



## Taking social media SERIOUSLY

Tips to gauge whether your approach is the right approach.

I remember when the Internet first gained prominence and it became apparent that having a website was essential for any commercial enterprise.

Back then, Web designers were not plentiful and few people thought to hire a professional to create a site. They felt that any Web presence was better than none at all and they found people they knew who were “into the whole Internet thing” to help them.

As a PR professional, when I saw a website that didn't represent people well or looked amateurish, I'd ask who created it. Invariably, I'd get answers like, “My nephew did it,” or “I bought ‘Web Design for Dummies’ and did it myself,” or “My son has a friend who just graduated with a

degree in computer science.” While those days have passed for Web sites, I'm afraid I am seeing the same thing happen with regard to social media.

As social media has become an integral element of all mainstream media, some people regard it the same way they used to regard websites – as a good addition to their marketing tactics, but not so essential that they need to approach it with a professional sensibility. As with any marketing outreach, social media done badly will actually set a person or organization back rather than move them forward.

Here are some tips to gauge whether they're taking the right approach or heading down the wrong path:

By Marsha Freidman

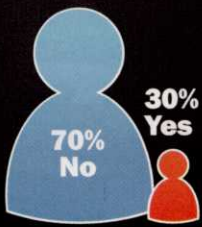


# SUPER SOCIAL MEDIA

As part of its State of the Industry Research – make sure you read this issue’s cover story – Golf Course Industry asked

superintendents if they were using social media outlets – such as Twitter and Facebook – to distribute information and communicate with golfers or their club’s membership. Nearly 70 percent said they weren’t, according to the data.

**Are you using Twitter, Facebook or other social media to distribute info or communicate?**



Source: Golf Course Industry research

**MY DAUGHTER DOES THAT FOR ME.** If your daughter is a college graduate with a broad-based education that includes a degree in mass communications, I’d say you may be on the right track. However, if she’s 18 and her primary qualification is that she has Twitter and Facebook accounts, I’d say you need to reevaluate your choice of marketing personnel here. Just because she’s your daughter and can use Facebook and Twitter, doesn’t mean she has the skills necessary to market a business using social media.

**I HIRED A COLLEGE INTERN.** While college students may be part of the social media generation, it doesn’t automatically qualify them to do social media for you. Unlike traditional media, which is a communication to a

broad audience, social media is one-to-one marketing outreach. You are communicating directly to individuals and anyone who has ever posted an opinion in an Internet forum knows the online audience is not to be trifled with. Understand that your reputation is on the line. A social media marketing professional is an astute communicator who ensures each time the right tone, caring and message is delivered for maximum return and keeps your audience engaged. This dynamic is crucial for the success of the program.

**I GOT 11 NEW FOLLOWERS ON TWITTER THIS WEEK.** Of course, building followers is important, but you’ll never make a social media campaign work with the onesy-twosy approach. For my-

self, my company and our social media clients, we have a monthly benchmark for building followers. Now, this benchmark is not a gross number, but a net figure after we have weeded out spammers, chronic friend adders and marriage proposals from men in foreign countries.

Done right, it can create a base of thousands of followers. Done wrong, it wastes time and energy and, most important, gives people the impression that social media marketing isn’t important. In fact, it has become one of the most critical and fundamental components for any marketing strategy, which every company needs to put in place. **GCI**

*Marsha Friedman is a PR consultant and founder/CEO of EMSI Public Relations.*

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