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By Bo Barron

The Three Phases to Building a

DOMINATING

Digital Presence

I was recently on a flight from Nashville, Tenn. to the global headquarters of the Massimo Group in Raleigh, N.C. When I got to our Massimo office, Rod Santomassimo, founder and president of the Massimo Group, had an email. In that email was a picture of me on that plane.

Someone had seen me, knew who I was, taken a picture of me, and emailed it to Rod. This guy has never been a client of the Massimo Group. I never coached him. But he knew who I was because of our digital presence.

We looked him up in our database and saw that he's been on our email list since 2012. I wish he would have said something to me.

Creating dominating digital presence is an asset. However, it is something that is widely misunderstood.

And let's be honest, commercial real estate is the opposite of an early adopter when it comes to technology - especially digital presence and social media.

I want to challenge you to rethink what you believe about digital presence. I'm going to share with you four myths about digital presence, explain the benefits of having a dominating digital presence, and then give you the framework to create it.

Here are the four myths of digital presence:

Myth #1: It Leads to Deals

Well - it doesn't. Don't get me wrong. I could find some stories where digital presence and social media have led to deals, but they aren't normative. They rarely have a direct ROI. Digital presence will get you known. It will make you top-of-mind. Much like it is difficult to calculate the ROI of consistently going to cocktail parties, it is difficult to calculate the ROI of digital presence.

Myth #2: It is Just Social Media

Social media is just a cog in your digital presence machine. I was a long time in learning this. I thought if I had thousands of Twitter followers and a good

LinkedIn profile, I could check the digital presence box. That is not the case.

Myth #3: It Is a Waste of Time

Just because it is difficult to define a direct ROI does not mean it is a waste of time. There is an ROI. There absolutely is a benefit to digital presence. You just have to know where to look and take the long view of the results. Is patience one

expert is an advantage at any age and in any market. So why should you dedicate your most precious resource - your time - to building a digital presence? Because it is worth it. Here's why...

First, it allows you to demonstrate your expertise. Creating digital presence is mostly about content marketing. This gives you the opportunity to create valuable content that your ideal prospects will find valuable. You get to show off how smart you are to the benefit of your

constraints. When you write articles, blog posts, ebooks, etc., they are out there all the time, forever - working for you. Nothing else you can do will put in that kind of time without wanting a paycheck.

So now that we have dispelled some myths and made a brief case for why digital presence is valuable, let's go over the framework so you can begin for yourselves.

When I coach people who want to create digital presence, we work through a 90-day framework that has three phases. Many internet gurus have different words and models to create digital presence, but they are all essentially the same. I'm going to use the terms I heard first from Michael Hyatt because it has a military context and I'm a former Marine.

Phase 1: The First 30 Days

You need a home base. A home base is digital real estate you own or control. It is your own personal location on the internet. It is generally a website, a blog, a YouTube channel, or a podcast. You completely control what happens in that space. This is where you put out your best content. And everything you do in Phase 2 is going to invite people back here to your home base.

You can easily have this up in 30 days or less. Step 1 - ask your teenage niece to help you. Step 2 - buy the URL of your name or a version of your name.

Phase 2: 30-60 Days

You need embassies. These are the social media sites. For CRE, the ones that matter are LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook - probably in that order. Embassies are places you don't control but it is where the people are. LinkedIn could change everything tomorrow and

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of your key traits? I didn't think so - but it needs to be when dealing with digital presence.

4. It is a Young Person's Game

Young people have an advantage here - no doubt. But that doesn't mean you can't do it - and do it well. I gave a keynote address to a national CRE company six years ago where I made the comment that I could come into your market and be more known than you in 18 months. Granted, I was trying to say something shocking and noteworthy, but it is true. Being top-of-mind and known as an

prospects and clients. Do you think it would be beneficial to you to call a prospect and hear from them that they have been reading your content? The answer is yes.

Second, it triggers the rule of reciprocity. If you want to learn more about this, read the book *Influence* by Robert Cialdini. Essentially, when you give something of value for free, the recipient feels tremendous pressure to return the favor. This is super powerful in getting people to take your calls, meet with you, etc.

Third, your digital presence works for you 24/7 with no geographical

you couldn't do anything about it. You want a presence there. You want to share your content there. You want to engage with people there - all to invite them back to the place you do control - your home base.

Step 1 - set up your profiles on LinkedIn and Twitter. If you aren't there already, set up your Facebook profile as well. My best advice is to take a look at my LinkedIn profile (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/bobarron/>) and Rod Santomassimo's (<https://www.linkedin.com/in/crecoach/>). Mine is good. Rod's is very well done. Then copy them to get started. You can get more creative and customized as you go.

Tip: don't get bogged down in the details and the need for perfection. Just create it. Then optimize it as you go.

Phase 3: 60-90 Days

You need listening outposts. I was in the signals intelligence field when I was in the Marine Corps. Some Marines in my field would get close to the enemy, whip out their 40 lb. radios, and listen to what the bad guys were doing. Then they would feed the good guys intel.

You want listening posts scattered out in the far reaches of the internet feeding you intelligence. The simplest way to do this is with Google Alerts.

Essentially, you can tell Google what you want to know about, and it will search for anything that hits - new stories, blog posts, etc. When it finds something, it will shoot you an email with the intel. It is a beautiful thing. And it is free.

Tip #1 - set up a Google Alert of your name and your company. If someone is out there trashing you, or praising you, you need to know right away so you can do something about it.

Tip #2 - set up Google Alerts for all of your highest prospects and clients. If something awesome happens to one of them, you can be the first to call and congratulate them. If something goes wrong with them, you can proactively come to their aid.

Knowing more than your competition is a huge advantage. Let Google Alerts do the work for you and feed you intel.

Don't let your age, your dislike for abbreviations like LOL, IDK, and YOLO, or your belief in the myths that we discussed hold you back from creating a dominating digital presence. It takes a plan, and it takes consistency. However, it absolutely pays off. ♥

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