



Small Business Consultation Report

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Report Date: July 2010

Report Type: One Hour Small Business Makeover

Client: Cyr Tosto Group LLC- Six-figure, female-owned graphic design and marketing firm from Michigan, USA www.cyrtostogroup.com

Report By: Joshua Black – Outer Limit Productions LLC

Consultation Issue and Background:

- Client has been in business for 15 years. Looking to reinvigorate their business and grow by 85%. Current customer levels are declining. They are looking for a new direction for the business, have about 6 ideas and they are looking for a little guidance.
- Client currently operates the business late at night, after their families are asleep 10pm-2am. This strategy allows them to have projects waiting for their customers the next morning. Current USP is “Coffee. Because You Can Sleep When You’re Dead.”
- Current method of getting customers is through word of mouth and networking only, with a 90% closing ratio. Client is worried that their small size and the fact that they work from home, is a deterrent
- Currently they sell B2B, do not follow up with prospects that they don’t close. Very small client list of customers that stay with them for years. They currently have no marketing system in place. Client has a web site, but is looking for direction.
- They give back a lot to their community with donations and spend much of their time working on charitable events. This work has also led to the idea of creating an information product about how to raise money for charities.

Quick Fixes:

- The USP should be re-worked to show how your business is going to help the customer, the biggest promise that you can make for the customer and what you do that is different than any other graphic design/marketing firm in your market. Currently, the statement sounds as if you are a coffee distributor, or a coffee shop. Instead, use your unique business hours, the fact that you are mother/female-owned, and the amount of community

work that you do- all to your advantage. I understand that you just printed new business material, but in my estimation, this current USP is going to hurt your business.

- Once you create a new USP, it will need to permeate every aspect of your business, from the way you answer the phone, to the look of your web site, to the look of all marketing material.
- Decide on a single purpose for your web site. Whether it's for lead generation (then you will need a way to grab contact info, i.e. autoresponder), or if you are using it to be informative (here, you will need some portfolio examples). When your customer sees your web site, they need to know exactly what type of work you do and they are going to want to see some work samples and some testimonials from happy customers.
- Contact your entire, long-standing customer list and ask them for lengthy testimonials. In return, offer them a free, 1 hour business evaluation. During this evaluation, you can go over any marketing material that they need re-designed and grab some extra business in the process.
- I would not recommend trying to move away from B2B and try to get B2C customers. The non-business work that you may could water down the reputation that your current B2C customers may expect. Stick with your current model.
- You appear to have a very personal business, with face-to-face relationships. I would continue this process and use your web presence only for lead-generated clients or people that want to know more from your business cards.
- Don't worry about the fact that your business is small and you don't have an office. Most clients will be happy to not have to pay for someone's office. Plus, you have been in business for 15 years, so it clearly is not bothering your customers as much as you think.
- Create a Facebook fan page for your business and use this avenue to meet more female-owned business owners all over the country, promoting your services to the mother-owned/female-owned business niche.

Hidden marketing assets:

- Capitalize on your all-female/mom-owned business network idea. This would be an excellent additional stream of income into your business. Contact female business owners in your area, create a late night networking event for working mothers, contact vendors that would be willing to promote the cause, charge a small fee for attending. Not only could you repeat this event monthly, but at each even you can network as well, gaining more referral business. Your own event will make you money in 2 ways. Niche networking events are a VERY powerful ways to get contacts fast.
- Since you volunteer so much, I think it would be a great idea to follow up that process with a product that you can create and market as a SEPARATE business ideas altogether. Do not use your graphic design business to promote this product (however, you might be able to self-publish it in hard copy and sell it at your networking events).

Long-term Suggestions:

- Develop an entire course based on raising money for non-profit organizations. Offer a free seminar (or paid) on this topic and film the entire thing. Use the videos as part of your product. This entire project will need to have its own web site and completely separate Internet presence from the work that you are doing now.
- Since graphic design is such a huge, competitive business niche, look at the areas that you are working and focus on those niches alone. Try to position yourself as the graphic design/marketing firm for day care centers (just an example). If you take a stand as the business that is out there to help one type of business niche (even if you have clients from other areas), this will help your word of mouth advertising tremendously.

Resources that may offer additional help:

- www.Aweber.com –the granddaddy of auto responders (monthly subscription fee)
- www.autoresponseplus.com –this is software, where you only pay once, and self-host your email list. This is the one that I use and have been very happy with it.
- www.ultimateUSPcreator.com –this is an entire course of mine that will help you develop a very powerful USP for your business and show you ideas for implementing it.
- www.how-to-business-network.com –this is an excellent networking tool that I created to help small business owners generate tons of free, qualified customer leads through networking.
- www.Clickbank.com –this is a digital products hosting site. They take the payments from almost any currency in the world and distribute affiliate income to anyone that sells your book. Very reasonable fees.
- Get the audiobook *Networking With Millionaires*, by Thomas J. Stanley

Additional comments:

- Try to stay away from business ideas that will go against the model that you have developed for yourself (working at home, at night). Don't go for the photo booth rental business as suggested. This will turn you into an employee of your own business, having to haul a picture booth to different events, away from family, during the day.
- Make sure that you never stop marketing your business. You should try to spend at least 25% of your time each week dedicated to finding more customers and promoting your business. When businesses stop telling people they are still out there, that is when customers forget about them.