Green Marketing Strategy for Small Businesses

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Green Marketing Reaches New Customers

- Four out of five people say they are buying green products and services, and 19% say they are buying more green products.

- Green consumers are willing to spend a premium (usually over 20%) on clean, green products over non-sustainable alternatives.

- 55% of surveyed consumers look for labeling and other signs that a company has some amount of environmental responsibility.

- About 75% say it’s okay if a company is not environmentally perfect as long as it is honest and transparent about its efforts.
Types of Green Marketers…What We Learned at Greener Pittsburgh


- The Meek – Hold back from sharing anything due to a concern over scrutiny. Going green yet may have not one piece of green information on their website.

- The Confident – On a mission and nothing is going to stop them. Detailed, evangelizing, ready to talk sustainability and influence others.
Before You Begin Green Marketing

How to Start from a Place of Confidence…

- Assemble a Green Team
- Have a Vision Statement
- Complete a Basic Assessment
- Create a Green Marketing Strategy
Green Content – Your Story

- Your “Why” Story – Why did you decide to go green? Make it personal but professional.

- Your Green History – Share the journey and let customers know this a long-term commitment. (Not a marketing trick!)

- What You’re Doing Now – Describe individual initiatives with your customers. Announce key greening milestones.

- What You Love about Green – Share your passion for eco-friendly products or services (yours or others) and how to incorporate them in their lives.
Green Keywords and Search Engine Optimization

- Keywords Matter – Choose “green” keywords that capture your industry, products and/or services. Now is the time!

- Keyword Density – Increase the concentration of text containing green keywords.

- Keyword Metatags and Tags – Work keywords into respective page titles, keyword lists, and blogging tags.

- Meta Description Tag – Insert green phrases into the copy that appears in your search engine listing. Stand out.
Leverage Social Media

- **Twitter** – Share green success stories in real time. Follow like-minded green business thinkers and share tips and insights.

- **Facebook** – Encourage discussion and spread the word about your incorporation of sustainable practices. Start discussions.

- **LinkedIn** – Use connections to find green suppliers or distributors. Create deliberate B2B green biz relationships.

- **Blogging** – Begin a forum for transparent, more credible information on actions you are taking to address social and environmental impacts.
Importance of Internal Marketing

- Remember buy-in from all members of the organization is always a key factor in your success.
- Keep employees up-to-date on social, environmental, and economic sustainability initiatives and progress.
- Celebrate successes with staff and encourage them to contribute green ideas. Have contests.
- Create an eco-tips newsletter and infect employees with your commitment.
Green Certification – Marketing Advantage

- **Transparency is Easier** – You’re not alone and measures can be understood in the context of established standards and peers.

- **Burden of Proof is Less** – Lowers the barrier to prove the green-ness of your product or service.

- **Tool in your Toolkit** – Frames your green content and conversations about business practices.

- **Overcome Skepticism Faster** – By having a valid, respected certification, enables your business to overcome consumer skepticism and appeal to a wide market of green buyers.
“What they [critics] don't realize is that I'm not in the business to make clothes. I'm not in the business to make more money for myself, for Christ's sake. This is the reason Patagonia exists -- to put into action the recommendations I read about in books to avoid environmental collapse. That's the reason I'm in business -- to try to clean up our own act, and try to influence other companies to do the right thing, and try to influence our customers to do the right thing.”

- Yvon Chouinard, CEO Patagonia
Summary

- Know that the market is there for your greener products or services.
- Assess where you are as a marketer and where you are internally as a team.
- Begin a green marketing program from a place of confidence.
- Start with your story and leverage search engines and social media to greet those new, eco-conscious customers.
- Don’t forget to perpetually market sustainability internally.
- Consider a respected third-party certification to bolster your green marketing efforts.