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*infinite possibilities*

## The Empty Trojan Horse...or Losing New Business Opportunities by Poor Marketing!

Can you imagine the outcome of the Trojan War if the Greeks had failed to fill their wooden horse with soldiers? Instead of a breathtaking innovative strategy gaining victory and putting an end to the 10 year siege – the horse was simply pulled inside the city of Troy. Rather than a Greek victory remembered for millennia, the Trojans instead went on to live happily ever after!

This hypothetical outcome is not dissimilar to real life situations faced by today's business owners, especially those in professional and financial services. Failing to keep pace with evolving consumer demands and expectations in the year ahead, through the application of modern marketing and communication processes will have *Empty Trojan Horse* ramifications.

One of the first lessons financial advisers (in fact most SMEs) receive when they start their self employed journey is the power of a referral from a satisfied client, friend, family member or business associate and the importance of seeking these at every opportunity.

But what would happen if a client recommends your firm to a senior manager or CEO of a large company and following the meeting the potential new customer conducts a quick mobile search of your website on his / her phone. Regrettably, it doesn't display properly on the Smartphone or iPhone because the site is not tailored to the formatting and style of a mobile web device.

The prospect then follows this up with a Google search only to find no LinkedIn profile; no PR media presence; no white papers / thought leadership pieces and a very basic website with no examples of successfully completed projects, client testimonials, an amateurishly designed company logo, and the list goes on.

The fortunate adviser or business owner in this scenario had literally been catapulted over the ramparts and landed softly inside the fortress – literally within reach of the treasures contained within the castle.

But alas, this is where the adventure and good fortune came to an abrupt end.

Unfortunately, many business owners cut corners on the construction of their marketing Trojan Horse. Others are lazy or financially tight fisted to complete the task finding it easier not to fill the horse with soldiers; or worse, fail to arm the troops inside.

The integration of the online and offline marketing process is fundamental and crucial in today's economic climate. Far too many businesses don't employ a holistic approach to their marketing, branding and positioning – especially the removal of roadblocks that hamper access to information required by clients and potential customers.

Convenience and ease of access are two major factors that must be integrated into a marketing communication process that is streamlined and dovetails into a single activity that ensures the business or individual is easy to find.

The modern technically savvy and sophisticated consumer needs to be reassured about the business relationship to be entered into and will use technology to research your background, capability, expertise, etc through Google, your company website, LinkedIn, etc before connecting commercially with you.

Regardless of industry or sector, businesses need to have a comprehensive integrated marketing and communication arsenal in place from website, social media profiles, advertising, PR and so on – as they are the essential key ingredients for building a brand that will deliver long term sustained financial success.

Before concluding, it's important to note that in contrast to the bravado displayed by the ill-equipped 'business warrior' that seeks out and receives referrals and recommendations; there is another category of business owner and this group avoids confrontation and potential 'prospect rejection' by building a bigger and more elaborate Trojan Horse.

These business owners take their marketing activities to whole new level by adding more and more features and enhancements to their Trojan horse via blogging, tweeting, writing countless white papers, etc.

Don't get me wrong – I'm not belittling the role and importance of these activities in the marketing process and they too can play an important role in the marketing of some businesses. But there comes a point where adding more and more features and enhancements to the marketing framework will not increase sales and revenue.

The steps to sales, marketing and referral success aren't complicated –

- Prepare your online offline marketing Trojan Horse in advance – website, brochures, LinkedIn profile, etc.
- Streamline the marketing process making sure all the components dovetail and reflect / support the business objective.

Ultimately, the success of the marketing Trojan Horse is built on an integrated framework that is focussed on connecting the business dots so that prospective customers don't have to.