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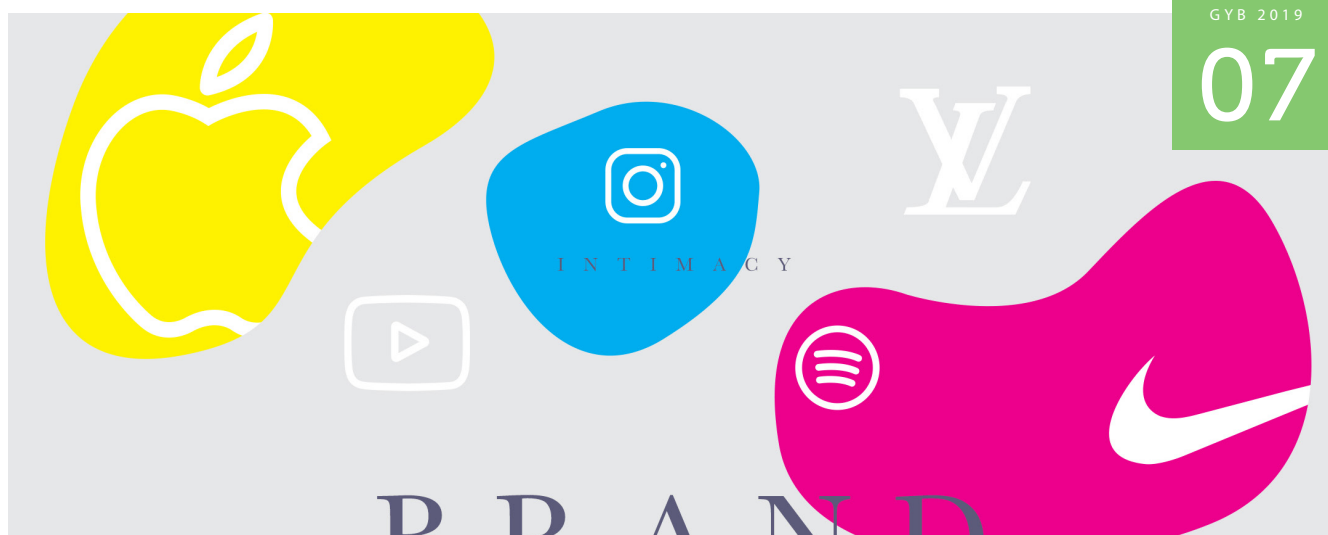
07



## GROW YOUR BUSINESS

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## Brand Intimacy

With the last decade focusing so intently on data culling and analysis, we have seen an interesting paradigm shift in the last few years when it comes to the 'science' of marketing.

Emotional science is being revered for its ability to predict and affirm relationships- something that in a tech-obsessed culture consumers are beginning to crave and seek out. Companies are recognizing this need and quickly moving towards filling the void.

While the big dogs are quick to adapt new ideas and implement them, it can be tougher for smaller businesses to catch up. Luckily, emotional science doesn't require a lot of budget adjusting- its more of a mindset.

The most influential idea emotional science has applied to marketing strategies is that of brand intimacy.

This excerpt from the industry favorite "Brand Intimacy: A New Paradigm in Marketing" best explains the concept:

***"The emotional connections we form with our beloved brands and services are important relationships-relationships that are potentially worth billions..."***

One of the more interesting facets to this shift is how frequently concepts of marketing strategy shift one way then another, but yet the concept of a brand always remain front and center as the most important part of your strategy.

The basic science here is that the driving forces behind our decisions are emotion and instinct. As a small business owner, the decisions your consumer is making- no matter how logical or technical they may appear are at the heart, driven by instinct.

In order to employ brand intimacy, you must build up trust, so that decisions regarding your product and/or services become instinctual. Brand intimacy explores the science behind the bonds we form with products/services and the names associated with them.

In short, try to find the most engaging, intimate and real way to engage with your customers. One of the biggest challenges here is figuring out whether technology helps or hurts those relationships, in particular to your brand or service.

Consider carefully the consumers decision-making process and figure out where emotion and trust make their biggest impact. Targeting your marketing messages to touch on those areas will create the much craved brand intimacy, as displayed by monster companies like Amazon, Netflix, Google and Apple- no matter the size of your business.

R E A L I S T I C

R E F E R R A L S

## Realistic Referrals

Refining your referral process is something you should be doing on a pretty frequent basis as a small business owner, however, its likely its also quick to fall to the bottom of the To-Do list...

Building out a realistic referral process can create longevity and stability, and reduce the need for constant reevaluation.

Even in 2019, "85 percent of small businesses say word-of-mouth referrals are the number one way that new prospects find out about their businesses. Influitive, an advocate marketing firm, found that referrals have a higher conversion, close faster, and have a higher lifetime value." (Outboundengine.com)

Most business owners would also agree that the initial fear of the ask is the biggest roadblock in the referral building process- the advice? Get over yourself.

You have to ask, but the way you ask is definitely an area for improvement. Make sure you display tact and taste, and that your ask reflects your personality and that of your business.

Think about encouraging referrals instead of asking for them. Sometimes simply the language associated with the referral process generates the most discomfort.

Referrals should be built on in a network fashion- they should piggyback on one another, each helping the next get further in the process. Always be prepared to offer back what you have asked for.

When you're ready to craft a referral strategy consider including the following:

1. Customization
2. Quality incentives
3. Easy sharing mechanisms
4. Maintenance schedule to refine and promote

Assigning referrals to a person or team is also a good idea. It makes the most sense to keep this within your customer service team, though instead of assuming everyone is doing a small amount, consider assigning the referral management to one employee.

Remember that both formal and informal referral systems naturally exist. Formal systems include companies with relatable businesses, vendors/buyers, other professionals that naturally relate back to your businesses services and products. Informal would be people you meet at events, conferences, personal contacts- anyone you hand a business card to. Don't forget to nurture both!

## Top Talent Tips- 10 ways to refine your recruitment

It's a tough pill to swallow but... recruitment will always be on of the top challenges for small businesses. Whether as a start up, during a growth spurt or just trying to keep up with day –to-day operations, you're best bet is a solid recruitment plan.

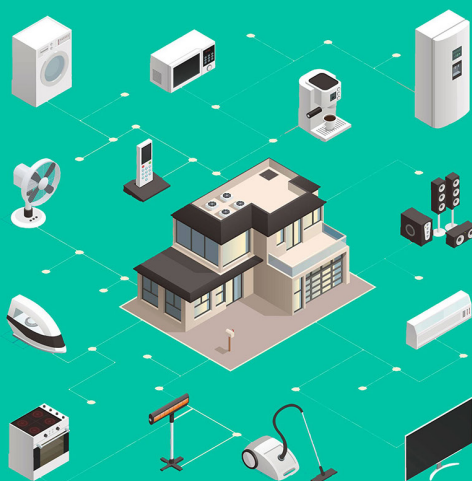
Let's jump right in with ten tips to finding top talent:

1. Work assessments into your hiring process. This will help address the realistic likelihood that hiring is not exactly you're skill du jour- assessments are a great way to analyze your candidates and build structure into your process.
2. Keep tabs on your internal talent pipeline- pay attention! Your best talent may be right under your nose, but its up to you to recognize and ensure strengths are being best applied.
3. Invest in technology/apps/ programs instead of hiring. Shrink your hiring needs down to the most vital.
4. Consider using HR tech to help you with the process- its okay to call in reinforcements (without the need to hire an HR person!)
5. Get creative with your sourcing, instead of waiting for CV's to come to you.
6. Consider hiring 'potential' over 'qualification'.
7. If you aren't already, employ job shadowing. Creating realistic expectations is the best way to improve retention.
8. Boost your benefits package. Studies show that in 2019 benefits are top of the list for high-quality job seekers.
9. Avoid hiring in desperation- filling jobs just to fill them is going to cost you in the end. Try to get ahead of your needs by having a cyclical hiring system in place or leave job postings open, even when you aren't in need.
10. Don't limit yourself- posting only local will dramatically limit your options- national postings are affordable, easy and open your options up. Relocation costs are not an expectation in today's market.

Hiring has three stages: recruitment, onboarding and retention. Make sure your hiring system has a flow that makes sense and is as seamless as possible.

I N T E R N E T

O F T H I N G S



## IoT: is it for you?

IoT, or the Internet of Things, is a phrase you may start hearing much more of in the business sector. Be one step ahead and read on for a brief, simple breakdown of this new Internet innovation.

***“The Internet of things is the extension of Internet connectivity into physical devices and everyday objects. Embedded with electronics, Internet connectivity, and other forms of hardware, these devices can communicate and interact with others over the Internet, and they can be remotely monitored and controlled.”***

– Definition courtesy of Wikipedia.

Hmm...say what? Still confused? Us too...

There is a LOT of jargon and policy related to the what and how of IoT and its potential and implications in how we do things, but for the purpose of this article, let's just try and tackle

the basics and create a foundation of understanding.

With the increasing capabilities of WiFi and its addition to more and more tech devices, the increased availability of broadband internet, therefore leading to its lowering cost the internet and how we use it is changing drastically.

The Internet of Things, most simply explained, is the connectivity (in relation to the internet) of everything that has the capability of being switched on and off.

The biggest change here will be the relationships- previously being between the internet and the device, now having the potential to be between people and people, people and things, and things and things.

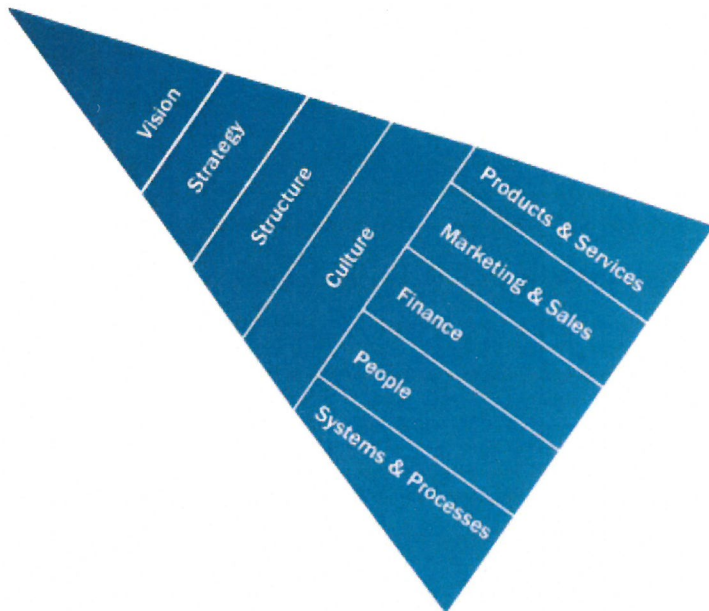
Essentially we are moving towards an existence where “anything that can be connected, will be connected”.

Years ago we were referring to these types of cross-over capabilities as ‘smart’ (think smartphone – a phone that can also access your calendar, make updates, notifications, integrate directions to your destination, etc). It's basically the description of a ‘smart world’ where all things (people included) are connected.

Nowadays we experience these smart devices in a more pervasive way than ever: think fitness trackers, driverless cars, remote video monitoring systems, Siri, etc.).

Small businesses can implement IoT in remote monitoring, inventory management, security, overall performance, efficiency and production management, managing costs and tracking growth.





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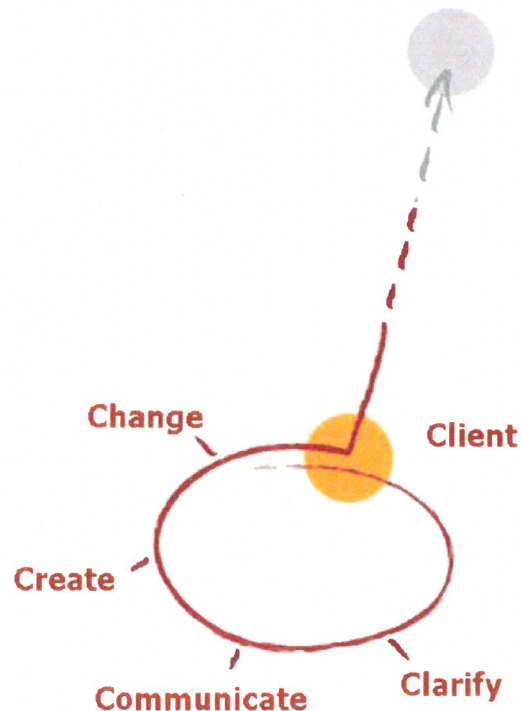
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