Daniel Dixon Interview

**Can you provide us with a brief personal background?**

I am originally a Charlotte native who attended Myers Park High School from 2004 through 2008. It was here that I gained an initial interest in the field through my participation in the organization DECA, as well as my multiple marketing courses. I subsequently attended the University of South Carolina and graduated with a dual degree in Economics and Management.

My first professional venture was the result of a required internship my senior year. Myself, and selected individuals, were chosen to partner with the Columbia based marketing firm, Post No Bills. Through this educational partnership my dedication was recognized and I was hired upon graduation. For two years I helped manage a number of local and national accounts, including: SC State Fair, ESPN, Colonial Life, USC Athletics, Lexington Chamber of Commerce, etc.

I eventually decided that it was time to move on and ultimately began work with a management consulting firm in Washington, DC. After a few weeks I decided that my heart was still in the marketing realm and I returned to Charlotte to begin a job with Pinckney Marketing.

**What is your educational background?**

***See above***

**High School:** Myers Park (Professional Organizations: DECA, FBLA)

**Undergraduate:** The University of South Carolina, The Moore School of Business

**Major:** Economics, Management

**Minor:** Political Science

**How did you get into the marketing field and how long have you been participating in it?**

I was first pulled into this field through a number of High School courses that I was an active participant in - freshman through senior year. Some mentors include Matthew Speas and Jim Smith, dedicated marketing teachers and active DECA leaders. I became a regular member of DECA and routinely attended the annual state conference, earning a place as a finalist during my senior year. Because of this, I was eligible to attend the national competition. I ultimately did not.

When I joined Post No Bills I regained that passion and continued to advance my creative ambitions. Working with organizations such as ESPN helped fuel my admiration for the industry. Though, in reality, we only worked with their marketing department in New York. Despite that, it was a fantastic experience as I got to help plan their VIP events for the Super Bowl and MLB All Star game.

Post No Bills was just a stepping-stone; it was more of a boutique agency than full service. It gave me a taste of the professional field and I wanted more. Pinckney has given me the opportunity to experience the full spectrum of marketing and advertising.

**If you are not originally from Charlotte, was Charlotte a target city for you to find a job with your type of firm?**

I have always intended to return to Charlotte but did so not because of my familiarity with the city, but the opportunity it offers. Charlotte has continued to expand economically, despite the banking downturn. As a diverse economy, thriving energy center, and burgeoning tech hub, Charlotte has become an ideal destination for any young professional.

**What keeps you interested in this field?**

Routine is never part of this field’s vocabulary and I appreciate that. Every day brings a new goal, obstacle, and creative challenge to overcome. It keeps you remain focused but it also teaches how to truly prioritize. In some senses, that puts your mind at ease, despite the constant hustle.

I **see there are sixteen members on your team according to the web site. When were your hired within this list of sixteen?**

Our digital strategist, Brad Ferrell, and myself are the newest additions to the Pinckney staff. Each of us arrived in early May of this year.

**How did/ does Pinckney Marketing attract the present level of talented staff?**

It’s all about the culture, value of work, and the potential of opportunity. In the end, this is what determines growth and anyone who wants to cultivate their career should find an organization that offers a high-growth focus.

**What was your first marketing strategy/ campaign with your company? What tactics did you employ to meet or exceed the client’s expectations? Did the campaign work as well as planed.**

Since Pinckney Marketing has such a diverse and wide-ranging group of clientele, I came in during a stage of high-growth and long hours. With my experience that I brought from Post No Bills I was entrusted to handle a number of responsibilities quickly. This included managing automotive dealers monthly incentive packages, cultural events around Charlotte, and helping to optimize the marketing initiatives of local enterprises.

**How has your own marketing played a role in your company growth?**

With the experience I brought from my previous agency I was able to adapt to the culture seamlessly. With this in mind, this helped me to understand our clientele and process better than most new hires. The fact that there was no lapse in output has helped us continue the growth that had been cultivated before I arrived. Additionally, I had more vendor experience than most my colleagues which has helped us from a production standpoint.

**Can you describe how your company attracts and then services a client?**

It really depends on the client and type of service that we intend to provide them. Recently, the quality and turnaround of our work has provided us great reference points. Complementing this is the fact that Requests for proposals (RFPs) are very commonplace within the industry.

**How do you determine the best marketing program for any given client?**

You have to understand them and their markets as well as they do. It also depends on what they are looking for. Ad agencies have become synonymous with digital marketing; it is almost a necessity to have SEO and PPC management as a main tenant of your service. A lot of what we do and a lot of what we determine comes from figuring out how efficient our clients are in these areas. As well as their exploitation of social media management and print advertising.

**How have your marketing strategies grown as social media has become a more dominant way for a company to deliver its’ message?**

We manage a majority of our client’s social media accounts and normally plan their strategies on a monthly basis. We have a strong focus on inbound marketing and social media management is a primary lead-in to effective inbound marketing. We continue to refine our methods, and with the growth of social media we will continue to lean on best practices.

**Do you use market surveys to determine the usefulness and impact of your marketing plans?**

From what I have seen – and I haven’t been here too long – we regularly utilize a strong base of online analytics. This helps us guide our campaigns and develop needed deliverables. I have not been a part of a market survey yet the insights we gain from analytics (google, social media, most recently Hubspot) provides valuable information that we can convey to our client, particularly during our quarterly reports.

**What has been your best overall marketing strategy and how can you measure its’ impact on a company’s business?**

I would consolidate our dealership initiatives into an overall effective strategy. While each dealership we deal with has their own individual deliverables, we have monthly templates and projects that we implement for all of them. Incentives, makes, models, and people change, but the basic premise is the same. We create a strong SEO, PPC campaign, we monitor and run their social media, and we create the necessary banners to attract potential buyers to their website.

**I see that ping pong plays a special role in your company. Can you explain the what, why and how of it all. Meaning, why is it so important that it makes your web page? Does is have significance in the company philosophy.**

From what I understand, a primary reason that it has become so integral in our culture is that it represents our team-oriented, creative, and flexible atmosphere. On days when our docket is full, which is nearly all the time, we use this as a way to relax, stretch our minds, and give us the ability to keep the day recreational/

**What kind of advice would you give a very small (1 -2 ) person startup company on where to start with their marketing plan? Clearly a strategy is the first step, but where would they go from there.**

Ensure that you have the right individuals, who are dedicated to their work and the industry. Then, know your strengths and start developing your potential audience from it. What services can you provide at a higher level than the competition and who could use them.

**How would social media play into this plan?**

Social media has become integral to any marketing strategy. It is not only your biggest reputational outlet, but it provides you the ability to constantly communicate. You can let your audience, clientele know that you are aware and are making a concerted effort to apprise them of important matters relevant to THEM. Ensure that it is interactive, give the audience information that they would enjoy, don’t continuously promote yourself 24/7. Mix it up, use it as bait.

Additionally, social media gives you incredible insight into your reach and exposure. You will be able to tell if your online campaigns are bringing in new leads.

**What has been the most successful marketing plan you have been involved with? Are you able to discuss the success in relation to sales growth?**

Personally, it would have to be the South Carolina State Fair at my previous job. We were able to do something that they hadn’t been able to accomplish. Namely, bring the vendors and city of Columbia together. In the past, contention was the norm due to the fact that they would compete for the South Carolina hospitality tax. Recognizing this, we developed a campaign to bring them together and drive home the fact that fair goers bring in new business to the city altogether. Not just the fair, they put “feets in sheets and heads in beds.”

We also created an incredibly fresh new creative look to the campaign that achieved critical acclaim and won us a number of ADDY awards. This look has been so successful and flexible that we have been able to consistently use it as a base to create award-winning artwork every year. It also helped us to develop on-airable press kits (meaning that radio or TV programs would mention the kits on air).

**What’s the GBR? That must have been a special dive.**

Great Barrier Reef, it was unbelievable. A once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that I would recommend to anyone. A tropical paradise that is calming at the same time. Beautiful reefs, underwater caves, and boundless fish.