

Changing the game:

Credibility through innovation

A constantly changing market is nothing new to business owners, nor is it unique to any particular industry.

The last few years have thrown up a number of challenges not seen in the business landscape before – from the threat of online and overseas retailing, to free file sharing, economic strife and increased red tape and competition across the board.

In most tough conditions, be they economic or other, it is forward thinkers and risk takers that come out on top. The franchise sector boasts some of the most talented business people in Australia and their work is changing the game.

One of the biggest concerns over the last few years is the struggle seen in 'bricks and mortar' retailing. We've seen the closure of stores, merging of brands and large Australian companies buckling under overseas competition. Some who have successfully moved beyond these issues have entered the online sphere, rather than shying away from it. They have formed franchise networks enhancing customer loyalty where traditionally single operators are the norm - and they have focused on innovative staff retention strategies – attracting and keeping the brightest minds in their field.

The changing face of content consumption

One of the major business stories of 2011 was the collapse of Borders and Angus and Robertson – both of retail group, REDgroup. While both brands still trade online, they no longer have street-level visibility.

The challenges faced by the retail book industry are not solely due to the current economic environment and constrained consumer spending – technology is also proving to be a real game changer. Books and other printed material are perhaps the easiest items to purchase online.

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No need to try anything on, no need to test functionality, and reviews and excerpts of almost anything ever published are available online.

The rise of ebooks and reader technology has changed the way we publish, purchase and consume content. The decline in sales of hard copy printed materials has only further encouraged people to move their spend online.

In late 2011, Dymocks launched a new online venture – D Publishing.

The website features author-driven production tools including a typesetting function for both hardcopy and ebook formats. Basically, anyone with content, a computer and an internet connection can publish a book.

General Manager – ecommerce at Dymocks, Michael Allara, says the company, which has been part of the Australian book market for more than 130 years has always had a firm focus on customers. It was around these book-loving consumers that D Publishing was developed.

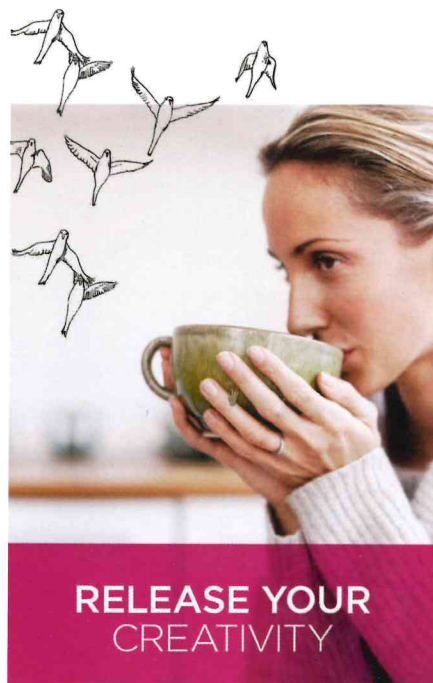
“Many of our customers have sought to write and publish their own books, but been unable to via traditional publishing and distribution methods. We have always felt we were well placed to help local authors and believe now is the right time to provide a suite of innovative, fully author-driven production, printing, publishing and distribution services,” Mr Allara says.

Following the launch late last year, some publishing trends have already emerged through the platform.

“We have seen manuscripts ranging from romantic fiction and political thrillers to military history and family memoirs. We are finding that all our authors have different motivations for producing or publishing their books with us, but that their motivations commonly stem from their personal and life experiences,” Mr Allara says.

D
PUBLISHING
NETWORK

Publish with Dymocks
www.dpublishing.com



Jason Smith, founder and CEO, Back in Motion Health Group

One of the major concerns for any system implementing online strategies is how to pass on value to franchisees and retain the strength of the network overall. D Publishing provides authors with the opportunity to distribute their titles via the Dymocks website and in hardcopy through Dymocks stores. Mr Allara says any book stocked in an individual store is at the discretion of the franchisee. If this is done mindfully, it can increase local traffic through the doors.

“D Publishing gives Dymocks franchise owners the opportunity to engage with local authors and support local books. Franchise owners have the opportunity to explore and establish trends and build a network of local authors via this unique service.”

To further support franchisees through technological advances, in 2011 Dymocks engaged in a strategic partnership, bringing the biggest range of ebooks to Australia. Dymocks has been promoting and selling ebooks for more than five years and recently partnered with Google eBooks to bring an even broader range of titles and a cloud-based reading experience to Dymocks customers.

“To coincide with this launch we introduced eBook gift cards in all our stores, making it easier for customers to buy ebooks from their local store and give them as gifts,” Mr Allara says.

Holistic approach gets people back in motion

It is the support of individual business owners within a system that has seen physiotherapy franchise, Back In Motion Health Group (BIM) experience explosive growth over the last decade. While franchising in the health care industry is relatively new in Australia, it is certainly an area to watch.

BIM, which began in founders Jason and Paulina Smith's garage in 1999, boasts a range of innovations they believe set them apart from other healthcare providers in the country. The philosophy of care instilled in each franchisee (known at BIM as Practice Directors) is based around the group's Results4Life® program. Mr Smith says this program was the cornerstone of the business before it even had a name.

“Given we don't provide a product or widget to customers, but rather a highly professional health service, we needed to align the philosophy of our staff to deliver quality assurance across all clients,” Mr Smith says.

“The healthcare industry is called a ‘service industry’ for one very good reason - we have to serve our clients. We don't want to just treat someone's injury, we want to care for the whole person. It's this holistic approach to health that's our real passion, and what has accelerated our growth across the country.

“Results4Life® is the name of our philosophy that drives understanding the complete needs of a client, their background, injuries and lifestyle, and how that incorporates to get them long term benefits with their treatment. Rather than just diagnosing an injury by its symptoms, and treating the pain superficially, we incorporate everything we've learned about the client with comprehensive strategies to ensure the best possible outcome. This individual service-based treatment has inspired massive loyalty from our clients.

“There is evidence-based research that shows clients achieve much better results with this kind of treatment. All our Practice Directors operate within this philosophy as part of our brand proposition.”

BIM also provide a free initial assessment for every client, as well as a 100% money back guarantee.

“It (the initial assessment) was met with a lot of criticism in the beginning within the industry, but it is a really great way to get a conversation started with unsure clients. What happens in the consultation room is everything. When a client comes in they can feel quite vulnerable, as they are often in pain and need to discuss sensitive health matters. If we can provide a consultation prior to treatment, with no obligation to the client, it really helps foster trust in the practitioner and we find we gain a lot of loyalty.”

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