

On doing things piecemeal

Are you a small business with a tight marketing budget?

If you are, you probably have fallen prey to the idea that you should do (marketing) things as you can afford them. You know, an ad here, a brochure there. Budget-wise, this may make sense. After all, you can't afford a large campaign, or an ad agency. Branding-wise, not so much. It's tough to build up an image on unconnected pieces of the puzzle. The missing link is the connection, or the reason, behind each piece.

Think strategically

In business, there is strategy and there are tactics. Often companies fall into tactics without thinking about the strategy. Many people can't tell the difference. Here's a quick example: sending a press release is a tactic, achieving positive publicity is a strategy. Ideally, tactics should follow your strategy.

You must know what you want to accomplish so that you can figure the steps to make it happen.

Often, small business owners are overwhelmed with trying to do everything: managing staff, invoicing, doing the books, buying inventory, negotiating. Marketing may be a distant thought, something to do when there is down time. This is unfortunate because marketing will bring business in. Neglecting your marketing will result in a business downturn, for sure.

Develop a basic marketing plan

The easiest thing to do is to devote some time to thinking about what you want to accomplish. Perhaps you want more female customers, or larger organizations. Write these goals down. Figure out who your current customers are. Figure out how much budget you can afford to devote to marketing. See

what you already have and what you need.

Here are some elements of a marketing plan:

- Current situation/Situation analysis
- Goals
- Target audience
- Budget
- Tactics for reaching target audience (and this is where your ads, brochures, press releases fit in)

Remember, doing marketing piecemeal will only result in getting small chunks of your target audience.

