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Ingenuity + Inventiveness + Internet = Success

By Kristi Stangeland © 2008, All Rights Reserved

As a highly creative designer for Ralph Lauren, Calvin Klein and Liz Claiborne, Patricia van Essche of PVE Design wanted something hands on that would give her a sense of being appreciated and would allow her to stay home with her children and husband. That's when she began to offer illustrations from home.

At first, her business was strictly local, and friends and family encouraged her to open her own brick-and-mortar store. While fulfilling, it took extra effort to meet face to face with clients. Patricia knew there had to be an easier way, but she was unsure of how to proceed. That's when she hired Mustang Web to hook her up to the World Wide Web.

A Website Starts a Pivotal Movement

Because Patricia's artwork is 100% custom, she wasn't exactly sure whether a website would be of benefit. Most of the artwork sites she'd seen online were ecommerce-type sites and, since she didn't have a line of preprinted cards or drawings to sell, the question of getting a good return on investment was pressing.

Mustang Web helped Patricia see that her site could easily be developed to generate leads. By creating a showplace for her artwork, the PVE Design site offered a convenient way for prospects to evaluate Patricia's illustrations, decorative designs and pattern designs before contacting her via email or telephone. Because the site was optimized for local keyphrases, it gave a head start in reaching those in the surrounding communities. But one thing seemed to hold her back: exposure.

Unless you opt for pay-per-click advertising, good search engine rankings can take some time to germinate and blossom. That's when Patricia decided to experiment with blogging.

The Blog Was the Missing Link

It was not so much that Patricia created a blog (as millions of others have done), but the unique and ingenious way she went about promoting it that was nothing short of brilliant.

As she had time, Patricia would do a little research looking for blogs for compatible industries that might be in need of illustrations. Most quality blogs have a 'contact us' link. Patricia would introduce herself to the blog owner and explain a little about her illustration services for blog mastheads. Typically, this would lead to work for Patricia and often a mention about her illustration services by the blog owner.

Patricia illustrates pets, greeting or holiday cards, homes, people, weddings and much more as well as decorative designs in homes and businesses and pattern design. You can imagine that, if she only reached five new blogs with each project search she did, and each blog owner mentioned her work to their following, she could quickly and inexpensively build her business.

In the meantime, she was also keeping up her own blog.

The System for Successful Blogging

Patricia posts daily in her own blog. "I might not have much to say, but I can put up a drawing I just recently finished." Good point! Keeping your blog active is vital.

The Blog Supports the Website and Vice Versa

Regardless of where the buying cycle begins, the website and blog actively support one another. When visitors enter through a link from a search engine, they are able to view Patricia's artwork and then click to her blog where they can communicate with the artist herself if they choose.

If visitors come into the blog through Patricia's guerrilla marketing tactics, they can view samples of recent artwork or click to the website for additional information.

Big Goals for the Future

After a year and a half, Patricia has reached the point of being consistent with her earnings since she stopped her full-time design career. Sitting on her laurels, she's not! In the coming 12 months, Patricia's aim is to double her income. Since blog posts spread like wildfire on the Internet, she shouldn't have any trouble whatsoever.