

Keyword Creativity in Web Design

Can Bob Arden save his
web design business?

Will brother Mike's keyword
strategy deliver results?

Has 2nd in command,
Laura betrayed Bob?

Will Bob, Carl and Larry
finally confront their past?



Keyword Creativity Episode One

A Time for change for me and my wed design company

Bob Arden is young and ambitious enough to believe that he can still make it big with his web design company. He's determined to make big changes, and make them happen soon. The latest new business pitch sounds just the right opportunity to try new ways of working, especially as it demands a high level of keyword research skills, something he really wants to get on top on.



In this episode...

- Meet Bob Arden, the owner of a web design company in Silicon Valley.
- Bob, tells us about his business challenges and how he intends to solve them, particularly the need to increase his optimization skills.
- Meet Laura, Bob's talented deputy. Laura tells Bob what happened when he was away, including a new business pitch.
- Bob and Laura have some other big news to tell each other.

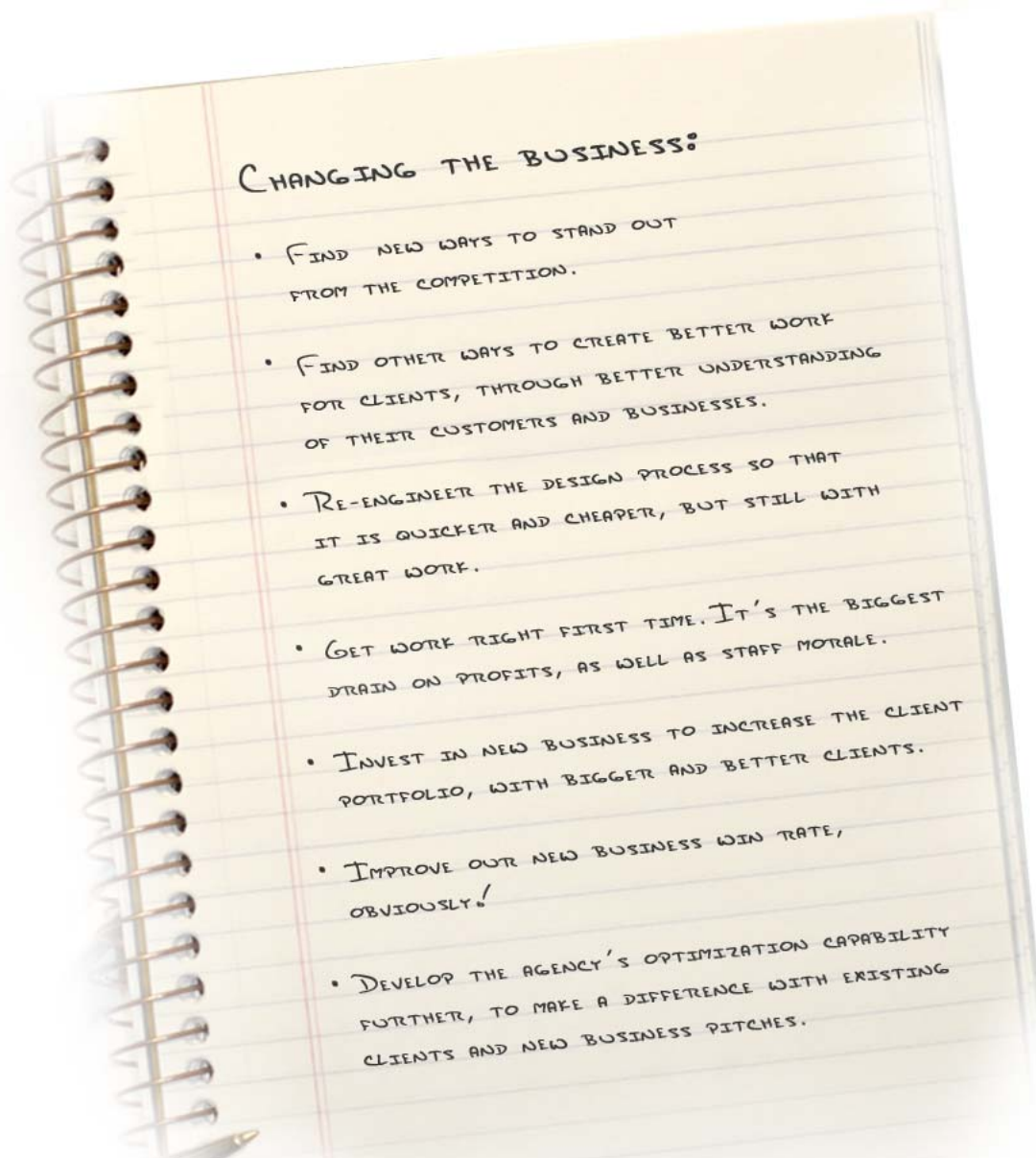
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Ever had that feeling at the end of a vacation? You're all fired up, convinced that you'll change everything as soon as you get home. You're going to start a new exercise regime, cut down your calorie intake and take your wife to the movies once a week. Yes, it's all going to happen, just as soon as you get back from vacation, and nothing's going to stop you.

Work's another thing that can creep back into your mind when you're away. At least, it does with me, even when Pam, my wife, tells me just to forget about it. By the last day, I've got a plan for changing things in my web design company, just as soon as I get off the plane, and nothing's going to stop me with that either.

It's so easy to change things in your head, especially when you're away from it all, but reality always hits you hard when you get back. My new exercise regime usually lasts two months, I start ordering desserts again and I'm too tired for the movies. Welcome to the real world.

It's the same with my business. Just like any business, website design has its problems. Tough clients, unhappy staff and temperamental designers always get in the way of the big vision. Well, that was how it had always been for me until then. But even though today was my first day back after vacation I also knew that I really would change things this time. I'd even made a list of what I needed to do to turn things around in my business.



Of course, being away from the business had prompted me to write it all down, but it was also because I had some big news, news that would change things forever. It meant that I had to make my plan stick this time.

Breakfast at Buck's. Welcome back to the real world.

It was just after eight in the morning when I walked into Buck's, my local restaurant. If you know anything about Silicon Valley you'll probably have heard of Buck's. It's the real heart of this place, where people come to eat, talk, come up with ideas and pitch them to venture capitalists over breakfast. Some of the biggest technology companies in the world started up at a table in Buck's. You can feel the spirit of optimism as soon as you walk in, even during the tough times. That's why I always start the week here, to remind myself that anything's possible, and the food's great too.

I saw a familiar face at one of the tables, a welcome sight after a week away. It was Laura, my deputy, the only person I trust to take care of the business while I'm away. In fact, she's the only reason I can go on vacation. Laura's young, brunette and good-looking. Some clients and designers misjudge her because of that, but there's a tough, smart businesswoman underneath. She'd worked for me for the last five years, and she was more than just someone I trusted with my business, she'd become the sister I never had.

'Hi, Bob. Welcome back.'

Her voice was full of energy and optimism, as usual, but I didn't have long to wait before she started to tell me about the reality of last week.

'We're running late on the Chuck's Sports brief. I took Tom off it, as he just wasn't getting the look and feel of their brand. Sam's on it now. He knows he's only got two days to turn it around.'

Another project going to the wire, the sort of thing I'd been thinking about when I wrote my list. As always, it would get finished on time for the client presentation, but I dreaded looking at the people costs once it was all over. Not getting things right first time in the agency was expensive, but even when we thought we had got it right there was no guarantee that the client would like what he saw. This was exactly the sort of thing that I had been thinking about when I had been on vacation, the sort of thing that I had to change. How could we start to get it right with clients first time, every time? Of course, that wasn't the only problem Laura needed me to solve.

'Slater's Furniture have given us a new brief, but no one can make any sense of it. There's nothing to latch on to about their customers. I talked to the MD, but he said that if we thought that customer understanding was so important we should be happy to do the research ourselves, at our expense.'

Mistakes? It's the Agency that pays

Laura kept on going, and the news on other clients wasn't any better. She'd done her best to sort things out, but even she couldn't work miracles. My only hope for some good news was the Sage Beer Company project. The client had loved the ideas we presented before I went away and we'd shot the photography for the website last week.

'The client's not happy. He told me that he didn't realize that there would be so many male models with moustaches. He said that facial hair was wrong for his brand and that we should have known that. He wants us to re-shoot, at our cost.'

'You know, Laura, part of me wants to laugh, but it's the agency that'll pay for this craziness. If we don't pay for this shoot we'll lose the client, and then people will have to lose their jobs.'

'I know, Bob.' She was silent for a moment. 'I have got some good news for you. I got a call from the Whitewater Rafting Company last week and they got me over for a briefing meeting the next morning. They've got a pitch for a website re-design. The MD said that he thought of you as soon as he wrote the brief. Here's a copy of it. He wants a slick website design, but he also wants something that will be highly visible on Google and other search engines, as he thinks that he could be getting even more business from the web. He wants us to show him how. The pitch is next Tuesday. Welcome back, boss. I hope I didn't shatter too many of your dreams.'

***“Not getting things right first time in the agency was expensive,
but even when we thought we had got it right there was no
guarantee that the client would like what he saw”***

She knew me too well, but the look on my face must have given me away too. It wasn't just because this was another pitch that demanded better optimization skills.

'Laura, did the MD say anything else about why he had chosen us?'

'I did think it was a bit strange to get a call for a pitch out of nowhere but he said that you had known each other years ago and that you'd lost touch. Still, he thought of you for this pitch so he must have some good memories. Do you remember Larry Mackay?'

'Yes.' This was bad news. 'Who else is on the pitch list?'

She frowned. 'It's between us and Carter Design.'

They were our biggest rivals. We had never won a pitch against them.

'Laura, we've got to win this pitch.'

'I know, I know.'

'No, we really need to win this one. I've got something to tell you.'

It seemed like days had passed since I'd first walked into Buck's this morning, brimming full of my news. Now, because of this pitch, there were other things I needed to say, but I couldn't tell her everything now.

'And I've got something to tell you too. You won't like it. I'm sorry, Bob.'

We were quiet for a moment. I thought how true it was that life was what happened to you while you're making grand plans. I hadn't even made it into the agency yet and all my plans for taking control of my business seemed like wishful thinking.

In the next episode...



- Bob tells Laura his big news.
- Mike, Bob's opinionated younger brother, tells Bob how he can work smarter and make his agency a success.
- Bob finds new ways to tackle the website design brief for the Whitewater Rafting Company.
- Bob starts to reveal the secret past behind the Whitewater Rafting Company.

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