

Ann Handley once said, “Even when you are marketing to your entire audience or customer base, you are still simply speaking to a single human at any given time.” We’ve heard time and time again. people want to feel a connection to the brands they are supporting. That connection could be as simple as having fun, or as complex as wanting to support businesses that support their values. I like to think about business success as lighting a fire. In this metaphor, the kindling is your digital presence, the gasoline is your reputation and community influence, and the initial spark is your community, customers, and YOU the business owner.

In the marketing world, digital marketing is getting all the attention. Don’t get me wrong, without a prominent web presence, your business will die. However, for local businesses, a lack of local marketing strategies will produce the same result. In fact, I’d go out on a limb and say it’s more important than digital marketing at the start of your business. Not only do local marketing strategies traditionally cost less and produce a higher return on investment (ROI,) they are also the magic sauce that makes your business truly unique.

I run a boutique marketing firm specializing in local and social media marketing. Which is code for, I drink champagne and think of ideas for people all day. My firm had the pleasure of working with the Pedal Pub Quad Cities location on their launch and marketing strategy for their 2019 opening. Even though we were working against a few hurdles; a late start to the season (Opening Labor day weekend) and other geographical and political challenges; we still were able to have a strong showing for the season.

During its opening weekend, Pedal Pub Quad Cities had 63 bookings with 165+ guests for total net revenue of over \$7,500.00. This was only the beginning; the franchise went on to make a little under \$19,000 for its first month in operation. Even with weather issues into October, the operation reached 63 bookings throughout the month. However, these are not even the most impressive stats of the business.

With a large majority of my firm’s work concentrated on social media, public relations, and business development, we are excited to say we were able to secure 2,851 followers on Facebook, with impressions of 135,832 since opening. Pedal Pub Quad Cities appeared in over 10 news articles, and our team has been live on-air four times with local media. All of this happening since August 20th, 2019.

Returning to our aforementioned metaphor, Pedal Pub Quad Cities is on fire. The franchise’s fire will continue to grow strong because before it even opened, our team was making the right connections and building the right relationships. Using an effective word-of-mouth strategy, we created hype around the business. Leveraging local influencers we announced the launch even before we got our bikes in the Quad Cities. Our announcement was a simple post on Facebook; the post was then shared 30 times. That post then got picked up by a few others who updated the creative. The post continued to grow. Overnight we went from 0 to 1,000 followers.

Our Team also fostered relationships with Local Chamber of Commerce officials, members of the visitor's bureau, local officials, news anchors, and local influencers. We had instant brand recognition. These people didn't like us because we wanted to bring in a new business; they liked our style, personality, and passion for local business. What can I say, we've got some boss sauce.

Trying to launch and grow your franchise? It just takes some boss sauce and people-centered marketing.

What are you going to do to light your business on fire today?