

Tech Marketing

Brian Jarvis (jarvis@office-assist.com, @bjarvis, about.me/brian.a.jarvis)
CALLERLAB Convention, April 2012 - Nashville, TN

In any marketing plan, remember:

- Identify your market:
 - Children? Teens? Young adults? Middle-aged? Seniors?
 - Singles? Married? Empty-nesters?
 - Education, income level?
 - Other interests?
- You're not selling dancing: you're selling what dancing does for you:
 - Fun! Laughter! Joy of success!
 - Social interaction!
 - Make new friends!
 - An evening out!
- What makes your offering special or stand out from other activities?
- Include a clear call to action.
- Deliver a consistent message.
- Market to your prospects, not to existing customers. Get them talking, find their needs and speak to their needs.
- How are you reaching your prospects, *and how are they reaching you?* Hint: the method people will use to contact you will depend immensely on who they are!
- Work on referrals: ask them to bring a friend, a group or their families or colleagues. People typically don't respond to material referral incentives: they value the prestige & recognition in their social circle for their contribution.
- Be disciplined: mark future actions on a calendar and keep to the schedule.
- Remember that this is a long term project, multi-year not multi-week.

You can still work the old media:

- Broadcast one-to-many, unidirectional;
- "Push" model: the message is transmitted to consumers;
- Users see what is placed in front of them... you'd better hope they're receptive at that particular instant! Multiple exposures will be needed.
- Examples: Radio, television, newspaper, signs, bulletin boards, etc..

So what is this new media?

- Conversational, multi-directional;
- "Pull" model: the consumers seek out your message;
- Consumers seek information when they want, when they are receptive. You just have to have your message ready for them when they come.
- Examples: Telephone, web sites, social media (FaceBook, Twitter, Google+, Tumblr, Flickr, LiveJournal, YouTube, FourSquare, etc.).

Building an Effective Web Site

- Get your own domain name. Check with your Internet service provider for details.
- Design your front page to speak to new prospects, showing your ABC & intro dances, new classes, desired prerequisites (hopefully none!). Store the pages of interest to your regulars further down or on a sub-page; your regulars will find it.
- Keep it current! “Upcoming events” listing 2007 dances doesn’t cut it.
- Don’t use background music or flashing, moving graphics. Please. Seriously.
- Keep graphics small for faster loading and a cleaner presentation.
- Consider a stripped-down mobile version of selected elements of your website. It’s a nice feature for dancers on the road to confirm dates, times & locations.
- Don’t just digitize your old stuff & hope for the best.
- Don’t waste time with link farms, keyword stuffing, etc. although an accurate meta-tag of the title & contents description will help search engines.
- Use Google Analytics or similar to measure visits to your site.

Google AdWords,

- Purchase keywords so your ad will appear alongside Google-supplied search results.
- You pick your keywords, exclusion words (eg. “square dance” but exclude “calls”), the geographical area, default user language, how much you’re willing to pay per click-thru and a maximum daily budget.
 - “square dance” in US, English, \$0.10/click, \$10/day max is estimated by Google to appear against 40,500 local monthly searches, generate 5 daily clicks and cost \$0.42/day but the ad would be 4th from the top.
- Users would click-thru to your web site so be sure it’s ready & current first! And you’d better have something to sell when they visit!

FaceBook MarketPlace Ads

- Can be directed to demographics, education level, geographic area & interests.
- Set your max daily budget; cost-per-click is determined in real-time via a virtual auction.
- Ad headline, graphic, URL & text will appear at right of FaceBook page.

Email Lists

- Eg. Google Groups, Yahoo Groups.
- Easy way for existing members to communicate with each other or for administrators to broadcast updates.
- Make a new list per group, range of interest (eg your fall Mainstream class vs. your C3A weekly group); dancers could join more than one if they’re interested.
- Strongly recommend making lists opt-in and provide an easy obvious way to unsubscribe.
- Join email lists in your local community—service clubs, church communications, school announcements, civic associations—and invite members to come to your open house events. Just be sure to ask the permission of the list owner first, and don’t abuse the privilege!

Social Media

- It’s a new world, the largest personal referral network in history: In December, 2011, FaceBook has 483 million regular users in 70 languages, half of them logging in daily. Twitter topped 500 million accounts in February, 2012.
- It’s growing quickly! New in 2011: Google+, Pinterest and a number of new sites.

- Consumers use references & recommendations of friends:
 - People want to know what others are doing, thinking;
 - We value acceptance & personal connections;
 - We know our friends' values and trust they won't respond like a paid shill;
 - We ask friends for additional information or candid opinions;
 - Friends understand their reputation will be damaged if they lie or mislead;
 - We can use our friends' experiences to ease our own purchase decision anxiety, as well as the learning curve after committing.
- Users are generally younger & relatively affluent, employ social media & mobile devices to find services.
- It's not marketing: it's engagement and dialogue.
- Engagement keeps future dancers in touch until your next open house or class.
- Cheap, easy way to keep in contact with lapsed dancers or dancers who have moved away: they may come back again if they have the opportunity.
- Practically free of cost –but can be a time sink.

FaceBook Best Practices

- Build a fan page to promote your calling & regular dances, event pages for specific festivals. Fan pages can be “liked” by others, can have more than one administrator and can be kept separate from your personal FaceBook page.
- Encourage linking to your fan page by placing a link and/or FB icon on your blog, web site, etc..
- Encourage engagement & calls to action, asking people to repeat your news, copy your links, add their own photos & videos, etc..
- Ask your fans to click “Suggest to friends” to spread the word.
- Respond to the comments of your followers, fans & friends.
- Keep your profile picture small & clear.
- Sync with your Twitter account.

Twitter Best Practices

- Use an easily remembered Twitter ID: your colleagues will be able to remember it quickly when they reference you in their own tweets.
- Use Twaitter or similar to queue up & schedule all of your messages in one sitting.
- Schedule tweets for approximately noon on weekdays for maximum visibility.
- Ask your followers to retweet your most important tweets and freely retweet your colleagues' tweets when relevant to your audience.
- Keep messages as short as possible by providing a link to your web page or online flyer with more details. Just remember to use a link-shortening service like goo.gl or bit.ly.
- You're not obligated to follow everyone who follows you but it's good etiquette. (You have the option of ignoring their posts silently if desired.)
- Follow other social organizations to find other marketing opportunities; offer to retweet their news if they'll retweet yours. It's like getting access to another org's mailing list!

Best Practices

- Your elevator speech should be front & center. It's the clearest, fastest way to say who you are and what you can do for the customer –or it should be.
- Get your name out! And keep your profile current (eg. www.ceder.net)!
- Become an expert in your field by writing. Publish your entries with RSS so others can see them via their preferred reader/portal.

- When you attend an event, announce it! Encourage your dancers to update their online status when they've been dancing.
- Include your web site URL, FaceBook fan page, Twitter ID, etc., on your business cards.
- Share ideas, links, references, retweets with colleagues. You'll raise your profile and your appearance in the search engines.
- Our customers can & do market our product better than we can: listen to them, support them and get out of the way.
- Conversation (have one!), Content (honesty & transparency), Control (give it up).
- Delegate but only to people you trust. Know you may have to fire them.
- Build relationships first. Sales will follow.
- Experiment!

Caveats

- Users sometimes mistake online shallow connections for real connections, friendship; on the other hand, even a shallow connection is better than none.
- "Making noise on the Internet can be like standing in a bar, waving your hands and yelling. You can attract attention –it doesn't mean you're going to build a relationship."

The Future?

- Discount coupons on dance parties via GroupOn, Living Social.com, etc.;
- Location-specific offers via your smartphone via GroupOn Now;
- Location-specific dance opportunity alerts via your mobile device;
- Flash-mob square dance tips as guerilla marketing;
- Online video –but only if you're smiling & laughing, OK?

Resources

Social bookmarking: Digg, Delicio.us, Reddit

Social networking: FaceBook, Google+, LiveJournal, LinkedIn, Orkut, Hi5, Tribe.net

Geolocation: FourSquare, Gowalla, Loopt

Microblogging: Twitter, Tumblr, FriendFind, SixApart, Yammer

Media sharing: Flickr, Picasa, YouTube, Vimeo

Extra tools: About.me, Google Voice, FreeConferenceCall.com, eVite, Google Alerts

Reading List

30-Minute Social Media Marketing, Susan Gunelius, McGraw Hill

101 Successful Networking Strategies, Eric P. Kramer, Cengage Learning

How to Make it Big as a Consultant, William A. Cohen, American Management Association

Effective Selling for the Small Business Owner, Grant Leboff, Capstone Publishing Ltd.

Social Media 101, Chris Brogan, John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Your Google Game Plan for Success, Joe Teixeira, John Wiley & Sons Inc.

Free Marketing, Jim Cockrum, John Wiley & Sons Inc.

The Zen of Social Media Marketing, Shama Hyder Kabani, BenBella Books Inc.

The Best of Guerrilla Marketing, Jay Levinson, Entrepreneur Media Inc.