

SCHOLEFIELD

BUSINESS

JOURNAL

UniSQ Rebrand
explained

Toowoomba CBD
is hanging by
a thread

Meet
photographer
Tilly Mycat

How AICD
changes lives

Microbusiness –
Yes, You Can Have It All

Mark My Words –
the McCrindle Report
and what's in it for you

Starting Out?
Digital Visibility
a Must

Are you wasting
money on marketing?

Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce

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Next

step for the workshop

starts

by supporting my cash flow.

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Toowoomba's
CBD hanging by
a thread. Who is
saving it?

Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the lands, the Jagera, Giabal and Jarowair people. We extend that respect to the elders past, present and emerging for they hold the memories, the traditions, the cultures and the hopes of Australia's First Peoples.

on the cover

Self-portrait of Tilly Mycat of Oh Tilly! Brand Photography.



TOOWOOMBA
CHAMBER OF
COMMERCE

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The Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce is one of Queensland's largest regional Chambers. Together we represent a significant voice and as a group we can make a positive difference for our local business community. Contact our Chamber team today to learn more on how we can help you. We work for business. **Email:** admin@toowoombachamber.com.au

Scholefield Business Journal - *new name, new look!*

Well, what do you think? We've given the Business Journal a little make-over to keep it fresh. And we are also transitioning to a new name incorporating "Scholefield". It's our way of honouring Chamber's first president R.W. Scholefield as we get ready to celebrate the organisation's 125th birthday in 2024.

We want to hear from you

Send your story ideas and
submissions to communications@toowoombachamber.com.au



I'LL HAVE WHAT SHE'S HAVING

Oh Tilly Brand Photography is a bit of lone wolf in the photographic world, capturing exclusively branding images for businesses and being very strategic in the way she does it. Deep down Tilly wants to see each and every one of her clients have the most success possible and knock the socks off their audience with images that WORK.

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The process of working with Tilly on a branding shoot is different to any other, Tilly will work with you to figure out the message your brand needs to convey through its visuals and then she creates a

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At your session there's no time limit, we work together to capture what we need in the time it takes. Tilly has a way of making nerves melt away and you will leave your session feeling confident in yourself and your business!

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Quasquicentennial

From the Archives: Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce celebrates 125 years in 2024

The young town of Toowoomba was all aflutter on 12 October, 1899. In fact, according to a Darling Downs Gazette article from the day before, it was “pregnant with possibilities”. You see, a meeting was held at the Church Institute to form a Chamber of Commerce. And so it happened on that starry night, our baby was born.

The Gazette had certainly stirred attendees into action claiming there were “special opportunities afforded by a digest of the ideas and experiences of an association of business” and that “a vigilant and united body can readily discuss anomalies and abuses which if left unchecked work to the detriment of the community”. The Toowoomba Chamber of today, continues to build on those foundations. It remains an independent voice for business based on the ideas and experiences of its members. It is united in addressing issues that affect business and it remains vigilant in monitoring government activities and regulations. There it is, that is in Chamber’s DNA.

By all accounts the meeting on 12 October, 1899 was well attended and a month later Chamber’s first office bearers were elected as follows:

- President – Mr R.W. Scholefield
- Vice Presidents - Messrs J.H. Munro and J.H. Robertson
- Secretary – Mr George Leichney
- Treasurer – Mr C. Wardrop
- Committee: Messrs W.R. Robinson, T.K. Lamb, G. James, H.A. Holden, D. Munro, R. Sinclair, G.G. Cory, C. Rowbotham, W.C. Peak and F. Paterson.

Those first office-bearers, with their familiar names, seem so very long ago. They were bakers, builders and traders from a different world. But they had some solid ideas and we owe them enormous gratitude. How the organisation then evolved and survived through historic events such as the Federation of Australia, Depression, wars, technological advancement, natural disasters as well as cycles of economic boom and bust was up to subsequent leaders – and there have been many.

The Chamber story 1899 to 2024 will be featured in a series of articles to be published over the coming months leading up to our 125th Birthday on 12 October, 2024. We want to highlight the people and events that continued to shape Toowoomba Chamber and we ask that members share stories and information with us.

We begin our first “From the Archives” piece with a short biography of Toowoomba Chamber’s founding president, Richard William Scholefield.

Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce’s Founding President - R.W. Scholefield

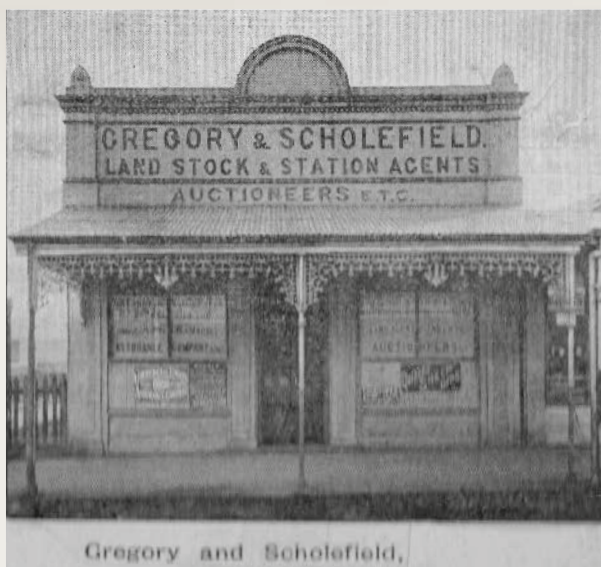
There are 72 names written in gold script on Toowoomba Chamber’s Past Presidents Honour Board. Together they cover almost 125-years of history – good and bad. Several names are shared by roads, buildings or products (such as gin). But what do we know of the name at the very top of the honour board, founding president, R.W. Scholefield? With the help of Toowoomba Historical Society, Ally Martell discovered what put him in the top spot back in 1899.

Toowoomba’s flags flew at half-mast on 20 March, 1902 as the city mourned the death of a prominent citizen: a man who had gone out of his way to assist in the development of our fledgeling community. Richard William Scholefield was 58 when he died from a short illness at his home “Weetwood” in Tor Street.

What do we know of this much-admired man? We know he was the son of a wool merchant in Leeds, Great Britain and the oldest of 11 children. We can assume that, like many young men of his time, he travelled to Australia to improve his opportunities. Somehow, he made his way to Westbrook Station where he quickly worked his way up to overseer and then to manager at Alice Downs Station.

With obvious business acumen, Scholefield joined forces with another notable citizen, Hon. F. T. Gregory of Harlaxton House to form a land, stock and station agency. On the passing of Mr Gregory, Scholefield invited Mr Godsall to join him in business and the pair dominated that space until Scholefield’s death in 1902.

Scholefield commissioned noted architect Richard Marks to design a grand residence called “Weetwood Homestead” in Tor Street. He most likely named it after a wealthy estate near his hometown of Headingley in Leeds. In those days, the property adjoined Toowoomba Turf Club where Scholefield held various positions including steward, trustee and secretary. The club even named a race in his honour calling it the “Weetwood Handicap”.



*Richard William Scholefield
- first President of the
Toowoomba Chamber of
Commerce 1899*

- Born 1844 Leeds, Yorkshire UK
- Died 1902 aged 58 Toowoomba
- Married to Eva Louisa McDougall at St James Parish in January 1885
- Children: Richard William (died in infancy), Cyrus William and Ann Marjorie
- Lived: at Weetwood in Tor Street
- First worked for Westbrook Station and Alice Downs as manager.
- He owned a business called Gregory & Scholefield and later Scholefield & Godsall which was a land, stock and station agency, auctioneers and insurance agency
- Scholefield was also a Justice of the Peace
- Committees and Boards: Toowoomba Turf Club (steward, trustee and secretary) Toowoomba Hospital, Trustee of the Toowoomba Grammar School, Royal Agricultural Society, Fire Brigade and board director of Toowoomba Foundry and Hogarth Australian Meat Preserving Company in Oakey.





Farm to Table Lunches Showcase the Best of Our Region

Words by Kristen O'Brien, Dine Darling Downs

Supporting our local farmers not only strengthens our community and economy but it also means you get to enjoy the freshest most flavourful foods available. That is the philosophy of Kristen O'Brien from popular food platform Dine Darling Downs whose long-held dream is to make local produce a hero on every single plate.

Ensuring Australian farmers are recognised and supported is something that is particularly close to the heart for Robyn Ayles from the Toowoomba Farmers Market as well, so together they are partnering with the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce to bring a series of seasonal "Farm to Table" long lunches to Toowoomba that will showcase the very best of our region.

The first of these special events is scheduled for October 6th at Clifford Park Racecourse and the menu is promising to be something truly unique. Kristen said,

"Think local cheese, herbs, beef, vegetables and fruits all hand selected by Clifford Park Head Chef Olaf Pfeiffer to create a mouth-watering share style feast guaranteed to tempt your taste buds".





"We have so many incredible growers and producers right here on our doorstep" Robyn said and its vital that we keep them on the land by supporting them at every level"

According to Chamber CEO Todd Rohl, "This can be as simple as purchasing your fresh produce from the farmers market rather than the supermarket each week. If everyone chose to do that our local grower's sustainability and future would be much more secure".

Tickets to the first of the "Farm to Table" long lunches are available now and include:

- A welcome cocktail on arrival
- A share style 3 course lunch
- 2 hour drinks package
- Entertainment from a Live Band

To purchase your tickets, go to www.toowoombachamberofcommerce.com.au/Events

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share style meal,
2 hour drinks package with
lunch & a live band**








The McCrindle Business Performance Sentiment Report

Words by Mark McCrindle

For the second year in a row, we were delighted to partner with Toowoomba Chamber to conduct the Business Performance Sentiment Index. This study takes the pulse of local businesses and explores the attitudes, experiences, and expectations of business owners and managers in the Toowoomba Regional Council area.

As the 8th largest Local Government Area in Queensland, Toowoomba's entrepreneurial spirit outshines its population size. Toowoomba is home to almost 17,000 businesses, making it the 6th largest business community in Queensland.

The tough economic climate is having an impact on the sentiment of local business owners, with commercial sentiment falling from a neutral outlook in 2022. While this is a challenge for local business performance, the research also highlighted the resilient nature of businesses in Toowoomba, and this, coupled with strong demographic forecasts for the region, show the strength of this business community.

Research Methodology

Survey of business owners and managers in Toowoomba: In field -12th of April 2023 to 31st of May 2023 with 156 respondents. Business data: Australian Bureau of Statistics, Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce and TSBE. Research and design by McCrindle

Highlights

The research highlighted that businesses are focusing on revenue and cost management, especially as South-East Queensland gears up to host the 2032 Brisbane Olympics. This once-in-a-generation event for the region is projected to add 11,000+ people to Toowoomba's residential population count, as well as a large flux of domestic and international visitors. If Toowoomba's recent growth is anything to go by, however, it is likely that this growth could be far greater than expected. Just this past year, Toowoomba's population increased by more than 3,000; almost 2,000 of which relocated from other parts of Australia. With the findings that locals think highly of Toowoomba's regional attractiveness, family friendliness, and sense of community, it is perhaps no surprise that more people are choosing to call Toowoomba home for their families and businesses.

Toowoomba Business PSI The Business Performance Sentiment Index (Business PSI)

The Toowoomba Business PSI, developed by McCrindle, is an ongoing measure of three key business measures:

performance, conditions and sentiment. It provides a snapshot of business health and allows the comparison of economic performance over time and across regions.

Toowoomba snapshot:

16,849 businesses in Toowoomba (+5% over the past year)

Top five industries by business count:

- 3,532 Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing (+3% over the past year)
- 2,695 Construction (+4%)
- 1,791 Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services (+5%)
- 1,306 Professional, Scientific and Technical Services (+2%)
- 1,149 Health Care and Social Assistance (+9%)

PSI Results

The 2023 Toowoomba Business PSI is a score of -27.

P: Performance, C: Condition, S:Sentiment

COVID-19 and related restrictions continue to have negative impact on businesses. Three in ten businesses experience an extreme/somewhat negative impact as a result of COVID19 on:

- 30% Economic conditions (local, state or national)
- 30% Government policy
- 29% Cost management
- 29% Sales revenue

Revenue and costs management key priority for the future Top priorities for the coming 12 months: Extreme/significant priority

- 75% Sales revenue
- 71% Cost management
- 67% Funding/ Cash flow
- 59% Management/ Staff skills



Top issues currently impacting businesses

In a slowing economic environment, key issues have increasingly negative impacts on business performance.

Extreme/somewhat negative impact ...

- 38% Red tape/compliance costs (33% in 2022)
- 37% Economic conditions (local/national) (20% in 2022)
- 24% Government policy (22% in 2022)
- 17% Local, State or National infrastructure (11% in 2022)

Reasons the business community calls Toowoomba home

Businesses are attracted by Toowoomba's regional location and lifestyle factors.

- 56% Regional attractiveness
- 52% Family friendliness
- 50% Sense of community
- 49% Pace of life
- 35% Cost of living
- 21% Job opportunities

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How Not to Waste Money on Marketing

*Words by Jai Warner and Deep Saroa
Directors, Web Marketing*

In a world saturated with marketing opportunities, it's common to witness businesses sinking money into initiatives that generate unclear results. This editorial aims to provide actionable insights for business owners on avoiding the pitfalls of wasteful marketing spending through digital marketing and analytics. Drawing on tried-and-tested methods, comprehensive training, and in-depth research, we reveal the secrets some agencies prefer to keep hidden.

Step 1: Planning a Campaign

How do you know which campaign is the right one? Typical questions you may get asked might be about the target audience, your business personality, your location, and the budgets. Too often, we learn that many business owners rarely get asked the most essential question in marketing. "How much a lead is worth?". The value of a sale is a vital component of creating a successful marketing campaign fit for your business.

Tracking metrics to know actual values involves following where leads and enquiries come from. Sales figures alone cannot show the success of your marketing. Knowing where all sales come from and when they convert is essential to understanding how you generate success. Good marketing is more than providing appealing work but tracking where your money is going and how it's returning; this ensures you know if you're getting a return on your marketing.

Suppose you only see the number of calls, clicks and online impressions. In that case, you may only get half the story for measuring your actual return on investment (ROI for business-savvy people).

Make sure you do the groundwork before a campaign and that whoever develops your marketing can accurately track leads to show you where they come from and if they turned into a sale. Only pour money into marketing with a way to measure results.

Step 2: Commencing a Campaign

The first step of any journey is fundamental to where you end up. No matter which journeys a lead takes, from social media, ads, organic search or traditional marketing platforms, it's essential to know that circling them back to a professional website is the best way to compare the results of each channel.

A website is the most powerful tool in this digital world.

So many platforms like Meta (Facebook and Instagram), Google and even Tik Tok have website-specific integrations that cohesively track users from one system to another if done correctly.

With websites being the centre of digital platforms, it stresses the importance of an impactful web presence that represents your business well. A good website should be accessible, appealing, fast and search engine optimised. All of which encourage a customer's journey from lead to sale.

Using a cohesive tracking method across all platforms correctly can follow a lead's journey from the end of your marketing tree to the roots of your sale and every action

that guided them along the way. With this integral tracking, it is easier to understand what made the customer convert and the total return of each campaign cost.



Want to know more about how to track your marketing?

Step 3: Reporting on a Campaign

Measuring the success of a marketing campaign goes beyond the number of impressions, views, users, clicks and even sales. It requires detailed tracking of leads, sources, frequency and costs. Sales figures alone do not reflect the effectiveness of marketing efforts; you need insights into which strategies are driving these results.

Close collaboration between marketing and sales is key in identifying trends of high-value leads and areas that need improvement. Effective reporting prompts discussions on reports, instigating a plan for the growth of your marketing.



Step 4: Optimising a Campaign

Understanding platform performance is paramount. The close connection between marketing and sales reveals the analytical proof behind pain points and where strategies fall short, guiding a success-driven optimisation.

Whilst discussion is necessary, transformation occurs from change and implementation. The first step is translating trends and analytics into strategies contributing to a growing ROI. Adjusting the technical aspects of each marketing solution requires time, knowledge, and experience related to that field. Businesses can benefit from a team of qualified digital professionals or verified partners; a broad range of expertise for any campaign adds extreme value to a business's marketing efforts. All sides of the digital media industry, from

videography to copywriting, pay-per-click advertising to website development, a diverse skillset can bring a more comprehensive opportunity for success.

Conclusion: An Ever-Evolving Path to Success

With steps focusing on planning, commencing, reporting, and optimising a campaign, your journey to maximising marketing ROI becomes even more powerful. Each phase is integral to minimising wasteful spending and ensuring strategic investments.

By embracing these comprehensive guidelines, you position yourself to unlock the full potential of your marketing endeavours, transforming them into potent instruments for business growth.

OUTGROWN YOUR EXISTING ACCOUNTANT?

If another year has passed that could have been better with more practical and timely advice, and business support, then it's time for a positive change.

The level of uncertainty for business owners is at an unprecedented high – so what are you and your accountant doing together to help you succeed?

To make confident decisions about your future you need an accountant who brings ideas and insights to the table. One who thinks differently and can work with you to reimagine possibilities.

How those challenges are considered and acted upon is what differentiates successful business leaders from others.



WHY RSM?

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William Laird
Partner



Sharon Baldwin
Principal



Ben Twidale
Senior Manager



Kristelle Stark
Senior Manager



David Lethbridge
Consultant



Olympic Procurement 2032 – Your Chance to Get Involved

*Jason Cubit, Senior Media Relations Officer
Toowoomba Regional Council*

With the recent passing of a key milestone to mark nine years until the start of the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games, Toowoomba businesses are being encouraged to think about procurement opportunities on the horizon.

The Queensland State Government has recently released the Q2032 Procurement Strategy and Toowoomba Region Mayor Geoff McDonald is encouraging local businesses to cash in.

“The Queensland State Government has strongly indicated their ‘Buy Queensland’ approach in the lead-up to the Brisbane 2032 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

“9 years out from the games, now is the time for Toowoomba region businesses to start to think about how they could be involved in procurement and service delivery in the lead-up to the 2032 Games.

“The Olympics and Paralympics are not just about celebrating world-class sporting events.

There are so many more ways our community and the Toowoomba region can benefit.

“The Queensland State Government has indicated that Queensland businesses will likely share an estimated \$180 billion in government procurement leading into the 2032 Games.

“That unprecedented level of spending is the true green and gold runway our business community needs to be ready to tap into,” Mayor McDonald said.

Toowoomba region businesses can register to receive regular procurement updates here - qld.gov.au/about/Brisbane2032

Building Your Online Presence from Scratch on a Limited Budget

Words by Leisa Clark, Retrohex

Starting a new business can be very stressful and expensive, with many different hats to wear. One of those hats is digital marketing so that people can find you and learn more about you online.

You may be asking, “Do I really need to build an online presence? Can’t I just go to a few networking events?”. Well yes, absolutely you can go to networking events, and I highly recommend this. However, in this internet era, customers expect you to have an online presence. In marketing we often talk about the Know, Like, Trust principle. This is a journey customers go through before making a purchasing decision. Customers are going online to research first (aka stalking you online) to get to Know you, Like you and then Trust you, before they give you their hard earned money. If you don’t have an online presence, they will find your competitor and shop with them.

“Visibility online creates opportunities offline”.

Leisa Clark

With so many online platforms it can be extremely overwhelming, so where do you begin?

1. Figure out your Target Customer

The first step in building your online presence is to figure out your target customer and where they are spending time online. When you narrow in on this, you can build your online presence on those platforms and not waste your time creating content for every single platform, which will do your head in.

2. Share valuable content on Social Media

Social media platforms can be a powerful and affordable way to get started online. To prevent overwhelm, choose 2-3 platforms your customers are using and share valuable content that engages, educates and entertains your customers.

People spend time on Social Media to connect with others, learn something new or be entertained, so make sure your content fulfills those needs. Remember social media is a two way street, just like any relationship you need to also be engaging on the platforms through liking, commenting and being your authentic self. The best part about social media, it is free to get started.

3. Connect via Email Marketing

Your Social media accounts could close or get hacked tomorrow and you would have no way of reaching your hundreds/thousands of followers. So, making sure you collect emails is a way to always stay connected to your customers. Remember email marketing should not be salesy. Provide valuable information through your email, so when customers are looking to purchase, you will be top-of-mind and they will come to you.

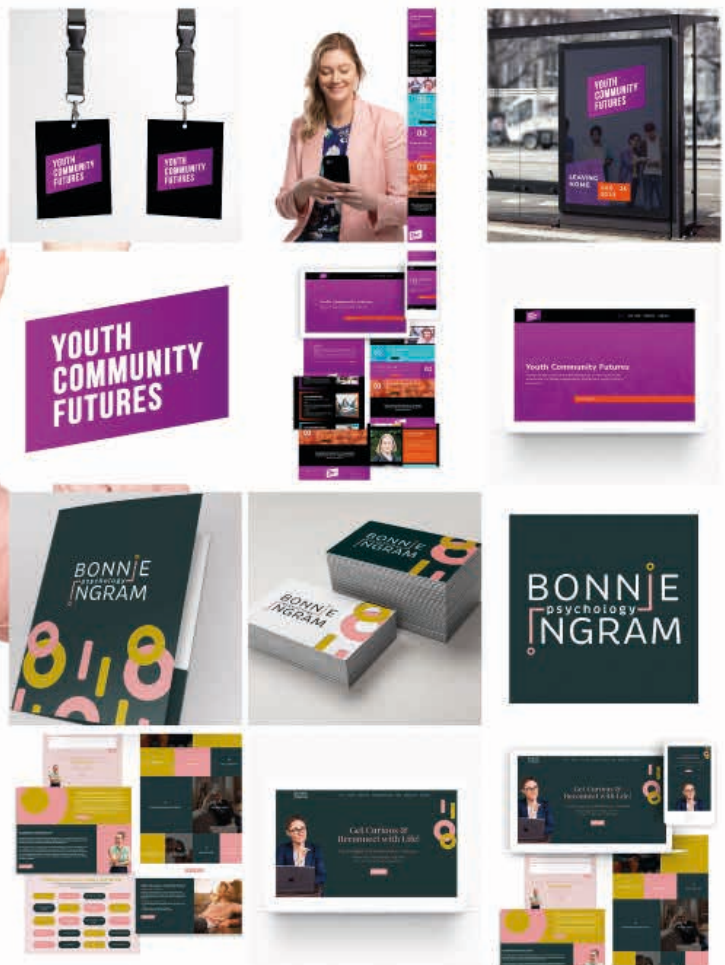
How to collect emails? Have a great value proposition they can’t refuse such as a free resource, discount or offer. Their email is valuable to them, so they won’t give it up freely. Mailchimp or MailerLite are well known email marketing platforms. They have free tiers you can start with, so a great way to build your online presence without breaking the bank.

4. Build a Content rich Website

Websites are one of the most important digital assets you can own. Whether you DIY or outsource, it’s definitely worth the investment.

Why do you need a website?

- A. There are only 2 digital assets that you own and have complete control over. Your email list and your website. If social media suddenly closed how would people learn about you and find you online?
- B. Google remains the dominant search engine with over 90% of all searches. When someone’s searching for your offering, you need to have a website that is valuable enough to show up on Google’s search results page. If you don’t have a website and a strong online presence, your competitors will show up instead. Having a Google Business Profile (formally known as Google My Business) is also a fantastic way to get found on the search results page.
- C. In this Digital age your customers expect you to have a website and it helps them get to learn more about you. Remember, they need to get to KNOW, LIKE and TRUST you.



What do I put on my website?

People need to know all about who you are and what you're offering. You need to help them get to KNOW, LIKE and TRUST you so make sure you add that throughout your website. Then provide an easy way for them to contact you, purchase your product or book your service.

Remember a website should not be static. You should be adding valuable content to your website on a regular basis as this shows Google that you have a content rich website that will be valuable to show on the Google Search results page. Add blog posts, completed projects, reviews/testimonies, case studies or whatever makes sense to share with your audience. Content on your website doesn't disappear like social media, and boosts your Search engine optimization (SEO), improving your chance of getting found on Google.

How much do websites cost?

The most expensive part of a website is the labour cost to design, build and maintain it. So, if you are tech savvy

and willing to have a go yourself, then platforms like WIX, Squarespace, Shopify and WordPress are all affordable options with prices ranging from \$15-\$100 per month. If you don't have the desire or the time to DIY, then outsourcing is another great option, but a more expensive one.

Remember, building an online presence takes time and patience. If you can add valuable content on a regular basis to your Website, Email and Social Media, this will definitely help you create a strong online presence.

Leisa Clark is a Graphic and Web Designer at Retrohex, helping small businesses build their online presence. She also offers Digital Marketing training and strategy sessions as a co-founder of Eat Digital and was also a Digital Business Advisor for the Federally Funded Program "Digital Solutions".

If you need any help with building your online presence, please reach out to Leisa Clark at Retrohex <https://retrohex.com.au>



Microbusiness + Family Life

You can have it all...just not all at once!
Work-Life balance lessons

Words by Letoya Coates, Flair Marketing and PR

I'm prefacing the below: I'm always learning! When I think I'm winning at life - bam! Another challenge. Rules change. Time to learn a new level of work-life balance. Hopefully after 42+ years of growing up/living in microbusiness, I've gleaned some insights.

First rule of Fight Club...

Let's bust an unspoken Rule Number One: "When starting a business, never share your secrets".

Codswallop!

This is the most divisive and destructive attitude you can have in microbusiness. To be the best in your industry, there will come a day when you need others. Keeping "all your secrets" is the best way to sabotage your business.

Don't give yourself so much credit. There is nothing new under the sun. All your best ideas can be Googled anyway!

Juggling means you'll drop something. That's okay!

I've learnt this lesson many times! I've forgotten to collect children from music lessons. Sent a client a VERY personal text message. Completely put my foot in my mouth on MANY occasions.

Further detail will undermine my professionalism WAY too much to put here in print (if we ever have a wine together, I might elaborate).

Suffice to say you will make mistakes. We all do, but keep striving for excellence and be gracious to others when they make mistakes!



The Legacy - the lesson of working together!

As a family of six, we were all about teamwork.

I was often at Dad's sign-writing shed, sweeping the floor, cleaning brushes, anything to hang out with him. I'm so grateful now and didn't realise then how much I'd learned.

It's great when kids pitch in with business tasks. They're learning more than you realise. Our teens help with creative ideas for social media posts, or flyer deliveries. My husband has them carrying camera bags, or framing up photos. These are valuable ways they become inoculated to entitlement.

The buck stops with you

Staff get sick. Complications happen. But you're the boss, it all lands with you. Sometimes this really sucks - it means working longer hours covering your team.

Other times, they cover everything and you get to be "proud parent", watching them kick goals and flourish.

You dictate when you have time off

One of the biggest advantages in small business is the flexibility to make time with those you love.

When our kids were younger, end of term meant my husband and I would take time off and we'd all "wag life" and go to a theme park.

Trade-off for this is that my hubby and I would work longer days the week leading up to make up for it - worth it!

Don't let business busyness dictate your time. Having your own business is tough - utilise the flexibility of time off, making it count with those you love.

The Ebbs and Flows

Our family tag-teams especially in the lead up to holidays. Our kids are well acquainted with making dinners and doing washing. They're great at collating packing lists (we may have forgotten togs or undies occasionally!).

The Family Life Flexibility

Once I went to change the oil in my car and completely botched driving onto the ramps. I went running to Dad, he simply let out a big sigh, put his paintbrush in the Golden Circle tin full of turps and helped me out of my dilemma.

Owning your own business means you dictate priorities. If you need to pause to help those you love, you have the freedom to do so. If you don't, it's time to revisit if you are the boss or the puppet in your business.

Being the boss means you choose what your business stands for, giving back to the community you live in. I want my business contributing towards Toowoomba becoming safer and more inclusive. As the boss, I invest time and other resources in this.

Bonus Highlights

Dad did some scrolling and pinstriping on a helicopter. None of my family had ever been in a helicopter before, so he worked out a deal where each of my family got joy rides (with the sides off!).

As small business owners, we get priceless opportunities others won't. Jump at those chances and make the most of them, because sometimes in the balancing act, the "life" side can jump over into the "work" side, which can become very serendipitous for all!

About Letoya Coates

Letoya Coates is director of local marketing agency Flair Marketing and PR. Her husband Andrew is director and chief photographer at Salt Studios.

Letoya is Toowoomba born and bred, and her parents were owners of G-J Signs, a local sign-writing business which ran for over 35 years in Toowoomba. Letoya and Andrew live in Toowoomba with their two daughters and Raymond the dog.

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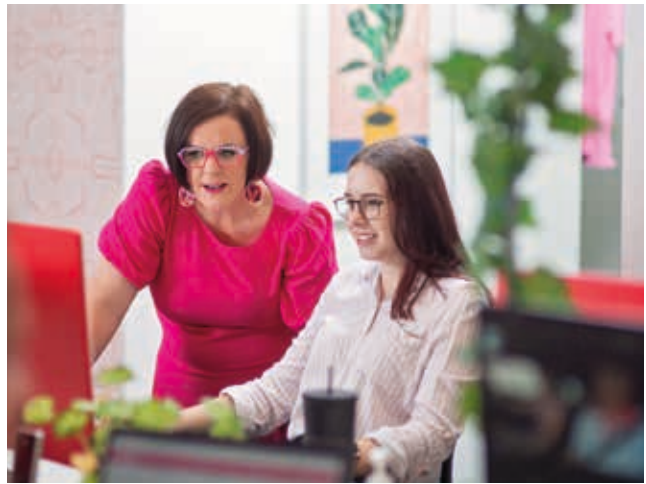
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LPC: Proving Pigs Can Fly!

Words by Emma Menyweather, Little Pig Consulting

Little Pig Consulting, a digital marketing agency and business consultancy with a name that purposely reminds us of those three, tenacious fairy tale pigs, has evolved from a home business start up to one of our region's most recognised brands in a little over six years.

Director Clayton Menyweather began the brand in 2017 after finishing as a teacher with TAFE Queensland. In the back of his mind, there was always a desire to teach people about growing a business, a passion that was born from having owned businesses previously, undertaking various business development roles and a strong desire to be able to be more of a hands-on dad by growing a business that allowed for flexibility of work hours.



Recognising that one-size-fits-all solutions are outdated in the world of marketing, Clayton and Emma have purposely evolved LPC into a comprehensive marketing and consulting agency. Along with their team, they are committed to helping local businesses establish strong brand recognition and engage effectively with their target audiences. The range of personalised services on offer, ensures that every business's unique needs are met.

From skillful videography that captures your narrative to meticulous logo and branding design that encapsulates brand identity, Little Pig Consulting possesses the artistic finesse to make your brand stand out. They excel in social media management, crafting visually appealing websites, and even offer business coaching to equip you with effective tools for success.

In today's digital landscape, establishing a strong online presence isn't sufficient – it's about crafting an engaging digital footprint.

Thankfully, Little Pig Consulting excels in building brands, expanding online reach, and captivating audiences.

Uniqueness sets Little Pig Consulting apart in Toowoomba's marketing landscape. They're not just consultants; they're collaborative partners driven by passion to consistently exceed expectations.

Ready to take your business to the next level with creativity, expertise, and unwavering commitment? Connect with Little Pig Consulting today – where your brand's journey becomes their passion!

Regional Directors Aiming High

So what do Everest base camp and the AICD Company Director Course have in common? Apparently, more than you'd think. Since completing the course a few years ago, Toowoomba business adviser and Chair of Momentum Mental Health, Chris Black says his life has taken off in directions he'd only imagined.

"The past three years has been sliding doors moment after sliding doors moment, probably starting with the AICD course and culminating in doing some really cool stuff since," Chris says.

"Doing that course back in 2019 basically joined the dots for me and gave me the skills to put my hand up to become the chair."

Since taking up the position of chair at Momentum in February 2020, Chris says he's immensely proud of what's been achieved. And it's in that role that he was among a group of locals who recently completed an expedition to Everest Base Camp, raising over \$100-thousand to provide more vital mental health services for the Toowoomba region.

"I think people in the regions have a lot of passion and they are very generous with their time and energy and their skills. So this AICD course just throws some rigour around the passion and purpose, and helps people become better directors and better business people."

Chris is also a vice president at the Toowoomba Chamber of Commerce.

His co-vice president Sam Wright did the AICD Company Director Course earlier this year and says while it's a challenging program that requires a real commitment, it's well worth the effort.

"I think it's like anything, it's what you put in you'll get back from it."

Partner in an accounting and professional services firm, Sam says: "The course has really sharpened up my thinking around governance and the whole dynamic between the executive and independent directors.

"I'm a director at work and I'm also interested in different aspects of governance and strategy, risk and legal frameworks. I wanted to invest in my own learning to expand my knowledge and be more aware of those factors and the impact on decision-making in management and leadership.

"I was interested both for my own benefit but also for passing that knowledge and experience on to our clients in the advice that we give."

Acting AICD Queensland State Manager, John Devine says the director community in Toowoomba is a highly engaged, diverse and experienced group.

"The level of motivation we see among the community is impressive, and our membership base continues to grow with aspiring and emerging leaders undertaking the company director course and beginning their director journey."

Chris: "I'd recommend it for anyone in business who has director behind their name. It's probably the best post-graduate course that I've ever done. It's definitely the most challenging."

Sam: "If you're just doing it to tick a box – you just want the letters after your name or it's been mandated by your organisation – you may not enjoy it that much



Chair of Momentum Mental Health, Chris Black



Co-vice president of Toowoomba Chamber, Sam Wright

because it is a lot of work. You really work your brain, stretching and broadening your thinking, and being challenged by different perspectives and points of view.”

Chris: “Really importantly, it gives you some great practical skills and tools and ability to have much higher and more strategic conversations with your colleagues and other professionals around you. So I’d strongly recommend it to anyone who’s a director or owner of a business full stop.

The AICD has a membership of around 350 in the Toowoomba region, with people holding directorships across the listed, private, public and not-for-profit sectors.

The AICD Toowoomba Regional Advisory Group provides a voice for the region within the Institute, supports member events and advocates for good governance and policy.

Completed by over 70,000 directors and business leaders, the AICD’s renowned *Company Directors Course™* has set the global benchmark for governance education for more than 40 years.

The Company Directors Course™ gives you an in-depth look at the responsibilities and expectations of directors, deepening your understanding of what effective governance looks like in practice.

Completion of the *Company Directors Course™* will help you to:

- gain clarity around your role as a director;
- improve your financial literacy;
- explore the tensions between short and long-term priorities and diverse stakeholder interests; and
- enhance future strategic discussions to improve your organisation’s performance.

Invest in your future as a director. Learn more about the *Company Directors Course™* today.



Acting AICD Queensland State Manager, John Devine



Murray Troy
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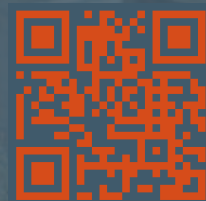
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TSBE's Time to Shine

Words by Greg Bowden, CEO TSBE

Toowoomba and Surat Basin Enterprise (TSBE) acts as a pivot in our region's economic landscape. As a membership-based economic development organisation we extend operational areas over the Toowoomba, Western Downs and Maranoa local government areas. TSBE's core values revolve around industry growth and investment attraction by fostering connections, facilitating networking, and building ongoing relationships and advocacy for business and industry.

At its heart, TSBE serves as a platform for businesses of all sizes to come together and forge meaningful relationships. With Toowoomba's Gross Regional Product now worth in excess of 11.6 billion with nearly 17,000 local businesses supporting over 90,000 jobs our region is abound with opportunities. Through a number of bespoke annual events, workshops, and seminars, TSBE curates an environment for connections to thrive. Local entrepreneurs, industry leaders, and innovators convene to share insights, explore potential collaborations, and exchange ideas that can drive economic advancement.

Networking plays a paramount role in TSBE's strategy. By bringing businesses, investors, and government bodies together, the organisation creates a synergy that propels the region forward. Interactions provide a fertile ground for partnerships to take root, helping businesses access new markets, technologies, people and expertise.

However, TSBE's role transcends mere networking. As a strong advocate for regional growth, the agency

ensures that the collective voice of its members resonates with policymakers and decision-makers. TSBE acts as a conduit, communicating the needs and aspirations of businesses to local, state and federal governments, fostering an environment conducive to sustainable development. This advocacy ranges from infrastructure enhancement and regulatory reforms to talent development and trade and investment attraction opportunities.

In the realm of investment, TSBE's significance shines even brighter. By showcasing the vast potential of the Toowoomba and Surat Basin region, the agency attracts both domestic and international investors. These investments inject capital, foster job creation, and invigorate the local economy, fortifying the region's strong position as a strong choice to live, work and invest.

TSBE is more than a mere economic development agency. It is a driving force that brings together businesses, catalyses networking, amplifies advocacy efforts, and fuels investments. Through its commitment to forging connections and fostering growth, TSBE emerges as a linchpin of regional prosperity, nurturing opportunities that leave an indelible mark on the economic landscape of regional Queensland.



CBD Hangs by a Thread, Thanks to Private Investment

Words by Wade Eiser, Director Aspect Architecture

Toowoomba's Central Business District (CBD) has been undergoing a remarkable transformation. One crucial factor that cannot be overlooked, is the role good architecture has played in the process.

Architects have a critical role in shaping our cities landscape and can have the desired effect of leaving a positive long-lasting legacy for our communities. The influence of architecture in shaping a city goes beyond mere aesthetics; it affects the way people interact with their environment, fostering a sense of identity and belonging. Wade Eiser from Aspect Architects & Project Managers (Aspect) suggests 'as our CBD has evolved, the significance of well-designed buildings and urban spaces becomes vital in creating a vibrant & sustainable community'.

Over the last seven years, numerous projects have been unravelling that exemplify the transformative power of good Architecture. Arguably, one of the catalyst events was when Aspect first moved their office to the SABA building at 469 Ruthven Street. They did so when this portion of

the city was in noticeable decline. In stark contrast to many other cities, Toowoomba's CBD has seen considerable private investment and has been going through a noticeable lift. Some of the notable projects include:

Grand Central Expansion: that created employment and expanded retail offerings in our city.

Walton Stores: where a new laneways focused shared community dining experience was introduced to the CBD.

Rowe's Precinct: Where the Rowe Family have helped revitalized Russell Street, Toowoomba's original Main Street.

The Longs Building: which help revitalize Margaret Street.

The Foundry: which has expanded the CBD and helped minimize satellite developments.



The Mills: in conjunction with the Foundry which are repurposing historically significant buildings with a link to the cities historical industrial strength.

Arguably, historical CBD's are arguably what sets cities apart. Wade suggests 'they are a link to our past and tell a story of the journey we've undertaken'.

The Aspect team are extremely excited by the potential of the next phase for Toowoomba's CBD development.

With Council starting their final journey to revitalize the civic square, Heritage Bank starting their process of building a new head office on The Shrine site will see additional significant city shaping transformation in coming years. Wade can see similarities with Heritage Banks current building along with the historically prominent Pigott's building and Bell Street Mall to what originally drew him and his team to their current location at 469 Ruthven St. Great architecture and place making will undoubtable play a critical role ensuring future generations reflect fondly on our historically unique CBD and business flourishes.



UniSQ Cements its Position as a Leader in Innovation and Excellence

The University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) unveiled a bold and transformative rebrand in June 2022 to reflect the University's commitment to innovation and excellence.

From leading breakthrough space and defence research of national significance to revolutionising how a university degree can be attained online, UniSQ has proven an innovative leader for over 50 years.

That strong track record of success is captured in a confident new commitment by the University to firmly stake its claim as the university of choice for people who think big and put ambition into action, with a full brand relaunch.

As part of the rebrand, the University adopted a new acronym to further increase awareness. 'UniSQ' has amplified the University's global presence and impact with the rebrand coinciding with a rapid rise up the world universities rankings.

The University of Southern Queensland places in the top 301-350 band in the 2023 Times Higher Education World University Rankings and the top 2 per cent of universities worldwide.

UniSQ is leading the way to help drought-proof the country, challenging the story of human migration and evolution, seeking new habitable planets, searching for a cure for dementia, finding ways to curb obesity, and developing solutions to provide youth mental health support.

Backed by world-class institutes, centres, and facilities, the University of Southern Queensland is where students, researchers, community, and partners access excellence.



It is where knowledge and industry combine to create real, positive change for people and the planet.

Beyond its campuses at Toowoomba, Springfield, and Ipswich, the University's influence knows no geographical bounds as a recognised leader in online and blended education.

The rebranding of the University of Southern is more than a visual transformation – it's a recognition of what has been achieved and a commitment to the future.

With a track record of innovation and a legacy of pioneering achievements, UniSQ is well-placed to continue its positive trajectory, shaping the educational landscape and contributing to positive change on a global scale.

Study on-campus or online, full-time or part-time. With 140 degrees across various disciplines, students are empowered to chart their academic journey according to their unique aspirations.

Be inspired by the incredible ideas and achievements of UniSQ students, staff, researchers and alumni.

By honing a curriculum that reflects the ever-evolving professional landscape, UniSQ graduates confidently step into their careers, equipped with the knowledge and skills employers seek.

Access Excellence

UniSQ is a place to excel, think big, and put your ambition into action. Discover quality learning experiences matched with resources and research that will inspire. You will experience a university that adapts to you. Our partnerships will motivate you. Our commitment to collaboration will open new doors. Learn at your own pace or at one of our three campuses or from anywhere in the world.



Rebranding – logo and colour palette

The new logo features a shield containing the iconic Bunya pine tree – representing growth, strength and journeys – acknowledging the connection to Southern Queensland and its significance for the thousands of generations of First Nations families who have called the region home.

The refreshed colour palette of gold and plum is a nod to the sunsets experienced throughout Southern Queensland and the warmth of the dynamic communities in which the University operates.



Elevate Your Digital Experience with Swanky Agency

Words by Sean Clanchy, Managing Director Swanky Agency

If you're serious about online business and E-commerce, you need to chat to Sean Clanchy of Swanky Agency. He's a Toowoomba local with a truly impressive international marketing business built around Shopify Plus. He works with many multi-million-dollar companies from all over the world which gives him insight into global trends and the latest technologies.

Get to Know Swanky:

Swanky Australia is a wholly owned subsidiary of Swanky Group Limited - we are a private company, founded in the UK by a group of friends who started out as freelancers, but then consolidated and created the agency officially in 2011. We are still bootstrapped and I joined the business when I was living in the UK in 2016. In Toowoomba we currently have a team of six, and globally, in the vicinity of 65 staff across the UK, Ireland, France and Australia. With a full-service digital agency skill sets across the group are broad. We have product and project managers, frontend, backend and full stack developers, UX/UI developers, paid search and social media advertising managers, SEO consultants, data analysts and digital strategists.

Despite global changes in the economy, Swanky is growing. We launched into France in 2022 to help access Europe (thanks Brexit!), and selected Montpellier as both a lovely spot, and a bit of a hub for decision makers.

Why Toowoomba?

I came home to Toowoomba in 2018 and continued working remotely for the UK business for a year, before deciding that we would set up an Australian entity. I had lived in Toowoomba from 2003 to 2015 (high school at Downlands and early adult life) so it was a bit of a homecoming after time abroad. I'm now engaged to be married (Sept 23) and have a little boy (7 months old

and cute as can be) so I find the family friendly aspect of Toowoomba really does differentiate it from metro cities.

Shopify – a quick guide

Shopify is a complete commerce platform that lets you start, grow, and manage a business. It powers a wide range of businesses from start-up, mums and dads to JB HiFi.

With Shopify, we help clients create and customise an online store which means they can sell products online including web, mobile, social media and so on. It also helps manage products, inventory, payment and shipping. It's cloud-based so there's no software upgrade to worry about.

We find Shopify is more geared to the sale of products than services generally, but certainly is a great platform for everyone from start-ups to billion-dollar brands. It's very easy to use, includes most of the key functionality that an ecommerce or POS business needs in one system, and is pretty affordable when you realise just how much is included out of the box.

I actually built an online store on Shopify myself and grew it before focusing on Swanky (it was a camping store before you ask), but for businesses without a super complex digital business model, Shopify generally is the best of the bunch for D2C and B2B, international and domestic markets.

When I say not super complex business models - they can work on Shopify (we've built some weird and

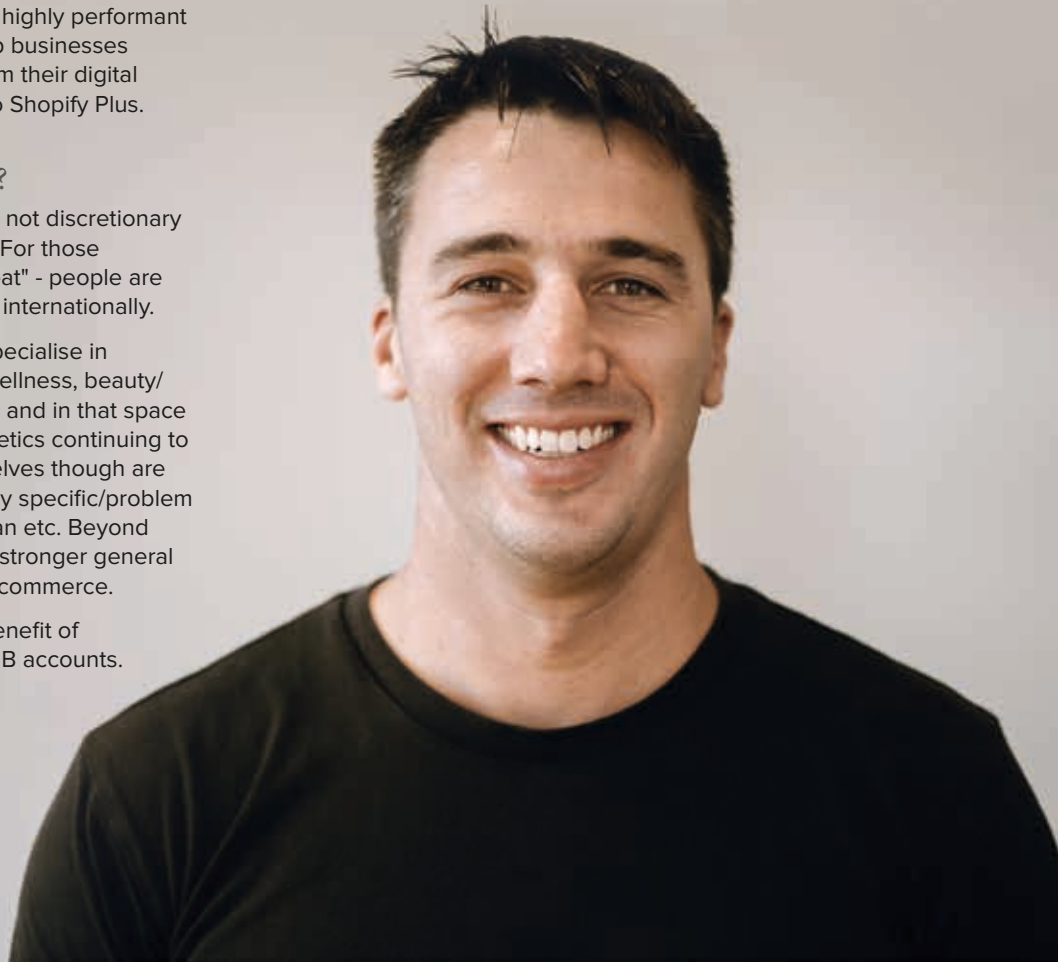
wonderful things), but the biggest benefit of Shopify is having a bombproof, reliable, and highly performant E-commerce platform. We often help businesses remove unnecessary complexity from their digital processes as part of the transition to Shopify Plus.

What businesses are trending?

Businesses selling products that are not discretionary spend items seem to be doing well. For those products that are a bit more of "a treat" - people are tightening the belt domestically and internationally.

In the case of Swanky, we tend to specialise in FMCG (food and drink, health and wellness, beauty/ cosmetics and pet care in particular) and in that space we are seeing coffee, pet and cosmetics continuing to perform well - food products themselves though are struggling a little unless they are very specific/problem solving products - Gluten Free, Vegan etc. Beyond D2C verticals, at present one of the stronger general growth areas we are seeing - B2B ecommerce.

Lots of businesses are seeing the benefit of reducing the cost to service their B2B accounts.



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Ask yourself this question:

Are you better to pay 10 business development and account management staff to work a 38-hour week, or, build one online store that works 24/7, services outside your physical area, including internationally and can work in conjunction with a three person business development/account management team?

Selling a Service? Sean has some advice:

I love the idea of productising IP and experiences so I think the most important thing is that you - have a niche value proposition, communicate it well, and add value to people with a problem/opportunity for improvement. Then ensure that you have the right systems in place to provide whatever your end user needs - gated training content, pre-recorded video sessions, online ingredients stores or online learning tools.

After you have those bits and pieces in place, get reviews to validate your offering and ask for referrals (the best salesman is a happy customer!).

How can Toowoomba businesses find out if Swanky will suit their needs?

Most of our clients come to us to solve a problem or unlock an opportunity. To ensure we tailor our service to their needs, we run through either a discovery process for our new builds projects (dipping into all core systems that are part of their ecommerce site, logistics, marketing, analytics and customer service systems), or an audit process for our marketing and CRO engagements to help understand what our clients could benefit from, to understand the opportunity for them, the effort from us and then develop a proposal that is relevant to their business with the appropriate technology/ad budget/strategy behind it.

We do our initial sales conversations for free but discovery and audit processes are paid engagements. To help pre-qualify enquiries, it's worth noting our typical merchants are turning over in the vicinity of \$5M to \$100M a year online, with some turning over significantly more. If someone were looking to engage Swanky it's worth having an expectation of investing \$100,000 per annum with us so we can dedicate enough of our time and expertise to drive results.



Roughly how long does it take from first consultation to a fully operational online business?

Most of our clients are existing businesses or have all of the ingredients. To build an online store, with a fully integrated ecosystem of tools (purchasing, warehousing/ logistics, customer service, on site functionality, reviews, marketing tech) would typically take in the vicinity of four months from scratch. If you have some of these systems already in place, sometimes much quicker.

As for getting teams in a position to operate effectively as an E-commerce business - that typically takes a lot longer but, when given support and operating processes from Swanky's consulting team, we have seen businesses reach high operating efficiency within 6-9 months.

How Does Swanky Market Itself?

We typically target verticals in the consumable sector and are happy to chat to businesses at 3 stages; funded startup, scale up and enterprise. By splitting out based on business scales we tend to have different deal cycles - enterprise sales are great but take a long time to close so it's really important to not put all of our eggs in one basket.

We use content marketing (SEO) to drive organic inbound enquiries (typically this is our most valuable lead source as the user trusts us due to the quality of our content hence their reaching out to get in touch). Some search marketing to drive enquiry from high-intent audiences. And lastly event and network-based promotion; we try to get in the room with as many merchants in our ideal customer profile as possible to raise our visibility as well as reconnecting with our existing and past clients.

We then create educational content for each sector and the problems that different people in different roles find particularly pertinent to ensure there is something for everyone within a decision-making team. At the present we are writing lots of content around process automation (allowing businesses to be more efficient and reduce staff overheads), conversion rate optimisation (to get as much bang for your buck from advertising spend your site needs to convert well), and internationalisation (lots of businesses reach a glass ceiling in Australian E-commerce relatively quickly - expanding internationally can help alleviate that growth slow down as well as future proofing your business - reducing the impact of domestic region slow-downs).

Hanna's Case Study

During the height of COVID-19, Swanky Agency worked with Hanna's department store to guide them into a new era of trading. Basically, Swanky took this much-loved, family-owned local business to a world-wide audience. In doing so Swanky streamlined Hanna's online sales process including (large) inventory management, coordinated shipping services and advised about online marketing.

As a full-service agency, Swanky can look after digital brand and packaging design, UI/UX, SEO migration, digital architecture consulting, international expansion strategy consulting and delivery, digital marketing across social and search platforms, email and SMS marketing, loyalty strategy, and lastly, Conversion Rate Optimisation.

It worked for Hanna's!



She's a Shelleybrant!

Words by Shelley Burchett, Shelleybrant

The Shelleybrant (pun intended) was born from a love of weddings. My friends had always joked that they wanted me to be their MC and celebrant. So, I thought, why not?

When I started researching what a marriage celebrant did, I was surprised to learn that it included civil wedding ceremonies, vow renewals, naming ceremonies and funerals.

Now, not everyone can just go and perform a wedding ceremony. To legally become a commonwealth-registered marriage celebrant, you must complete a Certificate 4 in Celebrancy, which is a mixture of written learning and performing mock ceremonies. Once you've completed that, you put an application together to the Australian Government, pay the fee and wait 6-8 weeks to get the nod.

From there you can legally practice, however you must maintain your annual registration fee, insurances, and professional development hours.

Over the past couple of years, I've performed about 30 weddings, from elopements where we grab two strangers to be witnesses all the way to full-blown 180 guest wedding ceremonies.

I get to travel to some of the most beautiful places, meet the most amazing people and be part of so many big life moments.

I also love being part of the next generation of celebrants, as I have two ladies that I've been mentoring as they finish their study journey and get their businesses set up.

So, should you want to learn more about getting married, becoming a celebrant or collaboration in the industry feel free to reach out at hello@theshelleybrant.com.au



Gabbinbar Homestead by Tall Timber Studio

Toowoomba's thriving tourism and events scene is in bloom

Words by Peter Homan, CEO Southern Queensland Country Tourism

Spring is well known for being the peak events season in Toowoomba, but the excitement extends beyond the Council borders and through the Southern Queensland Country region; where we can find something to see and do each weekend this events season.

If you thought only the locals were looking forward to joining the festivities you would be mistaken, Toowoomba is making waves in both the International and Domestic markets. The National Visitor Statistics to the end of March 2023 show that the Southern Queensland Country region is on the rise with an increase of 17.8% in overnight visitation, this translates to 2.7 million overnight visitors and a region wide spend of \$1.3 billion.

Not everyone is staying the night, but this isn't stopping our day trippers from spending in the region. Day trippers account for bringing \$717 million to the Southern Queensland Country region over the past year (year ending March 2023) up 38.7% on the year prior.

Tourism and Events Queensland are reporting a 37% increase in destination interest and international site traffic (based on 607K site visits to <https://teq.queensland.com>) in the past months reporting. It is important to note that over 50% of these site visits flagged a growing

interest in our food and beverage sector, great news for the regions growers and thriving restaurant market.

Our student market is also bouncing back with a significant number of agencies looking for school tours and accommodation connections across our region. The Department of Education has released Year-to-date (YTD) May 2023 international student data and indicates an increase of 28% in student visas with the top 5 countries of origin being China, India, Nepal, Colombia and the Philippines.

If you would like to tap into our growing tourism market, Southern Queensland Country Tourism offer trade ready programs and representation at Australia's leading trade events both domestically and internationally with a focus on the South East Asian market and are always looking for fresh opportunities to showcase our regions flourishing tourism and hospitality market.



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Toowoomba in Crisis

Face to Face with Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Queensland

Words by Rachelle Patterson

CEO, Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Queensland

Over the past 18 months we have observed an increase in the complexity of issues facing people requiring our services. Of particular note, is the increase in the number of females and elderly requesting assistance from us.

We have also started to observe that a lot of people who are seeking assistance from us, have not previously required our services. We attribute this to the combined lack of housing supply, increased rent and costs and increased general experiences of financial distress. Recent figures reveal that the median rent in Toowoomba has increased from \$295 to \$370 in the five years from 2017-2022.

In terms of what we have directly observed and captured when it comes to client needs, we have seen a sharp increase in requests for our services across the board.

“The reality is, we cannot always meet demand due to limitations to funding and resources.”

In 2022 we were unable to meet the needs of an average of 71 people per month who needed Emergency Relief. What this includes is people presenting to us needing food, accommodation or assistance to pay for basics like fuel, medication etc. Over the past twelve months, the unmet need number has increased dramatically to an average of 173 requests per month.

We have seen a similar upward trend in the number of people requesting our various counselling services. From 2022 to 2023, the number of requests for our counselling services has increased from 121 to 279 per month. The requests we receive for financial counselling alone has doubled during this period, meaning we simply cannot keep up with demand for this service.

In terms of homelessness specifically, 500-600 people present to our Housing Hub annually. Of those, 60% are female and 30% of the entire cohort identify as Indigenous. Something different we have started this year is the bulk purchase of sleeping bags which we hand out to people who are sleeping rough. We have recently purchased 400 of these and have already distributed 280 across our region since July, some of which we provided to other services providers who are also seeing large numbers of people presenting who are in need. The cohorts that we donate the sleeping bags to are made up of individuals, families and children.

It is difficult to provide accurate statistics about the current homeless population in Toowoomba given

the most recently published Census data is from 2021. This situation has worsened considerably over the past 2 years. This is reinforced by Queensland Government data which reports that housing supply in Toowoomba has reduced by 28% from 2019-2022.

Homelessness and the Elderly

A very recently emerging issue that we are seeing regarding homelessness locally, is an increase in the number of elderly people who are both homeless and unwell. The research tells us that access to secure and affordable housing is a protective factor in keeping people well and aiding recovery. Conversely, lack of secure housing is a risk factor for poor physical and mental health, over two-thirds (67%) of respondents indicating that housing played a significant role in their client's mental health.

Given the relationship between housing stock shortages, cost of living and increased community need for support, we are expecting that we will be facing ongoing challenges to meet the demand. Our team of 115 or so staff have faced many challenges in our communities over the past almost 50 years and I know they will continue to work and come up with unique and innovative ways to support our community. Probably the key strength of the staff who work for Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Queensland Ltd is that we work and live in each of our communities.

Yours Locally - Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Queensland

Many people may not know that Lifeline as a brand is made up of several individual centres around Australia. The 13 11 14 crisis support number is managed nationally by Lifeline Australia and some of the individual Lifeline member centres who deliver this service. However, there are a number of Lifeline centres that do not have a call centre but instead deliver face-to-face services within their communities. Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Queensland is one of those face-to-face only centres. We deliver over 30 programs across our footprint as well as owning and operating 15 Lifeline retail stores across the Darling Downs and South West Queensland. Because we are a member centre of Lifeline Australia, we also pay



a significant contribution to Lifeline Australia to help fund the ongoing delivery of the important 13 11 14 number.

The programs that Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Qld provides in this region are delivered by staff and volunteers who live and work right across the region including in Toowoomba, Warwick, Dalby, St George, Roma, Charleville, Cunnamulla and the surrounding communities. The programs that we deliver face-to-face are many and varied and include areas such as:

- Financial Counselling
- Gambling Help
- Homelessness
- Domestic and Family Violence
- Emergency Relief
- Individual/Family and Group Counselling
- Child Protection and Early Intervention
- Youth Justice
- Crisis Counselling
- Youth and Training programs (SafeTALK, LGBTQIA+ awareness, Mental Health First Aid and Accidental Counsellor).

How We Pay for Services in Our Region

Our funding to deliver these services comes from various levels of local, state and Commonwealth governments, as well as donations from individuals, families and businesses. Something that you may not know is that when you make a donation to Lifeline, depending on how you do so, will inform where this money goes. As an example, when you donate to Lifeline, the funding goes to Lifeline Australia which contributes to the running of the 13 11 14 call centres nationally. However when you donate specifically to Lifeline Darling Downs and South West Queensland Ltd www.lifelinedarlingdowns.org.au, this money remains in this region and contributes to the face-to-face services we deliver.

If you would like to talk about ways in which your business could partner with us at Lifeline Darling Downs & South West Qld, you can reach out to CEO Rachelle Patterson on 1300991443 or 0400672937.

*Did you know that
Lifeline Darling Downs &
South West Queensland
Ltd commenced in 1975?*



Specialist Industry Marketing – Fitness

*Words by Chris Gent, Chief Amazement Officer and
VP of Misc. Stuff at Happy Healthy HQ*

While most businesses share commonalities in marketing, there are a few tricks of the trade specific to each industry sector. We caught up with Chris Gent, owner of Happy Healthy HQ, who has recently moved to Toowoomba after 35 years in the fitness industry in Brisbane.

Happy Healthy HQ is a private personal training studio located in the centre of town. Full of positive energy, Chris caters for, and helps to overcome 'gym reluctance'. She believes everyone can shape a better life for themselves with individually tailored workouts.

You work with clients of all abilities, aged from 16 to 75. What do you like most about your work?

The positive difference you can make in someone's life is priceless. Being able to empower and inspire clients to improve their mental and physical health to get their happy back.

What do you find motivates people more, health or looks?

Most of us have a healthy dose of caring about how we look. But when we care too much about our appearance and what other people think, this can be detrimental to self-esteem, confidence, and mood. Internalising these ideals can lead to heightened negative thoughts which can lead to exercising for weight and appearance reasons, rather than for health or fitness reasons.

How do you get clients to come back if they fall by the wayside?

A loss of time and motivation are the most common reasons people abandon training. I keep regular contact

with past clients as many times they refer other people or return themselves when circumstances change.

Have you noticed the fitness business has changed over the years? In what way?

The health and fitness industry has gone through many trends over my 35 years with things like Jazzercise, Richard Simmons workout videos, leotards, Tae-Bo, and workouts with the step and spin classes which still continue till this day.

Being a PT is your expertise but in business you have to wear so many other hats! Do you wear the marketing hat too?

Yes sure do. Growing a service-based business such as personal training means being smart about where time and capital are spent. Social media, networking referral groups, business to business relationships and referrals are the main source of marketing.

Do you work with consultants in the marketing field?

I currently use a local media agency to oversee my socials and have developed some great business relationships that offer support.



What marketing/promotion works best for you?

Referrals from existing clients, referrals from allied health professionals, and networking referrals provide the best return.

Tell me about your online program:

Online sessions are suited to clients who cannot make it to the studio due to their remote location (live outside Toowoomba) or circumstances (no time to travel due to family/ work commitments).

I schedule these sessions just like a normal session and use a visual communication platform.

Some people are price-driven when it comes to choosing a gym. What are your thoughts on this?

Some of the cheapest gyms have no staff for guidance, but if you know your way around the gym, then this may be a great fit. Otherwise, I generally advise people to look for a gym that is a balance between affordability, convenience and quality with a supportive community.

Is there a quick fix to weight-loss and being healthy?

Making the necessary changes of being consistent with improving your energy-controlled diet and becoming more active will always be the best and healthiest way to lose body fat. A lot of pharmaceutical companies are pretty convincing with their weight-loss pills but there can be side-effects such as heart palpitations, high blood pressure, headaches, nausea and constipation.



Why join the construction industry?

*Words by Nick Hannant,
Operations Manager, Classic Recruitment*

The unemployment rate in Australia has now dropped to below 4%, which is a 1.46% decline from 2021. Despite the unemployment rate dropping to its lowest in a long time, there is still a skill shortage in the trades industry across Australia, and Toowoomba is certainly no different.

The team at Classic Recruitment believes the best way out of the skill shortage in trades is to encourage our school students to start their careers young. Let's encourage them to learn some skills while earning good money at the same time. This especially applies to those who are not necessarily academically minded or at least, not pursuing a career in that direction.

The really good news is that the construction industry in the Toowoomba Region is booming, with projects such as the new hospital and the Inland Rail in the pipeline. These projects need both skilled and unskilled workers.

Our first piece of advice for young people looking to get into this industry is to go out and get your White Card. This is a General Construction Induction, and it is mandatory for workers on site to have this qualification.

Secondly, we recommend going to recruitment agencies such as Classic Recruitment. We work with construction company's both big and small and supply them with entry level workers. You would start off casual, earning over \$32 an hour, and learn valuable skills to grow your career.

Once you prove yourself in this industry the opportunities are endless.

There are shortages in all construction trades and opportunities to become a plant operator, workplace health and safety manager or site supervisor.

If you are a parent of a 16–18-year-old who is not sure what they want to do after school, it could really pay to get them interested in construction. If you'd like to get in touch with the team at Classic Recruitment. We'd be happy to have a chat with you. Phone Nick on 4638 3599.



Human Resources Update with Classic Recruitment

Casual Employment Changes – Fair Work Legislation Amendment (Closing Loopholes) Bill 2023

A recent legislation change known as the 'Closing Loopholes Bill' will introduce a new definition of casual employment into the Fair Work Act.

Commencing from 1 July 2024, an employee is a casual employee of an employer only if:

- The employment relationship is characterised by an absence of a firm advance commitment to continuing and indefinite work; and
- The employee would be entitled to a casual loading or a specific rate of pay for casual employees under the terms of a fair work instrument if the employer were a casual, or the employee is entitled to such a loading or rate of pay under the contract of employment.

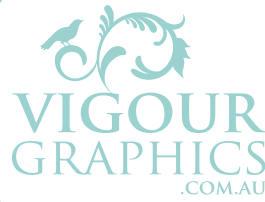
To assess the absence of a firm advance commitment to continuing and indefinite work the Act will consider:

- whether there is an inability of the employer to elect to offer work or an inability of the employee to elect to accept or reject work;
- whether, having regard to the nature of the employer's enterprise, it is reasonably likely that there will be future availability of continuing work in that enterprise of the kind usually performed by the employee;
- whether there are full time employees or part time employees performing the same kind of work in the employer's enterprise that is usually performed by the employee; and
- whether there is a regular pattern of work for the employee (although this doesn't have to be "absolutely uniform").

Significantly, this definition does not include a requirement for an agreed regular pattern of work.

This change means that parties will need to look beyond the written terms of a contract to determine whether an employee is truly a casual and must make an assessment having regard to the practical reality and true nature of the employment relationship.

Please reach out to the team at Classic Recruitment should you want more information on either of these topics.



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