

Smart News Release
Search engine and social media optimized [GET STARTED](#)



Careers Newsletter
Products & Tools Newsletter
Healthcare Newsletter

PRWeek

Home | News | **Features** | Reports | Blogs | Whitepapers | Events | Jobs | Directory | Subscribe | About Us | Multimedia

Hot Topics: 10th Anniversary | Healthcare | Consumer | Technology | Media | Public Affairs | Corporate | Green [RSS](#) | [Logout](#) | [My Account](#)

More savings. More sources.

Home > Features > Web Exclusives > Social media - beyond the hype

Social media - beyond the hype

Scott Severson April 20, 2009

[PRINT](#) [EMAIL](#) [REPRINT](#) [PERMISSIONS](#) FONT SIZE: [A](#) | [A](#) | [A](#) [BOOKMARK](#) [Subscribe HERE!](#)

I would peg the moment at about April 1996. This was the collective point in time when companies large and small began chanting, "We have to be on the Web!" The interesting thing is, at the time many of these companies had no idea what their specific strategy for going online was beyond "everyone else is doing it." Fast forward 13 years. The mantra has changed to: "We have to be on Facebook and Twitter!", but the strategy underpinning the desire is still, "everyone else is doing it." So, what is the right social media strategy?

MORE IN WEB EXCLUSIVES

- Letter from Julia Hood
- Public affairs pros discover new areas of opportunity
- PBS hopes video portal casts it in a 'hipper' shade
- Social media practices a good choice despite recession
- Morton's sees comms as recipe for success

TAGS
[Social media](#) [Opinion](#)

Now more than ever, it is important to not get caught up in the online trend du jour. Entering the social media arena without a good strategy is at minimum a costly distraction. Worse, you can actually damage your brand. Moreover, if your company/client is not quite ready to face public scrutiny, you have other things to focus on than social media.

Twitter is the hot tactic right now. Given a large enough base of followers, it can be an extremely effective outreach and engagement tool. But, contrary to popular belief, Twitter isn't free. Given the time and resources required to build and maintain an effective Twitter presence, it's actually one of the more expensive online outreach tools at your disposal.

Remember that the true value of social media for companies lies in the ability to really listen to your customers versus telling your story. If the number one rule in business is to find out what your customers' needs are and then respond to them, social media provides a fantastic conduit into what your customers think and want.

It's certainly tempting to get caught up in the social media fervor, but we can't lose track of the fact that it's still results that matter. Last month, we got a report from a study fielded by Opinion Research Corporation that said consumers prefer to receive online information in the context of articles where they can read about the product or service before they click through to learn more or buy. That consumer feedback reinforces the idea that there's a major opportunity to use brand storytelling via online articles to get marketing messages across in measurable, convincing ways – a much more contextual consumer contact than a 140-character tweet.

Depending on your clients' goals, a social media campaign may make a lot of sense. Just remember it's only one tool in your PR toolkit.

Scott Severson is president of media company ARAnet that provides article-based cost per click advertising platforms and feature article placements.

NYU'S SCHOOL OF CONTINUING AND PROFESSIONAL STUDIES **Master of Science in Public Relations and Corporate Communications** [CLICK TO LEARN MORE](#)

Empire State Building Goes Green

The Empire State Building plans to reduce its carbon footprint by nearly 40 percent. To highlight the historic landmark as a model for similar green projects around the world, Edelman orchestrated a launch press conference with former President Bill Clinton and Mayor Michael Bloomberg. [More](#)

Follow: [G+](#) [f](#) [in](#) [v](#) [t](#) [p](#)

[Get & Share](#)

Most Popular | **Most Emailed** | **Most Recent**

- KFC missteps lead to short-term pain
- Interview: Jack Leslie, chairman, Weber Shandwick
- Interview: Tom Barritt, Ketchum
- Xerox launches ColorQube 9200 series with integrated approach
- InterContinental Hotels kicks off giveaway with a global 'bed jump'
- Ad Hoc Committee of GM Bondholders hires Sloane
- Hitachi Data Systems taps Bite Communications as AOR
- Scharffen Berger reviews PR agencies
- MillerCoors launches robust "cold front" marketing campaign
- UPDATE: FCC awards Burson digital TV awareness contract

VOCUS
From Twitter to Facebook
Download the FREE Whitepaper! [DOWNLOAD](#)

Master the Power of Social Media Marketing

marketwire

Ads by Google

[Social Media PR](#)
Integrate Social Media Into Your PR & Marketing Strategy with Vocus!
[www.vocus.com](#)

[Pr Marketing](#)
Distribute Your News to the Media & Consumers. Over 100,000 Contacts!
[www.prweb.com](#)

[Pharma Social Media](#)
View a Wiki including examples of successful pharma programs.
[www.doseofdigital.com](#)

Featured White Papers

[Advice and Worksheets to Develop a Strategic, Results-Driven B2B Marketing Program](#)
For companies with high-involvement sales cycles, the struggle to engage and win new customers is an ongoing and...
[View Now](#)

[Get the Most Value From Your Surveys with Text Analysis](#)
Learn the benefits and advantages of using text analysis to gain the most value from your surveys.
[View Now](#)

[Video Webinar: Using online video to strengthen your relationship with your online community](#)
B2B Marketers can use online video to enhance the two-way dialogue with customers and prospects and strengthen the...
[View Now](#)

[Cooperative Marketing Best Practices 2008](#)
This White Paper, sponsored by Pitney Bowes Marketing Solutions, a leading provider of web-based co-op marketing tools, ...
[View Now](#)

[Achieving Marketing Management Excellence](#)
Today's marketers face numerous challenges when it comes to managing high pressure demands imposed by difficult...
[View Now](#)

[View More Research](#)

Comments (1) [Login to comment](#)

Sort by: [Date](#) [Rating](#) [Last Activity](#)

John_Wark [Op](#) · 2 weeks ago +1

Scott makes a number of good points here. One can imagine situations in which being too tweety tips a brand with more serious issues facing it toward being tagged chirpy rather than earnest in addressing the needs of its reputation and might even turn a much needed conversation with stakeholders and consumers into a cacophony of self-referential and ephemeral one liners.

But it's the point he makes about consumers reading articles as they do research online that really catches the eye. Well written, informative, articles -- online or in print -- continue to influence choices, and continue to have impact. At least for now.

As to the future generation? My 13-year-old daughter texts her social circle throughout the day. But when it comes to learning ways of being (behaving) in the world, I have noticed, she seems to be mining narrative novels and television shows and magazines. It is a generation that also seems to take great pleasure in research tied to personal well-being and benefit.

[POST REPLY](#)

Post a new comment

Enter text right here!

Post as a Guest | [Login - Sign up](#) | [OpenID](#)

Name Email Website (optional)

Displayed next to your comments. Not displayed publicly. If you have a website, link to it here.

Notify me of follow-up comments via email

Comments by [intensedebate](#)

Popular Tags

Account Change Agency Arts and Entertainment Branding Briefs Campaign Consumer Corporate Corporate Communications Crisis Communications Financial Services Food and Beverage Government Health and Wellness Healthcare Investor Relations Media Media Relations People Moves Product Launch Public Affairs Retail Social media Technology Tourism

Don't miss the **MOST IMPORTANT GATHERING** of corporate compliance and risk officers, regulators, and federal officials.

[Register Today!](#)

COMPLIANCE WEEK 2009
JUNE 3 - 5 • WASHINGTON, D.C.

PRWEEK US SITEMAP

<p>News Latest News Analysis Latest Opinions</p> <p>Features Latest Features Cover Stories Opinion Web Exclusives Roundtables</p> <p>Blogs The Cycle The Editor's Blog Target Green The Pulse Page Views</p> <p>Media Podcasts Webcasts Videos</p>	<p>Whitepapers Latest Whitepapers</p> <p>Directory PRWeek Contact Directory</p> <p>Jobs PR Jobs</p> <p>Events PRWEEK Awards</p> <p>More Newsletters Subscribe Contact Us Advertising About Us Editorial Calendar Permissions Reprints RSS</p>	<p>Topics Account Change Blogs Branding Campaign Corporate Communications Crisis Communications Fashion/Beauty Internal Communications Investor Relations Media Relations Politics Public Affairs Social Media Word of Mouth</p> <p>Issue Archive Issue Archive</p>	<p>Sectors Healthcare Consumer Technology Media Public Affairs Corporate Green</p> <p>Verticals Arts and Entertainment Consumer Financial Services Food and Beverage Health and Wellness Healthcare Media Technology</p>
--	--	---	--