

Foundations—a Pedestal Group Publication

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FOUNDATIONS

The Pedestal Group

The New Sales Process

Special points of interest:

- *Branding Guides*
- *Sharing Your Story*
- *Buying a New Computer*
- *LinkedIn*
- *AND MORE!*

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Getting new clients in today's marketing environment is not easy. Cold calling is definitely on the decline and executives at all levels are getting more savvy in their buying process. So how do you reach your target market?

90% of buyers indicate when they are ready to buy, they will find you, according to DemandGen Report. And if you are thinking, those aren't MY customers, then check out these statistics from Forbes Insight—The Rise of the Digital C-Suite:

- The C-suite first turns to mainstream search engines (63%) to locate information
- 6 out of 10 C-Suite executives conduct more than six searches a day

So what does that mean for your business?

Inbound Marketing, a term coined by Hubspot, focuses on putting yourself out in the right places and having the customers come to you.

While it isn't an easy strategy, it does tend to form stronger, long term relationships with clients while allowing more

consistent time management as marketing becomes a part of every day and not just those hours set aside for cold calling.

Your first task is to create buyer personas for your top clients. A buyer persona is a detailed description about your best customers down to likes, dislikes, hobbies, etc. The more you know the more opportunities you have to get in front of other people just like your top clients.

Once you have created your buyer personas, you are ready to craft your messages to talk to those buyers. Aren't sure what would appeal to one buyer vs. another? Ask your current customer! It is often amazing what they tell you is the most important component of your service.

Once you have your buyer personas, it is much more obvious where you need to put your messages and content. If one type of buyer you have is someone who reads a large number of blogs, guest blogging or working with a blogging group will help you get in front of the right people. If the people you currently work with read more



journals, you know where to put your advertising dollars.

Because you are helping to solve clients' problems today, you can be confident that other people have those same challenges. Addressing them in your content whether that be on your website, in your updates on LinkedIn or Twitter, in blog posts, white papers or emails, means the prospects will know immediately you "get" their issues and therefore, them.

Be sure everything you do is written by a real person. Associating content with an individual helps the prospect form a relationship with the person before they ever have a conversation.

Clients want to be a part of the process and no longer "sold to". So find them the new fashioned-way!

A Guide To Your Brand

Whether you have a 50 year old brand or one that is brand new, it is vital to have a set of brand guidelines to make sure everyone uses it in the same way. Even if you are a solopreneur, you will want to develop this guide for vendors and partners who ask to use your logo, etc. in promotions.



First, establish what is your business name and what are acceptable ways to shorten or abbreviate it. For instance at

The Pedestal Group it is acceptable to use either the full name or TPG. Anything else is not a part of our brand guide.

Next, establish the appropriate font, style (italic, bold, etc.) for your tag line. Are there any rules for when to use the logo with the tag line vs. without?

Third, look at your logo. Typically you will need your logo in both the colors of your company and black and white for print applications. Determine when the black and white logo is ap-

propriate.

You should establish a font as your standard company font as well as your colors in addition to your logo. Typically companies will have two to three main colors and then two to four accents. This way if you need to use colors in a brochure or on a website, you are able to pull those colors out without having to vary them from application to application.

Documenting these things up front means you are prepared when the need arises!

Sharing Your Story

What's your story?

We all know that the way to connect with people is through stories. As a culture, we do best when we hear stories and can share the details of

how things have happened.

In her blog article, “Trying to Connect with Customers? Tell a Story”, MP Mueller helps businesses put those stories to use. She suggests you start with the following ideas to get your story together:

What inspired you to start your business? What caused you to really jump in with both feet and reach that point you had to create your business?

Who turned you down, told you it wouldn't work or put barriers in your way? How did you overcome those objections and succeed?

Take this opportunity to celebrate

those people that helped you. Was it a former boss or coworker, or maybe a family member who gave you the support you needed. How did you find your first client or that big client that was the real game-changer. Who was involved in making that happen?

Were there any organizations or non-profits that helped along the way? Why do they mean so much to your business? For example, TOMS, was founded after the founder visited South America and wanted to give shoes to people who needed them. By incorporating that into his business model (for every pair of shoes purchased a pair is donated), he was able to generate buzz about his business. Definitely something to talk about!

Your story should be told in a way that others could pick it up and tell it for you. Customers that know your story will tell it when they talk about you so be sure to put it out there in a way it can be shared with others.

The only time this becomes a challenge is when you don't feel your story is compelling—even with all these areas to consider. If that's the case, there are always stories to be told about customer experiences, how customers found you, or employees working with customers. Listen to employees talk to each other or how they educate a new person on the company. You will hear the stories used to convey the culture and history of the company.

Finally, don't be afraid to make the story fun. Humor goes a long way in helping people remember your story and fun elements can enhance the telling. For instance, Ben and Jerry's story is told in a scrapbook complete with markers and glue. The story itself isn't all that unique if you think about the hundreds of people who start retail businesses every day, but the method used to tell it is.

At the end of the day we want to know your story. So... what's your story?

Buying a New Computer

We are often asked what to buy when it is time to get a new computer. Here are the things we recommend keeping in mind when selecting your next system.

Today's laptops are as robust as desktops but have two limitations; heat and upgradeability. With a desktop, heat is rarely a problem but with a laptop, if it sits on your lap it can often get very warm. In addition if you want to keep your computer for a long time planning to upgrade components that get out of date faster than the rest of the unit, a desktop is a must. If portability is important, than a laptop becomes a no-brainer. If you don't travel much and have a space where heat won't be an issue, you can leave the decision up to price. One reason laptops are nice, though, is they are built to do dual monitors out of the box. Often with a desktop you will have to add a second video card. We use laptops in our office because it allows the flexibility and they were the same price as the comparable desktop at the time.

Once you know if you want a laptop or desktop, you need to decide on an operating system. It is very important to look at the software you currently use and see what operating systems will work. Often people think switching to a Macintosh would be a good idea only to discover they can't run their software under the Mac OS. While they can run software to allow them to use Windows, it is subject to the same viruses and malware problems of any other windows machine.

Now that you have your operating system, I recommend deciding on monitor size next. If you go with a laptop, the screen size will effect the weight so be sure you balance viewing space with carrying through an airport. We highly recommend going to a computer store and holding different weights of laptop. It is amazing how

much different a 4 lb laptop is vs. a 6 lb laptop is!

Next, you get into the technical stuff. But don't worry—this is easy as well.

Hard drives today come in sizes from 250 gb and up. Most people do not have enough data to fill a hard drive of this size at the moment. If you store a large number of pictures, music and videos, you may consider going bigger but if you are a normal user, whatever drive comes with the machine will be more than enough.

If there is any extra money in the budget, you should always put it into RAM. RAM, or "random access memory" is the short term memory of your computer. Imagine if you could install additional short term memory into your brain. You could remember everything that's happening right now and act on much more of it. It would help you not have to take notes or make lists as often. It is the same with your computer. The more RAM it has, the faster it can do its job and process information. Computers today generally come with at least 4 gb and that should definitely be the lowest you go. If you can, upgrade it.

It is also safe to assume the requirements for RAM will continue to go up so make sure the computer is upgradeable to at least 8 gb.

In reality, the amount of RAM has much more of an impact on your computer's speed than the processor does. While processors get faster, they don't get faster at a noticeable pace and often the cost outweighs the speed gains. When considering multiple models, choose the mid-range processor to get the best speed for the money.

Right now multiple "cores" are the important thing with processors. Quad cores are faster than dual cores and generally better at multi-tasking. A mid-range, quad core should be

plenty of speed as well as last for the long haul.

Brand-wise, every computer manufacturer has had problems, and each one has had raving fans. A good rule of thumb is to make sure the brand is one you have heard of: Dell, Gateway, HP, Sony, etc. Asus is made by Dell and Vio is made by Sony so it gets a little tricky when they start talking brand names, but known brands are going to stand behind their units.

Tech Support and warranty—it is now time to read some of that fine print about your computer tech support and warranty. For tech support, does it specifically give you a number where people will answer the phone and give you a timely answer? Be sure you get the plan that gives you real help and not just an email address. As far as warranties go, consider what happens if you had a hardware failure and make sure you understand your options. If your hard drive failed in the 13th month of ownership, how big a deal would it be to pay to fix it? If that would be a big deal, upgrade the warranty. The other reason to upgrade the warranty is if you customize any of the components. If that component fails, the company will fix it for warranty customers before they ever sell that part to a non-warranty customer.

Buying your next computer can be easy if you think about your needs and have a little knowledge. You can build a computer online or go to a store and have a sales person's advice. Either way, you will get the best machine at the best price!



RAM is the most important component—put your money there!

The Pedestal Group

4809 Lexington Ridge
Medina OH 44256

330-952-1121

kathy@thepedestalgroupp.com

www.thepedestalgroupp.com

Twitter: K_Breitenbucher



Putting our clients where they belong.

The Pedestal Group was founded to answer a need we saw in small businesses to have a source for help. That could be how to find and integrate the right technology, how to better hire and manage people, how to set goals and create a strategic plan, or really attack and own your marketplace.

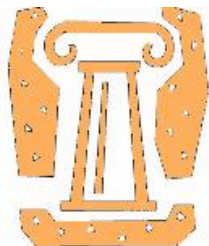
Our team has worked in a variety of industries including staffing, recruiting and executive search, retail, technology, healthcare software / IT, higher education and franchising and the consistent theme we have found it is very hard to see the forest for the trees. In small business, that is compounded by the number of resources available.

Our approach is unique in that we don't just say it is all about the customer, it really is. The Pedestal Group puts our customers on a pedestal – right where they belong. That isn't to say the customer is always right because that is an adversarial relationship – in our case, we always come to agreement. We are always in a partnership with our clients but also remember who's the most important – YOU.

The Pedestal Group - Putting our clients where they belong.

LinkedIn—Fun and Grow It

There was quite a stir recently about LinkedIn's InMaps (<http://inmaps.linkedinlabs.com/network>) which is a tool that will show you a graphic of your LinkedIn network. Each "area" of your network comes up in a different color so you can see how they relate. To check that out, use the scroll wheel on your mouse to zoom in and mouse over one of the little dots. That will show you who



that is. As you look at the different people in that color, you can see who they are and even assign the group a name

(there is a box with corresponding colored squares in the bottom left corner of the window).

The reason this can be useful is because the graphic shows you where your network is strong, and where you can add more connections. In my case the green is my local town and there are not as many people on LinkedIn as there are in the group of power-networkers represented by the blue. I know that I could spend some time building up my green area and benefit from that because it is my target market.

Tools like this can also be used for marketing. If your graph is much bigger than a client's, you can easily demonstrate your power to bring new people to the table.

LinkedIn is such a powerful tool it is often difficult to manage. InMaps is one more way to help stay on top of it!

