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IBD'S 10 SECRETS TO SUCCESS

Investor's Business Daily has spent years analyzing leaders and successful people in all walks of life. Most have 10 traits that, when combined, can turn dreams into reality. Each day, we highlight one.

3 TAKE ACTION: Goals are nothing without action. Don't be afraid to get started. Just do it.

Cover All Your Web Bases

3 Getting it right on the Web for firms means playing offense and defense. Tips:

Create top content. This equates to information that's substantive, free and helps customers learn something new, said Jon Wuebben, author of "Content Is Currency": "People don't want to be sold to anymore. They want to build a relationship with the companies they do business with."

Prioritize. Wuebben says content is king and not a tired bromide.

"The reality, however, is that most Web content is poorly written or developed and doesn't help companies get the results they are hoping for," he told IBD.

Hire pros to help; it's money well-spent. While a great-looking and easy-to-navigate website is crucial, it can't be a substitute for high-quality content. Rather, it's a vehicle for disseminating it.

Produce volume. The more sharp pages you create, the better, provided you ensure it's optimized for Web searches, Wuebben says. Content can take the form of e-books, blogs and social media posts, e-newsletters, auto responders, press releases and video.

He points to **Google**GOOG, where users rarely go past Page 3 in the search engine, making the marriage of volume and search engine optimization critical. A site that comes up on Page 1 of a Google search will get 20 times more traffic than a site on Page 2, and 50 times more than on Page 3.

Mobilize. Wuebben cites a study that says by 2013, more people will access the Web from their smartphones than on a PC.

Nancy Flynn, author of "The Social Media Handbook," says Facebook reports more than 350 million active users access its pages through mobile devices.

"You need to have a mobile-friendly website and produce mobile content," Wuebben said.

Understand risks. Whether companies, and by extension their employees, are responding to customer inquiries via Twitter or promoting business services on their Facebook page, "the ever-growing Web use dramatically increases organizations' exposure," Flynn said. This means possible lawsuits, regulatory violations, fines, security breaches and reputation-damaging public relations nightmares.

Protect yourself.

Establish best practices. Flynn says the most effective way to manage legal and regulatory risks associated with social media is by establishing clear policies. Educate your workforce about procedures. Enforce policy with disciplinary action and technology tools.

Keep records. At legal crunch-time, employers must "produce social media business records and other forms of electronically stored information," Flynn said.

Failure to come up with records in the course of e-discovery can result in multimillion-dollar court sanctions, jury awards, legal settlements and regulatory fines.

"U.S. courts have consistently ruled that organizations that have in place a current e-policy, supported by comprehensive employee education and enforced by best-in-class technology tools, may have a defense from liability," Flynn said.

Integrate. In addition to search engine optimization, firms should employ social media optimization, driven by sites like Facebook and Twitter. SEO and SMO reduce marketing costs, can create top customer relationships and reap benefits from an online presence, Wuebben says. **Michael Mink**