

Monthly Marketing Morsels

November 2014

PAY ATTENTION TO THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM.

It's now impossible to ignore. **Social media marketing** (the elephant) is forcing its way into our marketing planning conversations.

It's a fact. Social media opens two-way communication with businesses and customers, becomes an effective research tool for better understanding of clients and competitors, and makes us, as one expert says, **Digital Natives**. We keep finding more ways to use online technology to help us do a better job of marketing our businesses.

Text book authors Tracy Tuten and Michael Solomon divide the task of studying social media marketing into four "zones" –Social Community; Social Publishing; Social Entertainment; and Social Commerce.

Let's start with "Community" – how do we use Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Plus, etc. as outlets for sharing, socializing, and conversing to establish and build business relationships? If you have objectives like reinforcing brand, or getting instant feedback on an idea before you invest a lot of money into full blown production, then use the social resource you are most comfortable with to get the dialogue started. Be sure it complements your other messaging.

Social Publishing has a place in your plan if blogging, You Tube, Picasa, Smug Mug, Flickr, or other platforms can be used to give you an inexpensive way to build your brand reputation as an expert "content marketer". People appreciate gaining useful knowledge without feeling the pressure to buy something.

I'll skip "Entertainment". But companies like Groupon and Trip Advisor are making inroads through Social Commerce, by combining useful information with business.

As marketers, we're just scratching the surface of the potential social media marketing brings to the planning meeting. Here's to progress!

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