

CHAMBER HOSTS ANNUAL "SALUTE TO BUSINESS" AWARDS & INSTALLATION LUNCHEON



Newly Installed Board Members with City Council and City Manager

Each year the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce recognizes businesses and individuals that contribute to the success of the Norwalk economy and provide outstanding support to the Chamber and the community. This year at the Annual "Salute to Business" Awards & Installation Luncheon, the Chamber once again recognized those accomplishments from our Chamber members. The following businesses and individuals were recognized by the Norwalk Chamber:

Business of the Year

Norwalk Realty, Gordon Stefenhagen

Emerging Business Award

Leche Café & Bookstore, Jesse Pelayo

Emerging Business Award

TNT Tortas & Tacos, Israel Gomez

Impact Award

Applebee's Neighborhood Grill & Bar

Impact Award

Vicencia & Buckley, Christina Jones

Volunteer of the Year

Virginia Zuno, DoubleTree by Hilton, Norwalk

Ambassador of the Year

Richard Sneed, Norwalk Records

Exceptional Customer Service Award

Budget Car Sales – Phil Arey, Craig Wicks

Exceptional Customer Service Award

Joseline Nucum, DoubleTree by Hilton, Norwalk

Presidents Award

Michael Batory, Walgreens

All of these award winning businesses were also recognized by the City of Norwalk and other elected officials, including Congresswoman Linda Sanchez, State Assemblymember Cristina Garcia, State Assemblymember Ian Calderon, and Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe. The commitment these businesses and individuals have made to create a strong local economy in Norwalk should be commended.



Michael Batory of Walgreens won the President's Award. Shown presenting the award is President Toni Grijalva from Cerritos College



Christina Jones, Vicencia & Buckley Insurances, is presented with an Impact Award for her work with the Women In Business Council from presenter Gordon Stefenhagen of Norwalk Realty.

The Norwalk Chamber of Commerce thanks all the businesses and members who made this event possible! Thank you to our Awards Sponsor, Republic Services and Francella Aguilar. Thank you Teri Bazen of Norwalk La Mirada Plumbing, for creating the table centerpieces for the luncheon. Thank you to our caterer, Art Sanchez and Sanchez Catering for the delicious lunch. Thank you to the Events Committee: Michael Batory, Lynda Fisher, Teri Bazen, Christine Consunji-Chen, and Susan Arthur for putting on a spectacular event. Thank you to Mr. Mike Egan, Norwalk City Manager for serving as the Installing Officer for the new Board of Directors. Thank you to our elected officials for providing certificates of recognition: Congresswoman Lynda Sanchez and her staff, State Assemblymember Cristina Garcia and her staff, State Assembly Member Ian Calderon and his staff, Los Angeles County Supervisor Don Knabe and his staff, and thank you to all who attended or participated in making this event memorable. To find out more about the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce and upcoming events, visit our website at www.norwalkchamber.com.



President Toni Grijalva, Cerritos College is presented with her President's Gavel Plaque and thank you basket from Past President, Lynda Fisher of Walmart and President Elect Michael Batory of Walgreens.



Norwalk Record's owner Richard Sneed won the Ambassador of the Year Award. The award was presented by Susan Arthur, Community Member



Michael Batory of Walgreens presented Virginia Zuno of the DoubleTree by Hilton Los Angeles – Norwalk Hotel with the Volunteer of the Year Award.



Craig Wicks of Budget Cars & Trucks Rental and Sales is presented an Exceptional Customer Service award from the Chamber of Commerce by Rob Cazares of Outback Restaurant and Norwalk City Vice May Leonard Shryock



Vice Mayor Leonard Shryock and Teri Bazen of Norwalk La Mirada Plumbing present Gordon Stefenhagen of Norwalk Realty with the Business of the Year Award

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT



As Norwalk Chamber celebrates 91 years of serving the business community in the City of Norwalk, I want to assure you that Norwalk Chamber is devoted to being the ultimate business resource for our members. Whether through networking, promotion or advocacy, we are committed to helping your business and our communities thrive. I encourage you to become an active chamber member and take advantage of all that Norwalk Chamber has to offer.

We are happy to welcome two new Norwalk Chamber members: SoCal Pizza and Kinde-Topia Nunez Family Child Care.

On June 24th we held our Networking Lunch Ambassador Meeting at Leche Café & Bookstore. These monthly meetings provide our chamber members with an excellent opportunity to network with other businesses while enjoying lunch at one of our local restaurants. Our next Networking Lunch/Ambassador Meeting will be on July 29 at Applebee's Norwalk.

On June 26, we celebrated our 91st Annual Norwalk Chamber Installation of Officers and Salute to Business Awards Luncheon. Mike Egan, Norwalk City Manager, installed our 2014-

2015 Chamber Board of Directors. Businesses and Individuals honored included: Norwalk Realty, Gordon Stefenhagen – Business of the Year; Leche Café & Bookstore, Jesse Pelayo – Emerging Business Award; TNT Tortas and Tacos, Israel Gomez – Emerging Business Award; Budget Rental & Sales – Exceptional Customer Service Award; Joseline Nucum, DoubleTree Norwalk – Exceptional Customer Service Award; Christina Jones, Vicencia & Buckley Insurance Services – Impact Award; Applebee's Norwalk – Impact Award; Virginia Zuno, DoubleTree Norwalk – Volunteer of the Year; Richard Sneed, Norwalk Records – Ambassador of the Year and Michael Batory, Walgreens – President's Award. Congratulations to all of our award recipients!

Coming up this month, our **Women in Business Council** will hold **After Hours Golf** at Lakewood Country Club on **July 8th**. For more information about the **Women in Business Council** or to find out more about this and other upcoming Women in Business events, contact Christina Jones at Christina.Jones@hubinternational.com or at 714.739.3177, Ext. 204. Join us on **July 11** for a **State of the State Luncheon featuring Assemblymember Cristina Garcia**, co-hosted with Artesia Chamber of Commerce. Our next **Norwalk Small Business Program FREE 3-day Workshop Series** begins on **Wednesday, July 16**. We are currently taking registrations for our **3rd Annual 9-Hole Golf Tournament at Norwalk Golf Center on July 17th**. For more information or to register for these events, please go to our website at: www.NorwalkChamber.com or contact our chamber office at 562.864.7785.

As I begin my second term your Norwalk Chamber President for 2014-2015, I want to assure you that your Norwalk Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, Ambassadors and Chamber Staff will continue to provide exemplary programs and services to help our local businesses succeed during these difficult economic times.

On behalf of my Norwalk Chamber Board of Directors and Ambassadors, and our Chamber Staff, I want to thank you for your chamber membership. We look forward to serving you, your business and our community in 2014-2015!

Sincerely,

Toni Grijalva
2013-14 President
Norwalk Chamber of Commerce

Norwalk Chamber of Commerce
12040 Foster Road, Norwalk, CA 90650

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CALENDER OF EVENTS

July 8

Women in Business Council
After Hours Golf
Lakewood Country Club

July 10

Executive Committee Meeting
Chamber Office – Noon

July 11

“State of the State” with
Assemblymember Cristina Garcia
Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex
11:30 am – 1:00 pm

July 16

Norwalk Small Business Program
City Hall
8:30 – 11:00 am

July 16

Cerritos College Celebration of
Ribbon Cutting Liberal Arts Building
5:00 pm

July 17

Chamber Golf Tournament
Norwalk Golf Center – 5-9 pm

July 23

Norwalk Small Business Program
City Hall
8:30 – 11:00 am

July 24

Board of Directors
Annual Planning Meeting
Outback – 5 pm

July 29

“Business Connection Lunch”
Ambassador Meeting to follow
Applesbee’s Neighborhood Grill & Bar
11:45 am

July 30

Norwalk Small Business Program
City Hall
8:30 – 11:00 am

August 13

Women in Business Council
Cyber-Liability Seminar

August 14

Evening Mixer
Golf n’ Stuff

August 21

“State of the Nation” with
Congresswoman Linda Sanchez
Norwalk Arts & Sports Complex
11:30am to 1:00pm

August 26

“Business Connection Lunch”
Ambassador Meeting to follow
Diana’s Restaurant
11:45am

NEW AND RENEWING MEMBERS

New Members

Nunez Family Child Care
DbA Kinde-Topia
Ruth Nunez
562-202-3296
www.kinder-topia.net

So Cal Pizza
Ric Ochoa
12253 Imperial Hwy
Norwalk CA 90650
562-868-3252
www.scalpizza.com

Please call Caren Spilsbury for more information on how to become a Norwalk Chamber Member! (562) 864-7785

Renewing Members

The following companies and individuals renewed their membership with the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce and the services we provide are made possible by their support.

40 Years
Republic Services
Francella Aguilar
www.republicservices.com

15 Years
Merry Maids
Nina Joaquin
merrymaids397@aol.com

7 Years
The PC Help Desk
Steve Guzman
www.thepchd.com

22 Years
Healthfirst Medical Group
Alex Saulas
562-926-3440
www.healthfirstmedical.net

New Harvest Christian Fellowship
Richard Salazar
562-929-6034
www.newharvestnorwalk.com

5 Years
State Farm Southeast LA AFO
Kevin McKinney
562-402-6136

19 Years
Diana’s Restaurant
Sam Magana
562-926-5802
www.dianas.net

10 Years
NTMA
Gina Marinello
562-921-3722

2 Years
ANA Insurance Brokerage, Inc.
Amy Solares
www.anainsurance.com

18 Years
West Coast Arborists
Patrick Mahoney
714-991-1900
http://wcainc.com

8 Years
West Coast Arborists
Patrick Mahoney
http://wcainc.com

Advanced Performance Parts
Yuri Marquez
yuri@appincusa.com

From the Membership Desk...

Utilize your membership in the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce! Do this through the multiple networking opportunities offered by the Norwalk Chamber. Member to Member Discounts: Either offering a member to member discount or using your membership card to take advantage of current discounts being offered by other members can save you dollars!

•Website Advertising: Are you getting business leads through our website membership database? Have you provided the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce with your website address? Have you investigated the cost of advertising on the Chamber website to see if this can bring more business into your door?

•Newspaper flyers: the *Norwalk Chamber Business Connections* not only gets mailed directly to each Chamber member and other City Officials, but it is also delivered directly to over 22,000 residents here in Norwalk. Check out pricing on flyer inserts in this paper, it can be very cost effective.

•Email Blast: As a Chamber member you receive free quarterly email blast. Do you have a special coming up for your business, or an event? Let us know!

•Business Resource Center: The Chambers Business Resource Center is a

place for you to have your business cards, flyers and brochures and other business material. Visitors to the Chamber will pick up these materials and they will be mailed out in our visitors packages.

•Networking Events: Take advantage of our monthly networking luncheons taking place at various Chamber restaurants on the last Tuesday of each month. Also look for additional networking opportunities at Chamber breakfasts, luncheons and mixers.

By visiting the Norwalk Chamber of Commerce website at www.norwalkchamber.com or finding us on Facebook http://on.fb.me/TK1cbL you can find out all of the happenings with the Norwalk Chamber!

MEMBERSHIP SERVICES DIRECTOR CAREN SPILSBURY

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- ◆ 22,000 Distribution

AMBASSADORS CORNER

The Norwalk Chamber Ambassadors held their monthly meeting in conjunction with our “Lunch Mob” at Leche Café & Bookstore here on Norwalk. Each month we visit a different member’s restaurant on the last Tuesday of the month for networking and the Ambassador Meeting. Leche Café is a newer member to the Chamber, but already a hub of activity here in Norwalk. Not only do they serve great food, but their bookstore has a great selection of new and used books that are favorably priced for anyone’s budget. Leche Café has hosted art shows, open mike comedy nights and many more events since they have opened their doors for business. Attending this month’s networking luncheon were Norwalk Chamber President Toni Grijalva, Cerritos College, new member Ruth Nunez, Kinde-Topia Family Day Care, and guest Melissa Enriquez of Primerica and Norwalk City Councilmember Cheri Kelley. Also present were Chamber Board Members Karla Butler of Thompson Bookkeeping, Joe Derthick, AFLAC, and Gary Murphy, Norwalk Florist, Ambassadors Teri Bazen, Norwalk La Mirada Plumbing, Craig Wicks, Budget Car Sales, Virginia Zuno, DoubleTree by Hilton, Norwalk Los Angeles. Chamber members present were Helpline Youth Counseling, Leche Café & Bookstore and SELACO Workforce Investment Board.



Norwalk Chamber visits Leche Café, pictured here are Maurina Cintron & Steve Mona, Helpline Youth Counseling, Joe Derthick AFLAC, Virginia Zuno, Norwalk DoubleTree Hotel, Joel Reynosa, Helpline Youth Counseling, Toni Grijalva, Cerritos College, Gary Murphy, Norwalk Florist, Karla Butler, Thompson Bookkeeping, Larry Lee, SELACO WIB, Craig Wicks, Budget Car Sales, Norwalk Chamber Executive Director and Teri Bazen, Norwalk La Mirada Plumbing.

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"Business Connections"

This is what we hear from our members asking us to introduce them to new business leads. Potential members ask how many connections they can make through the Chamber. We are also looked to as a source when locals and visitors come in looking for connections in the community.

Making Business Connections is more than networking or mixing – it's about forming genuine and sustainable connections with business leads. You never know who may be sitting next to you at our monthly Business Connection Lunches or whom you will strike up a conversation with. They may be a future customer, business colleague, someone from the community or from a Non Profit Agency or Service Club. They may be real estate agent, child care provider, restaurant owner, manufacturer or supplier.

You never know what doors may open through a simple "hello" and a handshake when two like-minded business people strike up a conversation. Join us each month, bring plenty of business cards. Give the person you meet two cards, one for them and one for them to pass onto another connection they may make that could use your product or services.

Our next luncheon is scheduled on Tuesday, July 29th at Applebee's Restaurant located at 12129 Imperial Hwy. We meet in the parking lot by 11:45 am and enter together. This connects our Chamber Members with our member restaurants each month, to enjoy good food, great talk and awesome people as we dine together. The Chamber Ambassadors meet after the luncheon and you are welcome to stay. See you there.

-Vivian Hansen

LEGISLATIVE CORNER



Split Roll Parcel Tax Dies in Assembly Committee

Would Have Increased Business, Consumer Costs

An opposition effort headed by the California Chamber of Commerce has killed a legislative proposal that would have allowed school districts to create a split roll at the local level with regard to parcel taxes.

SB 1021 (Wolk; D-Davis), identified by the CalChamber as a "job killer," sought to allow a school district to impose a parcel tax on property used for commercial purposes as opposed to residential properties.

Unfair, Discriminatory
"The Assembly Revenue and Taxation Committee did the right thing by rejecting an unfair, discriminatory split roll bill that would have raised rents and costs for all businesses, especially small businesses," said CalChamber President and

CEO Allan Zaremberg. "The committee turned back an assault on California's historic commitment to uniformity and fairness in property taxation."

"Policy makers understood the flaws in this proposal and its potential to kill jobs," said CalChamber Policy Advocate Jennifer Barrera. "The increased costs faced by commercial property owners under SB 1021 would have been passed along to consumers or resulted in hiring reductions or cuts to benefits for workers in local communities."

Similarly, the bill would have allowed a school district to impose a parcel tax solely on properties that exceed a certain square footage so as to only include commercial property and exclude residential property for higher tax rates.

SB 1021 sought to redefine the term "special taxes that apply uniformly" to mean special taxes that may be applied discriminatorily and unfairly.

Layers of Taxes
Nothing in SB 1021 would have prevented the school district from imposing both a parcel tax based upon use as well as a parcel tax based upon square footage, thereby allowing a district to impose layers of taxes against commercial versus residential property.

The likelihood of a school district imposing discriminatory parcel taxes is evidenced by the

recent case of Borikas v. Alameda Unified School District, in which the Alameda School District's Measure H that sought to tax residential and commercial/industrial properties differently was deemed unlawful.

Moreover, the most recent amendments to SB 1021 confirmed concerns regarding disproportionate parcel taxes. The amendments specified that a parcel tax on commercial or industry property cannot be more than two times a parcel tax imposed on residential property.

The risk of multiple, nonuniform, targeted taxes against unpopular taxpayers was exacerbated by the provision of SB 1021 that allowed the district to treat multiple parcels the same if the parcels were contiguous or owned by the same owner(s). Under this provision, a school district could have aggregated multiple, smaller parcels owned by one owner to capture all of the properties under a square footage parcel tax.

Key Vote
Assembly Revenue and Taxation rejected SB 1021 on a vote of 1-3:

Aye: Ting (D-San Francisco).
Noes: Harkey (R-Dana Point); B. Gaines (Rocklin), Dahle (R-Bieber).

Not Voting: Bocanegra (D-Pacoima), Bloom (D-Santa Monica), Gordon (D-Menlo Park), Pan (D-Sacramento), V.M. Pérez (D-Coachella),

BEST BUSINESS PRACTICES

Are You Ready to Get Government Contracts?

Marketing your products or services to the federal government could be a gold mine for your business-as long as you're prepared for all it entails. Before you start, ask yourself:

• **Am I committed?**
Landing government contracts takes time. You will deal with red tape, dozens of procurement offices and multi-year sales cycles.

• **Can I handle the business?** Have a strong team in place and procedures, suppliers

and systems that can ramp up quickly to handle the demands of the federal government. There are no second chances, so make sure you're ready to do it right the first time.

• **Am I adequately capitalized?** Government agencies can be slow to pay, so make sure you have the cash flow to deliver your products and services without getting paid. Plan ahead and have financing in place if needed.

• **Am I proactive?** Don't sit back and expect government purchasing agents to come to you. Like any other industry, federal contracting success

requires actively marketing your business.

Visit the SBA's website at: <http://www.sba.gov> to learn how to register in government databases and learn where to find out about open contracts.

The SBDC is a group of successful small business owners helping fellow entrepreneurs start, sustain, and grow their business through low-cost workshops and free one-on-one consulting in business planning, finance, marketing, and various other specialty areas (Spanish speaking consultants available). To make an appointment call: (562) 938-5100, or email: sbdcinfo@lbcc.edu

Mid-Year Labor Law Update: July 1 Marks Minimum Wage Hike, More New Laws

Several laws that were signed last year will take effect on July 1, including the upcoming minimum wage increase. Employers should take note of the laws below and revise existing business practices accordingly.

Minimum Wage
On July 1, 2014, California's minimum wage increases to \$9 per hour from the existing minimum wage of \$8 per hour. This is the first increase to the state minimum wage since January 1, 2008. The minimum wage will increase a second time to \$10 per hour on January 1, 2016.

Employers should examine all pay practices that might be affected by the minimum wage increase. The minimum wage increase affects several employer practices, including:

- Overtime rates of pay;
- Exempt/nonexempt classification. The minimum salary requirement for administrative, professional and executive exemptions increases to \$3,120 per month;
- Meal and lodging credits;
- Piece-rate pay. Employers must ensure that piece-rate employees receive the minimum wage for each hour worked;
- Draws against future commissions, which must be equal to at least the minimum wage and overtime due to the employee for each pay period (unless the employee is exempt);
- Tools and equipment. Only employees whose wages are at least two times the minimum wage can be required to provide and maintain hand tools and equipment customarily required by the trade or craft in which they work; and
- The subminimum wage rate.

Notice Requirements
Employers will need to make certain to comply with all notice requirements that are affected by the minimum wage increase.

California's official Minimum Wage Order (MW-2014) in a conspicuous location frequented by employees. The Department of Industrial Relations (DIR) updated the official notice, which now includes both the July increase and the second increase for January 1, 2016.

• Second, the DIR recently revised all 17 industry Wage Orders. The DIR amended sections 4(A) and 10(C) in orders No. 1 through No. 15, and sections 4(A) and 9(C) in order No. 16. Employers are required to post a copy of the industry Wage Order that applies to their business in a place where employees can read it easily. Use the correct industry Wage Order(s), which now bear a revision date of "07/2014."

• Third, California employers must provide each employee with written, itemized wage statements at the time wages are paid. The wage statements must reflect all applicable hourly rates in effect during the pay period (Labor Code Section 226).

Paid Family Leave Benefits
Effective July 1, SB 770 expands Paid Family Leave (PFL) wage-replacement benefits for employees to include benefits for time taken off to care for a seriously ill grandparent, grandchild, sibling or parent-in-law.

PFL does not create the right to a leave of absence, but provides California workers with some financial compensation/wage replacement during a qualifying absence.

Background Checks
Effective July 1, AB 218 prohibits a state or local agency from asking an applicant to disclose information regarding a criminal conviction until after the agency determines the applicant meets minimum employment qualifications. There are specified exceptions, such as when a criminal history background check is otherwise required by

law for the position.

At the local level, San Francisco's Fair Chance Ordinance takes effect August 13, 2014. This ordinance limits the use of criminal history information by San Francisco employers and also requires employers to post a new notice.

Workers' Compensation Predisignation of Physician

Workers' compensation regulations concerning predisignation of personal physicians also take effect July 1. According to the DIR, the final regulations change the criteria that an employee must meet to predisignate a personal physician or medical group for work-related injuries or illnesses to conform to SB 863 (which was passed in 2012).

DIR also revised the forms used for predisignating a personal physician or a personal chiropractor and the time of hire pamphlet.

Work Sharing Plans

The California Employment Development Department (EDD) uses a special work sharing program to help companies avoid mass layoffs by sharing the available work among employees. AB 1392 changes the requirements for those work sharing plans that take effect on or after July 1, 2014.

The EDD's director still must approve plans. For more information about the work sharing program, visit EDD's work sharing webpage at: http://www.edd.ca.gov/Unemployment/Work_Sharing_Program.htm

Best Practices

- Review your policies and practices to ensure compliance with legal updates.
- Make certain that you update your posters and pamphlets.

LABOR LAW CORNER

Can Employers Prohibit E-Cigarettes in the Workplace?

By: Sunny Lee, HR Advisor

Question: We are getting complaints from employees who are objecting to vapor cigarettes at work. Is there anything we can do?

Yes, an employer has the right to adopt a policy governing its own worksite that prohibits or restricts the use of electronic cigarettes (e-cigarettes) at work in the same manner as regular cigarettes.

Labor Code Section 6404.5 applies to California employers of five or more employees and prohibits smoking of tobacco products in the workplace. When that law went into effect on January 1, 1995, e-cigarettes were not in existence.

Until the courts, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the Legislature act on regulating e-cigarettes, it is best not to tell employees that state law prohibits e-cigarettes in the workplace, but rather to develop and communicate to employees your own company policy on the use of e-cigarettes in the workplace.

Outdoor Areas

Outdoor areas over which an employer has control—such

as patios, parking lots, walkways, etc.—also may be included. If it is a public sidewalk or parking lot, however, and you do not own the property, then you would need to check to see if there is a local ordinance that restricts the use of e-cigarettes in outside areas.

California cities can enact local ordinances that ban electronic cigarettes in parks, restaurants and other places where cigarettes are banned—so be sure you know the rule in your city.

Pending State/Federal Action

At the state level the issue is yet to be addressed. SB 648, introduced in the state Legislature in 2013, would prohibit the use of e-cigarettes in the workplace. That bill has passed the Senate and is awaiting action in the Assembly. Currently the FDA has not regulated e-cigarettes, but is looking into the issue.

Health Issues

While an employee may say that he/she should not be prohibited from using e-cigarettes at work because they do not cause health issues, currently there is not enough information available to assess the health risks to persons exposed to vapor.

Further, all employers in California have the obligation

to provide a safe and healthy workplace for all employees. If you have no company policy restricting smoking of e-cigarettes at work and the employee feels that it is a health issue to be exposed to the vapor, then it is best to work with legal counsel to determine the most appropriate accommodation, particularly if the request is supported by a medical note or doctor's certification.

As an employer, you may restrict the use of e-cigarettes in the workplace to ensure other employees are not affected.

Although indoor break areas might be considered, this is not the best choice, as all employees should have access to a break area that is comfortable for their use. Outdoor break areas that employers have set up in response to employees who want to smoke cigarettes at work may be a choice to consider.

The Labor Law Helpline is a service to California Chamber of Commerce preferred and executive members. For expert explanations of labor laws and Cal/OSHA regulations, not legal counsel for specific situations, call (800) 348-2262 or submit your question at www.hrcalifornia.com.

June 11th	What Every Home Buyer Should Know...
July 8th	After Hour Golfing
August 13th	Cyber Liability
September 10th	Meeting Your Workforce Needs
October 15th	"The Heels Have It" Luncheon
November 12th	Vendor Share Night
December 3rd	Holiday Boutique

Greater Lakewood Chamber of Commerce & Norwalk Chamber of Commerce ~ Women in Business Council
"Encouraging and Supporting Women in Business" Norwalk Chamber of Commerce

Want to Boost Your Companies Exposure?

Like Us on Facebook

www.facebook.com/Norwalk Chamber

Remember if they're looking at the Chamber they're looking at you!

~Like Us and We will Like you Back~

DIGITAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY

A Quick-Start Guide for Small Businesses

BY MELINDA EMERSON

While the statistics vary from one small business expert to another, one fact remains: a lot of small businesses fail due to poor marketing strategy. Sometimes it's because they're not marketing at all, and other times it's due to an uneven balance among different marketing tactics.

My philosophy when it comes to marketing, especially digital marketing, is that you need equal amounts of effort in three key areas. I call it **SmallBizLady's Three-Legged Stool Approach**. Ready for it? Here are the areas that need your attention:

1. Your website
2. Your social media channels
3. Your email campaigns

Just like a three-legged stool, if one of these is out of whack, the whole thing tumbles over. Let's dive into each area to get you stabilized in your marketing.

Step 1: Make Sure Your Website Speaks to Your Target Customer

When I look at some small business websites, it's unclear who their target market is. When I ask a client who their target is, here's an answer that makes me absolutely cringe:

We cater to everyone!

I'm sorry, if everyone can use your product or service, no one will. The more zeroed in you are with your marketing message, the more customers you'll find. Yes, it's counterintuitive that the fewer people you target, the more money you make, but

being a niche business is where the money is, and it's been proven again and again.

So take another look at the copy on your website. Does it speak to that tiny fraction of the population? Does it make them say, "Hey, their talking to me! They gets me!"

If not, start over with a detailed customer profile and then develop website copy that speaks to her or him. Make every person that visits your site feel like you're talking directly to them. Use keywords that will help the right people find you from search engines. Then reread that copy and make sure it flows well and makes sense.

Step 2: Get a Consistent Plan for Your Social Media

If only we could set up our Twitter, Facebook, Google +, or LinkedIn profiles and forget about them. You need to use the right social media network to drive traffic to your website. You do not need to do them all; just do one really well. Pick the one social site where your best target customer spends most of their time online. It takes a lot of work to develop a presence, build your following, and then maintain that connection with potential customers. There's no overnight success here.

You'll get best results if you vary your social content:

- Share your blog posts, as well as that of others, that is relevant to your audience
- Ask questions to engage your followers in conversation
- Participate in ongoing discussions to build relationships
- Share tips and insights to establish your own thought leadership
- Throw in something

personal to show you're not a tweetbot!

I don't know about you, but I don't have time to sit on Twitter all day, so I take advantage of tools like SproutSocial and HootSuite that let me schedule social updates across all my profiles. That way, I may actually be speaking at a conference, but as far as my followers know, I'm right there, providing value in my social stream.

Also, for social to work for you, you have to pay attention to results. Measure which of your updates are getting clicked on, and which led people back to your site. You can do this with social media dashboards and Google Analytics.

Step 3: Stay in Front of Your Customers Through Email

The final leg of your stool is email. We've come a long way since "customized email" meant you could put "Dear {Firstname}" at the start of your newsletter. Now we've got the tools to customize even further, delivering the kinds of content and product information each individual subscriber cares about.

So if you sell women's clothes and you have a customer on your list who frequently buys Petite clothing, she certainly isn't interested in getting your Tall Ladies' newsletter. Even with this tiny piece of information, you can tailor what she receives, increasing the chance of her buying from you again.

Keep your email newsletters informative and not high pressure sales. They should include articles, tips or videos that your subscribers can benefit from. If you have sales and promotions, send those out as separate emails a few times a month. Again, monitor your open rate so you know what's working and can do more of it.

With the proper balance of what's on your website, your social media profiles, and your email efforts, you can stay in front of customers when they're ready to buy.

THINK ONLY LARGE EMPLOYERS CAN ATTRACT THE BEST WORKERS? YOU'RE WRONG

AUTHOR: SCOTT FERGUSON

Your business is only as good as the people running it—namely, your employees. So naturally you want the most talented people on your team. While there are plenty of job seekers out there, you may have to compete for the best, because the excellent candidates are in demand. That means taking a multi-faceted approach to hiring employees and maintaining a strategic, long-term view of the job recruitment process. You'll need to balance passive recruiting, such as posting jobs on your website and job boards, with active recruiting, including using headhunters, leveraging social media, working professional groups, incentivizing referrals, raiding the competition, and sweetening the pot with sign-on bonuses and competitive compensation packages.

Casting a Nationwide Job Net

The broader your recruiting reach, the greater your chance of finding ideal candidates. Fortunately, there are many tools to help you search nationwide.

Job boards

Job boards are websites where you can post your open positions. Typically, you would pay a fee to have your jobs listed. Monster.com and CareerBuilder.com are two of the biggest general job boards. Niche-oriented boards focus on a particular industry, such as technology, healthcare, or legal services, or specific job categories, such as entry level, temp jobs, or executive positions.

Job search engines

Job search engines aggregate job listings from many different boards and employer websites. Because they compile from multiple sources, search engines may have millions of listings. Like job boards, there are niche job search engines that limit searches to specific industries or careers.

Social networks

A recent study by recruiting technology provider Jobvite found that 94 percent of recruiters use or plan to use social media to hire new employees. LinkedIn, which has become a personalized job board, is the most widely used network, followed closely by Facebook and Twitter. Hiring managers use social networks to get a sense of a candidate's personality and cultural appropriateness, and to confirm facts stated on resumes and in interviews.

Professional groups

You may already belong to several professional associations related to your field. These groups can be a good way to meet people with the specific skills you're after. Attend meetings, read the publications and newsletters, make note of people who are accomplishing things and who look like good candidates. If you stay involved with the group's activities and establish visibility, you will have more credibility when you reach out to people with job offers.

Referrals

Large firms are finding that it saves money and time when their own employees refer people for jobs. An analysis done by Ernst & Young found that referred hires perform better, stay longer, and are quicker to integrate into company teams.

Consider rewarding employees for making good referrals. According to the Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM), 50 percent of employers offer a formal employee referral program. To help maintain engagement and interest, create a program that recognizes and rewards referrals at several levels, such as a quality referral (even if it does not result in a hire), or a referral that results in a hire within a specified time frame. Incentives can be cash (\$1,000–\$2,500 is a common range according to WorldatWork.org), gift certificates, trips, or meals.

Job fairs

Like job boards, job fairs can be large generic events with many different industries and businesses on the floor, or more focused niche gatherings. A job fair requires a lot of your time to man a booth and may not be the most efficient way to meet candidates. But if the fair is local, it could be a good way to meet prospects in your immediate geographical area.

Newspapers

Newspaper circulation is dwindling across the country, but many businesses still place help wanted ads in their local paper for a targeted approach to finding candidates. Many large newspapers have significant online resources with robust site search functionality.

Walk-in applications

If you run a storefront-type retail business, you might go the old-fashioned route and put a help wanted sign in the window. You never know, the ideal candidate may one of your customers walking through the door.

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