

# Small Business Matters

Want more information and resources on this week's topics, ideas and events? Go to [www.cose.org/smallbizmatters](http://www.cose.org/smallbizmatters).

PRESENTED BY



## 52 TIPS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

### #37 – Stretch Your Content Resources Further

Content marketing, or creating and distributing highly specific content meant to inspire customer action, is all the rage these days. Jay Baer, president of marketing consultant Convince & Convert, cited data last week during the Content Marketing World Conference that 69% of business-to-consumer firms are creating more content than a year ago. Further, 70% of business-to-business firms are doing the same, according to research from the Content Marketing Institute and Marketing Profs.

The problem with that, especially for small businesses, is how to feed the content beast in a budget-friendly way. That's where content atomization comes in, Baer said during a session about content atomization. In a phrase, content atomization is the practice of stretching your content as far as it can go, including recycling it on other platforms and spinning off additional pieces of content from one idea.

Finding additional places for your content to live is essential. Baer revealed data that

found that 85% of Internet time is spent on 15 or fewer websites.

"The chances of your website being one of those 15 is officially 0%," he said, adding that is why finding additional platforms on which to catch people's attention is so crucial.

One example of creating these additional content platforms: Baer said his firm creates 10 blogs per week, two each day. Each week, the company takes its top-performing blogs and has someone record an audio version of it by reciting it. And just like that, a podcast is born.

"Content atomization creates resources out of thin air," he said. In fact, Baer related that every 3-minute-long video he has shot on his iPhone has created 10 additional pieces of content. The additional platforms his content lands on include Youtube, a video podcast, an audio podcast, his personal Facebook page, his company Facebook page, a blog, LinkedIn, email, SlideShare and Medium.

"Trying to do one big idea is like trying to catch lightning in a bottle," he said.



To avoid redundancy, the company rolls the content in waves, staggered across platforms. Also, considering the audience for each platform is important. "The audience for Medium and the audience for SlideShare is very different," he said.

Splitting up your big pieces of content into smaller pieces of content also helps amplify your company's message. "It gives the impression that you're everywhere," he said.

Perhaps just as importantly for small businesses, content atomization maximizes resources. "You can't only do (major pieces of content)," he told the audience. "IBM doesn't have that kind of budget. Lowe's doesn't have that kind of budget."

## TECH TALK

### How to Choose a Data Center

Not all data centers are created equal. This is an unfortunate lesson learned by many business owners.

Before we get into that, let's first discuss what is a Data Center and why it is important to your company's success and longevity. A data center is a purpose built facility that houses your critical data. The size of your company does not matter, whether you are a business with one employee or a multi-national, worldwide organization – we ALL have critical data that must be accessible, secure and always available. However based on your needs and requirements for uptime, availability and security, that is where data center services can become complex.

Some companies have an internal IT Closet, and consider that sufficient for their needs, albeit their business related data and hardware are located in an unsecured, easily accessible location with no redundant systems in place. For a business owner, that is a risky proposition as any downtime can be catastrophic to your business and brand.

Most businesses realize at some point, whether through trial and error, personal pain, loss of customers or external governing requirements that they will need to house their Primary and/or Secondary critical data and services at a multi-tenant data center. That sounds simple, however not all data centers are created equal. If you've ever toured a big 15,000 square foot or bigger data center it can be overwhelming. Security procedures just to get in the front door, loud buzzing of servers, storage and network equipment, rows and rows of cabinets, blinking lights, the whoosh of



Petar Bojovic,  
BlueBridge Networks

cool air, cages, cameras, cabling galore. Wow – because most data centers look similar from afar, what is one to do?

This is where the business owner must perform some due diligence and make sure their business needs and requirements align to the products and services the data center is providing. How? Well, here are some key areas of interest that would factor into your decision.

**Products and Services.** Does the data center provide leased space only, or other services like, cloud computing, security services, disaster recovery and business continuity, etc. Have a good understanding of what they can do, but also understand what they won't do. This is important to understand the line of delineation. When you, the business owner, are experiencing an issue, you want to make sure all roles and responsibilities are clearly defined with no ambiguity, thus increasing your mean-time to being operational.

**Power.** Ask questions on power design, redundancies and uptime. The data center should have detailed information on all aspects

of the power distribution and infrastructure.

**Network.** This item at times might be overlooked. Does the data center provide Internet services with multiple carriers for increased availability and redundancy? Does the data center only provide connections directly to Telco Carriers? Understand costs for these connections as these charges can add up.

**Preventative Maintenance.** This item is critically important. I've learned at an early age in business, that you want to make sure the company, "does what it says". A good way is to ask for records or maintenance, notifications and repair. Keep in mind mechanical systems will fail, there is no way around that fact, however understanding the redundancies in place and proactive approach can benefit the business owner and ultimately their customers.

**Contracts and SLA.** Review all terms and conditions and service level agreements, and negotiate terms if you feel uncomfortable. A Multi-tenant Data Center should work with you in crafting a service and conditions that work for you. Let's face it, all companies act different, think different and most importantly are different. You should align yourself with a partner that is flexible.

**Certification.** Ensure the data center follows industry recognized certifications and stays current.

**References.** This one is a no-brainer; however, ask for both current and past customers as references.

PETAR BOJOVIC is Director of Operations of BlueBridge Networks in Cleveland.

September 14

### By The Numbers Content Marketing

**27 mil**  
The number of content marketing pieces being shared every day

**50%**  
The amount of customer time spent engaging with custom content

SOURCE: AOL/NIELSEN, HUBSPOT

### Connection Calendar

#### BUSINESS VALUATION AND PLANNING THE NEXT STEPS PRESENTED BY US BANK

Knowing the value of your business is critical for your success when planning for the future. Whether you're considering selling your business or creating a succession plan, planning for retirement or even for tax purposes, we invite you to join the experts at U.S. Bank for a workshop on understanding the value of your business.

**SEPTEMBER 23**  
8 – 10 AM  
Embassy Suites, Independence

Cost: Free  
Register at [www.cose.org/events](http://www.cose.org/events).

#### FINDING THE MONEY FOR YOUR ENERGY PROJECT

COSE and Cuyahoga County Executive Armond Budish invite you to learn more about the Clean Energy Financing Hub and possibilities for your business to affordably reduce energy costs, spur job growth and reduce pollution.

**SEPTEMBER 24**  
9 – 11 AM  
Cuyahoga County Administrative Headquarters, Cleveland

Cost: Free  
Register at [www.cose.org/events](http://www.cose.org/events).

#### 10<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL COSE SMALL BUSINESS CONVENTION

There are hundreds of reasons small business owners and entrepreneurs should attend the Small Business Convention. Here are just a few: First, dynamic keynotes featuring powerful stories of people following their dreams, overcoming adversity, and building successful empires remind you why you stepped out on your own. Second, more than 30 educational workshops designed around topics that meet your needs and address your challenges. Finally, you will make valuable networking connections at a packed tradeshow, dinners and closing night party.

**OCTOBER 21-22**  
Cleveland Public Auditorium & Conference Center, Cleveland

Cost: COSE members \$159, non-members \$310  
Register at [www.smallbizconvention.com](http://www.smallbizconvention.com)

Check out [www.cose.org/events](http://www.cose.org/events) for all the latest happenings.

### NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH TIPS

In recognition of National Preparedness Month this September, COSE will provide a preparedness tip of the week each week on the Small Business Matters page of Crain's Cleveland Business. Today's tip has to do with regular inspections.

#### Regular Equipment Inspections

Perhaps the easiest way to prevent disaster from striking in your workplace is to get out in front of any potential mishaps. The Occupational Health and Safety Administration recommends officially naming certain employees to be responsible for the proper maintenance of equipment and systems. Improper maintenance can lead to equipment malfunctions, which can result in injuries to employees, fires or other catastrophes.