

Industry Pro Interview: Marketing Beyond the Basics

By Karon Thackston

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I had the privilege of interviewing Diane Garrod of TalkCity.com. Talk about a marketing pro! Her online specialty is marketing - helping for profit and nonprofit clients to acquire, retain and upgrade customers and/or donors. Diane has worked with many high profile clients such as Mattel, Lipton, Costco, Novell, Kemper Funds, Columbia Studios, Toyota, and NBC. Read carefully as Diane takes us into a new level of marketing success!

KARON: Hi Diane. I'm really looking forward to talking with you today. I'm sure there is a ton of information locked up in your brain that Business Essentials subscribers will benefit from :)

DIANE: Oh, Karon... it's my pleasure! Fire away.

KARON: All right. Getting right to the point, everybody is talking about article promotion, ezines, email advertising, permission marketing and so on. What's the next step? Where do we go from here?

DIANE: Time changes things. One thing that hasn't changed is that "content" is still king. Article promotion and electronic newsletters are still great venues of publicity online, and customer retention technique and "permission marketing" will always be necessary.

KARON: So where does that leave us?

DIANE: The next steps are that search engine optimization has vastly changed, the old rules of yesterday are no longer rules, and there are more advanced techniques of customer acquisition. In many ways we are back to the old basics of business with a new twist. The exciting ever-changing electronic arena allows small business to compete with big businesses.

KARON: Right. So far, I'm with you. But something else has changed, Diane. What is it?

DIANE: Today market intelligence is key. For instance, knowing the latest techniques, keeping up with what works and what doesn't, and testing continually just can't be ignored in today's online marketing battlefield.

KARON: Can you expand a little bit for those that might not understand "marketing intelligence?"

DIANE: Sure! A quick example: there are newer sales methods online that can generate lots of leads that bring in sales besides the search engines. Take a look at websites that pair buyers to sellers and sellers to buyers, like <http://www.bulkworks.com> , <http://www.infopia.com> , <http://www.gourmetcatalog.com> , <http://www.catalogcity.com> and many more. This is money well spent to turn a profit. And it is also so important that your website is sales and marketing ready.

KARON: Give us your definition of “sales and marketing ready.”

DIANE: What I’m talking about are sites that are interactive and ever-changing to stimulate buying, customer interaction, and ease of navigation. If not, and you are not making a profit, it could be as simple as the fact that something is just not right on your website.

KARON: Hmm... interesting points. These website vitals you’re talking about. Are these the things that keep most people from creating and maintaining an effective marketing campaign?

DIANE: Most of the time yes. Primarily due to cost. Nothing is for free anymore online, nothing that is effective, that is...however, the Web is still more cost effective. Creating the effective marketing campaign takes knowledge, research, and communication. Maintaining an effective campaign means continuing to do what works, continually testing other strategies and constantly studying and gaining experience.

KARON: So we would all be wise to investigate new options and learn as much as possible about the new changes in Internet marketing so we can take advantage things that will bring us better results.

DIANE: It all changes so fast, that that’s the only way to go. You just have to stay on top of things.

KARON: Where are the marketing trends pointing? Are there new, effective things we should be looking toward in the near future?

DIANE: We should look to future marketing efforts to come through wireless communication, constant attention to personalization techniques online, and using the power of offline marketing and online marketing together. Knowing how is half the battle. Marketing is a process based on knowledge and a bunch of strategies working in sync to acquire customers, retain customers and upgrade customers to larger buys.

KARON: Great stuff, Diane. Diversification is definitely important! I appreciate your time.

DIANE: Always a pleasure!

Be sure to visit Diane’s site at <http://www.talkcity.com> for additional information that can help your marketing plans bring about better results.

Most buying decisions are emotional. Your ad copy should be, too! Karon is Owner and President of KT & Associates who offers targeted copywriting, copy editing & ezine article services. Subscribe to KT & Associates' Ezine "Business Essentials" at businessessentials-subscribe@topica.com or visit her site at <http://www.ktamarketing.com> .

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