

Luxury Experience Company

What Did We Learn In 2009?

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Though this was a very trying year that will not be forgotten by many, it has provided some very interesting outcomes showing people and businesses have learned to adapt.

What I found interesting about 2009 was that many more people and businesses were projecting an attitude of survival than what many were predicting, that of a defeatist attitude. Specifically with all of the clients that Luxury Experience worked with in 2009, I saw firsthand that each entity evoked a refreshing creative energy.

With respect to the many interesting and diverse clients that we worked with, we found a heightened awareness to not only meet the customer's needs but to exceed their expectations for service, quality, and all deliverables. Luxury Experience encountered businesses that were interested in doing more to capture a prospective customer's awareness and connect with them. This was truly a unique year for Luxury Experience as we had the opportunity to work with a wide-ranging set of clients, thus providing a different economic perspective than what was happening in the United States.

There was not only a renewed sensitivity and attention to detail, but there was a strong focus on providing what the customer wants to see and experience, not just a list of features, functionality, or attributes. So, in addition to a renewed creative focus towards the customer, what were a few other things we learned in 2009 and from whom?

Well, the Internet, still in its infancy, continues to evolve and I am seeing more structure and discipline than ever before. Businesses continue to realize that the Internet is one of the most cost-effective marketing solutions they have. The challenge is that what was once just a "website" now has become a 24 hours a day, 7 days a week marketing opportunity. The need to control costs and measure the results of every move that a company makes has created a heightened awareness across all business functions. This awareness includes requiring more control, a plan, a purpose, and stronger measurements with regards to Web2.0 and Social Network solutions. One of the foremost influences over the past year was the major online retail sites. This group of entities continues to hone their Internet presence to maximize sales while connecting with and retaining customers, which was especially evident during the holiday season.

So, what did the online retailers do and how can other businesses utilize these points going forward?

Visual Elements: There is a shelf life on products and services, so remember to refresh photos (ex. hotel rooms, property renovations, restaurant menus, restaurant photos, spa treatments, etc.) and related text (update seasonal elements, update if there was a renovation, awards granted, or changes in a wine or liquor label). Do not let your material become stagnant.

Attention to Detail: Do not react and create a new website page, or initiate a new Social Network process just because it is the latest "thing to do." Make sure that you are ready to maintain the information on a webpage, or continue the social networking communications with timely, lively, and relevant information. The level of patience of a customer is very short with regards to websites that do not deliver what they promise, or have basic errors with regards to web pages and content. If you do not show an attention to detail on your website then how can you convince a customer that you are serious about your

product or service? Once you create an **Internet Presence** you are marketing your product or service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Create an
Experience:

The Internet provides the forum to project the experiential elements of a product or service to a customer. Example: online retail sites created interactive gaming opportunities to create the experience a consumer will have once they buy the game. Hotels need to expand beyond their own elements to show what experiences exist within the immediate location that guests could take part in; restaurants should display the latest menus, pictures of the food, and images or steaming video if there are cooking classes with the chef; and Spas should discuss the treatments, the preparation prior to treatment, as well as what to do after. The longer you can stay in contact with your customer the more trust that you build with them and the more opportunity to convert them from "just looking" to a sale.

The take-away - people have become very Internet savvy and their expectations continue to expand while their patience with regards to missing web pages, outdated information, and poorly developed social networks shrinks. Make sure that you place as much attention to your **Internet Presence** as you do creating a valuable product or service. Your **Internet Presence** should be the first of many interactions with the customer, not the last.

Cheers and a toast to everyone for a Happy, Healthy, and Prosperous 2010!!!

I thank you for your continued support of Luxury Experience Company, and as always, your comments are welcome, so please send comments to: EFNesta@L-E-Company.com.

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