



MARKETING LESSONS FROM A REDWOOD CRAFTSMAN

By Lori Williams

He tames redwood by night and develops businesses by day, but Kyle Golding's jobs don't end there. The owner of The Golding Group and Share Furniture is also a venture capitalist and a partner in the 1219 Creative Co-Work Space + Art Gallery. "An organic, natural approach is the best way to get people to connect with your product or service," says the chief strategic idealist who's as comfortable polishing business plans as he is sanding gnarled wood.

Those slabs of redwood were destined for the landfill until Kyle Golding rescued them from the dumpster. "The cut-off pieces are the hard sections with knotholes," says Kyle, who fused the three sections into a table. "I almost cut my hand off a couple times while I sanded out some of the roughness. But I kept as much of the natural element as possible."

At The Golding Group, Kyle also fits pieces of his clients' stories together into a marketable platform. "As a business owner, you need to connect with the right audience for all the right reasons," says the CEO. "People don't even care what your product or service costs as long as they can associate with you for the reasons they find important."

"We create systems that allow business owners to focus on the real story and the real audience. That way, they avoid the habit of using a snappy ad campaign to sell something based on price or a list of features that has nothing to do with the actual product or company."

"The hardest work we do is identifying the real target audience," says Golding, "and a lot of people are not ready for it because they're afraid of turning down opportunity."

Kyle, on the other hand, is very comfortable turning down opportunities that do not mesh with his company's modus operandi. "When we ask clients who their customers are, and they say, 'Everyone,' I'm not going to do business with them."

“That’s because, unless you’re selling oxygen, everyone is not your customer.”

Nailing down the customer base is something Kyle’s been doing since he was a teenager. “I played guitar for a rock group called EZ Access before I started doing sound for local bands on the weekends,” he says.

That gig led to the formation of a production company while Golding was still in college. “As an audio engineer I did national and international shows,” he says. “The most challenging tour was for Nine Inch Nails because their audio and video feeds had to sync without the audience hearing the cues for the band.”

These days, Kyle sits behind a desk instead of a control panel. But his decidedly untraditional office is at 1219 Creative Co-Work Space + Art Gallery on N. Classen Blvd in Oklahoma City. “At The Golding Group, we set ourselves apart from other business development professionals because we rely heavily on creativity,” he says. Thus his decision to offer co-working spaces as well as large and small offices for lease on a monthly basis. “My co-workers and I like to be around like-minded people because there’s an energy in that kind of environment. It’s been very good for all of us.”

“Everyone who’s in an office at 1219 started at one of the co-work desks,” says Kyle. Although it’s not an official incubator, business lessons rub off on the lessees as readily as linseed oil lends gleam to a table. “When people move out of the co-work desks and into one of our office spaces,” says Kyle, “their businesses are turning into successes.”