

Social Media for Practical Communicators

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Two Basic Aspects

- **How you use social media tools individually**
- **How you use social media tools to support an event, position or campaign**

Some Principles

- **All employees are potential ambassadors (old idea, new spaces)**
- **Can't control conversation, only influence it**
- **Must interact as equal - these are participatory tools**
- **Often the best way to participate is to provide information**
- **Need for clear expectation for online behavior**
- **Channels often less important than relationships**

Social Media Based on Relationships

- **Most obvious in tools like Facebook and Twitter**
- **Blog outreach/blogger relations**
- **Online communities/email lists**
- **Most tools are just different ways to nurture relationships**

Aspect 1: Individual Brand Ambassadors

- **Employees/representatives acting within their social channels**
- **Experts, bloggers, Twitterers, other prominent voices**
- **Internal communications/employee education become critical**
- **Can involve aggressive outreach, including commenting in prominent public spaces & direct confrontation of critics**

Aspect 2: Event/Campaign Support

- **Integration of social media tools into website**
- **Common tools: Twitter stream, YouTube Channel, Facebook/MySpace presence, Flickr photo stream**
- **Often coupled with individual outreach**

Examples:

- **General Motors**
- **Tea Parties**
- **HSUS/First Dog**
- **CAP/Wire the Grid**

Applying the Tools:

- **Rule of thumb: start with applications you already use**
- **Integration is often more important than any one tool**
- **Like traditional PR in some ways, but each channel has own rules**
- **Many opportunities to follow online discussion about your brand or issue**

Social Networking (Facebook/MySpace/LinkedIn)

- **Individual outreach/professional development**
- **Audience-building via fan pages or groups**
- **Start with individual profiles, group is next step**
- **Tools include status updates, posted links, comments, applications**

Twitter

- **Microblogging meets social network**
- **Small but influential audience**
- **Problem: wheat/chaff ratio**
- **Large time investment often required; tools can help**
- **Prominent voices can gain substantial followings**
- **Many posts are links**

Examples:

- **Twitter feeds**
- **Promoting a content piece via social channels**

Example: Optimizing/Promoting a blog post, report or article

- 1. Good content**
- 2. Good headline**
- 3. Promoting via Twitter & Facebook, using TinyURL**
- 4. Cross-posting?**
- 5. Direct promotion via email?**

YouTube/Online Video

- **Video is strongest medium for certain messages**
- **Channels are easy, cameras are cheap**
- **Video embedding allows integration into content**
- **Editing can be time-consuming**

Other Tools:

- **Flickr**
- **RSS**
- **Blogs**
- **Email groups**

Final Thoughts:

- **Don't be afraid to experiment**
- **Don't be afraid to monitor first, then participate**
- **Many tools cheap in money but expensive in time**

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