

The power of building an online tribe for your business



By Terence T Chinyangare

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With the continuous evolution of technology and the influential power online interaction has in our daily lives, it's impossible to separate a business's real-world relevance from its online persona and digital footprint.



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Whether you're a business or entrepreneur looking to promote yourself and your services, your very success or failure often rests on making a strong initial impression and these days, that impression can be made – and broken – online.

Stand out from the crowd

Whatever your services or product offerings, one undeniable reality of marketing it in today's world is that you can't even get a foot in the door (or a presence in people's minds) if you don't have a presence on social platforms, as well as a well-designed, strategically functional and visually appealing website. Having a mere online presence used to be enough several years ago but the market has become saturated to the point where competition between similar service providers or product suppliers has reached a never-before-seen height.



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While you now have to compete with many others in the same field, customers now demand a more personalised and in-depth experience. No matter what you're selling, you need to customise how you promote your offerings to your target market's interests, wants and needs. Your business needs to make a personal connection with its prospective customers, going beyond offering your products as a supply-and-demand business to one that builds relationships. A more human, relatable persona will garner their trust and gain interest.

It all starts with your website

Your core digital presence starts at your website. It represents you as a brand and might be the only impression you'll be able to make before a user moves on to another, more appealing website and brand. Intelligent web design involves understanding the psychology of human interaction with websites and applications and using this information to create a website that's functional, appealing, easy to use and navigate.

People are attracted to simplicity, intuitiveness and ease of use. This is essentially what UX (user experience) is as a service: a skillset that includes understanding how the best sites work and why then implementing this knowledge in a way that works optimally for a business. There's a great deal of research involved but the reward of investing in proper UX and UI (user interface) when creating a new website or redoing your existing one, will be monumental in terms of leads, trust gained and new customers being obtained. This brings us to the next part of this social and digital dynamic: social equity.



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Social equity

Today, the reason most brands do well is that customers have recommended them to their friends, family, co-workers and the like. Word of mouth recommendations have always been the most effective means of marketing as people place great trust in the words of others – they'd sooner buy something if a friend recommended it than if they saw even the flashiest advertising for it. Social equity is essentially your worth in terms of the online realm. It's your personality and how many people you know, the amount of trust they have in you and whether they interact with you, share your stories and recommend you to others. It's essentially your stock market value against which your success rate can be measured.

If you have a well-designed website that was professionally created, you're more likely to make a strong impression, leading to people talking about you and recommending you to others. This raises your social equity, and with this, you can grow your business – provided you correctly use online marketing to do so. It's why it's so important to entrust your branding, website creation, social media management and overall online marketing to professionals who are well-versed with exactly what needs to be done and how.

ABOUT TERENCE T CHINYANGARE

I'm a technology nomad working as an associate brand manager. I travel around meeting clients and helping them navigate new territories through brand blueprinting and stewardship. I strive to know them and think deeply about their unspoken values and needs. My objective is to help them create meaningful experiences, enabling their brand to be successful. Creating opportunities out of the challenges through implementations and evaluation.

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