



Society for Marketing Professional Services
Boston

October 13, 2011

The Happy Marriage between Public Relations and Social Media

PR	twitter	PR
facebook	PR	You Tube
PR	Linked in	PR

Today's post is a recap of several presentations given by Diane Danielson, principal of DKD New Media Strategies, to Boston's marketing and real estate professionals this year, written by Jennifer Shelby, CPSM, account director for Rhino Public Relations. Questions or comments? E-mail her at Jennifer@rhinopr.com.

Social media might easily become the buzz word of the century – or at least the turn of it. Everywhere you look, people are tweeting, on Facebook, linking in, or YouTubing. And with good reason. These tools transcend business and personal alike, and amplify business practices. It

stands to reason, then, that a traditional Public Relations program can benefit from the new practices of Social Media.

They say all PR is good PR, but we all know misinformation can negatively shape a firm's reputation. So, how do you control what people say about you? You can't – but with these new tools, you can control what you put out there, effectively garnering better control of your message.

The ultimate goal of public relations is to gain visibility and build brand recognition. By utilizing social media, traditional methods of communication become more accessible through new pathways for introductions. According to Diane Danielson, principal of DKD New Media Strategies, Social Media helps your target market find you.

Public Relations consists of a multitude of business activities, from the press release, to the construction event, to the article or byline to name a few. And Social Media is the wingman to these activities. Danielson likes to say that when you use social media, you are engaging in conversational sales, and your conversation takes the form of the venue in which you are interacting.

She continues, Twitter is akin to an online cocktail party, allowing you to introduce an idea and see where the conversation goes. Facebook is more like a night out on the town, largely using levity and humor to interact with your friends and fan base in a more intimate forum. And, LinkedIn, appropriately, is much like a business meeting, allowing for introductions and the knowledge sharing that often comes from interacting across a conference table.

So, what are some of the ways you can use Social Media to aid your PR activities?

1. By consistently updating and adding to your online footprint you keep your message fresh, current and intriguing. You can do this by creating a Google profile, keeping your individual or professional LinkedIn and Facebook pages up to date, and regularly posting blogs or Twitter posts.
2. Blogging is one of the best ways to stay visible in the online arena. Blogging can be light-hearted and informative, is generally pretty concise, and can be widely and easily distributed. This versatile venue provides a platform for your audience to return for more information, and by including keywords and links, allows for easier pick-up by search engines, which is crucial in the online visibility game.
3. Share the love – regularly acknowledge your friends, clients and colleagues. Not only will you help drive their business, but reciprocal linking leads to better search engine optimization, which in turn helps drive people back to your business.
4. Dabble in a variety of social media options to stay active in each arena, but choose one as a home-base and focus your primary attention there. This allows your audience to have a secure and reputable place to return when seeking information from you.
5. Bring home the bacon. Bacon, as opposed to spam, include emails or modes of contact that have been agreed upon. When someone follows you on Twitter, friends you on Facebook or signs up to receive your blog, they are agreeing to allow contact from you. The more bacon-bits you collect, the better your online following.
6. Learn to write for Search Engine Optimization (SEO). By using keywords and reciprocal links, you can position yourself for better search engine pick-up. SEO starts searching the internet's top sites, which are currently social media sites. Then, they search anything linked to that site, and then they search individual sites, including title tags, the links contained therein, and keywords. The more activity you create online, the better visibility you will have in search engine results.

When seeking visibility for yourself or your clients, you want to be seen as an expert and a resource. Reporters looking for sources are going to seek those they trust, and those they see often. By using online social media tools, you have a better chance of boosting visibility and achieving and maintaining contact. Just like in a marriage, communication is the key to a happy relationship. So, keep your online conversations strong and you will enjoy a match made in heaven.