

In the last issue of HeatWorks magazine we learned from Granite Consulting about how Ceramicx has succeeded in harnessing the power of the Internet to great marketing effect.



Adrian Lunney PR

Adrian Lunney is a business journalist, writer, marketer and owner of his own business-to-business communications agency.

From a English degree at Cambridge University he worked for the UK's National Economic Development Office before taking up a staff role on Europe's leading weekly business paper for the plastics industry - and then setting up his own business-to-business communications agency.

Adrian describes his work as 'helping companies celebrate their own best practices and achievements - and communicating that to the outside world in the service of growth and expansion.'

adrian@adrianlunneypr.com

Here Adrian Lunney, the other half of the Ceramicx marketing partnership, explains why great news and communication - ie 'content' - is vital in driving your company forward.

Join the revolution

It's taking time, but the Internet continues to encourage a revolution; not least in social communications and in corporate and business life. Hierarchies, systems and protocols are tumbling daily. Cats are looking at kings and emperors are walking around without clothes.

In these conditions, your company has great opportunity to be as bold and creative as it can be and to reach out for as much business as it can handle.

So how to get started?

It's much easier than you think. Because, for one thing.....Your business needs to communicate anyway - right?

If you are any size of company you need to do some or all of the following:

Website(s); company brochure(s); catalogue; customer communications, sales presentations; customer newsletters or ezines; press releases, press material.... the list goes on. And since you have no option but to do these things - you may as well do them right. It's time to move this issue up your agenda and make sure of a professional job.

So.....

A great way of shifting things - at least at the outset - is to bring in a professional helper. This might be basically defined as someone who can:

- Make the most of your source material - ie your 'content'
- Turn it into effective communications much quicker than you could
- Send it all out to the right customer & media markets and
- Be transparent and open; ie keep you and yours informed each step of the way.

But why do I need to talk?

OK, well if the above points have not registered, think about this: Your communications are a clear shot at an open goal. In other words, you can say what you want to say; promote your company and its wares - for free - and on your own terms; through your website and any other communications channels you want.

So what should I say?

Plenty. Begin with the notion of plenty - and then start editing? Use Rudyard Kipling's 6 honest serving men to organise

your answers - What, Why, When, and How, Where and Who.

What....is the most important trigger by far. What am I selling - and how? What news will give my buyer added confidence? What achievements has my company racked up this month? What customers do I enjoy doing business with - and how? What opportunities, anomalies, current developments do I want to draw the world's attention to? What does my business approve/disapprove of?

Who should communicate this material?

You should. You and your people. Sure - manufacturers need to know about plenty of things; solutions; technology, materials; systems, equipment - but people buy from people.

Get out of your mind

It is true of course that fear of talking in public comes second only to fear of death in most peoples' minds. So, maybe, there's a little hurdle to get over there.

But experience shows that this hurdle is much much lower than you think. The fear lives only in the mind. The actuality is different. Remember: this is an opportunity to grow your company while practicing leadership. Equally important - here is also an opportunity to put your happy customers and business associates in front of the camera at every opportunity.

Once you get started....don't take all week

In fact, don't take all day - or even all morning. Get it done - sign off those communications - and get 'em out there. Ceramicx, for one, is a past master at creating throughput and speed of response. Demand speed of response from your suppliers and helpers in communications. Let the good ideas fly free and let a thousand flowers bloom... (and try not to take it too seriously...)

But we are a very specialist supplier...and I'm no Brad Pitt...

If you could just get over yourself you would find out that in the business world the buzzwords speciality and niche are the new handmaidens of the Internet.

Have you noticed, for example, that the broadcasting age - one supplier and millions of viewers/readers 1:10,000,000 - has already melted away?

The Internet shows us that micro-marketing - with its great specificity of terms - is actually where it's at. The ratio of seekers-suppliers is coming down all the time.

Which means that...

Regardless of any glamour, your buyers are now 1000% more enabled to find you....on a plate. So help them buy. You don't have to reveal trade secrets in order to establish the attractiveness of your products or services. If you know your stuff, why not let people know that you do? You are free to choose exactly what you show and tell.

And how should I deal with the press?

Turn it around. They are there to deal with you. No journalist will want to spend their time on your company without getting something that they can then use in a positive manner. Remember: trade and business journalists absolutely no interest in getting on your wrong side. Reason? Most trade magazines will depend on you and your peers - editorial and advertising - to keep going. It's in the media's interest to get the best from you - so get the best from them too. It's a two way street.

Finally, never forget....

That you and your own communications are now the primary engine for your business growth and sales. Press coverage can be very nice; it gives the benefit of 3rd party interest. For sustained growth however, your own best interests are in your hands - and depend on your company's abilities to keep communicating who you are and what you do.

So go to. Take a leaf out of the Ceramicx book. Put yourself in the driving seat - and enjoy!

