


MARCH '11 NEWSWIRE

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Welcome to our monthly newswire designed to provide you with some marketing tips for your business.

We hope you enjoy reading it and remember, we are here to help you so please contact us if you need further information on any of the topics covered.

CORPORATE HOSPITALITY

In today's cut-throat, hyper competitive marketplace it is more important than ever to look after your clients. If your clients feel that you care about them, they are less likely to go and look for a new supplier. So, what can you do for them to give them a warm, fuzzy feeling?

Bring them on a day out!

It does require a budget (and budgets are hard to come-by these days) but corporate hospitality is an investment rather than an expenditure. The return on investment being customer loyalty, repeat business and referrals. If budgets are really tight you could consider hosting an Open Day at your office.

An Open Day

Schedule a day in the year that all of your clients are welcomed into the office. They can speak to all members of the team and speak to each other to exchange experiences. This is especially good for an industry that doesn't usually deal with face to face contact - for example web design firms, where most contact is via email or telephone. Ensure that you have booked a day when most of your staff are in the office, and make sure you've investigated the parking options for your clients. Schedule in some seminars so you can show your clients what you do and demonstrate your expertise. Don't forget to give them something for free – a good "Business Tips" seminar tends to do the trick. Finally, don't forget the food and drink!

Corporate Hospitality

An alternative would be to invest in corporate hospitality. This is perhaps a more grand gesture and gives the clients a "non educational" day out - they don't find out much more about your company but they certainly feel spoiled and your firm will build a stronger relationship with its clients as a result. Whether you bring clients to a rugby match or wine tasting, ensure the source of your package is reputable and a reliable member of staff has been tasked with being "hands on" for the event. Whether you choose an Open Day in your office or a hospitality package, your clients are going to be happy and appreciative. As we all know, happy clients remain loyal and refer business if they can.

EFFECTIVE NETWORKING

In today's challenging economic climate, it is critical to interact with the people who could become your clients, provide you with valuable information or help you to develop your business. Although we understand the importance of networking, many professionals will admit that they are not particularly good at it. In order to network effectively, it is essential to set some goals before you arrive at the event.

Obtain a new opportunity - This could be a new client, an invitation to join an organization (i.e. the ACCA), or a business referral.

Develop leads - If you don't develop a direct opportunity, your fall back option is to get talking to a few people who fall within your target market. For example, a corporate lawyer should attempt to meet an accountant or 2 as they tend to give business to corporate lawyers in general. The corporate lawyer can then add the accountant to their emailing list and keep in touch until a business opportunity arises.

Meet new people who could refer business or help you with your business - This is the bare minimum you should aim to achieve from attending networking events. You may get talking to a business consultant or IT specialist. They may not become a client of your firm but they could help you add value by providing advice on how you can improve the way you do business. They might even get you a better deal on some new I.T. hardware, for example.

What next? Make a commitment to attend at least 1 networking event every month. Try and set yourself some goals (i.e. pick up 3 new business cards, have a good conversation with at least 1 person, etc).

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SOON YOU MAY BE ABLE TO PAY FOR A BUSINESS LUNCH WITH YOUR IPHONE

According to the latest tech-blurb, Apple may implement "near field communication" technology (NFC) in the next iPad and iPhone, allowing users to make purchases directly from these devices. Futurists and techies alike have long heralded the dawn of the cashless society and now it seems closer than ever.

Numerous reports have suggested that NFC technology will be introduced in the upcoming updates of both the iPhone and the iPad this year, citing inside information from engineers working on the new hardware. Never being a firm to miss an opportunity, Apple is said to be introducing a mobile payment service from mid-2011 and could even redesign iTunes to allow it to hold loyalty credits and points. Users will also be able to use credit information or Apple gift cards to make real-world purchases.

Apple has reportedly already developed a prototype of the payment terminal and may heavily subsidise it to encourage fast take-up of the technology. The technology apparently allows users to send and receive information at a distance of 10 centimetres (4 inches), which can be used to make purchases of goods directly from a mobile phone, using the handset as a debit or credit card.

Google recently made its latest version of Android compatible with the technology, so it would make sense that Apple would want to access this market, too. The iPhone 5 has been rumoured to have NFC technology. If it happens, it could trigger a huge growth in mobile payments, considering Apple's ability to make a product become a consumer "must have" accessory.

MOBILE MARKETING – THE "NEXT BIG THING"?

Mobile Media Marketing consists of utilising mobile phones to deliver your firm's advertising and promotional message to existing and potential clients. With 3G and mobile internet technologies now commonplace, examples of mobile marketing range from all types of advertising and promotions to apps and games which promote a product or brand.

Innovative marketers have begun to dream up more extensive usage of the mobile channel. The "App" market really kicked off thanks to the iPhone and now businesses are offering a vast array of Apps which build the brand, drive traffic to their website or encourage people to become a customer. Whether or not this is a suitable marketing channel for your business depends on the products and services you provide.



EMPLOYEE INDUCTION PROGRAMMES

We've all been there before – first day in a new job. You're not sure what to expect. Everything is unfamiliar and you are apprehensive about proving yourself to your new colleagues.

To engage new recruits, employers need to think about each part of the process from application, interview and job offer to the first day - and beyond. Yet too often the induction process is not thought to start until the first day on the job. That is a mistake - and a missed opportunity. If you engage with your employees they more likely to stay longer, they are also productive and better at building good customer relationships from the start.

A good induction programme is the first strand of the employee engagement programme and needs to start early. A few simple steps will help your new recruit to take the early days in their stride. The period after an applicant has accepted a position and before they join is critical so ensure you keep in touch to alleviate concerns and respond to queries.

- Send an employment pack of relevant information with the offer letter and phone them a few days before they start to run through any questions.
- Ensure reception is expecting them on day one and knows where to take them - and brief the team. It's important that everyone in the office (or at least in the relevant department) knows the new recruit's name.
- Arrange a guided tour and introductions to other members of the office.
- Identify an office buddy for the new recruit to go to with questions. Whether this is a line manager or a colleague depends on the individual situation.
- Make the tone positive and keep written manuals and other paperwork to a minimum - good impressions work both ways.
- Ask the recruit to report back to you at the end of day one and follow up with the buddy or line manager - address any issues quickly.
- Offer constructive advice and assistance and give plenty of positive feedback and encouragement in the early days.
- Create a positive future vision by discussing development plans early on.
- Finally, don't forget to complete a Probationary Period Assessment form. This works both ways – it allows the firm to establish that they have hired the right candidate for the job and it acts as a feedback channel for the new recruit and

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