

Brett Hogarth

is co-founder and Executive Director at Impact Data, which specialises in data communication. Brett details some of the important ways new media and technology is affecting marketing.

www.impactdata.com.au

PS Now on *Talking Business* is Brett Hogarth who is co-founder and Executive Director at Impact Data which specialises in data communication. Brett is discussing some of the ways new media and technology is affecting marketing.

Thanks for joining us on *Talking Business*, Brett.

BH You're welcome. Thanks for having me.

PS Why don't you talk to us about Impact Data, what it actually does?

BH Impact Data specialises in direct and new media communications based around database marketing principles. So basically, what we do is provide our clients with an ability to communicate directly with their customers.

PS Okay, so someone comes in with a database and says, 'What can I do with this?', and you come up with smart ideas?

BH Exactly. Sometimes they have an existing database and we're trying to find the best ways to utilise that moving forward, and sometimes they don't have anything at all, so we want to help them build from scratch.

PS So you're suggesting that new media and technology is affecting the way we market. Why don't you give us some examples?

BH Absolutely. Some of the things that are being done in the marketplace today which we're assisting with a client, like a camera retailer, being able to build profile information of their customers, asking customers what it is that they're interested in receiving communication wise, being able to also track customers and find out what it is that they're buying, and being able to deliver communications to them that are incredibly relevant and valuable, and therefore have good response rates.

PS A part of your service, in a sense, is to say to this retailer, ask these key questions, and with the answers they get, we can market more effectively to them?

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BH Absolutely. What we're trying to do is provide those clients of ours the ability to segment their customers into small target audiences and deliver a highly valuable communication to a small portion of their overall database.

PS So it means that you don't have to go for a wide scattergun approach, you basically shoot for the people who are more likely to say yes to an offer?

BH Absolutely. Yeah, the motto is *Right Person, Right Message, Right Time*.

PS Good motto. What else are you doing, mate? That's one example, give us another example of the sort of stuff you're doing?

BH Well, we traverse a lot of industries with the work that we're doing, so at maybe the top-end of town, if you wanted to call it that, we're working with some big names on some more complex marketing strategies that revolve around smarter use of databases and customer information. But, at the same time, we're trying to take all of those principles into the small/medium business space and offer it to them in quick and easily accessible ways so that they can get the same benefit for their small business.

PS What about a small operation that doesn't really have a database? What can you offer that sort of business?

BH Oh, absolutely. Let's take maybe a hotel for example. Our home turf when we started the business some time ago was the hospitality industry, so hotels and restaurants. But in a hotel it might be offering them the capability of interacting with their customers and asking them what they're interested in finding out about. So, at my local hotel, it might be asking me what I prefer to drink, what sort of my music I like, what departments of the hotel I come to, maybe even what code of football I like to watch. When they then have something on that matches exactly those criteria they can let me know. So the message that I receive is perfectly tailored towards me, and for that reason it gets a higher response from me.

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PS How do you actually source the information to then pass on to your client?

BH Well, sometimes it's as easy as just walking up to people in a hotel and asking them, so the hotel will actually send their staff out on the floor.

PS So not always new media is used?

BH No, no. Sometimes it's a nice grass roots thing. So yeah, asking people if they'd like to sign up for a membership or a VIP program of sorts. Sometimes it's getting them to go to the businesses website and sign up at the website. Other times we have people sending in messages off their mobile phones and joining the membership directly that way.

PS We're talking to Brett Hogarth from a company called Impact Data. So, in a sense, what you're talking about is what everyone in the website land is saying, communities are really important to get these people coming to your website, but you're also using communities to go to businesses?

BH Absolutely, yeah. And the example before with the hotel, all of the people that go to that hotel are a community in themselves, being able to build these groups of people... But actually, the most important thing about all of that is to treat every individual as an individual, it is a prime point of what Impact Data offers, to be able to facilitate a one to one communication strategy, as opposed to a one to many communication strategy.

PS Well, give us an example of how you do a mass marketing campaign which actually targets the individuals, one on one?

BH Sure. We've got a really interesting piece of technology that we run at the moment. It's called *Timeline Marketing*, so it is a series of communications over a period of time that would go to a person, based on, let's call it a trigger. So the trigger might be renewing your membership for health insurance, then in nine months time a friendly reminder to let you know that you're coming up to renewal, and maybe

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another reminder at 10 or 11 months, and then another one after 12 months to let you know you're overdue. That's a nice easy one. We do a similar thing for a national tyre retailer where the trigger is the customer buying a set of tyres, and then they get given a series of communications for two and a half years about bringing a car back in for suspension and tyre rotations, and things like that. But everybody's receiving a personal sequence of messages that's based on when they made their purchase.

PS Yeah, that's a good idea. So, what about things like Facebook, are you getting involved in those sort of social networking areas and creating strategies for businesses?

BH One of our key principles, I suppose, is to be as agnostic with our technologies as possible. Impact Data's services, being able to interface with any number of data collection points, Facebook included, so when people signup to Facebook environments, that information can be moved into Impact Data as well. As I mention websites, we interface with point of sales systems that monitor purchasing and a wide range of data sources. But to us, the most important piece is the data and where we get it from, we'll go looking for it everywhere.

PS I guess a lot of businesses are quite staggered with what you guys are seeing in terms of the potential of new technology and new media, because people are just not skilled in that area, but you obviously are?

BH Yeah, well we've become quite proficient over time with what we do, and adapting to new technologies as they emerge is important all the time, and trying to keep our clients as informed as possible about those things is very important to us. So part of our service is education and advice, and the other side of our service is that we construct and build the toolsets that they use. We're a technology house, we're a development company, we build our own software to provide to our clients to use, and all of the tools that we build revolve around our key principles of success.

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PS You must be staggered how a lot of businesses are unaware of the value of research in their customer base?

BH Oh absolutely. Anywhere from a client that has no information whatsoever, and we're advising them and helping them build that information from a starting point. At the other end of the scale, there's business that's dripping with information, they've got more data than they know what to do with, but they haven't yet unlocked the power of the information that they've got and turned it into a communications potential. So that's an interesting part of our life as well.

PS If you could give advice to business owners who are listening right now on the plane, what are some of the simple strategies you would recommend they do to get really valuable data out of their clients?

BH Okay, well number one would be; don't be scared about interacting with customers and ask them for information. You'd be surprised at how many people want to engage with the business and give that information over in return for valuable communications. And number two; (and we think more about this with the current financial situation) building a customer database is a great insurance policy for your business. It gives you access to people who you already know and they already know you, and it's a lot cheaper and easier to win new business off existing customers than it is to go and find new customers. Thirdly; keep the level of interactions and communications up, make sure they're always regular, but they're always targeted and offering inherent value.

PS Great stuff. Now, if people want to contact you, what's your website?

BH You can have a look at www.impactdata.com.au.

PS Alright mate. Thanks for joining us on *Talking Business*.

BH You're welcome. Thank you.