

IVIE Motivator Newsletter

Summer 2022

Welcome to the quarterly IVIE Motivator Newsletter!

Newsletters are more valuable if many members share information and resources. Articles can be about anything you found to be helpful in growing your business. Please share your business experiences including how you started your business, the way you advertise or market your business, the technology you use, and other items of interest. We welcome book reviews, technology reviews, online resources, or organizations or agencies you've found useful. We'd also like an in-depth profile of a member in each issue highlighting your business or goals for a new business. Please include any specials, new products, or new features of your business. Please send articles to abazyn@bazyncommunications.com.

Message from IVIE President

Hi members,

We just finished attending another wonderful conference and convention. As you know, we had the ability to attend in person or virtually. Please read the convention wrap-up later in this issue.

IVIE will continue to provide opportunities for members and friends to network and share ideas. If you have not already taken advantage of the following options available for members, please consider participating in one or all of them.

- On the second Sunday night each month, IVIE sponsors an ACB community call called the IVIE Entrepreneur Exchange. Each month, a topic is suggested. Those on the call give input others can use for their business. Each attendee gets the opportunity to introduce themselves and their business.
- The IVIE email discussion list is available for members and interested list participants to share resources, opportunities, and other information of interest to business owners and those interested in starting a business. If you are not on the general IVIE email discussion list, please subscribe by sending an email to ivie+subscribe@acblists.org
- As you know, the IVIE business directory gives members a chance to be contacted for networking or

business purposes. If you'd like changes to your information on the business directory, please let me know.

- Our quarterly newsletter is sent to members every quarter. Members can submit articles about their business or helpful tips.
- IVIE now has a new email list for members only. Now, IVIE members can share IVIE business related information such as potential Constitution and Bylaw amendments, resolutions, and positive strategies to improve IVIE in the future.
- IVIE is endeavoring to have a quarterly presentation beneficial to all who attend. If you know a great speaker or would like a special speaker on a particular topic, please let us know.

Thanks for reading -- Ardis Bazyn

IVIE 2022 CONVENTION WRAP-UP

We held our annual business meeting on June 25 at 10 am Central. We elected a new Vice President, Teresa Christian (OR), and a new treasurer, Marie Brinas (VA). Welcome to the board and thank you for your willingness to serve our organization. At the business meeting, we agreed to continue our monthly “Entrepreneur Exchange” calls starting again in August. We also agreed to have

occasional special speakers and book discussions when we have enough interest. Members would like a fall business expo on Zoom where those businesses interested sign up for a time on Zoom to tell about their products and answer questions from participants. We decided the first weekend in November would be a good time to have this so purchases could be made for Christmas. IVIE would charge \$10 for members and \$25 for nonmembers with the option to join for the additional \$15. We'd like all members to solicit business owners to participate. If they have their own Zoom line, they could use it. If not, one of our members could allow them to use one of our Zoom lines. If you have suggestions, please share them. We'd hold it like the popular "Let's Go Shopping" weekends. Please think of a catchy tag line so we can get started quickly with marketing.

Monday July 4th was IVIE Day at the ACB Convention. Our annual luncheon was followed by our program which was streamed so you will be able to find it in a podcast at some future point. IVIE Teamed up with ACB Next Generation and the ACB Employment Committee for the panel presentation titled, "Selling Yourself: How to Put Your Best Foot Forward In The Evolving Employment World." Speakers were Sara Freeman Smith, an HR professional on the ACB Employment Committee, Kaila Allen, recent new-hire and ACB Next Generation member,

and IVIE past member Pam Shaw who will share their experience with written, Verbal and visual aspects of positioning yourself as the best job candidate and maximizing those networking opportunities.

The IVIE Business Expo had lots of ACB members check out our booths. We also gained three new members.

Turning Your Website into a Powerful Short Story for Today's Online Marketplace

By Ron Brooks

In the good old days, we all ran our businesses in person. We invited people to our offices, and we met our customers in person at conferences and trade shows and in other public spaces where face-to-face in-person interactions were par for the course. We invested lots of money in presentations, in business cards and brochures. In those days, our websites were usually places where prospective customers went to learn more about us, or put another way, as a follow-up to an in-person interaction. They might look us up to learn more about who we were, what we sold, the services we provided, and what former customers were saying about our work.

The world was already starting to shift more toward a virtual marketplace well before the COVID-19 pandemic shut everything down and forced us all to shift our workplaces to Zoom and other virtual spaces. However, the already-expanding role of Internet marketing and the pandemic has flipped the balance between the importance of our websites and our other in-person sales and marketing collateral on its head. Unlike times past, most customers now find us and our products online. They interact with us online, and they make buying decisions based on how we come across online. Put simply, our website is no longer a tool in our sales and marketing approach; it is the front door through which almost every customer will enter our business, and if our front door isn't simple to find and attractive, and if it isn't easy to open and enter, then most customers are going to keep on walking.

Before I ever began working to find clients for my new training and consulting business, Accessible Avenue, I made the decision to invest in the best website I could create, and I knew it would cost me some money. I would need a designer to build everything, a cool web address, a domain to host my online presence, an attractive layout, a good color scheme, engaging content, a clear path for customers to learn about me, my company and my products, and of course, a means for getting customers to

find me in the first place. And I had very little knowledge of web design, and none at all about how to actually put it together and get it online.

Knowing that I knew almost nothing about something that might actually make or break my young business, , I spent a good bit of time reading, learning and talking to people who did sales, marketing and web design, and in a couple of ways, I got really lucky. First, I had a close colleague who did really good marketing and another who built websites for a major company's corporate ad campaigns and who did side work building and maintaining websites for small businesses and non-profits. I hired both of them. I also got lucky when I landed in an online sales and marketing training program called Story Brand by sales and marketing guru Donald Miller. Through the advice of my marketing and website consultants and the Story Brand Framework class, I learned a lot about sales and marketing in general, and I picked up some incredibly helpful tips which I am sharing below. At the end of the article, I'll share some additional resources that introduce the Story Brand Framework.

1. Start by saying who you are and what you do. –
Research shows that the average website visitor

sticks around for just a few seconds. If they don't know who you are and what you do within about five seconds, there is a good chance they'll be moving on. Practically speaking, this means including the name of your business and a summary statement of what you do at the very top of every page on your website. This is called a tagline, and having a good one can get just enough engagement from your visitors to keep them reading.

2. Include a clear call to action. – Customers need to know what you want them to do. Otherwise, they'll lose interest and take their browsing elsewhere. By including a clear call to action at the top of each page of your website, you will give them a clear path to follow for deepening their relationship with you and your business and its products and services. The call to action can be easy: “Customers, enter here,” or “Schedule a free consultation.” Whatever it is, make it simple and put it at the top of the page.
3. Tell your customers what they want to hear. – Too many websites spend too much real estate explaining the history of the business, the professional qualifications of the owners, introductions for all the staff, and on and on. If someone is visiting your website, they have a need or a problem, and they are searching for a solution. Therefore, save the personal stories and tell them what they came there to learn—namely what you do and how you can help them. It's true that many customers will want to know more

about you, and you can tell them later. But first thing's first. Give them value, and once they recognize that you can help them, they will be more likely to spend time learning more about you, and that can serve to deepen their interest and level of commitment.

4. Repeat the call to action and create a second, easier call to action. – Some customers play hard to get, so don't give them a single call to action. Repeat the call to action a couple of times, and give them a secondary call to action, just in case they are the type who want to go more slowly. For example: your call to action might be getting customers to book a training appointment. Some customers will do that; others may be hesitant. For these customers, you might add a secondary call to action such as inviting them to subscribe to your free company newsletter. This will give them a less risky opportunity to engage, and it will keep you connected while they get more comfortable with you and your business.
5. It's a Website not a Book – As stated earlier, customers are in a hurry, so make your online content as tight as you can. By getting to the point, you will reduce the amount of time and effort your customers have to spend learning about you and your products, and that will make it easier for them to engage with you. On the other hand, if you spend too much time telling them stuff that they don't find important, they may lose interest and move on.

Here's one final tip. Don't hire a web designer until you know how you want your website to work for your visitors and customers. Web designers are great for colors, layout and functionality, but your story, your call to action, your secondary call to action and all the rest is yours, and you need to know what you want before you start. Otherwise, you might end up with a beautiful—and expensive website that doesn't get customers into your virtual door.

In closing, I can't say enough about the work of Donald Miller and the Story Brand Framework. For an article laying out several website pitfalls to avoid and the strategies for doing so as well as additional links to Story Brand Framework related content, check out “The Ultimate Field Guide to an Effective Website Redesign.”

<http://buildingastorybrand.com/field-guide-website-redesign/>

About the Author

Ron Brooks is an IVIE member, a 29-year veteran of the accessible transit and paratransit industry, and a champion for transportation and mobility products and services that are accessible to everyone.

What's New?

ASSISTIVE TECHNOLOGY FUND

The Association of Blind Citizens operates the Assistive Technology Fund (ATF). It will provide funds to cover 50% of the retail price of adaptive devices or software. This program allows blind and visually impaired individuals access to technology products that will have a significant impact on improving employment opportunities, increase the level of independence and enhance their overall quality of life. The products covered by this program must retail for a minimum of \$200 with a maximum retail price of \$6,000. Persons eligible to apply for assistance must have a family income of less than \$50,000 and cash assets of less than \$20,000. Applications are reviewed by the Assistive Technology Committee and recommendations are submitted for board approval. If applicants are selected to receive a technology grant, applicants will be asked to provide documents such as tax returns, bank statements and any other documents that the ABC board or its designee would deem necessary to assess financial need for the grant. Applicants must be legally blind and a resident of the United States. Applications must be submitted by June 30th and December 31st for each grant period (two per year). Applicants will be notified if their request for a grant is approved. Applicants may submit one request per calendar year. All applications must be submitted via e-mail. You will be notified by ABC within 45 days after the application deadline. The grantee will have 30 days after notification to purchase the product. If the purchase cannot be made within 30 days ABC reserves the right to withdraw the award and assign it to another

applicant. All decisions are final. Important: Requests must be received via email only, by June 30th or December 31st. Please do not use attachments when submitting your request. You may fill out the request form - Assistive Technology Fund found at blindcitizens.org and paste it in the message body and emailing it to: atf@blindcitizens.org.

NEW SENSOR TECHNOLOGY AVOIDS HAZARDS

A new patented technology from Intelligent Material Solutions, Inc. is designed to help pedestrians who are blind and visually impaired navigate busy sidewalks and avoid sidewalk hazards. The sensor tech uses a cooperative guidance system to determine the pedestrians' precise geolocation and guide them to public transportation, retail entrances, sidewalk exits and other locations. Rare-earth crystals, which convert energy and provide digital information, are embedded in paint or thermoplastics. Sensors mounted or integrated with a cane can sense the crystals, gathering geolocation feedback. Paired with a smart device, the system provides enhanced situational awareness for the user. Benefits include straight-line guidance at intersections and identification of transit stops. The system is also viable indoors for guidance in department stores and shopping malls, according to a statement about the technology. So far, the sensor technology has received a positive reception by those who've tested it.

<https://coolblindtech.com/new-sensor-technology-helps-blind-and-visually-impaired-pedestrians-avoid-hazards/>

ALL ABOARD MAKING BUS STOPS MORE ACCESSIBLE

Identifying physical bus stops is not an easy task for people with visual impairment. To help overcome this issue, a team of researchers at Schepens Eye Research Institute of Mass Eye and Ear have built an app that looks for bus stop signs through the phone camera. The user has to hold their phone in an upright position and point it generally in the direction of the bus stop. The app starts emitting sonar sounds indicating it is looking for the bus stop sign. Once identified, the sound's pitch keeps going higher the closer the user gets to the sign. This free app, called [*All Aboard*](#), uses artificial intelligence to recognize bus stop sign in multiple cities. Between 5,000 and 10,000 bus stop sign images were used for a given city to help the AI model identify signage patterns for bus stops. Because this app is built using artificial intelligence and generally understands what bus stop signs look like, try it in your city and see if it works!

Hearables

Hearables are also called smart headphones, or even earbuds. The term hearables is often split between two

categories: hearables for hearing health and hearables for standard earbuds. Hearables are electronic in-ear devices designed with hearing-aid-like features. They can increase the volume of sounds and they use speakers and microphones to capture and amplify. Hearables are the mid-point between true wireless earbuds and traditional hearing aids. Select hearables may offer various smart and/or entertainment features, like connecting to your preferred smart assistant, to hear incoming notifications from your phone) or even listening to music. Hearables also fall under the category of personal sound amplification products, or PSAPs. They are a less powerful alternative to pricey prescription-only hearing aids, which are often not covered by insurance companies. Some recommend the devices as a more accessible first step for those with mild to moderate hearing issues. They essentially do the same thing (albeit to a less powerful degree than traditional hearing aids) but at a much lower price point. Read full article: <https://www.reviewgeek.com/114421/what-are-hearables/>

Thanks for reading this issue of the IVIE Motivator. Articles are due for the next issue by September 15, 2022. Please forward information you think other business owners might find useful. . Happy writing!