

Empowered

A monthly online publication published by Thompson Management Consulting, LLC for small business change makers – December 2014



Thompson Management Consulting, LLC

Austin E. Thompson, Jr.

Year in Review

Thompson Management Consulting, LLC would like to extend warm and sincere wishes to all of our clients, newsletter subscribers, radio listeners, and other supporters for a magnificent holiday season. In 2014, we exceeded our expectations and goals for the year, and could not have accomplished these significant milestones without you. Our consulting company focuses on continuous improvement, both internally, and how we address the need to enhance our operations to better serve our most valuable assets, our clients. Therefore, we have already identified ways in which we can optimize some of our processes in 2015 to enhance your experience with us. These enhancements are made based on feedback from individuals with whom we do business and from our internal approach to on-going recognition of a need for continuously improving our service delivery model, which is built around strong customer relationship management and quality of service. In 2014, we launched three significant initiatives, which have increased the BRAND recognition of our company, while allowing us to establish strategic relationships with members of Corporate Atlanta and the small business community.

First, Thompson Management Consulting, LLC planned, organized, and executed its First Annual Entrepreneurship and Small Business Summit during National Small Business Week 2014, May 12 – May 16. During this event, we were honored to work with some of the most successful businesses and professionals in the Metro Atlanta Area who work tirelessly to embolden the small business community in Georgia. These businesses and professionals are NOWaccount, Business Plans & More, Inc., Gwinnett County Chamber of Commerce, Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Small Business Administration, Better Business Bureau, Department of Economic Development, PNC Bank, N.A., Dr. Karen Starks, Stanton Law Firm,

Continued on Page 2

In This Issue:

- Page 1-3** Thompson Management Consulting, LLC – Year in Review
- Page 3-4** 5 Things to Consider for a Successful 2015
- Page 5** Lecture Series: A BRAND New You
- Page 6-7** Business Market Place & Advertising



With

Austin E. Thompson, Jr.
CEO - Thompson Management Consulting, LLC

WATB 1420AM

www.watb1420.com

**Saturday, December 13, 2014
4:00pm - 5:00pm**

**"Improve Your Digital Presence with
Effective Websites"**

Small Business Development Center of Lawrenceville, DeVry University, Georgia Piedmont Technical College Conference Center, Fort Valley State University, Kendrick Law Firm, Rep. Valencia Stovall (HD-74), Mayor Ted Terry of the City of Clarkston, Procurement Websites, LLC, and Rapid Gourmet. We also thank those who registered and attended during the week of workshops and panel discussions. Topics included, but were not limited to accessing business credit, developing a business plan, working with the government and securing government contracts, Entrepreneurship 101, employee law, the Affordable Care Act for small business owners, building trust, securing business loans, and much more. Also, we appreciate receiving a special recognition from the office of Governor Nathan Deal, who sent his best wishes for a successful Town Hall Business Meeting. I would be remiss if I did not thank three wonderful and dear friends who stepped in to assist me tremendously, Joyce Thompson, who assisted me at the DeVry Decatur campus, Sandra Nicholls, who assisted me with public relations, and Andrea George, who facilitated the Town Hall discussion and provided the refreshments. These ladies are incredible.

We are currently planning and coordinating our Second Annual Entrepreneurship and Small Business Summit with a new model. Of course, we are an organization which continues to find ways to improve for the benefit of our customers, and those who work with us. Continue to visit www.nsbw2015.com for event updates. We currently have 2014 event information up, but that will be replaced with 2015 event information as soon as all arrangements are confirmed. However, continue to check the site, and we will send out a notification.

Second, we launched an electronic Business Newsletter, Empowered. This newsletter serves as a vehicle through which entrepreneurs and small business owners are promoted by writing industry related articles and providing bios for their spotlights. The purpose of this newsletter is to provide a resource for our customers and other small businesses to market their products, services, and overall BRAND. It provides an additional B2B and B2C marketing resource for business owners.



Empowered is proud to have launched its inaugural issue in January 2014 with so many who now express an interest in submitting articles addressing a myriad of topics important to small business owners. We continue to invite business owners and entrepreneurs to submit articles, as we are moving toward the digitization of Empowered to enhance the BRAND strength of this publication and increase the visibility of those who advertise and promote in it. We intend to continue using this newsletter to promote small businesses and business activity in Georgia. Our subscriber list is growing stronger and we are just over 1,500 members who receive the newsletter. We thank Rapid Gourmet, Caribbean International Shipping Services, Caribbean and American Business Global Connection, Gwinnett Association of Business Entrepreneurs, and Fort Valley State University for advertising with us, and we wish to continue growing this list of valued advertisers. Therefore, we invite you to advertise with us, as Empowered and Thompson Management Consulting, LLC are planning greater leaps in 2015 with increased exposure.

Our third significant launch was to partner with the Carib and Company radio program at WATB 1420AM with the illustrious, Mr. Colin Tinto, a prominent Atlanta radio personality for the past seven years. Mr. Tinto reached out to me with the opportunity to co-host a program with him on the second Saturday of each month between the hours of 4 p.m. and 5 p.m. With this invitation, I accepted and established the Entrepreneurship and Economic Development hour. The objective, in addition to promoting the services and business initiatives of Thompson Management Consulting, LLC, is to promote small businesses and their owners. We invite business owners and entrepreneurs on the show for live on-air interviews, which are broadcasted on 1420AM radio, and can also be accessed from the radio station's website (www.watb1420.com), giving our program a global influence. On Saturday, December 13, 2014, we will close out the year with a live on-air interview of Mr. Marc Hamm of Procurement Websites, who will share with our audience the importance of establishing a strong digital presence to capture a significant ROI with effective websites. As always, we are working to improve the way in which we deliver business news and information on this program, so we continue to appreciate your support and welcome the small business community to tune in and contact us for a live on-air interview to promote your business.

In conclusion, we thank all of our customers and supporters. We continue to evaluate all we are doing to make improvements and drive value-added enhancements to how we serve our customers and supporters. Please visit www.tmconsultingllc.com for all information on Thompson Management Consulting, LLC and the services we provide. Happy holidays to everyone and we wish you all nothing but the very best for a prosperous and wonderful New Year. Thank you.

5 Things to Consider for A Successful 2015

Austin E. Thompson, Jr.

As we prepare to leave 2014 behind for a new year, there are several important recommendations that entrepreneurs should consider:

Leave Negative Baggage in 2014

Just about every individual enter a new year with some kind of resolution. Lose weight, improve investment portfolio, find new love, open a business, get a new job, take a well-deserved vacation, etc. No matter what those resolutions are, they seem to be predicated on missed opportunities from the preceding year, with hopes of capitalizing on recognized opportunities in the forthcoming year. Oftentimes, we leave the current year wishing some things could have been better. For business owners, we may ponder weak sales margins, decreased revenues, lost customers, a trimmed down budget, affected by a bad economy, and other things we wish to leave behind for more lucrative pastures in a new year.

Letting go is the first step in making a positive rebound. Yes, things may have been bad for you this year, but look at your setback as a set up for a greater comeback. I love setbacks. Ok, this may sound ridiculous. However, setbacks provide you with an opportunity to assess where you may be going wrong with your business (the evaluation). Furthermore, you have an incentive to evaluate, find measurable and workable solutions, then, enhance your overall business to meet the demands of your customers (the optimization). When things are going great, we are less inclined to perform these audits. However, when the floor is falling out from under us, we are more inclined to diagnose a problem and resolve it. Start the New Year off with a new and revitalized perspective. Whatever went wrong in 2014, leave it in 2014 and start anew.

You will be surprised how a fresh perspective on new opportunities, combined with an overview of your business, can drive you in a better direction. If you need assistance, find the right assistance to drive your business down a successful pathway. Only by recognizing the need for change, will you see a change for the better in 2015.

Improve your BRAND

BRAND...here is that word again. What does it encompass? How do I recognize what it is? For business owners and entrepreneurs, effective branding is the difference between success and falling behind the competition. The competitive advantage we need oftentimes relies on how we are branding our businesses for effective visibility in the market we serve. I can offer many key points on this subject, but I will provide three key strategies to apply:

1. Attend more events to improve the awareness of your business. If no one knows you exist, it becomes difficult for you to grow. Visibility is integral to growing your presence and attracting attention to your business. So, find those events where you can meet other entrepreneurs and network, set up as vendors to reach potential customers, and events which may provide an opportunity for you to facilitate a workshop or participate on panels. This strategy will not only help enhance the branding of your business, but projecting an encouraging personal BRAND will leave a positive footprint on the minds of those with whom you come into contact.
2. Write a blog or create a newsletter for your business. Be a subject matter expert and own it. People love to hear what you have to say, because they are always looking for ways to improve themselves. If you enjoy writing and engaging your customers, then consider writing advice columns with information your customers can use to improve their businesses. This is a great way to get recognition, and also, a great way for people to keep in touch with you. Build your integrity, create a loyal following, and stay visible.
3. Evaluate your website constantly. I can't tell you how many times I look at my own business website and critique it for changes. The ultimate objective is to make your website desirable and attractive. According to the Nielson Group, the average time a viewer will spend on a webpage is less than 60 seconds, but the critical period is between 0-10 seconds.

If they like what they see within that critical period, they will have between 10-60 seconds to look around a bit. Good websites have pages which are bookmarked for later reading. Bad websites have pages which are disregarded altogether. So, make sure your website is robust, and designed to serve the purpose you intended. A good web presence will help enhance the BRAND of your business.

Be Aggressive – Take Risks – Embrace Failure

If you are going to be a business owner, you need to be comfortable with the reality of taking risks and diving into the unexpected. Now, I agree, not all risks are good risks, but they must be calculated thoroughly before you embark on them. Successful business owners and entrepreneurs are risk takers and change makers. They are the ones who recognize opportunities and go after them. If the thought of pursuing risky opportunities results from you being afraid to fail, entrepreneurship may not be for you. Failure is never an option, but it happens. Those who fail are those who never had the courage to try. Failure is part of building your entrepreneurship fortitude, and learning from failure is what built many successful small businesses which evolved into multi-national conglomerates. Being aggressive, taking calculated risks, and learning from failed attempts provide the lessons learned moments with an education you can't get in any business school. Take the risks, fall, pick yourself up, dust yourself off, then get back on the grind and try again. In 2015, identify what you will pursue and go seize your moment. Only by taking full advantage of an opportunity, and taking those necessary risks will you ever realize true success. As Steve Jobs once said, "stay hungry, stay foolish".

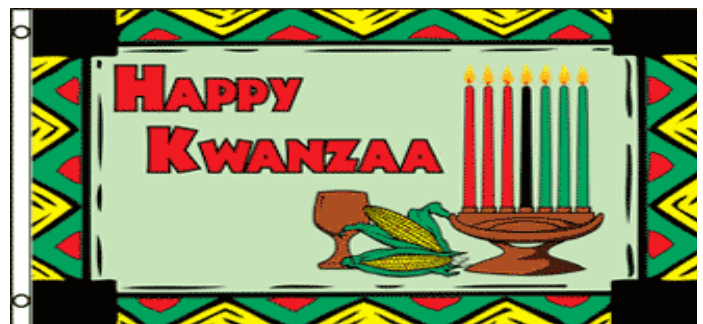
Surround Yourself with Successful People

It is said, successful people surround themselves with other successful people. Therefore, if you wish to become successful, surround yourself with successful people. Why would you wish to surround yourself with those who are heading in the opposite direction from you? There is a saying, "if you wish to understand the character of a man, see who his company is." Building success requires possessing a certain mindset. Entrepreneurs or those aspiring to be entrepreneurs must surround themselves with other like-minded individuals who have the vision to create and innovate. Place yourself with people who don't feel threatened by you, but will encourage you to do your best.

Place yourself in the company of those who uplift you, rather than in the company of those who set traps to tear you down. As you experience increased success on your path to growing your business, you will find separation from the uninspired necessary. Those who see you aspiring to do great things and sit envious of your accomplishments will work to derail you from your destiny. They will try to convince you that you are wasting your time, hoping to bring you down to their level. Mark Twain said "Keep away from people who belittle your ambitions. Small people always do that, but the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great."

Never Get Satisfied

No matter how much success you experienced in 2014, never get satisfied with achieving success. There is always more to accomplish and more to experience. Growth is inevitable, but so is stagnation, if you do not invest in growing your business. Take time to appreciate what accomplishments were made in 2014, but work diligently to exceed these milestones by remaining motivated and setting new goals for 2015. Complacency leads to sluggish momentum, which leads to diminished performance and loss of inspiration. Successful entrepreneurs realize that despite much success earned, there is always something new to explore and experience. When your flame is lit and shining bright, find ways to keep it lit. When the flame blows out, darkness falls and you lose sight of your direction. Remain motivated in 2015 and never get satisfied.



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small business owners and entrepreneurs
like yourself.***



Please join Austin E. Thompson, Jr., Co-host of the Carib & Company Show's Entrepreneurship and Economic Development segment for a discussion on **"Improving Your Digital Presence With Effective Websites"**

We will have Mr. Marc Hamm of Procurement Websites, LLC as our guest to discuss the ROI benefits of having a strong digital presence.



Tune in Saturday, December 13, 2014 at 4:00pm on 1420AM, or join us online at www.WATB1420.com, and click on listen live. Thank you very much for your support, and we look forward to a progressive discussion. We welcome you to call in with questions at (404) 292-1420. Happy Holidays!!!



Happy Holidays



From

Thompson Management Consulting, LLC



Lecture Series and Book Signing Atlanta-Fulton County Library System

A BRAND New You: Taking Ownership of Your personal BRAND

A lecture and workshop series from Austin E. Thompson, Jr., Author of A BRAND New You: Taking Ownership of Your Personal BRAND.

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Saturday, March 7, 2015: 1 p.m. – 3 p.m.

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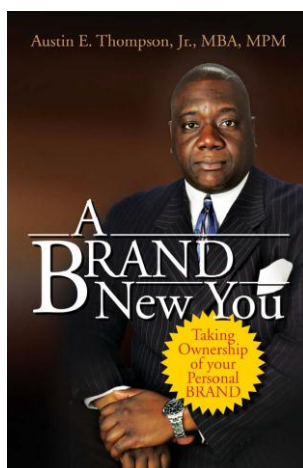
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