

STOP THINKING IT, START DOING IT

By Todd Collins

I hear all the time from clients, friends, and family of how they are going to do things different in the New Year. They are going to update their restaurant, spend more money on marketing, and improve their customer service and staff. However, I have always been curious as to why they are waiting until a specific time to make the decision to do these things. Stop thinking of how you are going to market your restaurant or liquor store online, just do it!

Many online marketing gurus will give you a litany of do's and don'ts. I am simply going to give you some pointers on how to start, and/or improve what you are already doing.

First things first ... Do you have a **Facebook** page? If not, start one right away. Every business should have a Facebook page. It's the equivalent to having a phone number back in the 90's. From there you will be able to market, contact, and educate your customers on the culture of your business.

Next ... **Instagram**. This account is a bit more organic. Instagram utilizes real time images and photos of happenings within your busi-



ness. Instagram requires a different approach than your approach should be with Facebook.

Twitter is next. Twitter is an open forum limited to 140 characters. I am not a huge Twitter fan personally, however many of your customers use it so you should to.

Next and very important is your **Google Plus**, and **Google My Business** page. Even though Google Plus was a failed attempt at social media, Google is still the coolest kid in school. If you pay attention to Google, Google will pay attention to you.

Last but not least is the new kid on the block **Snapchat**. Snapchat is a more complex, and youth based media outlet. However, statistics are showing huge growth in the 20-30-age range. My suggestion here is get your username even if you are not going to utilize it right away.

Once you have all your social media ducks in a row, it's time to post. What I like about Instagram is that you can post something to Instagram from your mobile device, and quickly share it to Facebook and Twitter with a click of a button. Many marketing consultants will tell you not to post the same thing on different avenues. However, if you do not have the budget for an agency or internal marketing person this is your best bet for saving time and money.

Once you start to post remember that you want to be entertaining, funny, or educational. These are the three things you enjoy most about the posts you like yourself on these same avenues so your customers will as well. Be sure to mix it up, use video occasionally, and trending articles from experts in your field. The secret to good social media is volume and consistency. If you are posting once a day, and not getting the results you want then increase the amount of posts going out. If you want to get more likes, then be sure to show your support to others. Social media is a give and take so you need to be involved in others posts as well.

If you want to go deeper into the advertising portion of social media, than Facebook and Instagram will be your most affordable bet. Make sure that those "sponsored" posts have a call to action like Learn More, or Call Now. This way you can track your ROI on the spending of those posts. If you are looking to grow your business over the next ten years, then this needs to be a part of your marketing budget and plan.

It's important that you reach your customers where they are, and that place is on social media and their mobile devices. I know this may seem like a lot of work. That is why there are companies that handle this all for you. Be sure to vet these companies well, and that they have your company's mission, culture and your expectations in mind. They need to have a clear path to success for you. If they are a legitimate agency this will be a walk in the park for them.

You need to stop thinking about doing this, and just do it. You will be happy you did, and so will your business. ■

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