

Report of the SSA Commercial Operators and Business Members Committee, Winter 2015

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SSA Business Member Page updates

1. Queried SSA office as to why Business Member page was behind member login firewall. Staff huddled and decided it should be publicly available.
2. Some HTML code was visible near one entry. Advised staff.
3. Called first two listings to determine what services they offer, to soaring or otherwise. Left message with first. No e-mail or website link. Spoke with second, who offers tow services and glider inspections and annuals. As a result, I suggested to SSA staff that we add comments for listings in a third column. There is both ample space and it would seem to enhance the value of the page and the business membership. There may be other embellishments to consider, like a Facebook link.
4. Received updated e-mail and web site addresses for one Business Member.

Followed-up with a Business Member after second hand information indicated potential vendor payment problems. This was after at least two previous attempts went unanswered. In the interim, no further reports of issues were received. The Business Member was frank in discussing the slowed market and advertising costs and results.

Social Media

Social media has the ability to attract people to return to a page or to visit a web site again and again. Furthermore, if a customer's story and experience is well-framed by images and commentary, they will be likely to share it. Images and videos appear to be used effectively by some of our commercial operators, but there is room for others to join in. If you have a business, Facebook may have already created a 'page' from existing public information. Our commercial operators need to take control and leverage that process for themselves. Avoid creating a group page, as they cannot be liked, only joined. Likes and shares are what broaden the reach.

Bermuda High Soaring does a good job of sharing milestones with pictures and commentary on a regular basis. Customers would be proud to share these posts.

Northwest Sky Sports posts in-flight videos of ride customers and some panoramic shots during the flights. This adds an exhilaration component. They formerly included the first names and perhaps a short comment about the experience, but this had appeared less in recent months. The occasional still photo or fly-by video is also posted. Interesting how many take 'selfies' while flying in the back of a 2-32.

Big Q Aviation shares some milestone images and comments.

Santa Barbara Soaring has posted a season's worth of images and has expanded into photo albums to capture a day's worth of flying. Comments vary.

Sky Sailing has been posting in-flight shots, some ground shots, interesting weather shots and the occasional video. Customer stories seem to be missing.

The SSA has shared posts and images from all of the above. More would certainly be better, not only for the SSA Facebook to share, but also the SSA's Let's Go Gliding Facebook. So, a goal for 2015 is to seek to have more commercial operators to embrace Facebook as a marketing channel.

A new COBM newsletter will be appearing as soon as contact e-mails are validated.