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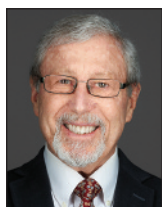


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 **Small Business
Resource Association**



THE SBRA COMMUNITY Culture Driven by Character



**By Gary Seibert, CEO,
Small Business Resource Association**

When was the last time you looked at your business and asked yourself, “Do our clients really know what our culture is?” or “Do they even care?” Whether or not you have ever asked those questions, I do believe I would be pretty safe in saying that they DO know what your culture is and they DO care. You see, corporate/business culture refers to the beliefs and behaviors that determine how a company’s employees and management interacts and handles their day to day business operations. Often this culture is not defined, it develops organically over time from the cumulative traits of the owner, management and employees. A company’s culture will be reflected in the dress code, business hours, office setup, employee benefits, turnover, hiring, decision making, treatment of clients, employee and customer satisfaction and every other aspect of the operation. You DO have a culture, whether you know it or not.

So, if culture develops over time, why am I suggesting “Culture is driven by Character?” Because I believe in the theory of Cause and Effect. Results (effects) are the byproduct of cause, stimulus and action. For a culture to take place there must be some pre-existence of a cause or stimulus and it’s there that I believe Character, someone’s character, will be a significant influence in the development of a company’s Culture. Character is defined as “the mental or moral qualities distinctive to an individual or group.” Therefore,

over time, I believe that a business will adopt, in whole, or at least part of the character of influencing people in the business. Let me give you a personal example of what happened in one of my former companies.

In 1986 I started a business called Kids Sports. It was based on the premise that kids were getting less physical activity, eating more and more fast and junk foods, watching way too much TV and, therefore, becoming known as “couch potato kids.” My college degree was in Health and Physical Education and I taught and coached high school from 1966 to 1975. I had a vision of a mini Disneyland-type fitness center for kids that would provide them with a variety of physical activities. They were being educated through sports and recreational activities about healthy living and eating while having a whole lot of fun. There was no emphasis on “winning” and a “loss” became a learning experience that helped the child become one step closer to success. I was passionate about what I was doing and the concept attracted more and more staff members who shared my passion. Soon, we grew out of a 5,000 sq/ft facility into a 20,000 sq/ft facility that offered programs for infants and toddlers, pre-school age children up to 13 year-olds. We started a fitness program under the same roof for adults and seniors. We offered birthday parties, a pre-school program, before and after school classes, summer camps and a whole lot more. The business started with my idea of a fitness center for kids and grew organically through the ideas and suggestions of the staff. Within four years we were selling Kids Sports licenses domestically before opening 13 master franchises around the world.

Our business grew tremendously because people (clients and staff) wanted to be part of what we were doing. They all felt safe in our facility and with our staff. They felt like and were treated like family. They felt comfortable asking questions. We became known for proving a great product at a great price. We had, without making a conscious effort, created a CULTURE based on the CHARACTER of the management team and staff. We had a passion for helping children feel better about themselves and the world around them through Health and Fitness, Family and Fun. That passion, Culture, became our cornerstone and trademark.

Take a minute after you have read this article and see if you can find a common thread between you, your staff and your clients. If you can, you have identified your culture. If not, it’s never too late but you may have to make some changes. There are people out there that can help you develop a culture and there are plenty of books, CD’s, podcasts and YouTube videos for additional insight. Become a CULTURE Driven Company inspired by Character and it will change your future.



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SBRA Business Spotlight

Dr. Thomas Wachtmann - Link Chiropractic Clinic



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877-252-0248

Website:
www.drwachtmann.com

Dr. Thomas Wachtmann, D.C., takes a natural, holistic approach to improving your quality of life by simply helping you feel good. He treats patients ranging from infants to seniors including professional athletes from the Philadelphia Eagles & Phillies, and the Lehigh Valley Steelers. For over 20 years, Dr. Wachtmann and his team at Link Chiropractic Clinic (LCC) have comforted patients suffering from back and neck pain, fibromyalgia, and headaches by *fixing* health problems instead of masking symptoms.

Conveniently located in Fleetwood, LCC's approach to "health care" is to create a customized plan of health maintenance for each patient, helping prevent the need for "sickness care".

NO TIME FOR A MARKETING PLAN



By Mark Kramer, founder
Core1Marketing,
Proud SBRA Member

If you have a small business, in all probability, you have a business plan, especially if you had to borrow money to get it going. Now, here's the big question, do you have a marketing plan?

If your answer is NO, you're not alone. Would you believe that only half of small business owners operate with a marketing plan? According to a 2019 survey of 350 small and medium business owners, conducted by Outbound Engine, 50% of those did not have a marketing plan for the year. I can attest to this statistic. I can't tell you how many business owners I've consulted with that after asking me how I might help them grow their business, I get a blank stare when I ask them to see their marketing plan.

Marketing is an *ongoing process* of educating consumers why they should buy your product or service, the key to ensuring the growth of your business. A well thought out marketing plan will help identify your target customer, where they live, where they play, and more importantly, it helps address the big question – *why should they buy from me?*

The key to having a marketing plan, especially for a small business owners, is the peace of mind that comes with knowing they can make the right day-to-day decisions about growing their business without spending a lot of time during the decision making process. If you're losing sleep over how to best spend your marketing dollars, a marketing plan provides the direction and ease of decision making that can help you sleep like a baby. Without a clear plan, many business owners end up trying too many different marketing tactics and end up walking away with little or no success without even knowing why.

As the former marketing director for a multi-million dollar hospitality group and a healthy marketing budget, I was *constantly*

being contacted by advertising sales reps selling print, radio, billboards, digital media, coupon books, directory advertising, cable TV, newspaper advertising, and more... DAILY. Without having a well-constructed marketing plan to follow, my head would have been spinning wondering if I was making the right decisions to grow the business while spending tons of time evaluating every single ad proposal that came across my desk. If that *greatest deal ever, that limited-time offer that expires tomorrow, that promotion that's guaranteed to drive a boatload of customers through your door* is something that's not in your plan, it's easy to say "no thanks"... confidently.

So why do so many businesses try to operate without marketing plan? Budget is usually a factor. Let's face it, after employee salaries, marketing is typically the biggest expense for most businesses. But here's something that will put a smile on your face – developing a marketing plan will actually save you money. When you understand who your target is and you know how to best reach and connect with them, that's where you need to spend your marketing dollars. There's no waste, no guesswork, you simply follow your PLAN.

Time is a factor that often delays the planning process. Small business owners are BUSY. And we all know it takes time to plan, but when you think about the time you'll save by not having to negotiate and make decisions about countless advertising options for your business, having a plan to guide you will put you way ahead of the game.

Experience plays a large part in creating an effective marketing plan. While small business owners wear many hats and there is some great do-it-yourself online help for marketing, we all can't be great at everything. It may be worth allowing a professional to help you get started with your plan. And if you do have a marketing plan, you want to make sure those marketing dollars are being spent in the most productive way possible.

Finally, whether you're starting a new business or you're a seasoned veteran, your marketing plan cannot be created then tucked away until next year rolls around. Especially in today's climate, change is constant and you need to keep pace with your customers' change in habits in order to stay connected. Review your plan at least quarterly to ensure that its components continue to send a clear, consistent message to your target about what you do and why you do it.



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