

Issue 20 £3.99

March 2019

Steer

STEER YOUR BUSINESS | THE MAGAZINE



**ADM Computing
drives zero emission**

Warren Dunham

**How to respond to
bad online reviews**

Ray St.Clair

**Art of sourcing
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Editor's Review

Welcome to the March issue. We've had some amazing feedback from contributors to the magazine including from Tulio Burrios in Chile who was a contributor in January. Tulio commented "I was pleased to realise that you published my article about education. Thank you very much. Your January issue is outstanding, both in design and content. I also value your comments in the editor's review. I have to tell you that my librería also loved the magazine. Congratulations, you are doing a very fine work."

It's very exciting when you realise that what you are doing is recognised around the world – and that also means that anyone contributing, or advertising is out there too. It's a form of networking which benefits all of us so please continue to be part of this amazing journey.

This month we have some fabulous articles yet again. Nicola Coppen explains why we are all project managers even without realising it sometimes when we organise events, and projects within our daily lives. A professional project manager however is a critical resource when planning something on a bigger scale in a business environment. What does "business casual" mean to you? Olwen Shaw talks us through what business casual means and how we can achieve the look we want.

Have you given any thought to your carbon footprint and how you can improve it in your business without reducing the impact on your customers? ADM have been working to improve theirs by moving to electric cars which still enable them to travel about to meet customers but in a more environmentally friendly way. Their article gives us all plenty to think about.

Does Google like your website? That is a leading question and Amy McManus gives us a run through what Google look for. This is a great resource to check that we are making our websites as Google-friendly as possible and get found by anyone looking for our services.

There are too many articles to mention them all individually but yet again, we have quite an eclectic mix of subjects, businesses and people who have something to offer to the wider business community.

Have a great month, keep in touch via social media or email us if you'd like to contribute or advertise and we'll catch up again in April.



Sally Marshall

Sally

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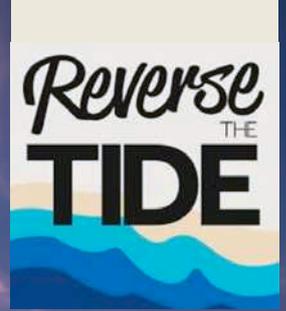
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Editor: Sally Marshall | Design & Layout: GraphicKat Uk Ltd | Print: Parkers Design & Print

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Subscription:

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News From the Beach!

I've been talking to lots of businesses over the past few weeks with varying challenges. Some are small businesses and haven't quite worked out whether they want to enjoy their hobby or be seen as a serious business. It's an interesting question and comes back to the basic point of where you see yourself in one, three- and five-years' time. What is your vision?

When I thought about this question a couple of years ago, I said that I wanted to wake up with a view of the sea - which I now have in Whitstable - and that I wanted a business which I could run from a coffee shop anywhere in the world. I now have that too just about. I teach some courses face to face but the majority of my clients will soon be online, making good use of the technology which we all have but don't use to its full capacity. When I said what my vision was initially, I had no idea how I would achieve it but by evaluating opportunities as they arise, I've chosen the ones which take me in the direction that I want to go to achieve my vision.

Once you know this, you can work out your goal funnel, your strategy and what you need to do in order to achieve your vision. When you put all this together, you have a business plan.

Another part of your business plan should be some competitor analysis. What are others in your sector doing? Why would potential customers choose you rather than them? Part of the answer to that is you. People buy from people they know, like and trust. Are you visible so that people get to know you as a person? Being on social media, speaking at events and attending

networking meetings will all help with your visibility.

Competition is a good thing and not something you should worry about. Your strategy however should include having something that makes you different, makes you stand out from the crowd. Have a look at what you offer, whether it be a product or service, and see where you can add value. Adding value doesn't necessarily mean that it costs more but that your clients feel that they are getting more, whether that's something simple like arriving on time or something like a loyalty card with a discount after a given number of purchases. Tradesmen in particular have a bad reputation for being late so if you're always on time, people would definitely be loyal - as long as you do what you say!

Most business owners have similar challenges when you look across the board. The key is to look closely at what you're doing, and work ON your business rather than IN your business. If the systems and processes that you have in place are not delivering the result that you want, then it's time to change things and get a different result.

If you'd like to see how I can help you, please visit my website and book a call with me.



Sally Marshall



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Are you still there caller

In the last two articles we briefly looked at the technology, features and costs of telecom solutions, but there is a far more important element to the equation which is just how you use these. What follows is a brief rehearsal of some of the thought processes we use to set up effective call flows and associated call handling, which I hope will be of use to you in your own situation, whatever system you have in place.

So let's start with the basics. Good call handling gets every call to the best person every time. Simple enough, but let's look at that last bit; "best person". This should perhaps be "best available person". However, to know that we need to identify who is calling and what they want or need. Then we can see who would be best, whether they are available and if not whether the next best person is available and so on until, eventually, a phone rings. All of this of course has to happen within seconds because we all know that, whilst we ourselves are paragons of patience, people calling us probably (definitely!) are not.

This then breaks down into a few logical questions, the first of which is how do we know who is calling and/or what they want? There are several ways we can address this and these can be combined to create extraordinarily accurate routing. Firstly there is the Caller ID or number the caller is calling from. Most lines carry this and present it to the telephone system or hosted exchange. This can be used to identify a caller from a database just as we see daily on our mobile phones. Depending upon the sophistication of your set-up (phone system and database) this will also identify the caller type as in customer or prospect or bad debt. If this is known then the call can be routed to the accounts/sales/support team.

Secondly there is the number the caller used to dial in. DDI (or DID) numbers are very inexpensive and assigning a different number for functions such as sales, service or accounts can immediately identify the type of call, whoever is dialling. DDI's can also be assigned to adver-



tising or marketing campaigns too which facilitates the assessment of leads generated. Sounds obvious doesn't it but it's rarely used.

Now we come to the obvious idea which is to get the caller to route their own call, or the infamous IVR or Auto-attendant. I remember these being first launched and they rightly have an infamy beyond belief but in truth if they are set up correctly (BIG IF I know...) they can be very useful. We always recommend finding someone enthusiastic and cheerful to record the messages (actually that often means we do it!). Have as few options as possible, definitely no more than two layers and always always always offer an escape button either to go up a level or to go to reception. Not everyone will use automation so do not force them. That said if the set-up is right, the voice is good and there is an escape button very many will do and this is a good thing.

So now we know who is calling and what they want we can get creative with the destination. Obvious solutions are to group accounts, sales, support and senior management staff together and apply a ring strategy ranging from "every phone rings until answered" through a round robin or "person who has had longest without a call". Some calls may be considered sufficiently important that the group can overflow to a bigger call group and so on until eventually there are so many handsets

ringing it has to be answered. Yet inevitably there will be times when there just isn't anyone to answer or the least experienced/skilled/appropriate person takes the call. There are simple solutions for this. If there is no one to take the call either, use a voicemail with a suitably worded greeting (we often end up doing these too!) or engage a decent quality Virtual Assistant or call answering service. The former can gather data, send out information, book appointments or process orders which prevents a build-up of these things in a pile of messages, so well worth the investment. Voicemails notoriously get forgotten or are not checked so use the feature in most systems to have an alert or even the recording itself emailed to the user. All the above are fairly commonplace, however, an alternative solution is to score each extension user against a set of skills. For example if it's telecom technical, solutions advice, problem solving or boating then I'm a 9. If it's administrative or accounts then a 1 is way too high! Once this exercise is done, it is pretty obvious that a question about invoicing is not well directed in my direction, yet if I am the only person then I will "do". Skills based routing or weighted routing of calls identifies the required destination or skill then seeks through the extensions with those skills until it finds the person with the highest score who is not already on a call or not logged in. This creates a dynamic response to calls and combined with strategies to identify the nature of the call means I can know that Mr Smith is calling in the sales queue to order kit. Add in one last tweak which is the ability of modern systems to interrogate databases and software packages and I can also know that he actually owes for four previous orders. Now that changes the conversation, possibly also the destination as there is no point in wasting a sales teams time, why not direct the call to credit control?

What I hope I have achieved with the above is open your eyes to what is available with a little attention to detail and some decent hardware or service provision. Your existing system in all probability can do most of these things already (I've delivered most of them with some very old systems for years!) but if it cannot or if your current supplier says not (not necessarily the same thing), then get in touch and I will give you an unbiased answer



James
Bulman



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or mobile: 07495758345 or
<https://www.mspphones.co.uk>



Live and let live in the Garden

The spring has sprung - the time of growing and multiplying. Fresh green leaves, flowers, birds and butterflies are with us again.

In my garden there is a patch of ground where Mother Nature reigns supreme and I only interfere in the early autumn when everything is cut down and raked away. In spring my mini-meadow is full of wild primroses and bluebells. After that, colourful aquilegias take over as the main performers. Many other wild plants have made their home there too. I had given some a helping hand by scattering seeds or planting. I pull out the occasional nasty weed but other than that, this is gardening at its laziest!

And the insects love it. Bees and bumble bees are regular visitors. Butterflies not so much because of the semi-shady location, what they need is a mini-meadow like this in a warm and sunny part of the garden. Could your garden accommodate that?

Birds are your friends in the garden, the small birds in particular like Dunnock, Blue Tit or Blackbird. They eat a lot of insects and Thrushes are very partial to snails. You can attract more birds to your garden by giving them somewhere to perch and build nests (in trees, shrubs, hedges), by growing berrying plants (e.g. Hawthorn, Pyracantha, Crab Apple) and providing water for them to drink and take a wash in. A pond would be ideal, but even a large saucer or a shallow bowl will help, provided the water is topped up regularly.

Did you know that it is a criminal offence in the UK to remove or deliberately destroy an active nest? This is a nest that is being built or has eggs or fledglings in it. We should not trim hedges during the peak nesting season from the beginning of March to the end of August unless we are sure there are no active nests hiding inside.

A few TOPICAL TIPS for spring.

Buying new plants

The garden centres are full to the brim, tempting us with

vast selections of perfect specimens. Before you buy, do read the plant label. It will tell you if the plant needs full sun, or boggy ground, or perhaps grows to 10 metres in 10 years. Only if you put the right plant in the right place has your perfect specimen a chance of staying that way.

Moss control

Moss can be beautiful and gardens have been made with moss in place of a grass lawn. However, if moss is your enemy, it can be controlled. Now is the time to apply moss-killer to lawns. If you use one based on iron sulphate, your lawn will turn black in 2-3 weeks. Then rake out the moss.

Alternatively, apply one of the new products containing special bacteria that promise to kill and break down the moss without the need for raking.

It must be stressed though, that the problem will return unless you address the underlying cause which may be bad drainage, too much shade or underfed grass.

A perfect lawn

Do you need one that is nothing but green? Or how about letting some of the so-called weeds stay? White clover and purple self-heal are both great nectar plants for butterflies and other pollinating insects. This could be your perfect lawn.

Feeding makes the lawn greener and thicker but also better able to fight off moss and the wear and tear. Now is the time to give your lawn the first feed of the season.



**Eva
Girling**



Eva Girling MSc (Hort) is a garden adviser and designer from Kent, UK. Contact her on: eva@gardenity.co.uk www.gardenity.co.uk

Art of Sourcing Venues

Are you someone who gets asked to find a venue for the all-important Summer BBQ, Christmas Party, Company meeting or conference?

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Does the "deal" seem expensive?

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ADM Computing Drives Zero Emission

By Warren Dunham



Established since 1984, ADM Computing are one of London & the South East's most trusted IT service partners. ADM deal with planning, implementing and supporting IT solutions, including:

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If you want to learn about their experience, they can be contacted at:

customerservices@adm-computing.co.uk

ADM Computing based in Canterbury have increased their fleet of zero emission vehicles.

ADM is one of the South East's largest IT support companies with staff visiting customers every day. David King, the QA Director, said "We are committed to ISO 14001 environmental targets to reduce ADM's carbon footprint. Our staff have to visit customers, it is the nature of our business, but we actively work to minimise the impact we have on the community we live and work in."

ADM recently replaced some diesels cars with the Nissan Leaf Tekna. Diesel vans are being replaced with the Renault Kangoo ZE as part of an ongoing program of improvement.

David King said, "we are especially interested in the replacement of another diesel with the Tesla Model 3 in 2019." Dave continued "Our colleagues must get to and from customers, fortunately there are an ever-increasing number of accessible charging points in Kent. ADM are adding more charging points at our Canterbury Head office."

Zero emission vehicles are part of a wider commitment to health and environmental issues at ADM. Staff are encouraged to cycle; Showers and changing facilities are provided. Electric bikes are supplied for shorter distances. Public transport and car share is encouraged by ADM for commuting.

ADM are willing to share their knowledge of using zero emission transport.



WHY

your business deserves so

much more

than a cool new logo

I opened the doors to Brandfunk to concentrate on helping SMEs reach their full potential with regards to understanding the fundamentals of good brand strategy and design.

After 25 years' experience in creative professions and working all over Europe, my passion for fresh and original creative solutions, combined with a level headed rational approach has helped many businesses stand out in their respective markets.

I am often asked about logo design and the client will have in mind something significant, usually in a very distinct colour shade (or two) and a symbolic image that means a lot to them. I understand that for most of us our business is very precious and handing over the creative reins can have you feeling like the horse will bolt and you'll be left with an empty stable!

I have observed the trend to DIY lately and for the aforementioned reason I completely get why it is so tempting to keep you're branding so close to your chest.

The abundance of software available to turn 'amateurs into pros' almost overnight is very tempting to avoid entrusting an outside agency with your brand story.

After all, we live in a world of technological advancement and informational 'how to's' at our finger tips. It is so appealing to not only give it a go but save some money in the process.

In fact, in a sense, I respect a business' can do attitude but find the lack of depth and clarity dedicated to the design process in such instances a sobering thought.

By attempting to create your brand identity yourself you risk missing key aspects such as strategy, the process and your messaging.

So let's stop you there...

Do you know who your customers are and what they need? Or do you simply think you know what they want?

A good design agency should consider aspects such as who your clients are and what their problem is in context to your business. They will incorporate many elements through various stages of the process to really hone in on the benefits of using your products and services and making sure the user experience is smooth and positively memorable.

Attracting and speaking to your ideal clients gives your business a head start amongst competitors that bring a generic, often diluted message and imagery to the table. The aim is to stand out despite offering similar or the same offerings to those within your market.

A good agency will take on board your mission, the desired customer journey, language, messaging and where you need to be positioned in your niche.

Put aside your preferences! We all lean towards colours and significance on a personal level, but focusing on you raises the question...

Is this about you or them?

Ultimately, your brand identity conveys a feeling that is multi-dimensional and emotion provoking. Something throwing up a quick logo just cannot give your business.



Emma White



Emma White can be contacted on:
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CYBER:

Reduce Risk, Increase Sleep

A few years ago I recognised a clear pattern of repetition when briefing CEOs, executives and business owners of different industries and of vastly different sizes. I received similar questions from a CEO whose organisation turned over £50Bn and from a family business owner whose turnover was £100,000. Despite the difference in size of their respective companies, both were deeply concerned about the risks from cyber-attack and wanted advice on what they should do to protect their business.

The idea of a cyber-attack on their business kept both of them up at night.

Cyber security is continually in the news with stories of big companies experiencing sophisticated attacks. Far less is reported about the vast numbers of SME businesses that are being affected. I meet many smaller businesses that have been defrauded for anywhere between £2,000 to £125,000 simply by paying invoices to the wrong bank account. It is especially saddening to know that almost every incident is completely avoidable.

No business should fear or suffer the impact of a cyber-attack and the majority can be prevented with

simple solutions which address all three aspects of cyber security: Technology, Policy and Process, and People. Most organisations are already aware of the need for up-to-date technology with the right security software installed.

If you don't already use a password manager, you should start today! (www.lastpass.com is highly recommended).

Some businesses implement sensible policies before, but most tend to implement these after a cybersecurity incident. Few of them address the third aspect: people. Technology will come and go (I still see the odd fax machine) but our staff are far more worthy of investment. The majority of cyber-attacks require human interaction at some point to be successful. Train your staff and they will become your first line of defence.

There are many different attack vectors for criminals, and the number of attacks that don't get reported is huge. Cyber security incidents are one of the top 3 risks to every business. Most businesses rely on email so heavily that the very thought of not being able to send or receive an email for 24 or 48 hours causes many CEOs to break into a cold sweat (even though most secretly welcome a bit of a break from email!).

‘Something has to change!’ I told myself



Everyone’s story is different. And sometimes you have to be realistic with what will work best. Running a business comes with its own challenges but I never envisaged they would be that difficult.

I was made redundant 6 months after returning to work following maternity leave. Although not planned, the second baby followed quickly. With the redundancy experience, the high cost of childcare and no external family support, I took the decision to start my own business in the industry I had worked in for many years - Health and Safety.

Safety Reign launched with the primary aim of being able to work while looking after our young family.

I know running a business can be challenging and there is an added pressure when you have a young family. What I didn’t predict were the numerous challenges along the way! From unfavourable networking times (making it difficult to take the children to and from school), the dreaded calls from the school, sometimes while I was in meetings about an hour’s drive away, that one or both children were unwell and needed to be picked up, and many other industry-specific issues made the situation even harder.

The setup was not right and I was failing in my effort to be a mumpreneur.

‘Something had to change!’ I told myself. In my quest for change I came across Smart Support, a business help that support you to find solutions. A critical look at my business made me reconsider the business and the family needs and why the business was failing.

I knew what my challenges were and I needed to find new ways of achieving my goal...and that was simply



to put Safety Reign on hold and drive forward a leisure pursuit I had already been nursing.

I am now a proud owner of ‘Sweet Wonders by Emefa’ (www.sweetwondersbyemefa.co.uk). We are based in Kent and we hand-make and supply elegant sweet treats for all occasions. We take the stress of providing sweet treats for parties away from our customers and in return provide them with sweet treats that will make their day or events the one to remember.

This new venture offers much more flexibility and allows me to meet my family needs more efficiently.



**Gloria
Madzi-
Sappah**



For more information about our offerings and services contact us on email:

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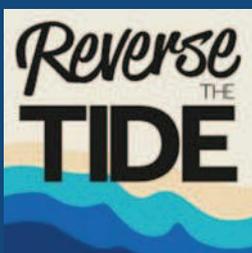
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Support for benefitting from change

My previous articles have covered ways in which you can benefit from change, firstly by understanding change and its effects, secondly by using some practical aids and thirdly by using some self-development tools. For many these will be sufficient to really gain some significant benefit from change and harness the positives. For some, however, it may be necessary to look for outside support in the form of motivational profiling and coaching.

Motivational profiling

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A

Theory of Human Motivation" and it is used to study how humans intrinsically partake in behavioural motivation. Your happiness and success at work is partly determined by whether or not your core 'Motivations' are being met. These Motivations are not a conscious decision, but rather emerge from your self-concept, beliefs, expectations and personality.

All organisations talk about motivation, however, most selection and development processes tend to focus on ability (competence / skills) and personality / preferences / personal style). By concentrating on these areas and



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sometimes 'later'
becomes 'never'*

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“The challenge is that without help, many of us would not necessarily know what our real talents are or understand how to maximise them”.

less on motivation, organisations ignore a fundamental aspect of performance. When ‘competent’ people do not perform as expected, it is usually a question of motivation.

The Work Interests Schedule (WIS) is a deceptively simple tool which looks at individual’s intrinsic motivation. Devised by John Hunt Emeritus Professor of London Business School the original tool was developed as part of his studies in the 1970s. Professor Hunt realised that there was no easily accessible questionnaire able to provide information on which factors most (and least) motivate people in their choice of work, jobs or challenges.

For individuals knowing and understanding what motivates you (and your work colleagues) can unlock potential and make you much more effective as a team member and as a leader.

Strengths based coaching

The aim of coaching is to develop a capacity to learn and find solutions that are ideal for the individual and the organisation. The outcome is that individuals are better able to grow and develop, lead and inspire their teams, to build closer relationships with their customers (both internal and external). In addition, they will gain a better understanding of their personal capabilities.

Such an approach highlights who you are at your best. Strengths are the result of your natural talents that you’ve built upon with skills, knowledge and experience. When you know your strengths, you get to see yourself from a powerful perspective that can catapult you forward no matter your current circumstances. When coaching occurs in this context, it can exponentially expand the value of your strengths.

The challenge is that without help, many of us would not necessarily know what our real talents are or understand how to maximise them.

The coaching can be face to face, telephone or web based, or a combination of all three depending upon location, time and work commitment.

Benefits:

- Cultivates a positive culture focused on talent discovery and strengths development
- Develops self-awareness and insights needed to achieve better performance and team working
- Promotes growth and top performance based on what each individual and team naturally does best
- Coaching directly related to workplace challenges and objectives so highly productive
- Applies to all individuals regardless of role
- Provides a common language and framework enabling individuals and teams to develop and perform better

A typical coaching programme will consist of 4 to 6 sessions lasting around an hour each over a period of 4 to 6 months. The sessions can be face to face, telephone or Skype, ideally with the first session being face to face.

The way a programme is set up makes a difference to the value achieved and most coaches will offer a 45-minute free telephone or Skype session to help you clarify what you want and determine what would be the best approach. They will discuss your key challenges and opportunities and discuss initial approaches and longer-term ideas.

Career coaching

If your change challenge is specifically about your career, then career coaching can help you identify the right role for you and then help you make the transition into your new role. Career coaching integrates career research and coaching psychology with current knowledge about the job market and particularly in organisational processes.

Career coaching can help if you are looking to:

- Improve your career progression with your current organisation
- Move into a new external role
- Explore your career options
- Change career direction
- Overcome a feeling of being “stuck” career-wise
- Position yourself for future opportunities
- Proactively manage career risks such as the threat of redundancy
- Realign your working life and personal priorities

Career coaching will typically take a similar course to strength-based coaching of 4 to 6 sessions, but, depending on your individual situation, may be less. If you are interested in talking about coaching support, please call me for a no-obligation discussion.



Phil Auden



Contact **Phil Auden** on Email:
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www.gainfromchange.co.uk

How to Respond to

BAD ONLINE REVIEWS



Every business is likely to receive the odd bad review - we just can't all be on our A-game all the time. A bad review can even be good for business, if the company responds appropriately and sprinkles a little marketing magic on it.

It may be hard to see it as such, but negative reviews can be a gift. For every customer who complains, 26 others remain silent. That means if a business gets a bad review, there could be dozens of other people who had the same experience and aren't saying anything.

Business owners crave feedback, so what could be better than receiving quick criticism from someone who has tried the business? Of course, there will always be trolls and people that are unpleasable. No matter how great you are doing, there will always be a few people who wish the soup was soupier, the rooms were roomier, or the cave was just slightly less cavernous. If you keep that in mind, negative reviews can start to feel a lot less like a kick in the gut, and a lot more like what they really are: a great source of feedback. That defensive feeling? Shake it off. The haters will hate. But, negative reviews can alert business owners to problems they didn't know about.

Here are a few things to remember when responding to negative reviews:

Take some time to respond.

Not a lot of time, you want people to be able to rely on your quick response, but make sure you don't react purely on emotion. It is hard not to take a bad review as a personal attack because business owners care so much about their company. While you want to ensure you don't let your emotions take charge, it's important to write with sincerity. Auto-responders can make the situation worse by sounding sarcastic or disingenuous (And cold and unfeeling).

Be kind and genuine.

While you are responding to a negative reviewer, your response should come across that way, remember that the audience is potentially much larger and far-

reaching. Not only will other people who visit the review site see the response, but it's possible those people could share the review and response with their own networks.

Be specific.

If a customer mentions something in particular about the business, use that in your reply. Not only does this demonstrate that you are not a robot, but it makes the complainant feel heard and understood and that, actually, you do care!

Remember that feedback and criticism can be helpful.

This reviewer has taken the time to invest in the business in an attempt to make it better - thank them (even if you don't agree with them) and if they left a particularly bad review you disarm them and may be able to win them back to your business or get them to amend your review by adding further, more positive, comments.

Business owners are always looking for a way to understand the customer experience, and there is no better way than a review. The reviewer may have a relevant point about the business, so it's important to consider the content without going on the defensive.

Offer to take the conversation offline.

You would never want to have a less than pleasant dialogue with an unhappy customer in a physical store with other customers around, would you? So why would you do it in front of many more watching eyes online?

Offering a phone number and a way to connect privately ensures the reviewer that you want to fix the situation for them, not just for the digital audience. Also, if you decide to offer a free or discounted service to make up for the bad experience, it's best not to do this in front of other customers and potential customers as this might encourage bad reviews to get free stuff. You know who loves free stuff? Me. And everyone else.



Do not ignore it.

Ever! Imagine a business's competitors were taking out ads saying how terrible they were and the business just chilled. The negative review may not be written by a competitor, but chances are, more relevant people will be reading the review than would be seeing an ad in traditional media. These people have already searched the business and are deciding on a purchasing decision. Make sure local businesses are part of the conversation going on about them, online, every single day.

Conclusion

Remember that the reviewer came to your business to give it a shot. Then they took some of their valuable time to offer feedback. It's possible to turn a naysayer into a brand ambassador. People are not looking for perfection (that's clear when we look at our elected politicians, isn't it?). And as Salvador Dali once said, "Have no fear of perfection - you'll never reach it." Consumers want to feel heard. They want to know a brand or local business is authentic. Learn to Love negative reviews and see them for the 'silver lined cloud' that they are.



Ray
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Contact Ray St.Clair, Managing Director
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Does Google like your website?

AM Marketing founder and Google certified expert Amy McManus takes us through Google's recent algorithm changes and how to make sure your website follows suit.

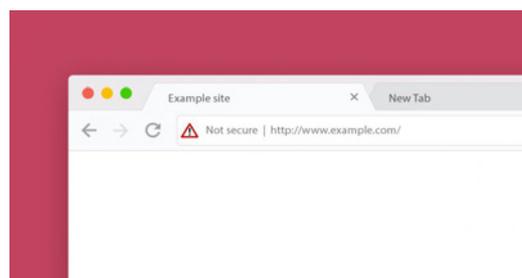
Every year Google change their algorithm around 500 times. For the most part these changes are small, but every so often there's a huge update that makes a big impact. These affect the way websites are ranked in search results and who makes it to the top of page 1 organically. Last year, Google moved the goalposts significantly and many websites found their tops spots had been lost overnight. In this handy guide, I'll be going through the 3 most significant Google updates from last year and how to ensure your website is up to date.

The User Experience

It used to be the case that if you built a website with perfect code, but a terrible user experience, it would still likely reach the top spots. This has now shifted to give priority to the user. Although it is still extremely important to ensure your site is made well and implements good SEO strategies, it is essential to ensure your website is user-friendly and accessible. Is your site easy to navigate? Is the user journey clear and comfortable to follow? Can you get to any page from any other page within 3 clicks? Does your website load quickly? Is it mobile-friendly? If you have answered no to any of these questions, your Google ranking could suffer.

Security and SSL Certificates

Last Spring there was a huge shift in the importance of website security. For Google Chrome users, have you noticed the 'Not Secure' note next to a website's URL? This means the website does not possess a SSL certificate. SSL Certificates are small data files that digitally bind an encryption key to an organisation's details. When installed on a website, it allows secure connections to a browser. They're very cheap to purchase (around £50 a year) and ensure your customers know your website is safe. You can tell if a website possesses a SSL certificate as its URL will read https:// rather than http:// Google will also notify you that the website is unsafe...not the best impression to give your customers!



Mobile-Friendly and Speedy!

How long does it take for your website to load? How long does it take when you're on your phone, in a coffee shop and not connected to Wi-Fi? The latter is the question you should be asking, as mobile-loading speed is the newest factor in for the Google algorithm. Your website must be classified as mobile-friendly AND load in under 5 seconds. With mobile traffic accounting for over 60% of visits on most websites, improving the user experience for your mobile customers is a necessity. If you find your website loads slowly, this can be due to large images, embedded videos, lack of code compression, redundant pages and a host of other website bad practices. If you want to find out if your site is mobile-friendly, simply use Google's free test: <https://search.google.com/test/mobile-friendly>



Amy
McManus



For more information and a FREE website check, you can get in touch at www.ammarketing.co.uk

Candid business advice for a New entrepreneur

I see time and time again, new entrepreneurs entering the business world and they've invested a huge amount of money in their new premises, branding, web site, business cards, etc, but there is one thing that they have spent very little time and investment on first..... themselves. Their self-care is never a priority and whilst they may have cash flow forecasts, marketing budgets, etc, they have never put any funds aside or budgeted towards to ensure that their health comes first. They have jumped fully into the business world without a parachute and any means of ensuring that their mental health is going to be able to survive the transition of an employed job to that of an entrepreneur. Being an entrepreneur can seriously mess with your head.

I should know.... I almost took my own life in 2014 following a mix of personal traumas/bereavements as well as struggling to get my business working and profitable, I found myself with huge debts very quickly.

A key time for those to jump into business is following a 'difficult' situation such as redundancy, divorce, hating a corporate job, etc as well as going through the menopause. Starting when confidence is a bit dented already, your body/life is in transition and it is clear now to see why I struggled. No part of me had appreciated that my business and my personal life were all one. You have to learn to value yourself and your self-worth. Your power and confidence is essential or else you will procrastinate and suffer from being overwhelmed.

Often new entrepreneurs are not planning their business properly and their vision past their first year. You need to have a plan for the next 10 years at least. Research shows that only 1 in 5 businesses make it past the first year mark and when you ask businesses who are finding it tough to stay open, it is usually finance related. Anything finance related, is always 'self-worth' related as the business you are creating comes from a vision in your mind. This is linked to your confidence and emotional baggage you are carrying, which is why business owners often can't sell themselves or the products/services they have invested in.

Invest in your confidence first by having some therapy and coaching, learn to stand in your power. Be wise and employ a business coach/mentor. Work on who you are and what gift you have to give to the world which you are passionate about, this needs to be at the heart of your business. The vision for your business incorporates your spiritual mission which is deeply embedded within you. It is essential that you know your-

self intimately first, before you invest your redundancy money, savings, etc into a business which may make you no money what so ever, unless you uncover the hidden gold within you which is your potential. Awaken the visionary within you.....



Liz Almond



Contact Liz Almond, The Mindset Shifter, Spiritual Business Coach/Mentor/Therapist - Insightful Minds

www.insightfulminds.co.uk
liz@insightfulminds.co.uk

Stepping Up and Unlocking Your Profit Potential

Are You Worth It?

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The VISIONary system. Be you, be true, be authentic!



The cost of believing everyone is a Project

In my opinion, it is true – everyone is a Project Manager. Whether it is organizing an event, buying and selling a house or even working out an itinerary for a holiday – you are a Project Manager. However, in business you might not be and I am not only saying that to protect my profession!

So what is a Project and what is, in terms of a career, a Project Manager?

According to the Oxford English Dictionary a Project is defined as ‘a piece of planned work or an activity that is finished over a period of time and intended to achieve a particular purpose’.

In careers, Projects can be all different sizes and timescales, but the main criteria for a project is that the ‘planned work or activity’ are not part of the organisations’ day to day operations. This is where a professional Project Manager is essential and the very reason why specialists are usually outsourced – like me, a Contractor brought in to lead and execute the Client’s requirements.

I am a collaborative Project Manager – the ‘figure-head’ of the defined project with the full responsibility for the delivery of the Client’s requirements, to time, budget and quality. As a ‘Figurehead’, I am not a specialist in every industry I have worked in, nor am I a Designer, Architect, Quantity Surveyor, Site Construction Manager or any of the many other disciplines making up a Project Team. What I am is someone who listens (you know, ‘the two ears, one mouth for a

reason’ meaning), evaluates options and evaluates the outcomes, to ensure the ship is steered in the direction of success.

In general terms, my qualifications in Project Management methodologies have provided me with the skills and knowledge of steering projects from pre-conception specification and ‘Business Case’ through to Feasibility, Construction, Commissioning, Completion and Handover; and my collaboration ensures that I constantly focus on the Client’s requirements and the Contract between the Client and the Delivery Contractor, able to spot potential challenges or indeed work with the Team to overcome them. It’s a people career, a process career and of course one with a requirement to prove how decisions have been made, finances spent and stakeholders kept informed. It’s the perfect career for me!

So, I think you can see it now...the Project Manager in ‘The Apprentice’ or you’re organising an event, that house sale or holiday doesn’t have all those steps! Which is very good because otherwise, you may never get to achieve those life choices.

It is the temporary state of a Project that leads many organisations to outsource Project Management and this has proven to be the success for many large businesses. A temporary team on a project, to focus and achieve an end goal that is not part of the Client’s ‘business as usual’ means there is no detraction from their business goals and requirements. In my career, I have been called in to help a company turn their project



Manager!

around after first believing internal staff could deliver a project in-house. The colleague involved ended up very unhappy and felt like a failure because he believed it should have been easy to deliver the project, but the costs were out of control. Hence, the title of this article 'The Cost of Believing everyone is a Project Manager'; not wanting to say it happens on every project, but the real quality of a Project Manager is to assess the costs and requirements for the Client. In some situations, the Delivery Contractor has cut costs to gain the contract for work, but is now looking for 'extras' to make up profit. The key is definitely in understanding what the situation is, whether there is an issue to solve, or whether the suggested change within the project is acceptable. In each of these instances and audit trail for the project is essential.

I believe that being a Project Manager is a fantastic career, if you are determined to learn then it really is a career with transferable skills, so you can change industry and keep your grey matter challenged!

The downside, well the minimum timescale of a Project I have undertaken is 6 months, with the longest being many years. As such, Project Management can feel like the achievement causes your downfall – a Project completes and you are no longer needed, 'out on your ear' needing the next break, but in terms of MY career, the fact I have been there until the end has been something to be proud of.

As Managing Director of Diligence (PM) Services Ltd, I have been involved in some pretty high profile projects

in southeast London and Kent, where we have enabled our Clients to deliver their Regulatory Body responsibilities through the provision of infrastructure. Examples include:

- Ebbsfleet Development Corporation, arms length body of Government. Utilities Project Manager (Project Value £275m.) My business cases include the £30m Electricity provision for the Ebbsfleet Valley – the first time the Government has invested in Infrastructure in this way. Something I am very proud of!
- UKPN high profile, London 2012 Olympics resilience project (Project Value £36m) 24/7 working and delivered in 6 months
- Thames Water on their TTQI project (Project Value £220m)
- UKPN Major Connections project for Crossness 33kV supply - Barking West to Abbey Wood (Project £12m)
- Harrods of Knightsbridge & Hyde Park Residents, Park Lane – Retail and Residential renovations (Projects from £100k through to £20m)

So now you know a little more about Projects and Project Management, but you are also now more aware of Diligence (PM) Services Ltd. So if you, or one of your contacts would like a proven Contract Project Manager, I hope you will be confident enough to signpost them to me – or should that be 'Steer' them in my direction?

Feel free to get in touch



Diligence

Specialist Infrastructure Project Managers



Nicola Coppen



Contact Nicola Coppen on
nicola@diligence-pm-services.co.uk
diligence-pm-services.co.uk or
07961 781981

ASICS London 10km – can you run for us?

*Did you set yourself the challenge of getting fit this year?
Have you decided to do more for charity?*

If you can say yes to either of these, why not join the ultimate foot tour of London. Run by Trafalgar Square, the Embankment, Big Ben and more on a hop-on-keep-hopping run tour. Flat and iconic, the classic course is ready for your best time and selfie. Sign up for the ASICS London 10km in July and run to raise money for our charity. We are Holding On Letting Go and we are based in Rochester but help families across the whole of Kent. The run is on Sunday 21st July and is a great day out.

We're looking for runners to wear our T-shirt and raise some money for us – which will go towards the monthly bereavement weekends we provide for bereaved children aged 6-16 across Kent.

In 2019 we have been able to plan a record 11 bereavement weekends this year, in Sittingbourne, Broadstairs and Wrotham. These are unique, specialist support weekends specifically for grieving children – there's nothing else like them around the county.

HOLG'S history

HOLG was founded in 1998 by a group of healthcare professionals who saw a gap in bereavement support for children. It's based in Rochester but helps children across Kent.

They started their own free service to make sure that children got the help they needed and began running weekend sessions – volunteering their time for the families who came. Their focus then, as it is today, was to give bereaved children a supportive and safe place to talk about their grief and find a way forward by holding onto precious memories and letting go of the sad ones.

Now, the two-day non-residential weekends are held 11 times a year and can support up to 25 children each time, plus a parent/carer group runs alongside to help those around the child with their grief too, because sometimes they are unable to help their children whilst they are bereaved.

Children can explore their feelings, talk about their loved one, meet other children, enjoy music and craft workshops and also create a memory box full of special things that remind them of their loved one.

Money raised from our runners will be used to support the children and their families so they, when they are ready, hold onto precious memories and let go of the sad ones.

Our support weekends also include arts and crafts, and music therapy sessions. We aim to provide children with a safe place to tell their story, share their feelings and ask their questions, giving them the coping strategies to move forward confidently in life.

Our support extends to the parents and carers of the children we support, with bespoke activities to help them through the grieving process.

CEO Caroline Ford said: "We'd love to hear from people who would like to run for us at this fantastic event. It's a great way to see the sights with no traffic to watch out for!

"It's a great event and whilst not everyone's a runner, myself included, this is a shorter run compared to a marathon and there might just be a few people out there who fancy a London run but don't want to do the 26 miles for the marathon – this could be a great alternative!

"And of course, raising money for us at the same time will really help us to provide the support we give to the children and families who come to us from across the county.

"There's also a lot of information on the event's website around training, eating and getting ready for the race too, so along with our support, our runners will be looked after!"



If you'd like to speak with Caroline about running for Holding On Letting Go, you can contact her on: **info@holg.org.uk | 03445 611 511**

Caroline Ford



WORKING HARD BUT NOT MAKING MONEY?

**Are you struggling to find time to do everything? You feel stuck?
Do you work IN your business not ON your business**

Whether you're a start up , in retail, transport, or manufacturing and any of the above sounds familiar, then the **Steer Your Business Programme** is the answer you've been looking for. Here are some key issues we cover...

Vision: The key to success: knowing where you want to be in 5 years' time. Do you know what you want from your business? Are you jumping from one idea to another? Are you following the shiny object time and time again?

Strategy: Have a Plan: How Are You Going To Get To Your Desired Goal? Do you have a plan for your business journey? Do you drift from one thing to another with no real focus on the outcome?

Systems & Processes: Having a Process for Everything Enables Your Business to Run Smoothly Are you offering the same service to every customer? Does everything you do look the same?

It's time to start your business improvement - TODAY!

Visit our website to find out more about the perfect programme for you and your business:

Web: <https://steeryourbusiness.com>

Email : connect@steeryourbusiness.com

Phone: 07771 714221



Events March

Company	Name	Date	Time	Location	Cost	To book your place
Omni Networking	Omni Sevenoaks	1st Mar	7.30 am-9.30am	7 Hotel Diner, London Rd, Polhill, Halstad, Kent TN14 7AA	£13	https://omnilocalbusinessnetworking.com/our-meetings/find-a-meeting/by-date/meetings/1402-sevenoaks-breakfast
BMIM Cashflow	How to make SMART money decisions... even if you are a non-finance CEO	1st Mar	9.45am - 12.00	City Business Library, Guidhall, London, EC2V 7HH	£50	https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/how-to-make-smart-money-decisionseven-if-you-are-a-non-finance-ceo-tickets-50849521287
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	After Hours Club	5th Mar	6pm-7.30pm	The Conningbrook Hotel, Canterbury Road, Ashford, TN24 9QR	Free	https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/events/after-hours-club-374/
Omni Networking	Omni Ashford	6th Mar	7.30am - 9.30am	The Flying Horse, Wye Rd, Boughton Aluph, TN25 4HH	£13	https://omnilocalbusinessnetworking.com/our-meetings/find-a-meeting/upcoming
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	After Hours Club	7th Mar	6pm-7.30pm	Bridgewood Manor Hotel, Nr Blue Bell Hill, Walderslade Woods, Chatham/Medway ME5 9AX	Free	https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/events/after-hours-club-386/
Omni Networking	Omni South Croydon	12th Mar	7.30-9.30am	The Coombe Lodge, 104 Coombe Rd, Croydon	£13	https://omnilocalbusinessnetworking.com/our-meetings/find-a-meeting/by-date/meetings/1430-south-croydon-
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	After Hours Club	12th Mar	6pm-7.30pm	Burlington Hotel, 3-5 Earls Ave, Folkestone, CT20 2HR	Free	https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/events/after-hours-club-352/
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	Coffee Connections	13th Mar	10.30am - 12.00pm	Hotel Campanile, Crossways Business Park, 1 Clipper Boulevard West Dartford, DA2 6QN	£8.50/ £12.50	https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/events/coffee-connections-good-things-happen-when-you-connect-over-coffee/
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	After Hours Club	14th Mar	6pm-7.30pm	KIMS Hospital, Newnham Ct Way, Weaving, Maidstone ME14 5FT	Free	https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/events/after-hours-club-386/
E-Training	Leadership vs Management	14th Mar	10am-12pm	Barham Business Park, Valley Rd, Barham CT4 6DQ		Kim.carter@etraining-uk.com 07760888498
Omni Networking	Omni Sevenoaks	15th Mar	7.30am-9.30am	7 Hotel Diner, London Rd, Polhill, Halstead, Kent TN14 7AA	£13	https://omnilocalbusinessnetworking.com/our-meetings/find-a-meeting/by-date/meetings/1458-sevenoaks-breakfast
The Business Terrace	Business Terrace Spring Networking	20th Mar	6.00pm-8.00pm	The Business Terrace, Maidstone Link, King Street, Maidstone, ME15 6IQ	Free	https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/business-terrace-spring-networking-tickets-54972491201?aff=ebdssbdestsearch
Kent Invicta Chamber of Commerce	After Hours Club	20th Mar	6pm-7.30pm	Abbotts Barton Hotel 36 New Dover Road Canterbury, CT1 3DU	Free	https://www.kentinvictachamber.co.uk/events/after-hours-club-314/
Ladies Who Latte	LWL Ashford	21st Mar	10am - 12pm	The Farriers Arms, Church Road, Ashford TN25 6NU	Free	https://www.facebook.com/groups/383353965115057/nikkiholy@aol.com
BMIM Cashflow	Cash Flow and Business Value: How to make more money		9.45am-12pm	Central Working Victoria, 25, Eccleston Place, SW1W 9NF	Free	https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/cash-flow-and-business-value-how-to-make-more-money-tickets-55445080729
Omni Networking	Omni South Croydon	26th Mar	7.30am-9.30am	The Coombe Lodge, 104 Coombe Rd, Croydon	£15	https://omnilocalbusinessnetworking.com/our-meetings/find-a-meeting/by-date/meetings/1430-south-croydon-breakfast
Metro Bank	Networking with FSB	27th Mar	6pm-7.30pm	Metro Bank, 10 Week St, Maidstone ME14 1RN	Free	
E-Training	Managing Change	28th Mar	10am - 12pm	Barham Business Park, Valley Road, Barham CT4 6DQ	Free	kim.carter@etraining-uk.com 07760 888498
ZC Social Media & Dragon CoWorking	Twitter for Business	28th Mar	4.30pm - 5.30pm	St. George Hotel, New Road Avenue, Rochester, ME4 6BB	Free	https://www.facebook.com/events/2127142340688401

Get Involved!

Steer Your Business loves to promote a variety of interesting businesses and individuals. An article in our magazine provides our readers with a far greater insight into your business than normal advertising alone.

Additionally, an article provides you the opportunity to shout from the roof tops about just how fantastic you are (something that we sometimes don't do enough of).

If you are interested in having an article with images published in a publication that has an international, business orientated readership with a call to action linking straight back to your website or email, then please get in contact at sally@steeryourbusiness.com

Steer Your Business is available in print and online, is distributed and publicised through social media and is owned by The Sally Marshall Group. We have some pretty impressive social media stats, with Sally Marshall's own Twitter feed reaching over 22k followers. We encourage retweets and shares across all of our social media platforms, enabling our publication and your words to reach even wider audiences thereby strengthening your business' social media presence.

Reaching far further than standard networking routes, you never know who will pick up your article and read it. From our experience, we find that contributors have increased their business as a result of publishing resonating articles.

For more information or to submit an article please email sally@steeryourbusiness.com.

Additionally, if you would like to invest in extra marketing, or don't fancy writing an article, we are able to advertise your business for a very reasonable and competitive rate. Regular adverts allow readers to remember and identify your business, meaning that your name will be at the front of their minds when they decide to make a purchase.

Please get in touch to discuss how we can help you to promote your business.

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followers

 Sally Marshall

7k
followers



ADVERTISING

Size	Ratecard		
	1-3 insertions	4-9 insertions	10-12+ insertions
Inside Front Cover	£350	£320	£300
Inside Back Cover	£350	£320	£300
Outside Back Cover	£450	£420	£400
Quarter page	£100	£90	£75
Half Page	£155	£130	£105
Full page	£265	£220	£180
Double Page Spread	£475	£390	£295



Get to know us...

Steer Your Business is a community to help businesses collaborate and engage with each other so that we all grow. It's based on the idea that we share information and promote each other and therefore all benefit from a much wider network than we can achieve on our own.

If you'd like to write an article or advertise in the magazine please email the editor,
info@steeryourbusiness.com
for more details