

Instantly Gain Credibility on the Internet

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Have you ever wondered how it is that some business are really successful and how many others don't even make it onto your radar?

Many years ago I took a very keen interest in a US-based technology company called General Magic who were doing impressive things with their software all around the world. In one project, they hooked up all the major roads in the Bavaria region and created an advanced warning system for road conditions. Basically, the system would work out where were traffic jams were - road works and anything else that would bring traffic to a halt. Using this information it would reroute traffic ahead of time to minimise the impact on flow of traffic. It also had a secondary effect of reducing the number of incidences of road-rage.

What was really interesting was the way the system used the information available to help drivers make better decisions.

Many business owners and managers are faced with similar decisions every day.
Think about this...

You have a strategy for creating a particular business outcome and the shortest distance between where you are now and where you want to be is a straight line.

Naturally, the smart thing to do is to take the most direct route. As you're working away, at some point, you may hit an obstacle that potentially causes your strategy to stall and be held up. One option is to find an alternative way that allows you to move beyond the obstacle.

This approach is not dissimilar to the one many businesses adopt. They keep applying the same strategy until either they hit an obstacle or they decide its time to change.

General Magic took their traffic solution one step further. Instead of getting all cars to take the previous turn-off and creating a huge bottleneck on the off-ramp, the system would constantly keep a track of how the traffic was flowing through the entire road system and make recommendations to drivers on which routes would get them to their destination fastest. The recommendations made by the General Magic solution would constantly change as the traffic flow through the roadways were themselves changing.

There were high hopes for the company. They signed some huge deals with AT&T, GM and Motorola. At one point, their shares were worth more than US\$100.

That was about 10 years ago. Since then, General Magic experienced several significant downturns, to the point where, today, it no longer exists.

Why this is the case, no-one really knows for sure. There just didn't seem to be a market...

Yet here we are today. You can surf the web on your mobile phone – while you're on the move. I can show you how to get to my favourite Seafood restaurant in Melbourne. In fact, you can now even take photos of your favourite places, put them up on the Web and connect them to specific places.

Many believe that General Magic's failure was the result of the Internet and the Web.

The Internet is here to stay and it touches almost every part of our lives – both personal and business. This makes it pretty hard not to be affected by it in some way.

If you think about it, this article couldn't even have been written without the Internet. And if it were, I'm sure you wouldn't be reading it the way you are right now.

But there is another side that demonstrates the Internet's impact – especially on businesses. And that is that as more and more businesses get on the Web, it becomes more and more difficult to find your way around and for others to find you. And then, when they do find you, they have to make a decision about a) whether you've got what they're after and b) whether they do business with you.

The three things

Successful online businesses say that there are three things they do that gets them the results they get.

1.

They make sure they can be found

Use effective marketing efforts that are optimised for the online world. Do this by aiming for a top 10 position on a Search Engine results page. The words that are used on the website and where they're promoted all contribute towards being found.

2.

They build credibility by providing high-value content

Whether its the information on their website or the information provided through email newsletters, successful online

businesses set out to build credibility amongst their potential clients. Foster an ongoing relationship through a free email newsletter that steadily increases your potential clients' trust levels and cements the view that you are an authority in your field.

3.

They offer to fulfill a wish or solve a problem

Show your potential clients that you can provide the solution they're seeking. Your service will solve their problems, answer a dream, enrich their lives and/or improve their businesses. You are the dependable expert they want and need!

Exactly what led to the demise of General Magic, no one can really say. They had a spectacularly good product. But then, no doubt, you'll recall the BETA/VHS battle for dominance when home video was first becoming popular, and that its not always the superior product that wins out.

In order to become a leader in your field, enough people must need and/or value your service. And they need to feel so strongly about it that they will personally benefit from the way you deliver it versus your competitors' approach.

When you think that some of the most successful companies, such as Apple Computers and HP, were started in a garage on a shoe-string budget, its encouraging proof that you don't need a lot of money to grow a successful business.

The important thing about becoming successful is that you have options available to you that you can easily take up. Because when you have options, the road ahead seems so much more pleasant.