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Creating a Good First Impression

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to this eBook on First Impressions. As the saying goes you only get one chance to make a good first impression so don't blow it!

Remember there is actually more to a first impression than just meeting someone for the first time. Keep the tips and pointers covered in this eBook in mind when creating anything new. This includes:

- ✓ New article or blog posts
- ✓ New comments on your social media pages
- ✓ Launching new products
- ✓ Sending out new emails and more….

As a business owner you never know who you are going to meet and when. This is exactly why you need to treat everything you do in your business with the anticipation of connecting with at least one new person. It is for this reason you will never cease working on how to improve your First Impressions.

Inside this book you will discover the important aspects of creating a good first impression for both an online business as well as for a traditional brick and mortar business. Today this is often referred to as an offline business.

Thank you for downloading, enjoy!

PART ONE - OFFLINE FIRST IMPRESSIONS

In this section we will discuss the important factors that you should take into consideration when introducing your offline business to potential customers and clients. Please note that the section for online businesses will apply as well, if you have or are considering setting up your own website. We highly recommend you do this as many people today turn to the internet when looking for information and resources locally. This could be a potential huge stream of traffic for your business which you don't want to overlook. Plus it could easily add to your bottom line.

Conducting Your Business in a Professional Manner

Regardless of your location you always want to be prepared for connecting with new prospects or customers. These people could be those that you meet at tradeshows and seminars or they might simply walk into your business off the street.

Being prepared means having your premises set up professionally, the reception area should be clean and inviting and there should be someone available to answer questions. While your business may not be large enough to warrant a full time receptionist try to have someone located as near to your main entrance as possible.

As well as presenting yourself in a professional manner you need to make use of professional tools. This includes having some form of voice mail or messaging service set up. If necessary you may need to set up a fax number and you definitely want to have a business email address.

BUSINESS TOOLS

There are several business tools that an offline business owner should incorporate into their business. This includes using Business Cards which display all your contact information. This information includes your business name along with your name, a formal business address, a fax number or service (if you use one), phone number, email address and your website.

Having some type of logo on your business card helps brand your business and serves to become your business identity. Plus you can use your cards as lead magnets when at marketing events. Always have them ready to handout as you never know where you might run into a potential new client or customer.

Take the time to set up a website along with a professional email address. You can find more information about creating a good first impression with your website in the next section of this eBook. Even an offline business can benefit from having a website as it allows you to get found on line and on sites like Google Places which will display a map of how to get to your business.

When you register your domain name you can also set up a business email address. For example your email address would look similar to:

yourbusinessname@dotcom

This looks more professional than just using a Gmail address, plus you can still forward your email to be delivered into your Gmail account. Just remember to go into your hosting account and periodically delete your stored emails, otherwise you may run out of space and find that your emails aren't being delivered.

Whether you intend to use business cards, flyers, brochures or posters in your business always keep in mind that these are some of the first things new people will notice. Any message that you are trying to convey should be meaningful, otherwise you can easily lose a large percentage of potential customers.

When reading any type of promotional material on or off line people will only read the first few lines of it. Marketers online know the term 'above the fold' and this should be applied to offline businesses as well. The first 2 inches of your advertising material is what will be noticed first. Make sure it attracts attention and using a photo or image helps pull people in.

Here's our recommended resources for getting business cards and other promotional material printed without breaking your budget. www.moo.com, www.vistaprint.com

STAYING IN TOUCH

Today being social in any type of business is important and this includes having both great customer service and a way to stay in touch with your customers. One easy way to manage this is by having a monthly Newsletter. You can advertise this on your website and at your physical location. When dealing with customers just mention that they may like to be added to your Newsletter. You could even offer a discount coupon for doing so.

By creating a newsletter you are building a mailing list and this is a highly important tool for any business. If you run a store for example, how many people come in and browse without purchasing anything? How are you going to stay in touch with them? Why not have a flyer with your newsletter details on it and mention that they will get a discount against their first purchase? You can easily set this up so that once a person is subscribed they are automatically emailed a discount code or coupon, this could be as simple as having to mention a word the next time they visit or getting them to print off a coupon.

Use this great tool to set up your own mailing list. **http://www.mailerlite.com/a/hpv175fdg0**

(Yes, this is an affiliate link, so if you use any of the paid versions, I might receive a small fee for providing this link to you.)

YOUR PHYSICAL LOCATION

Whether you rent or happen to own a physical location for your business the appearance of your building can definitely affect someone's first impression.

The basis of a first impression will affect how your relationship either grows or disappears. People today tend to make assumptions and decisions based on how your business looks before they even walk in the front door. Unfortunately once this first decision has been made it can be extremely difficult to change.

You always want to keep in mind that clients and customers are your income source. When they arrive at your location for the first time a dirty store front covered with trash, overfilled garbage cans or dirty windows does not help create a good first impression.

It is important to take the time to keep the front of your business looking neat. If you rent then talk with your landlord about ways to have the area cleaned more frequently.

Always try to think about what the image of your business implies to first time customers? Portraying a positive first impression helps to create positive thoughts in the minds of your customers. A bad first impression can potentially lead to that person never visiting your business again.

Taking the time to sweep your parking lots and store entrance on a daily basis can make a huge difference in the appearance of your building. As can using a tool such as a portable power washer, this can easily help remove stains, dirt and things like drink spills from your walkways.

A clean sparkling window allows customers to see inside your location and helps them to decide if they actually want to come in or not. How many times have you gone window shopping before entering a store?

If it is manageable you may be in a position to hire a maintenance company to keep your premises clean, this includes snow removal in the winter, if applicable. Even teaming up with other local businesses may help you all qualify for a lower price. Or you may prefer to use this type of service once or twice a year and then perform maintenance in between yourself.

DRESS FOR SUCCESS

Dressing the part is another important factor when it comes to creating a great first impression. Of course this will vary depending upon your business, a home renovation person would dress differently to someone running a gift store for example.

You always want to dress appropriately and dress in a way that matches your position. If you are the manager then dress the part as this helps identify you and creates an air of authority. Your attire will make people take you seriously and this can really affect the impact of your business, especially if you are launching a brand new business in your area.

People judge other people based on their looks and this will even affect their reaction to taking your business card or declining it. If you don't look the part a new contact may never consider recommending you to their business network.

Some critical areas to pay attention to include:

- Wearing clean shoes that are in good condition
- Wear well fitting clothes that look smart
- Wear good quality clothes
- Dress appropriately for your job

Many people today like to dress in a 'business casual' manner. This includes wearing neat and appropriate clothes such as including a professional looking jacket with a polo shirt of blouse along with dress pants. Conservative colors include navy blue, black, gray, khaki or tan. Adding a sweater is considered acceptable during the winter months.

If you are still unsure of how to dress look at what other people with the same type of business are wearing. It often helps to keep one set of clothes for attending business functions and meetings.

While on the subject of dressing for success don't forget to take personal grooming into consideration. When it comes to using cologne and perfumes do so carefully, many people suffer from allergies and over powering fragrances can deter someone from returning.

Always keep your hair neat and beards trimmed and remember to clean your fingernails. It is amazing how many people ruin a first impression by having dirty fingernails.

Don't go overboard on jewelry and wear what is considered to be appropriate for your business. Keep jewelry small and save your more extravagant items for going to parties or out on the town.

SELF CONFIDENCE

The National Research Council of Canada's Caroline Dunn and Lucette Charette found that, "People are affected by your appearance, whether or not they realize it, and whether or not they think appearance is important." In short, your visual presentation has consequences.

If you are new in town and opening up your first business you may feel intimated or nervous of meeting the locals. The worst thing you want to do is to appear nervous or self-conscious at this critical time. Instead understand that you are new to the area but you can still be confident in your business venture.

When meeting new clients it is acceptable to ask for recommendations and suggestions for places to see and what businesses to connect with in town. This can be a great way of breaking the ice and making those important new business associates.

Always remember that you are seen before you are heard and so the way you enter a room or approach a customer is important. Even though you may feel nervous smile and extend your hand to them, if appropriate. Ask if they need help and if not just let them browse and look around. Do not hover over them, as this makes you look impatient and desperate to make a sale.

You can improve your self confidence by believing in yourself. Start by walking with more authority and it can help to even practice speaking to yourself in front of a mirror. Just imagine you are talking with a new customer or client. Just the act of smiling can help you relax and it makes you look friendlier and approachable.

Running an online business has both advantages and disadvantages. Quite often the cost of starting up an online business can often be much cheaper than opening up a physical brick and mortar one.

One disadvantage is that you are often hidden behind your website or online store front. While some people prefer to remain invisible, customers still like to know that there is a real person working behind the scenes.

You are going to need to rely on information to portray your business so having a good website is crucial for your success. You will need to have well written content that easily explains what you are offering to your visitors. Other important elements are for you to provide great customer service and to be selling quality products or services.

Your online goals are:

Getting the attention of your website visitor
Providing them with valuable information
Convincing them that what you offer provides them with value

When it comes to making a first impression it is important to have a website that appeals to your visitors. This site should offer information and advice and solutions to the problems people have. It is so easy for online consumers to navigate to another website. You literally have about 5 seconds to get their attention and make them stay on your site.

One effective method of doing this is by offering a product or book for free. This could be a report, an eBook or video but it must be related to what you are offering on your site. This can be achieved by using a sign up or opt in box, where visitors can sign up to and receive this product directly to their inbox.

This box should be displayed in the top portion of your webpage when your site in a browser. This is known as above the fold and should attract the attention of the visitor immediately.

By implementing this step you are creating a database of people who have sought information from you. You can now use this list and offer your subscribers more information on the topic that they are interested in, along with promoting your own business products from time to time.

When sending out emails it is important to do this on a regular basis, and this is just one reason why creating a weekly or monthly newsletter is a great idea. Your subscribers start to expect your emails and will get into the habit of opening and reading them.

When sending emails try to make them around 80% information and send out 20% which are more promotional in nature.

The entire email process is a great way of educating your customers. Provide them with the why and how your products or services can be of benefit to them. By offering advice and information you are on your way to creating an extremely good first impression.

THE IMPORTANCE OF YOUR COMPANY NAME, WEBSITE & LOGO

Your company name and logo are going to be some of the first things a potential client or customer sees. This will create either a good or bad first impression.

Your company name and logo should be your branding tools and once they are in place you really don't want to change them too often. Once you have established a name for your business then you can make some changes. But if you constantly keep changing your name and logo you will end up confusing your customers and run the risk of losing them.

The same applies to your website. It is important to maintain a streamlined look that is instantly recognizable. So take the time and effort to come up with a good logo or header for your website and then use this as branding across all of your marketing material.

When it comes to website design you want to have a website that loads quickly in any browser. There is nothing worse than waiting and waiting for a site to load, if this has happened to you what is your reaction? To click away! So expect your visitors to do the same.

Depending on your business model you may have a shopping cart on your website. If you do then test it to ensure that it runs smoothly. Make it easy for people to add products to their cart and to complete the payment process. Check that the products are actually being delivered as they should.

If you offer lots of products then having an easy way for customers to search through your shopping cart is important. Nobody will spend lots of time trying to find products. You may have the ability to use tags and categories within your shopping cart to make finding products easy.

Don't forget that even an online business needs to provide fantastic customer service. This can be done in several ways including via email, by having a toll free phone number, by creating a Google+ Circle, or by using software such as Zen Desk on your site.

Whichever method you use always check for support tickets and get them answered quickly.

HOW TO WRITE ENGAGING CONTENT

The internet has really changed the way people discover new information today. They like to have the ability to find what they are looking for quickly. Once this information has been found they don't want to have to wade through pages and pages looking for certain details.

This means that they way you write today is different to what it was even 10 years ago. It really is easy for anyone to publish content to the web today. But this doesn't necessarily mean that the content is great. If you want to keep people returning to your website you need to know how to write engaging content.

The best writing tips include taking the time to think out and plan your content, followed by editing it. You also need to pay attention to the way your articles or blog posts look on a computer screen.

Web Specific Pointers

- Always leave lots of space in your posts and this includes making your paragraphs much shorter. Try to use two or three sentences when appropriate and then start a new paragraph.
- Make use of items such as bullet points, numbered lists, using different fonts to emphasize or quote things. Don't forget about using bolded fonts, underlining text and strike throughs.
- Include graphics, photos and resources such as infographics when applicable. People love to look at things so aim for a post that is informative and yet visual at the same time.
- Make use of headings and sub headings. This helps to make your content more visually appealing and also helps break down your thoughts into subsections making it easier to read. Remember that many people prefer to scan for information so using headers is a great way to get their attention.

Writing for the web means not adding fluff to your material. Instead your goal should be to get to the main points as quickly as possible. You are not writing an essay but giving clear concise information or instructions to your readers.

Another factor is to not use long or complicated sentences. Use language which is appropriate to your target market. You would write differently for a group of video game players than you would for IT experts.

People enjoy knowing what your opinions and thoughts are so you should never be worried about stating yours. This applies to items you write on your website or on social media. In fact some people say that opinionated posts often attract more attention that neutral ones.

Try to add your personality into your content as this helps make your information more real. Personalities often get left behind on the web and it is important to allow your readers know that there is a real person behind the website front.

SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTE

Using social media for your business is absolutely important today, but there are certain points to consider when using this type of marketing stream. Use the following social media etiquette tips to help you create a good first impression and maintain it.

- Do not get over personal on any of your pages
- Separate your business and personal life
- Post information that adds value and is helpful
- Share posts about things that you enjoy
- Include videos and pictures in your posts
- Don't spam people
- Don't always promote yourself and your products
- Aim to connect with other people in your industry
- Complete your profile page
- Add your contact information

While your main goal for creating a good first impression is to announce your business you don't want to become known as someone who does a lot of self promotion. When setting up your Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.… accounts use graphic covers that depict what your business is about. It is perfectly acceptable to include your website URL in the image as well.

Take the time to complete your profile page with an appropriate picture or use your business logo. Add all your contact information on your about page, as this allows people to actually make contact with you.

When announcing your business it is a good idea to offer a special promotion or discount offer. This will help you get more fans, likes or +1's to your pages. Remember it does take time to build up your business on social media. So posting content regularly is important and make sure that you share posts that you like as well as always writing about your business.

CONNECTING WITH YOUR AUDIENCE IS IMPORTANT

When you are writing your content you always want to remember that you are writing for your audience. Each piece of content which you write will create a first impression on someone, a seasoned or a new reader to your site.

On your website you no doubt have the required opt in form or giveaway to get people onto your list, but you want to build more of a connection with them than that.

People visit your website to find things that are of interest to them, to find a solution to a problem or for some other beneficial reason. The web is full of content and you are competing with thousands of others to get your audience to return to your site over and over.

So how can you attract someone and get them returning regularly?

Your first step to accomplishing this is to know who your audience consists of. This includes knowing the following factors:

- Are you catering to a specific group of people?
- What age group am I attracting?
- What gender are you attracting?
- What income bracket do my readers fall into?
- Where does my audience live?
- Are these people local or situated worldwide?
- What do my readers want?
- Are they looking for a solution to a problem or information?

Once you know who your audience is you can write content that is geared towards what they are looking for. No matter who you are writing for always communicate in an easy to understand manner. Provide them with clear and concise information which is trustworthy.

As you write always keep your audience in mind at all times and compliment this with the correct tone and style of your content. Use enough words to cover the topic thoroughly and don't add fluffy words just to lengthen the content.

Once your content is written take the time to edit it and to look for appropriate images to reinforce the concept of the piece. It takes time to write a quality post whether you are writing for your website or are writing a book.

BEST PRACTICES FOR CREATING & MAINTAINING A GOOD FIRST IMPRESSION

Develop your personal brand by defining yourself as a leader and representing the image you want to portray.

- Create a visual identity online.
- Keep your website real and don't add images or quotes that are fake.
- Reflect your personality on your website and on your social media sites.
- Get a good professional headshot done for your business.
- Look and act as though you mean business.
- Let your excitement and your passion for your business shine through.
- Always think about how you come across to others.
- Create a professional feel to your business.
- Remember when people buy your products they are buying you!
- Collect email addresses to follow up with customers.

CONCLUSION

While we have tried to separate topics in this ebook into offline first impressions and online first impressions, many items apply to both types of businesses. Let's recap the major ones.

You only get one chance to make a quality first impression. This is so crucial and is why you need to ensure that any contact with your company is positive. This includes making sure your physical location is clean, neat and organized and that you have friendly and knowledgeable staff. When people visit you in person 90% of how you and your business is evaluated is done by non verbal communication. This is why the way you dress, your body language and even your speech patterns can make a difference.

Online your website should be professional and provide visitors with a clear vision of what they can expect from you. You want to create a brand for your business that spreads from your website across into any social media accounts you are using.

Any type of banner, logo, business card or other marketing material should be sending a clearly defined message. All of this material should highlight what your company is and the benefits you are providing your customers with.

Regardless of your business model it is important to listen to your customers and then take appropriate actions. For an offline business the physical interaction with your customers can provide you with opinions for what they are looking for.

If a customer has a concern, take it seriously and listen to what they have to say. You could gain an important insight that could help significantly improve your company. Always pay attention to your customer and don't look away or allow yourself to become distracted. Finally acknowledge that you have understood their problem by repeating it back to them. You don't have to come up with an immediate solution but let them know you will follow up with them.

Online businesses need to read any comments or emails that are sent in by customers. This includes reading reviews that are left not just on your website but on sites like Google Places. If the reviews are not as great as you had hoped for take action and make improvements.

Other ways to get feedback from customers is to use online surveys or marketing software. These are great as many people prefer to provide feedback while staying anonymous. Using sites like Facebook and Google+ allow customers to provide honest, real time feedback.

Again make notes of comments left and reply appropriately. If you don't have an immediate response or feel angry about a certain response, don't respond. You never want to come across mad to your customers and venting online could potentially damage your image.

As we mentioned in the beginning of this ebook you should never forgot about making a good first impression every day. As you go through each day always ask yourself if you have taken the steps to make a good first impression.

- Did you listen to your customers and employees?
- Were you acting positively during the day?
- Did you handle phone calls appropriately?

- Are any customer service requests taken care of?
- Did you check and respond to emails?

Creating a good first impression is not that difficult. Many people tend to over think things and immediately start thinking that they have to change what they are doing. Instead be confident in what you have to offer and let your personality shine through. Think of yourself as a walking advertisement for your business, if running an online business then use your website in this way. Conduct your business in a way that you want to receive if you were a customer.

We truly hope that you have enjoyed reading this ebook and are more prepared to get out there and make your first impressions really count! We would love to hear from you and please feel free to connect with us on any of our social media sites we have listed below.

Thanks again for reading.

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