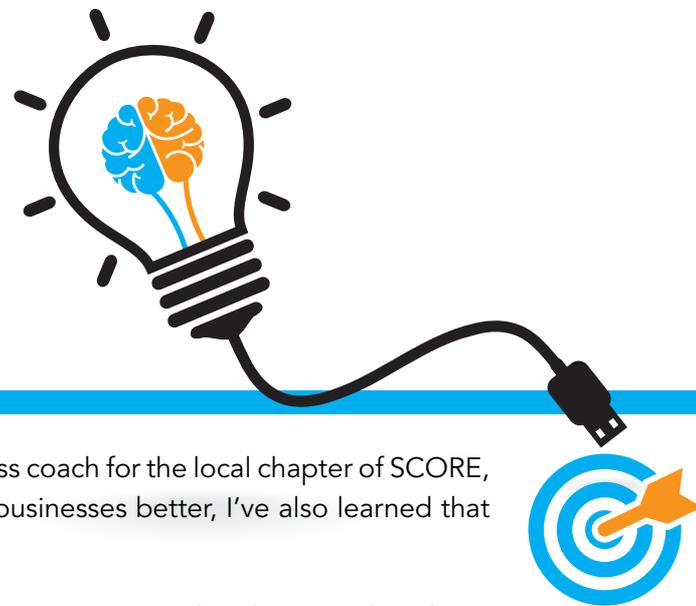


ADMITTING YOU NEED HELP IS THE FIRST STEP TO SUCCESS

By Matt Perosi



Many different entrepreneurs have been helped during my time as a volunteer business coach for the local chapter of SCORE, a division of the Small Business Administration. While I've helped them make their businesses better, I've also learned that most entrepreneurs share similar personality characteristics and practices.

Most entrepreneurs willingly accept the jobs of a salesperson, bookkeeper, manager, and marketing director to build their business. There are other similarities among those owners who have been wearing all those job hats for 20 years or more. While they have become very good at some back office duties required to make their business run, they also struggle to exceed more than \$750,000 in annual sales.

When it comes to traditional and out-of-home marketing, these same owners usually hire a local marketing agency to create and manage all their ads. On the other hand, these same owners choose to attempt website management and online marketing because something they saw online made them believe they could do it.

As a coach, it's my job to ask questions so the owners will understand different points of view and recognize effective methods. Anyone can learn the basics of online marketing, if they devote the necessary time. However, many small business owners simply do not have enough time to wear all their other job hats while still fully attempting online marketing.

When asked to name the obvious online marketing methods, most will list their own website, Google Search, and Facebook. Among the less obvious are ads within your favorite apps, other social media sites, YouTube, and local news websites. There are still many other ways to use the Internet for marketing, and many advertising platforms to deploy ads. It's virtually impossible for any one person to understand each advertising platform and how to apply it best for their business.

Internet marketing agencies usually have specifically trained employees for each marketing method, but no one knows how to do it all. Agencies spend a lot of money making sure their employees are continuously updated educationally with each advertising platform to stay in compliance with new policies and to correctly manage marketing budgets.

As a coach, I always try to convey the complexities and difficulty of Internet advertising in the hope small business owners will realize the futility of attempting online advertising without help. If an owner is willing to hire an agency to work on traditional marketing, they should also be amenable to hire an

agency for their Internet needs. Alternatively, a business can be equally successful if they hire talented in-house employees to manage their online marketing.

Small business owners across all industries, including retail jewelers, seem to share the same set of daily woes and time limitations. Many of the well established businesses I've helped are finding it difficult to keep up with the fast paced changes of online marketing. I've met many owners who bought into the belief that websites and Internet marketing will be easy to manage and will not be time consuming. Ads from GoDaddy, Shopify, Squarespace, Snap Retail, Wix, and many other providers all indicate in their advertising that anyone can do it. Yet I usually meet owners who started with the best of intentions but never had the time to finish. Their lackluster results led to disappointment and they eventually give up.

Entrepreneurs are very creative people, and what can be imagined as an online marketing campaign or website very seldom becomes reality when attempting it on their own. Even though I'm a skilled website professional, my own attempts never come out as well as when I'm working with my creative team. This is what I try to convey to my clients in the hope they will recognize how to correct their own online marketing problems.

My writing is focused on how jewelers can improve their online identity and how to use new technology. I hope you will use this article to reflect on your website. Is it doing what you want? Is it up-to date with the latest technology (scaling for example)? Ask yourself does your website look professional or does it look unprofessional and sloppy.

Each one of us needs to recognize when we've taken on too much, especially when it's outside your area of expertise. Ask for help. The Internet isn't as easy as you may think.



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Matthew Perosi reports the latest Internet trends and methods that are most relevant to the jewelry industry in his newsletters, videos, and blog available through jwag.biz. Tap into the more than 1,500 free newsletters to guide you towards better usage of websites, social, and mobile. Matthew invites your feedback and questions at matt@jwag.biz or 973.413.8211. Many questions from TRJ readers have turned into great newsletter topics.