

Day Two Notes

Quick Recap:

Your Business' "Unique Position Statement" should be:

- Brief
- Memorable
- True to your core values
- Credible promise
- Differentiates you (Note – what differentiates you is not "good customer service" because everyone says they offer this. Think about what truly sets you apart.)

Marketing is Just Content...Content is just stories about you and your business!

You don't need to create a story – you already have them! They include your history, why do you do what you do, where are you going, your values in action (things you are doing in the community, commitment to local or sustainability, etc), your products and services, your partners and supplies, your staff, your building...your everything that connects with people.

You are entrenched in your business every day, so sometimes you need to take a step back. You might not realize that you have a great story to tell because you live it every day. It might get old to you, but not to your customers because they don't hear it or live it every day. And even if you told it once, or put it on your website, since there is so much out there, it can get lost and should be repeated!

Without the right content, the best marketing plan and using the right channels won't matter.

Content is everything from photos with a caption, blogs, email newsletters, podcasts and more. (See the presentation #2 slide for a longer list of ideas.)

"Inbound Marketing"

Traditional media is "outbound marketing" (cold calling, TV, direct mail). This is where you are putting marketing message into the world until you hit someone over their head & convince them to come see you.

"Inbound Marketing" – this is when you make content so good, people find you and want to connect with you.

Here is an example of inbound marketing with Alpaca sweaters – if you sell these, you know they are a bit difficult to clean. Therefore, you produce content on how to care for them. You're the expert. You are who people find when they google "how do I wash my alpaca sweater." Then they watch your YouTube videos, read your instructions on your blog, follow you on Facebook, and then buy their new sweaters from you.

Some Keys to Inbound Marketing

- Make it enjoyable and entertaining – tell your story by finding things that are fun to hear.

- Make it searchable. People need to be able to find you even though they don't know they are looking for you.
- No one is good at everything. But, luckily, you don't have to do everything. So, if you aren't a good writer – maybe blog posts aren't the way to go. If you are a good photographer, you can take great photos and use them to tell an authentic story. Focus on what you like doing or things that you want to get better at.
- Don't sacrifice the good for the perfect. Your first podcast or blog might not be that good. That is ok. You will build from there. The more you do, the better you will get.
- Digital content is ephemeral – some literally disappear – even if it doesn't, by the next day it probably will be forgotten. The nature of the internet is people move on.
- But sometimes the Internet doesn't forget. And that is when you cross a line of some kind. Be careful with some content areas – think about what you might not bring up at Thanksgiving dinner table – politics, profanity, etc. Take a moment think if what you want to share is going to jive with the image of your business. You want to be authentic and not sacrifice what you hold dear but you should generally avoid controversy (unless that is part of your business plan).
- Perfect moments – if you don't have a slick video, professional photos, or paid writer, that shouldn't be what keeps you from generating content. People want the authentic side of you. They want to connect and relate. Therefore, you just need your smart phone and yourself.
- Share the love. There are things that you love about what you do – maybe you just had a great moment with a customer, maybe you have a great new product or service, maybe you foster a cat in your storefront, maybe you just made someone's life a little better – get that out there and share the love.

Video

- Social media and search engine algorithms are all about video right now. Organic reach on the internet is very low. You have to get fresh, new content to attract search engine attention and views to get more views.
- Get into the habit of taking photos and video and start posting to make sure people can find you.
- We all have smart phones in this room. You don't need anything more than that to get started on your content marketing journey. Don't worry about not getting the photo perfect in the first shot. Professionals don't get their perfect shot in the first try.
- Use the editing tools already built into your phone. Play with your editing features and sliders (brightness/contrast, hue, saturation, vibrance, color balance, etc) to see what they do. Apps like Instagram have filters – they can make your photos look more high

fidelity so you don't have to know anything about photography. Get to know the tools you already have.

- [Canva](#), [Adobe Spark](#), [BeFunky](#), and other tools are available for free or cheap that will do the graphic designing for you - they can make things like posters and flyers, too, not just digital content. Let those tools do all the work with built in design features.
- Help get your staff thinking about content marketing for when they have great moments with a customer -- maybe they just opened a box with a great new product, maybe you went out together for a team building lunch – get them into the habit to look for great moments and document them.
- Don't force it. Stop and regroup if it feels like you are. People can tell if you are forcing it, don't enjoy it, or don't put out authentic content.

User Generated Content

- Use what others are posting about you!
- Make a unique hashtag (search for ones you think of on Instagram to make sure there aren't any others using your hashtag. Don't bother running hashtag campaigns on Facebook because of their privacy settings). Don't use the hashtags already out there because if a lot of people are already using them, you will never find your content. Put the hashtag on a board in your business, by the register, on your social media posts, website, newsletter and more so people see it and use it.
- If a customer posts a photo or content related to your business, message them to thank them for posting about your business and let them know you really like what they shared and ask if you can re-share. Usually people are thrilled for you to do that.

Make it Easy

- Stories about you and your staff (withSimplicity just did this by taking nice photos of their staff and giving a personal bio and a note about their favorite products. Then customers could share the post and win it)
- Stories about customers
- Stories about pets (store pets, customer pets coming in) – the internet loves pets
- Products & services – what is new, what is most popular, explain why you love something or think it is really useful or cool – don't just post photos of your business or store and expect people to know you are talking about or understand why it is so great. Tell them!
- Community support – talk about why you support various community groups. It should reinforce your values and your brand and build goodwill. Hopefully those groups you support will reshare and give you an extra bump in publicity (even though this is not why you do it!)
- Behind the scenes – kitchen prep, tradeshow or conferences you attend, afterhours celebration, the team out having fun together that give an insight to who you are
- One image-one sentence: take a photo and put one sentence in your digital post. Use the hashtag so people can find it.

Exercise: Business Identity Notecard – write your identity on a notecard, write down what you would say to your mom if you were explaining what you do. Think about how you are communicating your truth and what you're offering.

*** Put your business identify on the Facebook group page and we'll all chime in to give feedback.

A California designer who does RuPaul's dresses came to Ragtime Fabric in Harrisonburg and bought fabric at their shop and had a great experience with the staff and finding what they needed. They designed the dress and took photos and tagged Ragtime. He took a business card (which had social media contacts on it) so he could reconnect. Lesson – you never know who is coming in to your business, and how they can help you market your business! This was great, surprise free advertising.

Content Calendar:

If you have a campaign, if you have plans for Father's Day or another milestone or holiday, put it on a calendar so you don't let the milestone sneak up on you and leave you without content. Don't get stuck rushing through creating something. Give yourself time to think it through and prepare it. Then just set it and forget it! You can schedule so much of your content in advance. Just plan it out and plot it out in your calendar to make sure that you post around once a day on social media during the week and space it out. If you plan it out and find gaps in your timing of posts, you should be able to see it in advance so you can figure out what to fill the gaps with.

Find a calendar that works for you. No one calendar will work for everyone so explore what is out there and see what keeps you organized. That is the main key. Use it, stick to it. Plan things out but then go back every day to use it to keep your content coming.

Planning tools include (all are free & included in the slides or handouts so you can get a closer look):

- Google Calendar: It lets you see what you have planned visually and can color code it. Jeslyn uses this for HDR. She color codes according to content type and theme.
- Spreadsheets – You can use Excel or Google Sheets to customize a spreadsheet solution that works for you.
- Trello – project management tool. It offers “board and card” organization.
- Gantt Chart – some people use this to plan for campaigns. It can be especially good for you to see where you have chunks of content planned and “busy” times.

Include repeated content in your calendar. It doesn't all have to be new. Use the same message but a different image. Make it easy on yourself.

Your organic reach for your Facebook posts that you haven't paid for reaches only about 2% of your total following. (Unless something gets a lot of shares and goes viral – then you hit the free jackpot.) You can see that in your analytics. Unless you pay for it, you will never get that number higher. Therefore, if you repeat/repurpose content, you will still reach new people.

There are people who want to read blogs and others who like videos. You can ask your customers if they have a preference, otherwise, have both formats to attract both types of clients or customers.

Automation - “Set it and forget it”

It is likely going to be hard to post every day – especially if you are a business operator without staff. Set aside time one morning or afternoon and plan out your content for the month and then get a tool that lets you set up your posts in advance. Then you don’t have to keep posting new content everyday. You need to come back to see if there are comments or questions, but you don’t have to generate new content each day.

Tools:

Use social media tools that let you post to multiple sites from one place. “[Hootsuite](#)” is an example. It is simple to use for most people – free for up to three accounts (look at the bottom of the pricing page – the free version is at the bottom). “[Buffer](#)” is a great free tool for scheduling ahead of time but it doesn’t have a lot of analytics. [Hubspot](#) is a more complex, costly tool that most small businesses probably don’t need (but Jeslyn has used it extensively – you can ask her if you have any questions about it). [MailChimp](#) and [Constant Contact](#) are email marketing tools. MailChimp is free for up to 2000 subscribers so you can build your email list and send emails or newsletters for free. It has integration tools for some social media.

Algorithms constantly change in social media. [Hubspot has a good blog](#) that gives tips on new social media changes and what you can do to keep up. If you agree to get news and updates on Facebook – they have to share this with you. [Content Marketing Institute](#) is a great site for this kind of information and so much more. It offers little tidbits like how your FAQ page can be your best for SEO. We will post more of these resources on the FB group page.

Show and Tell – what is right in front of you?

Billy Jacks does really short, fun Boomerangs that is a built-in feature on Instagram, Jack Browns’ Notcher Club takes photos of people who reach their X00th beer.

Heartworn Vintage has excellent captions that crack us up all the time

Black Sheep showcases their staff being zany.

Friendly City Food Coop – they love their vegetables and post photos of their produce and will take photos about the farmers showing up with produce.

Lady Jane – posts photos about the dogs and cats that she fosters.

Heritage Bakery – Isabell really makes the ordinary extraordinary – she does this by taking her beautiful baked goods outside for her photos – that is where you get the best light and you get a new backdrop. Brothers does this, too, effectively.

Challenge:

Find 2-3 other businesses in your industry who don’t operate in Harrisonburg – research their marketing – sign up for their newsletter, follow them on social media, create a goal inspired by them for you to work towards and share.

Also create a June content calendar with at least 5 entries each week. Quick hits, easy content. Write them down, plan them out, and schedule a few. Look for holidays, milestones.