

Beyond marketing

Although marketing communications can help brand your business, differentiate you from the crowd and even increase sales, it cannot make your business succeed. To succeed in business, you have to provide something useful or necessary—a product or service people want or need. And you have to provide that something consistently. You can have great advertising, but if your product is not available or is not of good quality, guess what? You are going to get nowhere fast.

Lots of people spend time on their marketing strategies. And they develop great websites and fabulous collateral materials. Some people spend lots of time coming up with fancy names and lovely logos. But what they fail at is defining AND providing their product/service.

This morning I read an article from the Philadelphia Business Journal about two local small businesses: a gas/service station and a dry cleaner. Both business owners work very hard and show up every day to run their businesses. People can count on them. Neither business does much in the way of marketing because they don't need to. If you need your car fixed, you go to one, and if you need some shirts cleaned, you go to the other.

Yesterday, I came across this post over on Copyblogger. It is about how it doesn't matter whether you have a beautiful website if you don't have a message. I would go further—you have to know what you are doing, and to quote Nike, just do it.

Time and again I meet successful business people. You know why they are successful? Because they provide the goods. On the other hand, how many times have you seen a restaurant fail? Probably dozens of times. You know why restaurants fail? Because people didn't go there to eat. And why didn't they go?

Probably because the food was bad or the service was bad.

Basically, it boils down to having the product or the service. Of course, if you want to increase your market presence and/or let people know you are there, you are going to have to engage in marketing. But marketing alone will not get you business.

