



NEWS photo Cindy Goodman

CHRIS Breikss and John Blown, founders of 6S Marketing, are helping other companies establish themselves on the popular social networking site, Facebook.

6S Marketing expands with the changing web

Caroline Skelton

cskelton@nsnews.com

WHEN the North Shore News last checked in with 6S Marketing, its founders were operating out of the solarium of a 26th-floor apartment in Yaletown.

And though they may or may not have mentioned it in their interview, they were on a steady diet of Kraft Dinner.

"We had just started the company, and we were ex-dot-commers," says Chris Breikss, who co-founded the company with childhood buddy and fellow North Vancouverite John Blown. "So we worked in Internet marketing for other companies, then decided right after the dot-com crash to start an Internet-related company, which was the opposite of what everyone else was doing."

Convincing investors that an Internet marketing firm was a good idea proved nearly impossible — particularly as many equated the term with pop-up ads and e-mail spam.

"I think our biggest investor was my mom — she bought my computer," says Blown.

Things are a little different these days. The two are now operating their far less fledgling company out of an exposed-brick-and-beam space above Yaletown Brewing Company. They have a staff of 16, and are aiming to expand to 25 by the end of the year.

Developing alongside the company is Internet marketing itself.

While once companies like 6S struggled to convince clients to try out cost-per-clicking and web analytics tools, these days, companies are dedicating a much larger portion of their budgets towards making the web work for them.

And no buzz is louder on the web these days than the one emanating from that ubiquitous social networking site: Facebook.

"Canadians love Facebook," says Breikss. A third of us already use it, creating a vast network of social data running coast to coast — a boon for companies looking to target their marketing, or find out more about who their brand appeals to.

In the past, companies looking to get in on the Facebook hype couldn't go beyond setting up a casual Facebook group, and asking others to join it. But as of November 2007, they can now create individual business profiles, incorporating cost-per-

How to get an online reputation

North Vancouver founders of 6S Marketing Chris Breikss and John Blown share their tips on developing an Internet marketing strategy.

- Build a website.
- Get an analytical tool. Google Analytics is a good, free tool to start with. These programs will tell you what's going on on your website — how many people are looking at it, and where they're travelling within the site.
- Get search engine optimized. Make sure Google and other search engines are finding your site.
- Do some paid online advertising. Various sites and programs offer cost-effective programs through Google AdWords, Microsoft adCentre and Yahoo Search Marketing.
- Look at integrating some social tools. Use Flickr for your photo gallery, for instance, or set up a Facebook profile.
- Start a quarterly newsletter, blog or RSS feed. If you choose an RSS feed, you can also add the FeedBurner application to track how many people are opening your newsletters.

See Get page 27



And the winners are...
Find out in the
Readers' Choice Feature.
Coming out April 30, 2008

Trust Honda Parts and Service to help keep your family safe.



Right now all-season tires Starting from **\$71⁸⁸*** (each)
Installation and balancing extra.

You can count on a certified Honda technician to help make sure your vehicle is maintained properly with all the right parts. After all, if it's not a Genuine Honda part, it shouldn't be part of your Honda. For details, call our Parts & Service today.

Uniroyal Tiger Paw \$71.88 each P175/70R13

North Shore Brake Special

15% OFF
HONDA BRAKE SERVICE parts & labour

Genuine Honda Brake Pad or Shoe Replacement
Service includes installation of front or rear brake pads or rear brake shoes, servicing of calipers or rear brakes, wash and vacuum.

Bonus: **37 Point Safety Inspection NO CHARGE**
Offer ends April 30 2008

GENUINE HONDA
GENUINE HONDA OIL & FILTER CHANGE **\$38⁸⁸***

***No appointment necessary or book online**

Includes premium quality 5W-20 or 5W-30 genuine Honda motor oil, Genuine Honda oil filter and a new drain plug gasket, plus the expertise of our factory technicians providing the service.

express service

TIRE SOURCE BRIDGESTONE
Bridgestone Spring Tire Sale

Rebates up to \$100 on select models

Featuring: **Bridgestone INSIGNIA SE200** All Season, 105,000km, limited tread wear warranty. **\$25 rebate** with purchase of 4 tires starting from **\$87.88** each P185/65R14 with mail-in rebate.
Call our Service Department today. Expires May 10/2008

Book All Your Appointments On-Line
www.pacifichonda.ca

ICBC & Private Insurance Claims Accepted

Pacific Honda
816 Automall Drive, North Vancouver www.pacifichonda.ca • 604-987-4618



HONDA GENUINE PARTS & SERVICE

West Vancouver Memorial Library Foundation presents

BOOKtopia
West Vancouver Children's Literature Festival



Tears of Joy Theatre's
STELLALUNA

THE VANCOUVER SUN Raise-a-Reader Family Event
Saturday May 10 10:30 am

Kay Meek Centre 1700 Mathers Ave., West Vancouver
Tickets \$5 at the West Vancouver Memorial Library and at the Kay Meek Centre.
604-925-7408 www.BOOKtopia.ca

West Vancouver Memorial Library | WEST VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT | north shore news | WVV

Illustration ©2008 Marla Louise Day

West Vancouver Memorial Library | WEST VANCOUVER SCHOOL DISTRICT | north shore news | WVV

Readers' Choice | Kidsbooks | artstarts | Canadian Heritage | Patrimoine canadien | Indigo

Don't cheat the taxman

DON'T stick your head in the sand if you feel you won't be able to file your tax return by the April 30 deadline.



Money Matters
Mike Grenby

Whether you owe tax but don't have the money, or you simply haven't got around to doing the paperwork, you can often avoid penalties and other unwelcome attention from the tax office by submitting your tax return on time even if it lacks a few details (like a cheque for tax owing).

Don't expect mercy just because you have other debts. The tax office wants its money — plus interest starting May 1 — just as much as any other creditor. However, if you have lost your job or suffered some personal or other crisis, you are more likely to get a sympathetic hearing.

You could include post-dated cheques to back up your repayment proposal. As long as you file your return

quickly turn forceful if you don't respond. And the tax office has considerable power to collect money owed.

If you simply haven't gathered the information you need to file your return on time, at least submit what you do have to avoid penalties in case you owe tax. Then send your additional information as soon as possible to the correct address for revising your return.

If you are sure you will receive a refund, the "penalty" for filing late comes in a different form: the tax office won't pay you any interest on your refund until you do file your return — again, a good reason for filing on time.

Mike Grenby is a columnist and independent personal financial adviser; he'll answer questions in this column as space allows but cannot reply personally — e-mail mike@grenby.com.

by April 30, you should avoid the penalty of 5-10 per cent of the tax owed plus another one to two per cent per month of the tax owed up to 20 months (depending on whether this is the first or second occurrence).

The other point of this exercise is to contact the tax collector before she or he contacts you. Contact might come in the form of computer letters, but the tone of those letters can

Staying disciplined in volatile times

SOARING oil prices, a collapse in U.S. housing prices and a serious worldwide credit crisis have given investors the jitters lately, making stock markets extremely volatile.



Making Cents
Lori Pinkowski

In fact, investors have experienced four serious market declines of on average 15 per cent over the past year!

Of course stocks can't always head straight up and some volatility is to be expected, but what can you do to manage your portfolio during this wild stock market ride?

Three of the most important ways to protect your investments are to diversify asset classes and sectors, take profits and losses, and include safe investments in your portfolio at all times.

Most investors have heard that they should diversify, but what does that really mean? Depending on your risk tolerance and investment objectives, you should have a certain percentage in stocks, bonds, income trusts and even cash or GICs. For example, if you are retired, your asset allocation may be 40 per cent in stocks, 10 per cent in income trusts, 45 per cent in bonds and 5 per cent cash. Once you have decided on an appropriate percentage in each

and losses on some of your investments. Many investors hold on to investments as they increase in value and don't take the profits. Investors can be quite emotional about taking losses on stocks, but it usually makes more sense to hold on to your winners and sell your losers.

Lastly, most investors like the idea of guaranteed investments such as GICs or bonds, but they definitely are not excited about the low rates they provide, as low as 4 per cent annually. However, I still believe that even if you are not retired, most investors should have at least some cash or liquid investments, so when the stock market does decline, a portion of the portfolio will not be affected, and will be available to take advantage of buying opportunities.

Managing your portfolio through volatile markets can be stressful, but you can reduce some of the risks by properly diversifying your portfolio, remaining disciplined on buying and selling equities and including safe investments in your portfolio.

Lori Pinkowski is a senior investment adviser at Canaccord Capital. She can be reached at lori.pinkowski@canaccord.com or 604-643-7006.

Get in on Facebook chatter

From page 26

click advertising, music, Flash elements, and other unique details.

The company can then collect "fans" (Facebook users who publicly declare their support for the company — news of which is sent to others on the fan's friend list), or post comments on the site's wall (an online message board).

6S recently added Facebook marketing to its list of services as Internet marketers, and have already taken on four clients, with many more proposals in the works.

Having a presence on the social networking site, say Breikss and Blown, is not just a nice addition to your online marketing strategy, it's essential. For those who are wary to set up a profile, for fear that others will post negative comments or otherwise vandalize their profile, Breikss and Blows say this is a small concern beside the larger benefit of having a voice in the already loud Facebook conversation.

"You need to have a Facebook presence because people are already talking about you on Facebook," says Breikss.

One of their new clients, Earls Restaurants, for instance, discovered that there were more than 500 Facebook groups affiliated with their company already active on the site — that's thousands of people publicly discussing the company, without any official intervention from the company itself.

"Having a Facebook business page allows you to have an element of control. You can moderate your wall and you can delete offensive or negative posts. It also

allows you to interact with the people who might be saying something negative. Instead of deleting it, you can respond to it in a controlled manner," says Breikss.

Unlike a website, which can only track basic information about visitors, the analytical data available through Facebook tells a larger story about the demographics of profile visitors.

"You can basically say that 66 per cent of the people that come to my Facebook business page are female between the ages of 25 and 34, and that's really powerful information that you can't get out of your normal website analytics," says Breikss.

Yet Breikss and Blown aren't recommending a wholesale focus on Facebook. They still recommend starting any web marketing strategy with a great, search engine-friendly website, and installing an analytics tool to keep track of how people use the site.

"A big part of Internet marketing is the analytics and reporting. So looking at your statistics from your website, or your Facebook business page, or your newsletter or your blog, reading the reports and the analytics then drawing conclusions and making decisions, and then acting on them," says Breikss.

Make sure to keep track of your website analytics, so that you can find out how exactly people are using your site — not just how many visit it.

"Hits is a term from the late-'90s that just won't die," says Breikss. "In the past we talked about hits, and then we talked about unique visitors, now we're talking about conversion percentages. So one per cent or two per cent of the people who

come to my website convert into a newsletter subscription or sale or lead."

With Earls, MEC, the Opus Hotel and Vancity among their many clients, it's clear that 6S is maturing these days, and their services are in high demand.


Yet the two Carson Graham graduates at the helm aren't forsaking the love for fun that struck up their friendship in the first place, when they were five years old.

Back then, it was the usual (possibly a bit destructive) boy activities that took up their time. But these days, community involvement is a focus for both, with Blown volunteering his time with North Shore Search and Rescue, and Breikss serving as an enthusiastic fundraiser for breast cancer and other causes.

But some of their interests seem to have remained the same — longtime snow sport enthusiasts, a recent company retreat featured a weekend of zip trekking, skiing and snowboarding at Whistler. Then there's the Nintendo Wii in the boardroom for impromptu tournaments, and the occasional Guitar Hero solo on Breakfast Television.

Maybe those Kraft Dinner days aren't so far behind after all.

Nervous about the Markets?



HAS YOUR INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO HELD UP DURING THE MARKET TURMOIL OF THE PAST YEAR? HOW ABOUT DURING OTHER DIFFICULT PERIODS?

If not, put the experience of a knowledgeable team to work for you.

When you choose Marc Latta and Jamie Switzer, you get more than experienced Financial Advisors who care about your needs. You get the strength

and resources of Raymond James, an internationally recognized leader in the investment industry;

- Preserving and building Wealth since 1962
- More than \$220 billion of client assets managed on behalf of more than 1.6 million individual investors and families
- Full range of high quality investment products and services
- Named as the Best-Managed Diversified Financial Firm by Forbes in 2005
- A Powerful Business Platform Focused on Client Service and Satisfaction

Contact us by email or by phone to arrange for a no-obligation portfolio review or simply receive a complimentary copy of our weekly e-newsletter.

Raymond James Ltd.
Suite 480, 171 West Esplanade
North Vancouver
604.981.3355

marc.latta@raymondjames.ca | jamie.switzer@raymondjames.ca

RAYMOND JAMES
Individual solutions from independent advisors

MATTRESSES

All the major brands at warehouse prices!



Always plenty to see at Colony!

COLONY WAREHOUSE
MAJOR APPLIANCE AND MATTRESS

Open 7 days a week
"Saving you money since 1969"

1075 Roosevelt Cres., N.Van.
(2 Blocks behind Indigo Books)

604-985-8738