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Darren Root • Apr. 21, 2014

Think Help Not Hype When Marketing Your Firm

For the past several decades, the function of marketing has been focused on selling consumers about the benefits of a particular service or product. Most companies, accounting firms included, have tried to create “hype” about their wares using mass media to generate sales.

However, the Internet revolution has changed this model, bringing with it both an explosion of new channels through which to reach prospects and more empowered consumers who now control how and when they consume marketing messages. And this new breed of consumer gives a lot less credence to traditional marketing and advertising.

Today, trying to use hype to sell your firm just doesn't work very well because more and more consumers of accounting services—and just about everything else—are rapidly shifting their search for information online and are using the content they find there to make purchase decisions. What consumers want now is credible, trustworthy information that helps them learn about your area of expertise.

Firms that adapt to this new reality, providing helpful information online, and in other marketing channels, can successfully promote their firm in the process. This is the fundamental concept of “YOUtility”—the subject of a new eBook, *YOUTILITY for Accountants*, that I recently co-authored with New York Times best-selling author

and marketing guru Jay Baer, which is now available on [Amazon Kindle](#), [Nook](#),

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knowledge and expertise for free—fearing that if we do, no one will pay for our services—the truth is that in today's environment the more information firms offer, the more consumers realize how much they do need our services. Plus, the more relevant content your firm publishes online, the more visible your website, the “digital doorway” of your practice, will be.

So how can you make the concept of YOUTility work for you? Start by thinking about the kind of information your ideal clients would find helpful to receive from your firm. Then build a plan for creating and delivering it, sharing relevant content on your website, via email, and through social media channels.

Even if you do use more traditional means of marketing such as print advertising, you can still apply the YOUTility principle by making your messages more educational and less of a hard sell, remembering that when it comes to winning new business, offering help—not hype—will position your firm for success.

Firm Management • Marketing

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