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Tame the Marketing Beast Before it Devours You

Published: *The Recorder*

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Universal Studios is home to a ride where the 3-D effects make the rider believe a wild dinosaur or monster robot is about to devour him. This is the same way many professionals feel about marketing today—that it's a voracious, many-headed monster that seems impossible to control and tame.

In the not too distant past, this marketing beast seemed manageable. Social media was but a glimmer in a teenager's eye. Cell phones were for phone calls.

Today, though, you have to tame a larger beast with many more appendages: its social media arm with an ever-growing number of fingers and toes; its eyes, which eschew words and only want infographics and videos; and its voracious appetite for content. Marketing a professional service in these ever-changing times feels overwhelming.

Take heart. This animal that seems to want to run you over can be managed and tamed. It takes time, patience and determination. It's not just a matter of getting the monster back in its cage. It is also a matter of your attitude toward this many-headed hydra.

Take Control

The marketing beast is like many animals. It senses weakness and seems to only get stronger when it knows you are afraid of it,

which only makes it want to engulf you more. It gets a thrill when it knows all it has to do is mention social media, and you will cower not so much in fear, but in confusion. Which path to take—Facebook? LinkedIn? Blogs?

On the other hand, when it senses determination—your determination—to understand your options, take steps, and get support, the beast shrinks back. So start there. Look social media vehicles in the eye, corral them and make them work for you.

Remember that you can only start from where you are. If you have done little or nothing in the digital realm, then starting out can seem more overwhelming than ever. And, once you've opened your eyes, you can become even more anxious seeing that many of your competitors are much farther along.



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Regardless of where you are or how you feel about your current marketing position, put aside regrets and get started now.

A key aspect of successful marketing is accepting that you can't do everything. This is good, because you can immediately start crossing things off of the list, making time and freeing resources for manageable activities that you can get your arms around. But before you can take things off of the list, you have to at least understand what those things are supposed to do and how one tactic works with another. Have a marketing professional—your in-house marketing manager or an agency—explain different media vehicles and how they work together; for example, the integral relationship between public relations and social media.

Most likely, you won't incorporate all possible social media vehicles into your marketing program, but you will feel a lot more in control knowing what they are and making informed choices.

Keep On Truckin'

The hallmark of marketing success is >>

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consistency—consistently taking small steps that build on each other and eventually create a marketing program. Consistency can be as simple, although not as easy, as committing to doing one blog post per week, or every other week if that's more doable for you. When this beast sees you are putting one foot in front of the other and not daunted by the whole, it retreats into its lair.

The most efficient means to create this consistency is systematization. Establish a timetable so you know when things will happen, develop templates, assign responsibilities and commit to meeting your goals.

This marketing beast belongs to you. Therefore, you must feed and care for it. Because this animal responds to a steady diet of content, you can begin with a morsel, such as a blog post, which you can then expand into an article. From this article, you can create a webinar, which then evolves into a white paper, all of which you want to distribute more broadly via digital channels. To harness this effort, you need a straightforward method such as a checklist; spreadsheet; or software, like HootSuite, to track what you have distributed and where. You can't keep track of it all in your head. By corralling your content, you are corralling the marketing creature as well.

You don't have to wrestle this wild animal back into its lair on your own. Enlist support, whether it's from your assistant, other attorneys in your office, ghostwriters, or outside professionals. Also, be wary of paralyzing yourself through your quest for perfection.

While you may believe the marketing beast is monstrous and out to get you, you also want to think kindly of it. After all, while its many-tentacled options seem like they can strangle you, they also offer the opportunity to get in front of more prospective clients and referral sources. In many ways, the marketing beast has torn asunder the doors that previously limited our reach and let in a world of opportunity. ■

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