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M. Sullivan Web Newsletter

Newsletter 3
March 2011

Dear Mary,

Hello once again. I hope you enjoy the third edition of this newsletter. The idea is to introduce terms you may have heard, but may not know what they are, as well as generate some ideas for those of you who have websites and businesses you wish to promote with them. I always think of a website as the equivalent to a glossy brochure, but better. Better because you can change it easily, more affordably and keep it up to date; you can "hand it out" to prospective clients by sending them to your website directly or by putting the address on every piece of paper you send out. But even better, they can find you in cyber space by searching or sometimes, just by chance!

I had a former client who requested that I put over 75 images of items that she sold on her website when I first designed it. This was stock that she was selling at the time. She put an ad in the local paper every week, but would not, as the years went by, even consider updating her site or even listing it on those expensive ads. She felt updating her website was too expensive. So as the years went on, most of those 75+ photos were of items she no longer sold.

I think it was more expensive having a website created in the first place that was never changed and more importantly, didn't reflect her changing business.

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Jury Duty

I've been recruited as a potential juror at the beginning of April, so while doing my "civic duty" I may not be available during the day. However if you have updates for your website, I will be catching up in the evening to keep up with my work. If you have any larger jobs that you already are thinking of, this month would be the best time to send them to me.

Enjoy your month! Spring is coming.

In This Issue

Website of the Month

What is Crowd Sourcing?

Crowdsourcing is the act of outsourcing tasks, traditionally performed by an employee or contractor, to an undefined, large group of people or community (a "crowd"), through an open call. The term "crowdsourcing" is a combination of "crowd" and "outsourcing," first coined by Jeff Howe in a June 2006 Wired magazine article "The Rise of Crowdsourcing".

Photography is a good example. The advent of the digital camera, easy to use photo editing software and of course the internet have seen a surge in the availability of stock photography at a reasonable price. So the quality of photographs created by individuals started to get on par with professionals and you have a larger pool of people to choose from when you are looking for photographs for yourself of your company.

Crowdsourcing can be for design work such as 99designs.com. Clients can ask for submissions for designs for anything from business cards to logo design. You state what kind of design you'd like, how much you will pay, and then interested designers will start submitting designs. You choose from the designs submitted and agree to pay what they have asked for (it may be more than you offered, but if it's the perfect logo, you may be willing to pay the higher
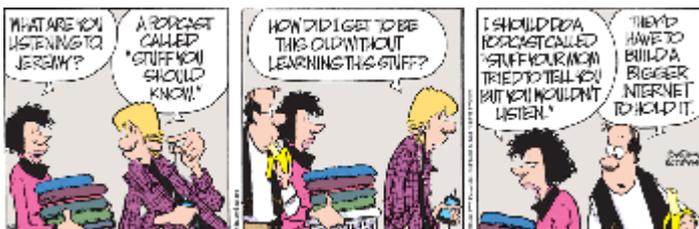
This site is for the Kawartha Lakes Food Source. It manages to take a serious subject, hunger in our community, but still makes it fun to look at. The logo was created a few years ago by local cartoonist Kevin Frank.

The reason that this site is notable is that it is updated often, at least twice a month, which encourages people to come back to find out about new events and programs that are being offered.

You may think that your business has nothing new to say from year to year, but with a bit of creativity, you can create what is called "sticky content" and give some value added information for people looking to use your business. This in turn will move your website up in the ranking on search engines, which will help people find you easier.

To see more about what the Kawartha Lakes Food Source offers our community, and how you can help, please visit: www.kawarthalakesfoodsource.ca.

Podcasts

Have you discovered Podcasts yet? The word Podcast comes from the original phrase Webcast (as in Web broadcast) but was soon called a Podcast due to the iPod's popularity.

The proposed definition of a Podcast is "a digital audio or video file that is episodic; downloadable; programme-driven, mainly with a host and/or theme; and convenient, usually via an automated feed with computer software.

The most commonly used software is iTunes, but it is not the only software that can be used. Some Podcasts are summaries of current radio programs, or longer versions of shorter interviews. Some only exist as a Podcast and are not found on the radio at all. You also don't have to have an iPod, you can listen to these programs on your computer or other mp3 players.

I have found myself really jumping into the Podcast media. I can't concentrate on my work with a radio talk show on, but hear of wonderful presenters on stations like CBC, and Podcasting now allows me to listen to them at a time of my own choosing. A few of my favourites are:

The Art of Persuasion: A clever marketing show by Terry O'Reilly
This American Life: A fascinating show about all sorts of interesting topics.
The Moth - Stories told live and without notes.
Spark Plus - Technology, many a topic is fodder for this newsletter

price).

Read more>>

Fun Sites

Don't upset your designer, you may find your story on this site
Clients From Hell

Make Use Of - is a site with links to funny news items, free software and computer questions answered.

Finally...

I love my job. How many people can say that? Some days can get lost in wasted time waiting for information, or trying to get something to work, but for the most part I enjoy my clients, and the things I learn from them and for them.

How else would I know so much about 4 post lifts, or the workings of a charity, or how our local rugby teams are doing?

But some days seem to have everything aligned and things just work out well. On Friday I settled in to create a blog for a client that matched exactly to her website. I've created blogs for quite a few clients over the years with Blogger.com. They used to be the most popular blog around. But WordPress seems to have grown to be a more popular blog as well as database driven site.

Everything worked perfectly that day and I'm very happy with how it worked out. I've been learning this new CMS or content management system for a while now, and between being happily busy, and other things not working correctly, I was struggling, but on Friday it all came together. I was grinning from ear to ear.

Next month I will introduce the site and offer this type of website, or blog for anyone else who may be interested in this type of site.

Coming Soon...

SEO - Search Engine Optimization

Are Twitter or Facebook right for your business?

Google Analytics - what is it?

Search Engine - another show about technology
How Stuff Works - and things you should know

But don't think they are just about computing, you can tune in about Books, Sports, Comedy, you name it, you'll find it.

 You can find podcasts by searching for them on iTunes, or just searching the word Podcast in your favourite search engine.

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Music on the Web

I don't really listen to the radio much. I can't seem to find any stations that don't play music that is less that 30 years old! So, I listen to my iPod in the car, or at home and fill it with music that I find from other sources. And where are these sources? Well, you hear about some songs from friends of course, but I find lately, that most of the music that I hear is from the sound tracks of television shows or movies!

You know how hard it is to read the credits on tv though. The stations either cut the credits off at the end, or reduce that screen so they can advertise the next big show that is coming up. While I love the website IMDB (the Internet Movie Database) for settling discussions on whether this actress is the same one you saw in that other movie, it isn't always great for finding music without a paid subscription.

So, I was very happy to discover a site called Tune Find. You type in the name of the show you heard a song, and then if you know the episode, you can look at all the songs that played, a small preview to see if it is the same one, and the name of the song and the artist. There is a link there to allow you to buy the song from iTunes or Amazon.

There are other sites that also do this, and it is handy because not every site has every show on it. Another one is called TV Show Music.

If you want to listen to these songs for awhile and not buy them, you can set up play lists on other sites. A site called Grooveshark lets you play random songs you like without signing up (for free) or if you do sign up, you can create playlists that plays the songs one after another. You can even connect to radio stations. There are other sites like this out there, and this is just one that I have found that is simple and works well.

I hope you have enjoyed this month's newsletter If you would like your website featured, or have anything you'd like me to introduce, please feel free to email me.

Also feel free to forward this newsletter on, if you find anything that you would like to share.

Thank you,

Mary Sullivan
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Forward email

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