

# Navigating a multimedia business path

By Steve Burns, Capital news contributor

How well do you communicate with your customers or potential customers? Are you using the right methods to market your idea, product or service? Do you have a creative marketing strategy, which uses all of the latest technology tools available?

We can all use help to improve our marketing strategies. This week we go inside, Navigator Multimedia Inc. ( [www.navigatormm.com](http://www.navigatormm.com)), for an interview with Greg Bauer, the company's CEO.



Marketing gurus Greg Bauer, Diana Craigie, Kirk Liu and Jiri Bakala of Navigator Multimedia with some of their video production equipment. Photo Gordon Bazzana

Navigator provides a full range of multimedia services that help you better craft and communicate your message to your marketplace.

Bauer started Navigator Multimedia in 1992 by building very simple Web pages. The company has since excelled in creating Internet Web pages, CDs and DVDs utilizing the latest tools available for multimedia content delivery.

In 1995, Bauer started to explore the world of multimedia CD ROM and digital video production. His brother, Steve, joined him as a business partner in 1996 and they incorporated in 2000.

All of their production and programming is done in Kelowna, while they maintain a sales office in Calgary. Navigator employs five full-time staff, four subcontractors and provides a full range of services including:

- Internet Web site design, e-commerce, programming and hosting,
- Internet search engine announcements,
- Original graphics design and creation,
- Photograph and video creation, editing and manipulation,
- Multimedia CD-ROM creation and mass duplication services.
- Multimedia DV-ROM (mini CD business cards) creation and mass duplication services.

- Multimedia DVD creation and mass duplication services,
- Cross-platform multimedia programming solutions.
- Original music composition and voiceovers,
- Language translation services.

What makes Navigator Multimedia unique in the marketplace?

Navigator prides itself on providing unique services in the marketplace.

For instance, Bauer talks about their capabilities with one-stop DVD production and replication. "We provide 'concept to delivery' DVD production and high volume replication at very low rates. For instance, DVD replication is now about one-half the cost of VHS. We can also take existing VHS corporate video and convert it into an interactive DVD. We use very high quality video equipment and are one of the only facilities in the valley that can offer true 16:9 widescreen video production.

"An example of our high quality work is the Okanagan Icewine Harvest DVD that we have just released, which is translated into eight languages. We have also produced DVDs for a sports marketing company and the B.C. Wine Institute.

"Our videographer has extensive experience in video production including work with CBC Newsworld in Toronto, music videos, commercials, documentaries and independent short films. At our core, whether it is software, games, videos or web sites, we are content producers.

"Once the project is complete we can offer a wide variety of delivery methods (internet, CD, mini CD, DVD, mini DVD, VHS etc.).

"We can replicate as many CDs or DVDs as required. For instance, we just replicated 22,000 mini CDs to hang off the neck of wine bottles for a winery in Chile, which is being distributed in Canada through Mark Anthony Brands."

What is the profile of your ideal customer?

"We work best with companies that give us creative freedom in script writing, videography and graphical user interface design. We want to help them create the end result that will achieve their goals.

"This takes time to understand their business objectives and how what we are doing fits into the big picture. For instance, in the DVD area, we work well with a company that has an open mind to new ideas, understands and appreciates the time needed to create a well polished, professional DVD production.

"Often we suggest concepts and uses for our technology that they didn't think of or didn't know existed."

Who are your major competitors?

“Our major competition would be other video production companies, although we do work with a few of them locally to provide multimedia programming, DVD authoring, and mass replication services.

“We think that competition is very good for us. It forces us to constantly seek out and learn the latest technologies. We take a lot of pride in the fact that we can give our customers access to the latest advancements in our industry.

“We can compete very well outside of the Okanagan as well. With so many instant communication and file transfer methods available today and the ability to source skills such as voice talent locally, we have many overhead advantages over other DVD authoring companies in larger cities both in Canada and the US.”

What advice would you give to other technology entrepreneurs?

Bauer has some critical advice for other technology entrepreneurs:

Stay focused

Stay focused on your unique skill sets that deliver value to your customers. Do what you do well—know yourself, your abilities and your limits. Don't try to do things that you are not good at or don't enjoy.

Build your people

Take the time to really understand what your team members are looking for. Do your utmost to match their skills and capabilities with the type of work that they will be doing for clients. A team member that is thrilled to be working on a client's project will let their enthusiasm show. Be sure to continually be improving your soft skills.

Promote constantly

Take every opportunity to shamelessly promote your business. Promotion often translates into new customers that you could not have reached any other way.

Always test your ideas

“We take the time to test our ideas to ensure that the solutions we are providing will be valuable to the client and to their end customer.”

Spend wisely

“You should spend your hard earned income with an eyedropper. Be careful to keep enough money in your business to get you through the slower cycles.”

Anticipate change

“Remind yourself that as soon as you learn something new and your customers start buying it, you must look for the next change. I think it is time for all entrepreneurs

to take time to re-evaluate their marketing strategies. Will a new, fresh marketing approach that includes multi-media provide your company with the sizzle required to sell your idea to existing or potential customers? Better yet, how will you ever know unless you try? Perhaps if you do, new customers will navigate their way to your business."

Next week: New Year's Revolution.

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