

Technology

Daniel Burrus launches a product by reaching his target audience at Visionary Apps

How to not get swept away by technology when selling your product

By Mark Scott

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Daniel Burrus had a lot of options to market his new mobile phone application at Visionary Apps LLC. He could have used the tried and true print ads or created a 30-second spot for TV or radio. He could have bought into the new wave of social media and turned to Twitter or Facebook.

But the technology of his product and the glitz of his ad campaign would mean nothing if it didn't hit home with his target audience and convince them to try his product.

"We tend to focus on the technology rather than on the solution it's created," says Burrus, founder, technology forecaster and business strategist of Visionary Apps. "We talk about features and functions and things like that and we forget that we're really in the business of solving people's problems. We have to put the various hats on of the target audience and look at, 'Are we really solving their problems in our pitch? Or are we just talking about how cool our technology is?'"

Burrus decided to take his company's new mobile phone app, geared to help make foreclosed homes easier to find and buy, and attempt to meld it into the continuing media coverage of the tough economy and resulting glut of foreclosed homes on the market.

He wanted to use the media to show people he had a solution to a societal problem.

"In our case, we think the smart phone revolution is going to transform how people buy and sell homes and we're stepping up as a leader to do that by launching these products," says Burrus, a serial entrepreneur who has launched seven companies.

"Rather than having to buy advertising, we've created a news story. ... We were the 11th most downloaded app in a very short amount of time."

Your first step to reaching your target audience is to find a PR firm that can help you develop a story to sell your product.

"That's what PR firms do, they develop stories," Burrus says. "If you can put a dollar down and get \$10 back up, it's worth putting the dollar down. So you have to put some money down and invest in PR, not just to help you get the story out, but to help you create the story. Secondly, you need to take an active role in creating that story."

Scour the media world and see what's on everyone's mind and figure out how you can tie your product into that buzz.

"Whatever your product or service is, you have to be aware of what's going on in the news and then develop a story that fits into the news so that indeed you have a newsworthy story," Burrus says.

The key is you have to dig deep in the same way you did to develop your new product.

"When you put innovation and energy into developing that technology, product or service, you need to put equal innovative energy into how you're going to price it, how you're going to market it and how you're going to position it," Burrus says. "Think in terms of what it is that you are trying to do."

Focus on what you want to do and how the array of technology, whether it be social media or a print ad campaign, can help you accomplish that goal.

"Boil it down to the few things that you must do," Burrus says. "You have to lay out, 'Here's what I could do with Twitter, here's what I could do with Facebook, here's what I could do with a newspaper or a magazine. Here are the various options I have. Let's boil it down to the best way that will allow me to get my message to the people I'm trying to communicate to and then how do I integrate it?'"

How to reach: Visionary Apps LLC, (414) 367-9374, www.visionaryapps.com or www.completerealtysuite.com

Stop waiting and start doing

Daniel Burrus did not start seven companies and become a respected business strategist by reacting to what others do.

So how do you avoid being in a position where you're always reacting to others? Start by taking an hour a week to think about the future.

"I know what they'll think the minute they read that," says Burrus, founder, president and CEO of Burrus Research Associates Inc. "I don't have an hour. I'm really busy. That's just because they've never done this before. Take one hour a week and my coaching is to make sure you put it in your planner and schedule it. Otherwise, you'll be putting out fires all week and you'll never do it. In that hour, I want you to unplug from the present. Start asking yourself, 'What are the things that are happening in the near future based on what I see taking place right now?'"

Once you have all of those things in mind, make a list of the things you are certain about.

"Then you ask yourself, 'Now that I'm certain about all these things, what should I do to use that opportunity list of certainties to my advantage?'" Burrus says. "I need to take some time to be strategic about what are the problems and what are the opportunities that lie ahead so I can solve the problems before they happen and seize the new opportunities before others."

How to reach: Burrus Research Associates Inc., (800) 827-6770 or www.burrus.com

Daniel Burrus is one of the world's leading technology forecasters and business strategists. He is the author of six books and has started seven companies, including his latest in Visionary Apps LLC. He has appeared in numerous publications and on many TV programs. Burrus Research Associates Inc. is a research and consulting firm that monitors global advancements in technology-driven trends to help clients better understand how technological, social and business forces converge to create new opportunities.



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835 Sharon Drive, • Suite 200 • Cleveland, OH 44145 • P: 440-250-7000 • F: 440-250-7001 • E: webmaster@sbnonline.com