



Social Media
Be there or Be Square



by Richard Earle
 Regis Group Affiliate

There are seminal times when everything changes, and all that went before seems totally out of date. 2010 is such a time. It is the year of Social Media.

Facebook

The Facebook site, established by some Harvard students as an online alternative to a campus student manual, in 2006 was made available to all citizens of the planet, and it dominated the web almost immediately. It currently has over 400 Million active users world-wide!

I joined both Facebook and LinkedIn several years ago after attending an American Marketing Association seminar. I received a few inquiries from college classmates, but after replying, essentially ignored the sites.

But this year, suddenly social networks have come alive! Dozens of e-mails have flooded my inbox, wanting to be my

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 102 North King Street | Leesburg, VA 20176 | 703
 777-2233 | www.regisgroup.com

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Be careful how you use it!

The web is a medium, not a brand solution

by David Basch
 Regis Group Affiliate.

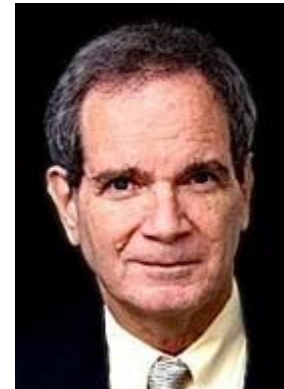
Most businesses today have web sites, Facebook, LinkedIn pages and Twitter accounts, but to what avail? Some are very successful, but some are not.

What seems to be happening is that many executives think that if they have a slick looking web site with the latest bells and whistles such as flash, video and a blog link, it will automatically increase their customer base.

A tool, not an answer

Unfortunately, many make the error of seeing the media platform as an answer rather than a tool - and like any tool, if used improperly it will not be effective and can even hurt you.

What we see as missing is the basic adherence to good fundamental branding principles. As I look at web sites and all sorts of digital communication I ask myself the same basic questions I ask when I look at a print ad in a magazine or a :30 second TV spot:



Marc Chinoy

President's Letter
Full Focus on the Internet

Over twenty years ago we began to use electronic means to supplement the written word, with the preponderance still basically on paper at that time. Ten years ago it had become apparent that email was a valuable function, not just a flash, or worse yet an avoidable nuisance. Five years ago, the marketplace went to an acceptance of email and the web as a universal standard that was threaded throughout business communication.

Now it is time for any

“Friend” or urging me to become a “Fan” on Facebook, or asking to Connect with me on LinkedIn.

Differences

Visiting both sites, I see a number of differences between them. Facebook seems to have the edge, particularly when it comes to companies or organizations. They made it very easy to upload picture albums, and audio and video. You can construct a virtual Home Page for your group or business, and as you build a “Fan” base, can start a Blog-style dialogue.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn seems to be more of a resume site for executives, to showcase their accomplishments and activities to date. But anyone in business who is not on both sites these days is not going to go far. The internet is the first place executives look when considering a new hire. At last count LinkedIn had in excess of 80 million members.

Twitter

Twitter is in my view the oddest of the most popular sites. Although it will allow corporate pages, with appropriate background art, there is a limit of 140 characters per post, aimed at keeping everything current and concise. However, it is hugely popular, with over 4 billion posts (“Tweets”) reported in the first quarter of this year.

A success story

I became personally aware of the renewed power of FaceBook, when a member of the Marketing team of the Cape Ann Symphony, a regional orchestra for which I served as President for the last two years, set up an attractive page. He recruited a long list of “fans,” and installed a photo album, an audio interview with the conductor, some videos of

1. Where does the brand fit into customer’s lives and how does being online support that positioning?
2. What business objective is being supported here?
3. What consumer problem is this an answer for?
4. How does this position the brand in a distinctive and differentiated way from the closest competition?
5. Does this clearly and compellingly deliver an important and single-minded benefit to the customer?
6. Is it clear who the target audience is, who this message is intended for?
7. How do they feel about you?
8. Is there a reason why I should stay on this site?

My colleagues and I have been asking these questions since modern marketing was invented in the 60’s. The questions remain as relevant as ever but because so much has changed in terms of technology we may have lost sight of the goal: to provide a meaningful value to a selected group of customers who will exchange money for the benefit your product or service provides.

Because the internet is so “retail” driven by its nature, advertisers have been sucked into the vortex of trying to keep up with the sales promotion approach rather than to remember that consumers don’t buy products, they buy promises.

Declining brand loyalty

If what you are selling is driven by tactics rather than critical brand strategy you suffer the risk of being commoditized. It has already happened as consumers are less and less brand loyal, opting simply for whoever offers the latest discount.

“The medium is the message” has finally come to fruition. Marketers

organization that does not have a detailed set of strategies for positioning themselves on the web, together with a working understanding that local and regional markets are progressively and rapidly being replaced by a single, global backyard, to immediately evolve their thinking.

Expanding the Reach

A producer, manufacturer, or professional service provider with a traditional five state reach needs to reassess their posture immediately because their competitors are not waiting for anything. Colleges that do not have students at a distance are becoming rare, but calibrating the potential of expanding their reach into that reality is the order of the day.

Law firms (even small ones) without a well considered ability to cross zones are now at a disadvantage even for their ‘local’ clients, who themselves are being thrust into the global community. This is neither a theoretic nor abstract discussion point. There is a need to think this through formally... right now.

Those who think they are the exception, are

our Holiday Concert, a performance by our featured soloist in an upcoming concert, and a local video newscast covering our Christmas promotion. All accompanied by Blog-style postings by our "Fans."

YouTube

The videos were mostly courtesy of YouTube, easily joined, and on whose site you can post almost any video, homegrown or professional, with embedding on a website or social media site accomplished with a couple of simple "clicks."

One caution: everything you post must truly speak for your company, and be consistent with your corporate branding guidelines (*see adjacent article.*)

So, go for it! Become a Social animal. It's not only fun, it can be profitable!

Focus on the Future

Guest Predictions: Judy Hanley

Guest Predictions is a regular feature in which we ask leaders in a number of professions questions that affect us all.

Judith Hanley, Ph.D. is the Director of the Loudoun Child Advocacy Center. She is also the Chair of the Loudoun Human Services Network. She earned her doctorate in child development, with an emphasis on research. Prior to her position with the Child Advocacy Center, Dr. Hanley was the Vice President of U.S. Program for INMED Partnerships for Children. In this position, she directed the MotherNet/Healthy Families Loudoun program. Dr. Hanley has a strong background in child development, child abuse and neglect, as well as monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance of programs. She maintains a broad network of academic, professional and community contacts through active membership in area coalitions and local associations, including graduating from Leadership Loudoun, Class of 2004. She also serves on the board of Loudoun Cares.



Judy Hanley

wrongly seem to think that the online platform itself is their marketing strategy. It's not. You still need a clear strategy for your marketing and advertising plan so that people know what you are and what you stand for.

Just a vehicle

The internet is an amazing breakthrough in the ability to communicate globally and efficiently, but it is still just a vehicle to deliver the message. We are the 1950s in TV equivalent time and there is still much to learn, so let's not throw out the baby (BRAND) with the bath water.

about to have a rude wake-up call from their clients, as well as from competitors that they have never even imagined in the past.

Marc



BizSpeak: Scrub

Definition:

(1) Making it look as good as it possibly can, rather than fixing the underlying document, deal, position, or whatever.

Related Terms:

Dust off, Polish, Wax over

How it Sounds:

"He decided we had better SCRUB the report before the boss saw it!"

Definition:

(2) Eliminate or end expanding effort on a project, concept, or other undertaking.

Related Terms:

86, Drop, Pitch, Ditch, or Dust off

How it Sounds:

"He decided we had better SCRUB the report before the boss saw it!" (Yes, they

Q: What changes in your professional environment in the past 3-5 years have you found to be the most beneficial?

A: The internet: Making it easier to communicate and find resources. While the internet has been with us for years, everything we do seems to have accelerated. We learn from others almost immediately and see how others are solving problems that might have stopped us earlier. By example: finding available resources for the homeless in our areas. Additionally there is a new sense of active collaboration through the internet that I personally find to be more than encouraging.

Q: What changes have been the most troubling to you?

A: Problems within the economy have shown nonprofits that we need to do a much better job educating in order to continue to fulfill our missions. For too long we have taken it for granted that the community understands the impact of what we do. Now, at a time when we are struggling to serve more people with fewer resources, we are challenged to educate the leadership of the community as to the ability of nonprofits to make a real difference. We find that creating a solid understanding is so much more difficult in today's financial climate than it was a few years ago.

Q: How will globalization affect your professional area in the near term?

A: Nonprofits are reaching every part of the globe with services to improve quality of life. Therefore, I believe it will not just be the emergence of India and China but countries across the globe will be prospering due to globalization.

Q: What significant challenges might be anticipated in your professional area in the next few years?

A: Going forward we need to do a better job educating policy makers, business leaders, government officials and others as to the benefits nonprofits provide to communities. Nonprofits provide cost savings to society. A great example of that is when residents use the community based health center rather than the emergency room. Nonprofits also have a multiplying effect by leveraging public and private funds. However, nonprofits "return on investment" runs deeper than just finances. Nonprofits strengthen the community

sound the same!
Watch out!!)

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check out the Book.
[Click here.](#)*

by being part of the “safety net” and connect people to each other and to resources. Our message must also put a face to our neighbors in need, showing that people representing all income levels, all races, and all ages are recipients of nonprofit services.

Q: What are the greatest challenges confronting young professionals in Western culture today?

A: With so many experienced, educated individuals out of work, many young people are finding it impossible to compete for a shrinking pool of available jobs when other more experienced people are willing to take the positions for the same pay grade. In order to be successful, young people today must think about doing business in a global environment as opposed to the more traditional ways.

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