



WHIRLWIND of PROGRESS

Cyclone Social Embraces Unique Approach

By Marissa Smith

The mantra of Fort Wayne-based marketing agency Cyclone Social is hard to miss, considering it is the main focal point upon entering the company's downtown office. A 20-foot mural welcomes guests as they step inside, immediately accomplishing its goal by getting people's attention.

This eye-catching visual display is fitting for a business that specializes in a different form of engaging content. Cyclone Social is a strategic marketing agency that focuses almost exclusively on social media. The company, started by University of Indianapolis alumnus Andrew Lamping shortly after his college graduation, picked up its first client in 2012 and has been growing ever since.

"Every little boy wants a Swiss Army knife, but when he goes to screw something in, he only wants a screwdriver," offers Lamping, using an analogy he finds best describes his business philosophy. "Cyclone Social is a screwdriver; we are specialists."

The social media emphasis has worked well for Cyclone Social. In January of last year, the company more than doubled its staff size, forcing it to relocate to a larger office. The growth also has come in revenue, with a 300% increase at the end of 2017 compared to previous years.

When asked what it was like to see his business grow so quickly, Lamping pauses to consider the question carefully. "It's funny that you ask that, because to me, I was never watching. I'm just in it, dialed in. When someone asks a question like that, it's kind of an 'ah-ha' moment. ... That is pretty cool."

Christopher Lamping, Andrew's brother, has had a much different vantage point. "I have been able to actually see this company blossom, from originally seeing Andrew working by himself to having a staff of 15. It's incredible."

By the hand

Everything the company has accomplished since 2012 has been achieved without contracts, a tactic not utilized by many businesses.

After an initial assessment, the Cyclone Social team proposes a flat monthly rate to cover the cost of meeting identified needs. The arrangement continues as long as clients like: no signatures, no dotted lines and no penalties for those who decide to walk away.

"Everything is done on a handshake. We have no package deals. We build a customized approach for each client," Andrew Lamping shares. This way of conducting business directly relates to the core values that Cyclone Social operates under: compassion, competency and consistency – above self-interest.

The company's first-ever client, Deer Park Irish Pub, is still working with Cyclone Social five and a half years later. "The clients really put their trust in us," says Anna Rudicel, one of Cyclone's community managers. "We're able to really run with a lot of our ideas and do a lot of great things."

George Guido, practicing manager of Graly and Guido Law Office, was another of Lamping's initial clients. The two met through a mutual friend at a networking event and have worked closely to create and implement social media strategies that appeal to Guido's target audience. Their similar approaches to business and entrepreneurial mindsets have also led them to become close friends.

"I trust Andrew implicitly, and I feel like he trusts me and the direction that I want to take my business," Guido explains when asked about the handshake policy.

All about relationships

Whether a client has worked with Cyclone for years or just a few months, an amicable relationship is the foundation. Lindsay Schlau, office manager at Women's Health Advantage, has been impressed with Cyclone's team since becoming a client in December 2017.

"Right away they wanted to get to know us more," Schlau details. "They're all so friendly, laid-back and yet so good at what they do. ... They have flooded the impressions, views, likes that we get on our Facebook page."

The company slogan, "Be remarkable or be ignored," does not just refer to the way Cyclone Social conducts business. Lamping and his team have cultivated a company culture reflective of that ideology as

well. Though the entrepreneur admits that Cyclone’s headquarters can be “a little old school,” it’s never stopped the agency from being innovative. “In everything we do, we push the boundaries,” he affirms.

Take, for example, the company’s recent anniversary party, celebrating a year at its downtown office location. Instead of a typical networking event, Cyclone Social hosted a world-class disc jockey complete with a dynamic light show. Staff and the ever-expanding network of clients spent the evening talking, laughing and dancing. Lamping says several attendees noted that you don’t often see events like this in the corporate world.

A week prior, the Cyclone team and family members gathered for an employee appreciation outing at Parkview Field, taking in a TinCaps game from box seats. Christopher Lamping, who officially joined Cyclone Social as director of operations last fall, stresses the importance of these types of events.

“People sometimes throw company culture around as an ambiguous phrase,” he acknowledges. “But we actually carve out time and say this is ‘no-work’ time, this is time for building relationships and getting to know your co-workers and their families.”

Employees also are encouraged to spend time outside of the office. The company offers unlimited paid time off and flexibility to work remotely. While everyone is held accountable for getting their work done and meeting clients’ needs, the agency’s founder doesn’t mind whether that is accomplished in a coffee shop up the street or from a beach in Florida.

Rudicel typically works from home three days a week, allowing her to spend more time with her infant daughter. Having just joined the team in March, Rudicel was certain this flexibility would come with a catch.

“There really isn’t one,” she asserts. “Andrew doesn’t care how many days in a row you take off, if you make sure that your clients are taken care of, that you’re getting your work done and you’re not letting your teammates down.”

As Cyclone Social continues to grow, it is seeking new markets. Lamping and the team do not take on competing clients, so he’s looking to add businesses that are outside of Fort Wayne. He believes that the goal of opening an Indianapolis location will be accomplished within the next six months.

Though Cyclone Social has worked with clients in 10 states, Lamping prefers meeting with companies face-to-face. “It’s not about finding a pretty picture and posting it on Facebook. It’s about creating content that’s unique and creating narratives for brands,” he contends. “You have to be present.”

Present and accounted for applies to the efforts of Lamping and Cyclone Social as they strive to make an impact in northeast Indiana and beyond.



CEO Andrew Lamping founded the company with funds from his time as a roofing salesman.



Staff members celebrate alongside corporate leaders and business owners.



Employees typically work collaboratively in “pods” to develop relationships with clients.

RESOURCE: Cyclone Social at www.cyclonesocial.com