



The Dangers of Agency New Business Social Media

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Social/digital should play a part in any agency's new business development effort, however there are four things an agency principal should consider when building a program.

- 1) Social media is passive. Just because you are an avid blogger or tweeter, don't think that all the chips will fall into place without any other effort;
- 2) Social media easily gets tired. You have to keep content current, fresh, up-to-date;
- 3) Social media is "no different" than regular media. There are thousands of others doing the same thing, so you have to boldly stand out and consistently be value-added in your messaging;
- 4) Social media should not be left alone. Social media is sexy and intriguing, but don't rely on it as the sole means of your prospecting effort.

Social media is a passive media

While it can be argued to the contrary (that because you are actively blogging and tweeting, social media is active), I disagree. If thousands of other agency principals are doing the same thing, how can a marketer in search of an agency sort it all out?

You need to consistently **activate your social commentary** so it works harder for you.

Take your content and push it out in the form of a thematic email series to your prospects (as an example); create a white paper you can mail and email out to prospects; create a short by-liner you can push out into the press - then take a pick-up and push it out to your group of prospects.

Please don't fall into the trap of thinking that if you blog, they will come. You have to be aggressive (in a nice way) in order to activate your social program.

The more that participate in social media, the more watered down it's going to be...so those that are aggressive and creative will win the day.

Social media easily gets tired

Consider this...a prospect checks out your blog and the last post was from March, 2009. I've got to believe that seeing that feels a bit like seeing old news at the top of a "News" section on a site. Tired, and not on top of things.

One of the dangers of using social media for agency new business development is it can become so overwhelming that you simply fall into a state of inertia.

I've read some blog posts recently that suggest it is important that you carve out time every day (same time, if possible), to blog, or tweet, or post on facebook. Good advice.

So while social media is important, it's equally if not more important to build a program that is realistic and actionable.

Social media is no different than regular media

As we at RSW/US engrossed ourselves into the ins and outs of social media for our own benefit, we quickly realized that many of our competitors are also actively involved in social initiatives...which reinforced our belief that in order to effectively break through, part of what you have to do is consistently offer value – and you have to be bold (and a bit “sexy”) in your approach.

In order for prospects to take notice, four things (at least) need to happen: 1) The messaging needs to be relevant (prospects need to understand that you understand them); 2) The communication needs to be value-added (don't just talk for the sake of talking); 3) The headlines need to be attention grabbing (like the “Dangers” of Social Media); and 4) The messaging needs to translate across other media to build awareness beyond the social space (sound like something you might tell a client?).

Social media can be an excellent equity (and sales) building tool if used properly and consistently.

Social media should not be left alone

While it is true that social media is an important component to a new business program, it is critical to not over-emphasize or become too reliant on social media. I spoke with an agency principal the other day who thinks so much of social media that he is going to use it as his sole means of generating opportunities. Not a great idea.

As noted in one of our more recent studies among Marketing Executives (rswsurveys), SEO is only used by marketers in small numbers to help them find agencies. The quality of the agency's website, unattributable awareness of the agency (as a result of the agency's outreach), recommendations from colleagues, and a timely approach from an agency all rate high among marketers as the things that most impact their decision of which agency to place in a consideration set. Key is making sure you keep it all going while building up a strong social media program.



What we have also learned from these studies is that prospects (your potential clients) want to know that you understand their world. Consequently what is also important is that when you build a social media program, you use it to reinforce your expert positioning by showcasing insights and posting information that will help your prospects see the value you can bring to their world. It is key that your website, your new business manager's messaging, your collateral, and the thematic you use for your email campaigns all also support the same messaging.

So don't fall into the trap thinking that social media is the, be all, end all. It's a vital component to any new business program - but not the only component necessary to drive prospect interest.