

16 November 2011

Small business riding the social media wave

Popular cafe taps into huge market via Facebook, apps

PAUL SMEATON

paul.smeaton@qt.com.au

QUEENS Park Cafe is one of those small Ipswich businesses that has always survived without an advertising budget or strategy – well not any more.

Social media applications like Facebook and Twitter have opened up a new “world of opportunity” for small operators and Ipswich businesses are leading the way.

The Goodsir family has operated the cafe in the iconic Ipswich location since 2001.

Jody Goodsir said the cafe has operated for most of that time without an advertising strategy but was now embracing their online presence.

“We’re now on Truelocal, Facebook and involved in some smartphone apps,” she said.

“It’s been a bit of a learning curve but it’s opening our business to new customers.”

The driving force behind the social media revolution in Ipswich

is Top of Town business Foysters Communications.

Owner Amanda Foy said businesses like the cafe could find a whole new market through social media.

“The Facebook community is equivalent to the third largest country in the world,” she said.

“By getting online business owners can start extending their reach at absolutely no cost.

“By employing a professional to set up a strategy though businesses can begin to engage one on one with their customers.”

Following a recent survey by American Express, Head of Small Business Services Jason Fryer confirmed a growing uptake of social media by small Queensland businesses.

“It is encouraging to see that 40% of all small business owners are using at least one form of social media in their business,” Mr Fryer said.

Ms Goodsir said her cafe had already made some operating changes based on online communication.

“We get a lot of feedback on what people want through the Facebook page,” she said.

“We introduced Thursday night trading this year based on Facebook feedback.

With traditional advertising focusing on the delivery of a message to a customer, social media tries to engage businesses one on one with their customers.

Facebook’s “check-in” feature has been proved critical in the cafe’s Facebook success.

As visitors to the park now “check-in” on their smartphone, they can nominate the cafe as their location.

Ms Goodsir said new customers were discovering the cafe every week because of the feature.



WEB WONDERS: Social media fans Amanda Foy of Foyster's Communication and Jodie Goodsir of Queens Park Cafe. Photo: Claudia Baxter