

EDITORIAL

THE INTERNET IS ISOLATING YOUR BUSINESS FROM YOUR CUSTOMERS

By SHAWN TACEY, CEO of Localloop

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In my last article, I explained the importance of knowing your customers, understanding their needs and understanding their perceptions of your business and its offerings. I now want to expand on the reasons why making the investment to know your customers and provide for their needs is so vital to the survival and growth of your business in the 21st century internet marketplace.

The growing necessity to study and know your customers results from the rapid shift of power, control and influence going on in the marketplace today. It used to be that the majority of power and control belonged to the media, followed by businesses, and what little power was left belonged to consumers. Over the last several years, this hierarchy has been inverted, and consumers have now assumed the top spot.

Despite this emerging shift in the marketplace, Web 2.0 mediums, like Google, Facebook, Yelp, Amazon and others continue to pursue ways to control, manipulate and monetize consumers, and are attempting to convince business owners that the only way they too can profit on the internet is to follow suit by engaging in strategies like search engine optimization, unverified reviews, paid for ranking placements, reputation sanitization and “likes”. Not one of these strategies is designed to respectfully acknowledge the power of consumers or meet the needs of consumers the way they want them to be met.

In their most simplistic forms, Web 2.0 mediums are free playgrounds built to attract consumers for the perverse purpose of gathering and selling data related to their social, search, purchase and relational behaviors. These mediums are extracting something from consumers that is far more valuable than the free services they provide. They are taking and selling our privacy, our dignity, our person and our power. They claim to be connecting us, but by invading our worlds with their pervasive practices, Web 2.0 mediums are actually isolating us from each other and from our local businesses.

From their new position of power, consumers are beginning to understand in large numbers what the Web 2.0 mediums are actually doing and they don't like it. They don't like being treated like leads or having their profiles trafficked. As a result, they are eagerly looking for an alternative to the Web 2.0 mediums that will allow them to engage in commerce without being used and violated.

Consumers want an internet medium that serves their needs first, and then serves the needs of the business they are seeking. Business owners should not

only recognize this need, but they should want the same thing. Think about it. As a business owner, why would you want to be a part of an internet medium that attempts to monetize your customers and your business before providing for the needs of your customers? Any medium that does this is actually isolating your customer from you, rather than truly connecting you.

Localloop is the new alternative internet medium consumers are looking for and they will be coming to our platform in droves. When they arrive they will be looking to connect with businesses that understand and respect their new power and the needs and expectations that come with it. Businesses need to create a presence on Localloop that addresses these needs in order to be ready when these consumers arrive. If they don't, if they fail to understand the power and needs of consumers, and if they fail to modify their behavior and communication accordingly, they will surely be left wandering in an Internet wasteland.

The Internet is only 17 years old, yet many trust their business to it. Google is a 13 year old experiment and Facebook is an 8 year old experiment. Both are built on a consumer trafficking business models that must control and monetize your customers and your business in order to survive. Why would you entrust your business communication and customer relationships to this type of entity? Your customers are beginning to reject and move away from these mediums, so should you.

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