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Creating Connections: Making Your Business Truly Multimedia

By Mary Wheeler

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Remember when "multimedia" was the hottest term in the computer world? Everyone wanted a system that was multimedia-ready -- some were even called "multimedia" systems, which usually meant that they had decent sound and video cards.

Today, we are on the verge of having TRULY multimedia systems -- systems that integrate and connect various ways of communicating and sharing information. Businesses that want to prosper (or perhaps even survive) in the future need to be aware of these changes and should try to capitalize on them as soon as they can.

What kind of changes am I talking about? Mainly the ways that the Internet is combining with other communication media to create products and services that hadn't been thought of before. Here are just a few examples:

* You can now use the Internet to make local and long distance telephone calls, as well as video conferencing. The combination of these two media allows customers to transmit more information than either could do by themselves.

* More and more merchants are integrating their physical store locations and their Websites, so that the two aren't separate selling points for the company, but rather work together to make profits. These kinds of systems lead to more sales and greater customer satisfaction.

* Innovative businesses are combining the power of the Internet with the ease and popularity of television to create new interactive media. With these systems, a person who is watching TV can use a wireless mouse to find out more about a product that he or she sees, including how much it costs and the closest place to buy it, all based upon the viewer's individual information and location.

These examples help show that the future of the Internet is going to be based upon the innovative ways that it is combined with media with which we are already familiar. As business "entrepreneurs," we should keep a close eye on

these kinds of developments, so that we don't get left behind.

Learning to Make Connections

By Paul "the soaring" Siegel

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Marketing may be considered to be a means of making connections. What every marketer must do is learn with whom to connect and how to connect in order to best serve his prospects and expand his business.

The Internet is the best medium invented to–date for making connections. There are lots of other media. But none offer the fast, easy and private methods for establishing connections and building useful relationships.

Some powerful companies have not learned how to do this on the Net. Recently a few members of the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA) have tried to hurt peer–to–peer music–sharing systems by signing on and offering spoofed CDs. These CDs have periods of empty space or ruined music. The idea is to drive people to "legitimate" outlets.

Now I ask You, Is this a way to make a connection with someone? Is this a way to gain customers? Is this a way to be helpful?

While RIAA members are stuck in the past, others who understand that the Internet is a learning medium, use services, such as

BroadProspect, to learn how to make connections. Here is an excerpt from an email I received from them:

"BroadProspect (<http://www.BroadProspect.com>) is a place where professionals list their senior industry connections on an ANONYMOUS BASIS for FREE, and become an anonymous connection maker. Companies shop online for a specific industry relationship and communicate with the ANONYMOUS connection maker. When the connection maker is satisfied with the information, he/she can establish a client – or goodwill – relationship with the business entity."

This outfit understands that the Internet is not merely an information highway but a learning network. They have developed a method to enable business people, not merely to gather information, but to learn about other businesses they would like to partner or otherwise work with.

I have no business relationship with BroadProject. I write about it because I think it may be of use to some of you.

To be successful on the Net, look for ways to broaden your connections.



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