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Q&A with Doug Tangwall

November 30, 2009 | COMMENTS 

Question: Which credit unions will survive the next 10 years?

Answer: Those that best adapt to changes in their environment.

Let's look at the role of marketing dinosaurs throughout history:

- *Precampaignian*: In this period there were no marketing dinosaurs. Businesses survived by providing useful products and helpful answers.
- *Tryasitis*: The first marketing dinosaurs, *Huckster-adon* and *Hawk-your-wares-aura*, appeared during this era. They had long legs that enabled them to leave town quickly following a sale.
- *Conjurassic*: This period brought us *Infomercial-physis* and *Ginsu-saurus*. These marketing dinosaurs developed slick, fast tongues and lived in canyons that echoed their calls.

Evolution caused most marketing dinosaurs to die off. Their primary prey, *Internet-eratops*, developed:

- Large brains to network and protect themselves
- Acute eyesight to see through flowery words
- Sensitive noses to sniff out false claims
- Thick armor and plates to deflect meaningless messages

Become a New Breed of Marketer

Today we live in the *Information Age*. A shock to the economic climate has affected many credit union marketing dinosaurs, but a few species remain. Which kind are you? Decide which kind you would like to be:

- *Head-in-the-sand-icus* has a hard time seeing what's changed and is afraid to investigate. It provides no information online to help prospects make financial decisions, and there are few young dinosaurs in its herd.
- *Syndicate-osaurus* recycles others' information. Its duplicated messages are easily recognized by smarter prey and its search engine rankings suffer as a result.
- New evidence suggests that marketing birds, such as *Thought-leadership-eagle*, are actually living dinosaurs that have evolved. Marketing birds have a distinctive, recognizable voice. Their keen hearing picks up on member needs. Their eyes are focused on industry trends. They have developed wings to soar above competitors, and they swoop in quickly to educate targets and seize opportunities.

Start by Listening

Providing strong educational content begins with understanding your environment. Take a look at the following list of resources and tools. Decide if there is more you want to do to stay in touch with the needs of current and potential members.

Who is responsible? How will you document what you've learned? How can you take what you've learned to the next level to educate and engage prospects and differentiate your credit union?

Tools

- Attitudinal research
- Industry trend analysis
- Interviews
- Case studies
- Data mining
- Demographic analysis
- Focus groups
- Psychographic analysis
- Quizzes
- Social media monitoring
- Suggestion solicitation
- Top-account analysis
- Surveys
- Websites

Resources

- Board of directors
- Committees
- Employee ideas
- Member feedback circles
- Partnerships
- Pilot programs
- Research "think tanks"
- Sponsor input
- Youth programs

Research shows that even dinosaurs are capable of change. How is your educational content evolving?

Tangwall is founder of [End Result Marketing](#) in Madison, Wisconsin.

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