



Branding and Digital Marketing Blueprint

Presenter: Darren McDougal, Managing Partner of Next Level Exchange

Darren McDougal is the Managing Partner of Kaye/Bassman International and Next Level Exchange, and Managing Director of Sanford Rose Associates International. With over 30 years of marketing and technology experience in corporate communications, broadcast, online and print mediums, Darren directs the branding and digital marketing for the firms helping Kaye/Bassman-Sanford Rose Associates grow into the 10th largest search firm in the Americas and Next Level into the world's largest training firm exclusive to the recruiting industry.

With Next Level Exchange, he is responsible for overseeing the delivery of the Next Level Exchange brand, membership system, ongoing video productions and developing the online launch of new training programs. In addition, Darren also leads Next Level Marketing Communications, a digital marketing agency providing consultation and growth strategies for search firms and owners. Capabilities include brand development, web, search engine optimization, inbound marketing and outbound marketing solutions.

In his presentation, entitled Branding and Digital Marketing, Darren shares best practices in establishing your brand, ideas for optimizing your digital marketing, and a desk-level personal marketing plan to build your business.

Meeting: “Branding and Digital Marketing Blueprint” by Darren McDougal

If you are reviewing this episode with a team, watch the entire Episode and ask your group for their key takeaways and insights. Review the following below to fill in the gaps.

(Facilitator): Buyer personas are fictional, generalized representations of your ideal clients or candidates. They help you understand your clients/candidates (and prospective clients/candidates) better, and make it easier for you to tailor sales messages and content to their specific needs, goals, behaviors, and interests.

How do you create a buyer persona?

Buyer personas are created through your industry knowledge, prior client/candidate experience, research, surveys, and interviews of your target audience. Take into consideration your recruiting team's feedback on the leads they are interacting with most.

Use the following template to start organizing and creating your persona data:

Ideal Client

Background: Age Range? Male/Female? Education? Family Life? Location? _____

Role: Job Title? Level of Sonority? Responsibilities? Day in the Life? Compensation/Income?
Skills/Knowledge/Tools? _____



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Company/Organization: Industry? Size of organization? Who do they report to? Who reports to them? _____

Watering Holes: Associations? Certifications? Where do they go to for information? Social Networks? Communication Preferences? _____

Goals: What does it mean to be successful? What do they value most? _____

Challenges: Pain Points? _____

Common Objections: What could keep them from being able to work with you? _____

Ideal Candidate

Background: Age Range? Male/Female? Education? Family Life? Location? _____

Role: Job Title? Level of Sonority? Responsibilities? Day in the Life? Compensation/Income? Skills/Knowledge/Tools? _____

Company/Organization: Industry? Size of organization? Who do they report to? Who reports to them? _____



Watering Holes: Associations? Certifications? Where do they go to for information? Social Networks? Communication Preferences? _____

Goals: What does it mean to be successful? What do they value most? _____

Challenges: Pain Points? _____

Common Objections: What could keep them from being able to work with you? _____

(Facilitator): Darren suggests creating a “briefcase” of core branded elements. Although you certainly have some of the items on this list already, there are bound to be a few that are on the “meaning to get to” list that you can prioritize now. Review the list below and highlight a couple that stand out as being priorities to get underway:

- A “brand guide” that documents and describes the acceptable usage of your brand: your logos, such as “stacked” versions, “horizontal” versions, your “mark” which is the icon or symbol that represents your firm, and the colors used in your brand.
- Business cards
- Letterhead
- Electronic MS Word version of letterhead
- #10 Envelopes (for letters, correspondence, invoices)
- Thank you cards and envelopes
- Catalog mailing envelopes
- Mailing labels
- Business pocket folders
- Branded PowerPoint presentation
- PPT Template Pages; can include: Brand Guide, Co-Branding for Client Visits, About Us, Practice Overview, Team, Process, Placements, Case Studies, Contact Info, Q&A Starters, Line Charts/Pie Charts/Graphs/Video Windows
- Recruiting practice brochures
- Branded candidate profiles



- Recruiter / Search consultant bios
- Case Studies
- Awards and Recognition documents (Top Search Firm Ranking, Best Place to Work, Magazine Recognition, etc)
- Press Release templates

(Facilitator): Let's talk about the inter-webs! For nearly all search firms, a strong website is one of the most important investments (of both time and financial resources) you can make. However, many recruiters have no idea what they're doing or why, so let's talk about some of best practices to getting your firm seen and building a site wisely so it maximizes your traffic from the key demographics you want to reach! Think through the following:

Take a look at your competition – either firms you want to emulate, or firms that are in your current niche(s). What are they doing that you are not yet? _____

After reviewing website reports of search firms for the past few decades, Darren knows what candidates and clients want to see: they want to learn about your areas of expertise, browse your current job postings, read your testimonials, read your blogs, and view recruiter profiles. What needs improvement on your current site? _____

Does your site have contact forms/lead generation forms on the front page? _____

Is your site mobile-ready? _____

If posting open positions, does each job display in a separate page with an individual URL link per job? (highly suggested in order to increase SEO and link jobs to other marketing vehicles, such as email marketing programs, social media posting, LinkedIn updates and your blogs) _____

Go to a few search engines and type in a few keywords; act as if you were a prospective client or candidate looking for a search firm. Where does your firm appear? _____

What keyword search results point to you? If you don't know, what should your keywords be? _____

Darren provides a list of possible topics for your blogs, articles, newsletters; if your objective is to create content for your marketplace, which topics below would be the ones you'd be most comfortable starting with?

- Career advice
- Career planning tips
- Career strategies for success
- Job Search best practices
- Interview and post-interview best practices
- How to stand out in the interview
- Industry news
- Market updates
- Hiring and Salary surveys
- Cost of a bad hire calculator
- Management tips
- Talent retention ideas
- How to recruit top talent
- Leadership wisdom
- _____
- _____
- _____