

sick of the 's' word.

Is there a day that goes by that we don't hear the term 'social media' being used, either by the water cooler, in the newspaper, on the radio, on TV, in magazines or on websites?? This article has been in the making for a while, but I now think it's time.

Whether it's seminars we go to and listen to 'social media' experts telling us to get 'social', or it's the newspaper you pick up telling you to do the same, small business is overawed with the amount of social media babble that is out there, either as advice or generate chatter and space to fill... and quite frankly, I'm a bit over it. Small business wants it real. Don't sugar-coat it.

Social media is not rocket science. I repeat, is NOT rocket science. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or YouTube, all of these Generation Y driven phenomena are all just another new vehicle by which we are able to communicate our business, and our lives for that matter, to the outside world.

Each medium has it's own way of addressing their audience. Like radio, websites, newspaper ads, flyers, workshops, events, they are all a tool of communication. The uniqueness that social media brings to the already over cluttered society is the way we can communicate with it. Social media tends to be more informal. It generally creates a dialogue with members and quite often can generate discussion.

I have advised some of my clients to utilise various elements of social media, and others not. My belief is that social media creates an opportunity to keep in contact with your clients, current and prospective; keep people up to date with their every minute of the business day, news, toilet breaks...you name it.

So the question is, how much of your business do people want to know? How much contact is too much, and how much is not enough? I can't tell you what the right answer is for your business because I'm not one to give blanket suggestions or advice on such a broad topic like social media, but these questions would be some of the bits and pieces you need to ask yourself if you are going to spend resources on using social media as a communication tool for your business. Unsurprisingly, it's the similar line of questioning you should be considering for any medium of communicating your brand.

So, what are some of the things that social media is great for? Updates on new products, new brands, new recruits, new events, photos, videos, client wins, opinions, debates, blogs, forums, discussions, advertising. Some of the things social media is not so great for; people having their say if you allow it, everything being published if you allow it, high maintenance to do it right.

One of the other problems that are being faced by business is that even as more resources are being allocated to social media in the future, it will remain difficult to measure. All of the social media experts out there better start to figure out the best ways to measure the investments being made by small and big business. Spending time to measure the investment will be an investment itself.

Of course there are opportunities, but again, just like other forms of communication, the opportunities to contact people are out there.

Certainly, get onboard the 'social media' train to Graceland. Create overcome by all the endless dribble, just get in there and get involved if you think it's relevant

to your business, just like other potential channels of contact with your potential and current clientele that is out there in our wonderful wonderland of communication tools.

Social Media...is it important, yes. Should it be ignored, no. Can it be useful, yes. Am I going to watch the movie that is being released about Facebook, its trials and tribulations, yes. Can we start talking about something else sometime soon, yes....please!

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a quick one on... social media

- Social Media in Australia is up 36.1%, overtaking search engines as the most visited online destinations.
- If you have a social media profile, make sure you're up to date, people don't like stale.
- Social media provides a unique way in communicating and receiving information.
- Harness social media if it's the right fit for your business.
- LinkedIn is a business friendly networking site.
- Facebook is used by all individuals, businesses, products and services...it knows no boundaries.
- Twitter is to share short, sharp updates...a bit like Facebook with no boundaries.
- 37% of people using social media are interacting with others via social networking sites daily.

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