

put the 'e' into your marketing

IF YOU'RE STILL PRINTING LEAFLETS AND MAILING OUT NEWSLETTERS, IT'S TIME TO PUT THE 'E' INTO YOUR MARKETING. WORDS BY LINDA HAILEY

E-marketing has become an absolute necessity. So how do you get started and what are the various eMarketing mediums you can use? The obvious ones are emails, your website and how you communicate using your phone. But they are just the start.

Put on your research hat and get Googling. Find out as much as you can about podcasts, pay-per-click advertising, SMS campaigns, blogs, Twitter, Linked In and Facebook. Some of these can be perfect to build your reputation as an expert and keep in touch with clients.

Ask yourself, what's the best medium for you? Will it reach your target market? What are you trying to achieve? Do you have the equipment, software and skills you need? Don't be frightened of outsourcing some of this. One participant at the recent Sydney Spa & Beauty Expo told me he employs a 16-year-old to handle his Twitter marketing!

But before you start blogging or sign up to Twitter make sure you are maximising the impact of your basic eMarketing communications. If you don't have a website, now is the time to take the plunge. If you have a website that is older

than three years it probably needs updating to take advantage of the latest technology. Check to see how it is ranking on search engines. If you're not on the first page, you're not in the race!

If you have a mailing list make sure it's electronic. Emails are cheaper, more effective and message delivery can be timed for maximum impact. Snail mail can mean your message doesn't even make it past the bin outside the post office.

If you're sending marketing emails, understand the basic rules. On an email, BCC stands for Blind Carbon Copy. If you don't know how to use it you can distribute your entire mailing list to all and sundry – definitely not a cool thing to do and totally against the spirit of privacy legislation. The same goes for unsolicited email campaigns; they are no longer acceptable and show potential clients that you have little respect for them or their time.

And while I'm on my technology hobby-horse, what about your phones? If you're using an answering machine with the standard 'sorry, I am not available' message, don't be surprised if potential clients don't leave messages and move on to the next salon on their list. In this day and age we are into instant gratification. If I call you I want to know where you are and when you will be back. Bite the bullet and pay for a call diversion to your mobile phone. Then get really innovative and record a message that says where you are and when you will be available. Clients and potential clients will feel like you are always available.

Whether you like it or not, how you use technology says a lot about your business. Just like the way you dress and the car you drive, technology sends a subtle message about where you sit in the marketplace.

So why not give eMarketing a go? If you don't succeed the first time, keep trying. Think of all those advertisements you ran in newspapers before you got it right. Successful eMarketing can also take time! **bella**

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