

SMARTER ONLINE MARKETING PODCAST with Vickie Siculiano, Online Marketing Coach Part 7 - Interview with Matthew Sweetwood

Vickie: When I've had questions when I was going along, your instructors are fantastic. Sometimes, you have a question when you're getting involved. You have to practice with photography. You always have to shoot. I'm a shutter bug and I'm thankful that you made me one, but you really have to practice and sometimes you have a certain application. Say you want to shoot something that's moving, I had an event that I was shooting.

It was a triathlon. It was something that's going to be using the panning technique that I have learned with Rick Gerrity. He was running across the room and we have to track him. It was something that I just wasn't sure about. I wanted to make sure that my shoot was perfect on the day of the event. You can't really say, "Wait. Can you hold everybody's triathlon running right now?"

Matthew: That's right. Slow down for me. Stop.

Vickie: Just stop right there.

Matthew: Start the race over again.

Vickie: Sometimes you just want to go back and to Unique Photo. Go where the experts are, just make sure you're doing it right. I practiced panning. I'm friends with Rick on Facebook so he was always helping me behind the scenes. I'm like look, look I need to do this. I'm always practicing down the driveway. My husband was riding his bike down the block and I was like snap.

Matthew: That's really nice if you're friends with him on Facebook, because Rick is a very lonely guy. He needs friends.

Vickie: Is that so?

Matthew: I encourage everybody ... That's totally not true. Everybody in the world loves Rick. I'll just something else. You don't have to reach out to our official instructors. If you come in on our store, every single person that works in our store, every one of them, if they wear a blue shirt, I have a stylish blue shirt.

Vickie: I have a blue shirt.

Matthew: Yeah. That's right. We're all blue today. Give me a pound.

Vickie: Pound.

Matthew: We're all stylish blue. The guys and gals that wear the blue shirt in store, that means their working photographers. Every single person that works behind the counter at Unique Photo is a working photographer which means they possess a lot of knowledge. We dispense free technical support. You know, you walk in the store, you ask them, they'll gladly help you with anything.

Vickie: I know.

Matthew: We encourage that. We're in the business discussion, not just a photography discussion. That's really an important model, because you become a qualitative as a business like that. People want to come in to the store because they're not just coming in for you to take their money. They're coming in to participate. To become part of what you have here. That's really, really an important part. When you walk in to the store, we're friends and so on, when you walk in the store, you feel comfortable in there. You don't feel like you're going to get pounced on. That people are trying to sell. If you just want to come in and talk photography, we'll do that. It's a comfortable place to do that. It's extremely important for a business to do that. To create an atmosphere where people are comfortable to come to a business. Even at a retail store. It doesn't matter what kind of business it is. You want your customer to be comfy.

Vickie: Your little coffee section. Little coffee talk. I had conversations there with many of your staff.

Matthew: I am a consumer of our coffee. We have a coffee bar. A gourmet coffee bar. Right?

Vickie: Yes. Absolutely.

Matthew: Many times, we actually hold corporate meetings there. When I have heads of state come in here, heads of corporation head in here. Nobody wants to sit in a conference room and look at the pictures of whatever. They want to go sit on the store and see where all the action is. We have really nice place out on the store to sit and discuss and feel like you're part of the community. We have great coffee.

Vickie: It's totally great. I just wanted to ask you, Matthew, if there are any exciting projects that are coming down the pike for Unique Photo?

Matthew: Actually we do. We have a couple of really interesting things coming down. The problem is like, few of them are like, I don't want to call them secretive, I'll be

careful about how we describe them. We're going to have a very, very special photo booking product that's going to come out where in we're actually going to have an exclusive with one of the big manufacturers in our business. They're going to be producing an extremely high quality photo album. We're going to be able to offer that to our customers.

It's a photo book. The reason it's really relevant here is that it's a book that businesses would want. It's not just sort of like you go have a birthday party and you go produce sort of this amateurish photo book. This is a production quality book that professionals going to want. Something that you can hand out to corporate clients or something. This is going to be available relatively shortly. Only at Unique Photo. A couple other things we have going on here, you're going to see a change in, I've been talking a lot about Panasonic, because we're working with them.

That coffee bar area that we just talked about is actually going to be transformed. The whole corner is going to turn into what's called a Lumix lounge. It's going to be a place where photographers can hang out. It's going to be better, more comfortable sitting in there. There's going to be a continuous running Google Hangout from in there. Podcast, social media and Panasonic is working to do product launches and have photography seminars right from the floor of the store which we'll be able to broadcast over the internet.

That's a pretty exciting and relevant. Maybe the next time we do one of these interviews, you will come in to the store, we'll sit next to each other. Maybe we'll bring in some other guest. We can also do it remotely too. Not all the guest have to be on the store. We'll actually run a Google Hangout or we can do Skype or both or whatever it is. We can broadcast this live all over the place.

Vickie: Nice. That will be awesome.

Matthew: The store is actually going to be a function like that. It's going to be a social media place.

Vickie: I know. That's not surprising coming from you.