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Topic:

Rethinking Social Media

by Ginger Conlon

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Many of the marketers who want to capture the power of social media struggle with how best to do so. According to Lon Safko, these marketers need to rethink their approach.

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“They re not looking at it holistically,” says Safko, author of *The Social Media Bible*. “They re looking at it as individual tools. Instead they should consider social media as a new tool set that they should integrate with their traditional marketing efforts. Then create a holistic strategy.”

What makes this difficult, however, is understanding the psychology behind the tools, he says. Communication on Twitter, for instance, should be instant, brief, and broad. Safko cited as an example an awards ceremony he attended. During the ceremony he tweeted each winner as each award was announced. This made the communication real time and the message brief, as well as broadened the reach of the awards.

Blogging, on the other hand, is a whole different psychology, Sakfo says. Readers and customers want to know, “How will you educate me?” Consequently, corporate bloggers should consider what it is they want to tell their top customers. “You become a thought leader and trusted expert,” he says, as long as the posts are transparent, authentic, and sincere. Ads can have a sales pitch; blogs and tweets shouldn t, he says. Additionally, blogging about topics in your firm s areas of expertise helps prospects find your company through keyword searches.

“Marketing is about being out there so customers and prospects can find you,” Safko says. “Social media puts an edge on that. Customers will look for you or companies that offer products and services like yours in Facebook and LinkedIn and the like. You have to be there to be found. If you re not there and your competitors are, you ve lost.” This applies to both B2C and B2B companies, Safko says.

Like any disruptive technology, it will take time to figure out social media. It changes everything, Safko says, but in the end “it s still one person selling to another.”

By Ginger Conlon on July 14 2009 10:27 AM | [Permalink](#)