

Are You Afraid of Social Media?

Three tips to being successful on Facebook and beyond

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I spoke to three business groups this week. They were comprised mainly of Boomers like me. (I am 55. I often get gasps from the audience when I reveal my age. What the hell! I've lived five decades and I know how to Tweet and post...I'm old and wise and technologically savvy and I'm damned proud of it!)

The issues raised when I spoke about social media were consistent; people don't know how to make money from it; they don't know how to find the time to do it; they struggle with messaging/content; they are afraid of losing their sense of privacy and many of them are simply struggling with new technologies and learning new skills halfway through their lives.

All of these issues are complex and none of them have simple solutions. Facebook is still in its early stages as a business and marketing medium and no one has all of the answers (or even most of them). But here are some tips I offer up to my audiences (and to you):

1. Read, attend, and read and attend some more. The best way to learn about how to build awareness and make money via social media is to study those businesses who are starting to do it. Subscribe to ezines, attend workshops, and talk to as many people as you can.

2. Learn how to use "aggregators" and dashboards like [NutshellMail](#), [HootSuite](#), and [SocialOomph](#), so you can spend less time managing your social media sites. Learn how to use [privacy settings on Facebook](#), so you don't have to worry about your key clients seeing you in a bikini or riding your kid's tricycle on the weekend.

3. Outsource. Yes, that's right. I said outsource. Although social media purists consider allowing someone else to manage your social media presence a form of blasphemy, my company has been doing it successfully for several clients with amazing results, freeing them up to manage their own businesses. But be careful to choose wisely when selecting an outsource solution. So many companies and individuals have jumped into the social media game and many of them only know how to develop content and use technology but are not focused on bottom-line results.

At one of the presentations, I asked the audience how many people had a marketing plan for 2011. Only five of an audience of about 30 raised their hands. Remember that social media is just one tactic in a broader strategy. Without a plan, you're simply throwing time and perhaps money into "stuff" without a clear sense of how it all fits together to reach your target market and achieve your business goals.

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