

Is Print Advertising Dead? (If You Think So, Think Again)

By Ian James, CEO, Retail Tribe

At the recent Proponent Group Summit, amid all the enthusiasm for email, online and social-marketing best practices, Lorin posed a question to the group: *Do you think that print marketing is obsolete?*

We never embraced that question, obsessed as we all were with email subject lines, home-page design and the comparative average ages of Twitter and Facebook audiences. So here's my response: No, print marketing is not dead! Relationship marketing isn't either. Nor is word-of-mouth marketing (the "live" variety). And while we're at it, let's not forget so-called active marketing. But before I expand on that, let's look at our "Marketing Heat Map" shown at the bottom of this page.

Every time I listen to the new-age marketers talking about the promise of websites, Google AdWords and SEO, I reflect on a winery in Stellenbosch, South Africa that ran a Facebook promotion. They started out with fewer than 250 locals and trade staff following their Facebook Page and reading their posts and updates. After the promotion they had over 20,000 followers.

On the face of it, this was a great success. They had been told by their digital consultant that each follower represented \$25 of value per annum. So \$500,000 of "Follower Value" in exchange for a \$360 case of wine was surely a great deal.

Unfortunately, the promotion went viral—but what does that mean relative to the winery's true market? The analytics revealed that web surfers in African locales such as Senegal and Cameroon got interested. The campaign gained traction in Nigeria and along the Ivory Coast. It was even picked up in the obscure African nation of Eritrea! Over 12,000 of the campaign's followers came from regions over 3,000 miles away from our winery. So, not so successful after all, and certainly not worth \$25 per follower.

They were now actually worse off than they were when they had just 250 lo-

cal, because, as many of you know, there's a Facebook algorithm that means not everyone following you gets to see every post. It's only a percentage that gets to see your posts in their newsfeed. So this wine producer's local population—the consumers with a realistic likelihood of purchasing wine (irrespective of e-commerce), attending tastings and turning up to the Sunday brunch—were now highly unlikely to get news about a favorite Pinot Noir or menu items like Lamb on the Spit in their newsfeed.

What this wine farm needed was a 'Social Compass' that prioritized its marketing! And that's exactly what you need in relation to your golf facility.

The concentration of your marketing efforts needs to be strongest at the location center of your business. Anyone already coming to your facility, even if it's the occasional visit, needs to receive your marketing messages as often as possible. And that absolutely includes your current customers.

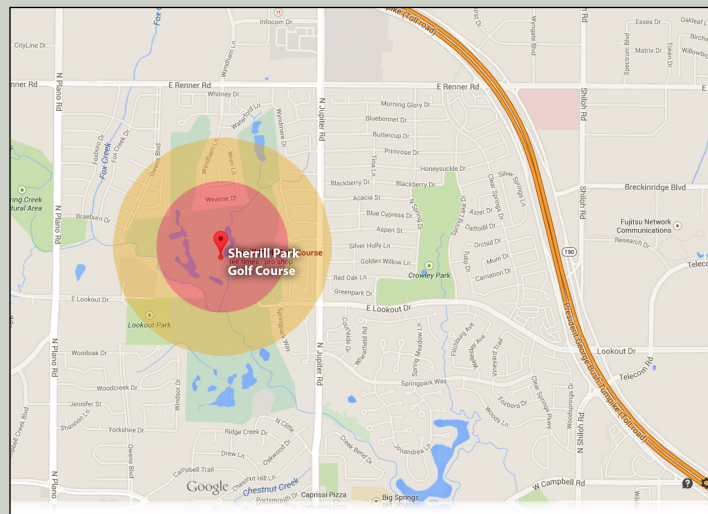
Examples of localized marketing efforts may include:

- Signage with your marketing proposition visible on noticeboards, in the locker-room, in the shop, at your coaching station
- Proposition vouchers that can be handed out to golfers
- Meeting with the influencers behind the various formal groups (men's, ladies, seniors, league golfers, juniors etc.) and informal groups (every club has smaller groups that play together and compete among themselves) to set up personal relationships
- Open Active Marketing events where golfers can experience their potential to improve and your ability to improve them (focused clinics, skills challenges, short events)

• Specific Active Marketing events for the groups you are building relationships with

• Email marketing, as you should have the email address of every golfer who visits your facility. This to include regular customer improvement stories

• Asking your customers and your club influencers to spread the word.



Marketing options focused on your "heat map" can pay big dividends.

For any one of the actions above I could explain why it is so important. I could tell you how Kenny Nairn has used signage to add real theater to his setup at Celebration Golf Club. I could pick out Tim Hall (not a Proponent member) who has doubled his business in 2014 just by investing in supporting the group owners, administrators and influencers at his club and then benefitting from tremendous word-of-mouth promotion. I could ask you to chat with Bill Abrams and have him explain the impact his skills challenges have made at his club.

But, the point is, while everyone is getting so excited about the opportunity of the digital world and its global reach, the power of old-fashioned marketing at your golf facility should not be under-estimated. It's your true hot spot and can be approached in a variety of ways including:

- Real-world networking with local organizations (if they're allowed at your facility), including company offices, schools, veterans groups, youth groups and the like—especially useful here is a single page hand-out with minimal text that states your proposition and contains your contact details
- Networking with mother's groups, especially those with a large reach (e.g. 'Mommy Bloggers'), whom you invite out for an hour-long visit to your facility where you

- show them how safe and well cared for their children will be and how much fun the kids will have
- In both examples above you also want email contacts so that you can send digital assets to them to distribute
- High-traffic locations where golfers might be, with notices on the boards (e.g. local health clubs, Starbucks)
- Getting into local news sources on a regular basis (providing a coaching tip for the local websites, radio programs, newspapers or even TV channels)
- And of course, making sure that anyone searching online in your local area is going to find you when they type in specific search criteria for your area

I cannot stress highly enough the value of making sure you're appealing to all the likely search criteria. Being the No. 1 teacher in Dallas might not get you the response you want when someone types in "coaching lessons in Plano." Through your SEO you need to have your local areas covered, as well as the city at large.

And, of course you're going to get as many of the people who respond to your local initiatives as possible to give you their email address, follow you on Twitter, and join your Facebook groups and Google+ circles. These are customers worth at least \$25 an email address or Facebook connection.

Proponent Success

Golfers Respond to 'Coaching Product' Offers

Paul Kaster, Proponent Group member and an instructor at Royce Brook Academy of Golf in Hillsborough, N.J., has started to embrace the philosophy that he can create and promote limited-space products that are linked to a specific skill and competency.

In his second week with RetailTribe he put together and promoted a half-day school to build awareness of the Royce Brook Academy and Royce Brook Golf Club to his local market. He secured his six students and \$1,620 for half a day's work.

"I have never been this busy in Fall. Not only does the RetailTribe marketing solution allow me to reach out to golfers more easily, but Rick, my RetailTribe Campaign Manager, is full of great ideas on how to grow my engagement with more golfers." – **Paul Kaster**, PGA Professional, Royce Brook Academy of Golf



Paul Kaster

"Selling the Result Really Works"

"Rick (a RetailTribe Campaign Manager) told me to run a 30-yard pitch shot challenge for three hours. I sold more wedges in

three hours than I'd sold in the previous three months. And guess what? I also sold coaching programs.



Then he encouraged me to run a "Speed Challenge" for three hours with the new PING G30 metalwood. I sold over \$5,000 of merchandise in those three hours, with more in the week after. Selling the result really works." – **Bill Abrams**, PGA Professional, Balmoral Woods

Bill is another PGA professional who has embraced "Better Golf as a Merchandising Strategy." In fact, Bill now adds his own ideas to our library of "Playbooks." But guess where the best ideas always come from? That's correct—once a golf professional starts thinking in this way, dozens of good ideas on how to sell the result will come forth. Our staff will struggle to keep up with you.

Meanwhile, in his comment above Abrams is being modest. The 30-yard charity pitch-shot challenge was actually his idea. And he's already got a lot more to follow.

You'll be surprised at how easy we can make effective marketing for you. Just give us 20 minutes and we'll show you how we can make an impact for you.

Contact Ian James at IanJames@retailtribe.com or 972-743-0038 or visit us at www.retailtribe.com.



Bill Abrams