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Blending journalism, social media and business

Three Hyperlocal Sites to Build Your Audience



Hyperlocal news is a great option for small business owners trying to grow an online audience for marketing, but it can also be intimidating if you think you have to cover every facet of your community.

Luckily, you don't have to do that. You can narrow your focus and still reap the benefits of hyperlocal. I discuss three topics below that would make excellent local news sites by providing "added value" to the community.

That idea of adding value is important and one I preach to any would-be social media marketer regardless of overall strategy. It is the heart of content marketing.

Readers have too many choices to stay with someone who is only trying to set them up for a sales pitch. Today's online reader has a highly tuned bullshit meter when it comes to advertising, and if they sense that is all you are about then they will be gone before even registering in your analytics.

You don't want your marketing to echo in an empty chamber, so here are three ways to build your online audience and help your community at the same time.

Sports

This is good particularly if you are in an area with multiple schools, because then you aren't competing against a single school's booster club.

You can also concentrate on one sport if you like, but make sure it is a sport that already has a large following. You won't help your business by championing middle school racquetball. Covering all the local football teams would be a great choice where I live in Texas, for instance.

You can post schedules, game reports, scoring updates, standings, podcasts with coaches, photos, preview upcoming games, look in on rival teams. You can also get readers to help by providing photos and game updates.

Community Calendar

There are a lot of events happening in your town — from bake sales to festivals, there is something going on all the time.

You could build a nice audience by announcing upcoming events and keeping an online calendar for the community. Head out to one or two events a week and take photos to post and you will quickly have a growing hyperlocal site.

TIP: If you are taking photos, get lots of faces.

The nice thing about this type of site is it appeals to every member of your community and once you getting it going, the community will provide most of the content for you.

Church News

Faith is an important component of the small town lifestyle and the church is often the center of a vibrant community.

Create a site announcing events from your town's churches, share ministry photos and links to sermons, and post faith-based inspirational quotes and memes and you can build a substantial online community.

So there you go, three content options that can help grow your business at the same time you are building your community and your reputation.