



So You Think You Have Social Media Covered ?

Here Are A Few Reasons You Might Want to Think Again !

I remember when the Internet first gained prominence and it became apparent that having a Web site was essential for any commercial enterprise.

Back then, Web designers were not plentiful and few people thought to hire a professional to create a Web site. They felt that ANY Web presence was better than none at all, and they found people they knew to help them who were "into the whole Internet thing."

As a PR professional, when I would see a Web site that didn't represent people well or looked amateurish, I'd ask who created it. Invariably, I'd get answers like, "My nephew did it," or "I bought *Web Design for Dummies* and did it myself," or "My son has a friend who just graduated with a degree in computer science." While those days have passed for Web sites, I'm afraid I am seeing the same thing happen with regard to social media.

As social media has become a serious part of the foundation of the media in general, some people regard it the same way as they used to regard Web sites – as something that's a good addition to their marketing tactics, but not so essential that they need to approach it with a professional sensibility. As with any marketing outreach, social media done badly will actually set you back instead of move you forward. Here are some ways to know if you are taking the right approach or heading down the wrong path:

- **My Daughter Does That For Me** – If your daughter is a college graduate with a broad-based education that includes a degree in mass communications, I'd say you may be on the right track. However, if she's 18 and her primary qualification is that she has Twitter and Facebook accounts, I'd say you need to reevaluate your choice of marketing personnel here. Just because she's your daughter and can use Facebook and Twitter, doesn't mean she has the skills necessary to market a business using social media.
- **I Hired a College Intern** – While college students may be part of the social media generation, it doesn't automatically qualify them to do social media for you. Unlike traditional media, which is a communication to a broad audience, social media is one-to-one marketing outreach. You are communicating directly to individuals and anyone who has ever posted an opinion in an Internet forum knows the online audience is not to be trifled with. Understand that your reputation is on the line. With the variety of questions and comments you will receive, it is critical that they're handled with care and professionalism to avoid any repercussions to your name and brand. A social media marketing professional is an astute communicator who ensures each time the right tone, caring and message is delivered for maximum return and keeps your audience engaged. This dynamic is crucial for the success of the program.





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• **I Got 11 New Followers on Twitter This Week** – Of course, building followers is important, but you'll never make a social media campaign work with the onesy-twosy approach. For myself, my company and our social media clients, we have a monthly benchmark for building followers. Now, this benchmark is not a gross number, but a net figure after we have weeded out spammers, chronic friend adders, and marriage proposals from men in foreign countries, and yes, I've gotten a few of those.

At the end of the day, social media is serious business. Do it right and you can create a base of thousands of followers. Do it wrong and you'll have spent a lot of time and energy, spinning your wheels and getting nowhere fast. More importantly, you'll end up thinking that social media marketing is a complete waste of time, when in fact in today's world it is one of the most critical and fundamental components for any marketing strategy, which every company needs to put in place. Here's to your successful social media journey.

About Marsha Friedman

Marsha Friedman is a 22-year veteran of the public relations industry. She is the CEO of EMSI Public Relations (www.emsincorporated.com), a national firm that provides PR strategy and publicity services to corporations, entertainers, authors and professional firms. She also co-hosts "The News and Experts Radio Show with Alex and Marsha" on Sirius/XM Channel 131 on Saturdays at 5:00 PM EST.

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