

## Q&A

# New Media Shifting Marketing's Terrain

Q&A talks sales and marketing strategies with Kim Pita, managing principal of the Pita Group in Rocky Hill.

**Q:** Pita Group has been in business since 1996. What has been the biggest change in marketing you have seen in those 14 years in terms of techniques that may no longer be relevant?

**A:** The largest shift in marketing has been the prominent use of new media (digital 2.0) to build brand communities, communicate messages and increase market share. Through the use of digital media, companies have become much more targeted in their market reach, and they benefit from analytics-driven insight.

Unfortunately, the departure from the use of traditional media is requiring newspapers and direct mail entities to re-evaluate their business models to include relevant digital components. The top ranking on a search engine has become more valuable than the front page of a newspaper because of the sheer exposure volume.

Multi-dimensional communication channels continue to grow and evolve on a daily basis. There is greater focus on in-bound marketing, which means your supporters search and find your organization through your web site and social media presence. By providing customers with a forum for dialogue and interaction, you can now access valuable insight that helps you deliver the best customer experiences. Company executives, now more than ever, need to take advantage of the platforms available to build their credibility as both listeners and thought leaders.

**Q:** On the other hand, what are some of the newer trends in sales and marketing just now hitting Connecticut?

**A:** Connecticut businesses have just begun to test the social media waters. The hesitation has been the necessity to first decipher the most relevant channels (YouTube, LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, blogs, etc.) and then to have a team in place to generate fresh content and manage updates. From what we have seen, the most progressive businesses that have embraced the power of social media fall in the not-for-profit sector. They have experienced the power of how building an online fan base can translate into customers and donors. Web portals with clever and unique addresses tied to media campaigns have also become effective marketing tools, providing opportunities to measure and track consumer interest.

**Q:** How effective is social networking as a marketing tool? Big corporations are all over Facebook and Twitter, but can small, local businesses have any success?

**A:** Companies should not depend solely on social media as their exclusive marketing channel. But it most definitely should be part

of the mix. Each organization must evaluate the social media channels that are most appropriate based on their marketing goals. Social media is an ideal platform to shape opinions, build referrals, leverage brand exposure, generate awareness, position thought leaders and stimulate conversations with consumers.

Our clients are encouraged not to use social media channels for the hard sell, but rather to demonstrate knowledge, expertise and culture. Small businesses should take advantage of the opportunity to learn, listen and respond. When you listen, you build loyalty. When you build loyalty, you can provide incentives. From there, sales will naturally increase.

**Q:** There is a lot of competition for customer eyeballs. What's working to cut through the clutter and make messages stand out?

**A:** The "I see me" strategy that has been prominent in marketing for ages still is appropriate. Customers and clients need to see themselves in your marketing, and know you can connect to them both emotionally and rationally.

Video testimonials have become extremely effective to break through the clutter because of their multi-sensory ability to deliver compelling messages. Millions of people view video on the web, watch video on their televisions and play video on their mobile devices. It is all around us and is an ideal campaign tactic that can be repurposed for many media channels.

**Q:** From your perspective, what is a common error small businesses make when trying to market themselves?

**A:** Typically there are two mistakes in marketing — the first has to do with messaging and the second has to do with the delivery.

Rather than talk about how they can impact the customer or client, businesses tend to talk about who they are and what they do. Messaging has to address the need of the customer. To gain this type of intelligence, businesses need to invest in consumer research.

The delivery of messages has to be strategic. Too often companies jump the gun to get out there with little thought devoted to audience, messaging and customer experience. Every marketing initiative — traditional and online — is a reflection of the company's brand. The most successful and valuable web sites are those that have been built based on a strategy and a purpose, with the intention to bring visitors back for more.

With search engines more closely measuring user interaction to determine rankings, it is more important than ever to attract and retain return visitors. Some unique offers that will drive traffic may include: monthly rotating coupons, changing video content, educational programs, a blog or a news widget. The goal is to engage visitors and keep them coming back for more!



"Reducing energy costs and waste were my main concern."

"My business was able to lower its gas and electric costs while decreasing our environmental impact, all with the help of financial incentives from the Connecticut Energy Efficiency Fund."

Corey Kosienki — Property Manager

Outdated energy systems and equipment in many buildings are wasting valuable energy — and money. Due to the capital investment often needed for high-efficiency systems, the Fund offers substantial incentives to help you bridge the gap. And your energy cost savings are immediate and long-term.

According to Corey Kosienki: "The Energy Opportunities program helped Mediterranean Realty retrofit its energy management system to reduce cost and waste associated with simultaneously heating and cooling our building. During the installation process, another efficiency opportunity for our business was identified, resulting in additional gas and electric savings. The project addressed some of our environmental concerns as well. I have three young children, and I suffer from asthma — so, I feel it is very important that we all do our part."

Project: Mediterranean Realty (Meriden)  
Fund Incentives: \$39,000  
Projected energy savings: \$15,700 annually



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Connecticut's Energy Efficiency Programs are funded by a Charge on Customer energy bills.

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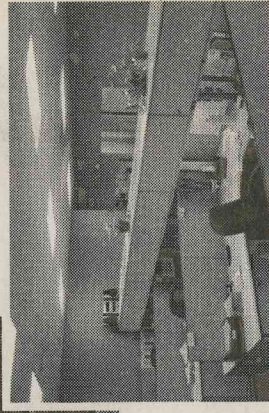
"PDS is very good at what they do."



Bob Barsalou pictured in front of his new office building in Plainville.

We were told that PDS had done an excellent job on another building in our industrial park, so we invited them to bid on our new building. From the first time we met PDS, we had a really good feeling about them; so we were glad when they also had the lowest bid! After the work began, nothing changed. They remained responsive, professional and on schedule. We always felt like their most important client. If we build again, we will definitely use PDS."

— Bob Barsalou  
V.P. of Operations  
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