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**Small Business
Resource Association**



THE SBRA COMMUNITY COLLABORATION Out-Trumps COMPETITION



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

Almost everyone has heard the saying “Money is the root of all evil”, however, the real truth behind this saying is “The LOVE of money is the root of all evil”. In other words, money in itself is not evil

but when ones overwhelming desire for it drives them to make decisions that are either illegal, self-centered or just not in the best interest of others, money becomes evil.

I believe the same principal holds true when it comes to competition. We live in a highly competitive world and no matter where you go you are overwhelmed by print, verbal, digital and social media that is designed to get you to believe that the product or service being promoted is by far the best one for you to buy. Again, competition in itself is not bad, in fact, I am a big fan of it. Without competition we would have no desire to change, we would just keep doing the same thing over and over. There would be no motivation to improve or be creative. There would be no reason to set goals or celebrate success. Competition in itself is not a bad thing if you stay within the boundaries of what good competition really looks like.

Years ago, I was a teacher and Gymnastics coach at Hempfield High School. There were 6 other high schools that also had gymnastic teams. When we started the league in 1968, gymnastics was just getting started in public schools as a complete sport. After the first season, the 7 coaches got together to discuss how that first year went and ideas that might create more spectator participation

and overall improvement for the sport, and the athlete’s skill and accomplishments. We started having clinics that would be held at a different school 3 or 4 times a year. We brought in guest coaches from other parts of Pennsylvania to help our students see other perspectives and techniques. We shared all this with one another and helped one another become better coaches.

Now, I know what you are thinking, this doesn’t make sense. Why would the coaches of competitive teams be getting together to help one another become better coaches? Why were you helping the other team’s gymnasts to improve their skills? Simply, it was because our

LOVE was in helping the students become better athletes. We were not focusing on winning or loosing but rather teaching good sportsmanship, teamwork, skill development and a COLLABORATION. (The act of working with others to produce or create something better). Collaboration thereby produces some of the best gymnasts in the state of Pennsylvania and the Eastern United States. We were focusing on what was best for all the gymnasts in our county, not just our own school. Collaboration not competition.

How does this relate to business? Same principals and applications. As a business owner, if all your focus is worrying about your competition, cutting expenses and making a profit or winning at any expense, you might find your self and your business fighting a up-hill battle. I found early in my business career that focusing on my employees and our customers’ needs was a major contributor to our success. I spent a lot of time and energy talking to other business owners, going to workshops on employee engage-

ment and retention, and talking to my staff, customers and vendors as to their needs and thoughts regarding how we did business.

As years went on, I felt very comfortable asking several of our competitors to join together for a breakfast or lunch meeting to discuss business in general and how we might work together. Some were skeptical in the beginning but after a few meetings we not only learned from one another but we were making new friendships. We were focusing on how to be better at customer service, employee retention, financial management, marketing and serving our community better. We collaborated, communicated and grew our businesses together. We found certain niches or specialties that each of us had and focused on them. We even referred clients to one another.

At a SBRA Mingle a couple of months ago, there were members present that represented 4 different banks here in Berks County. They were all huddled together talking to one another and swapping business cards. Later I talked to one of them and she told me she had just gotten a great lead from one of the other bankers. She explained that another banker asked if her bank did a certain type of banking transaction. She said yes and the other banker handed her a business card of a client that she had just met that was asking for something that her bank did not offer. This is a perfect example of Collaboration and not the fear of competition.

If we all work together to provide greater service and products to the members of our community, I believe that we will have a much better community. Did you ever consider why people live in certain areas and not others? Collaborate with the other business owners in your area and you might find the answer and make a few new friends at the same time. Together Everyone Achieves More. There is no “I” in TEAM. Collaboration builds success.



SBRA Business Spotlight

ARCpoint Labs of Reading, PA

2208 Quarry Dr., Suite 207
Phone: 484-926-2505

www.arcpointlabs.com/reading

Since 2015, ARCpoint Labs of Reading has provided employers and individuals with Drug and Alcohol testing programs, services, and solutions. Serving Berks County & Beyond, ARCpoint Labs is a full-service national third-party provider/administrator offering Drug, Alcohol & DNA Testing, Department of Transportation Mandated Testing Programs, On-site testing support & Background Screening.



At our West Lawn, PA location, you will always be dealing with one of the owners.

Annmarie and Al pride themselves with providing excellent customer experiences while supporting their local community. ARCpoint Labs is an independently owned franchise group with other locations in King of Prussia, Doylestown, and Center City Philadelphia.

WHAT DOES YOUR MARKETING PLAN LOOK LIKE FOR 2022?



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 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.

Mark Kramer at Core1Marketing.com provides the experience of virtual a Chief Marketing Officer to small business owners in Berks County.

New SBRA MEMBERS

- [ARCpoint Labs of Reading, PA](#)
- [Assured Assistance](#)
- [Impressions Matter](#)
- [JA Walter, Inc.](#)
- [Doug Hayward](#)
- [Level Financial Partners](#)
- [French Creek Aesthetics](#)

SBRA Monthly Member Shout Out

Members Helping Each Other Grow

SBRA EVENTS - BE BETTER. GROW FASTER.

TUNE-UP Tuesdays

information. sharing. motivating.



Free to the public. Get more details and register at <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

• Tuesday, February 1st
9:30-10:30 a.m. - SBRA
Workshop: Economic Forecast
for 2022 and the Effects on
Small Business

virtually on Zoom, presented by
Dianne P. Manges, CFA Director,
Senior Investment Advisor Truist
Foundations & Endowments
Specialty Practice

• Tuesday, February 15th - 9:30-
10:30 a.m. - SBRA Workshop

Virtually on Zoom,
Check <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>

120 MINGLE NETWORKING

For information
and location, check:
<https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>



Learn How the SBRA Can Help Your Business Grow – Membership Benefits Update

February 23rd, 9:00-9:30 a.m.
via Zoom register

Register: <https://www.sbrassociation.com/#EVENTS>.