

Thoughts on the new Facebook

Mark Zuckerberg has done it again. He has made some serious threats to your privacy, if you are a Facebook user. Zuckerberg does not believe in privacy, he has said so in those very words, so it is not too surprising that he further damaged your privacy to enhance his bottom line.

There are tons of articles about the new issues with privacy that came out of the f8 conference. This one on GigaOm is a good one (and thank you to Downtown Women's Club for posting it on Facebook...the irony). Sadly, most Facebook users will never know about these changes, which directly affect them.

I have been a steady Facebook user for more than two years. I had rarely logged out and usually checked in several times a day to see what everyone is up to. I also recently launched a Facebook Fan Page, which is now called a like page. But today, I logged out. I will log out every single time I visit Facebook and furthermore, I will limit my visits to Facebook. I am just not comfortable with what they are doing over there. And more pernicious, is that other sites I visit, like CNN and Washington Post now have my information and friends. Unless I logout of Facebook, CNN knows who my friends are and what they are doing online. Talk about Big Brother!

I also hate the new "like" feature on Facebook. A Fan page is not a "like" page. They are inherently different. Like Kim Woodbridge from Anti Social Development said to me about the change: "I like peas, but I am not a fan of peas."

I am not sure that Facebook cares what people think. It is feeling high because it has 400 million users worldwide, and that gives the company a lot of power, not to mention marketing might. For now, if you care about your privacy, protect yourself. Do not let Facebook use you for its gain. So logout, opt out, or do what you have to do.

Feel free to share your thoughts in the comments. Are you a fan of the Facebook?



Resisting change

Does change frighten you?

If so, you are not alone. Many people are so frightened of change that they cling to outmoded things. For some people, it is that shoulder-padded 1980s look that keeps them grounded. In business, especially the marketing business, resistance to change may not look as jarring as a 1980s ensemble, but it still causes plenty of pain.

The only constant is change

Fortunately or unfortunately, depending on your perspective, change is constant. Technology is especially fond of change and this kind of change is not only hard to deal with but expensive. Upgrade to Vista anyone? A few years ago, we would have never dreamed that we would be communicating with each other in warp speed via text messages or Twitter, but yet here we are.

I have noticed that many people in the marketing industry resist change. Some PR practitioners may still insist on sending out press releases via fax or regular mail. Some may keep their website static, never updating. Many scoff at Twitter or blogs or Facebook, thinking that they are flavor of the moment and quickly gone.

Whether Twitter will be here a year from now is debatable, but

what is not debatable is that it changes the way people communicate and connect. If anything has derived from the new social media world, is how close connections can be to anyone anywhere. One can be in contact with an Australian designer or a French writer. And the other reality is that there is more information out there than ever before. It IS hard to keep up. But ignoring it because you don't like it will not make it go away. I have heard many people say they "don't have time for blogs or for Twitter." Do you also not have time for the news and for email? My point is that the way people are communicating and learning is changing, and by resisting that change, especially if you are a marketing person, you are staying behind the times.

This reminds me of a friend who refuses to be on Facebook. She and I were catching up and she relayed information about a mutual friend, whom I haven't spoken to in a while. I told her I already knew. She wondered how I knew. I told her I saw it on Facebook. The point is people communicate with each other via social media, and it is necessary for marketing people to understand where people find out things.

Let me know what things you are resisting, and why. I really want to know!

How Not to Make Friends

Well folks, Facebook has done it again. It has irritated its legions of users by changing its layout. Apparently the folks at Facebook are not too savvy when it comes to public perception. If this was the first time, then we could let it pass. After all, Matt Zuckerberg is all of 12 years old or something such. But this is the upteenth time the company does

something that alienates its core public, and thus creates NEGATIVE publicity for itself. Case in point, read this blog entry in the Huffington Post. Facebook has been down this road before. And it doesn't learn. I really wonder if Facebook understands anything at all about public relations. I don't expect Zuckerberg to understand, but he should know enough to hire somebody that can provide him with communications counsel. If the company keeps doing stuff like this, it will become the Tylenol Poisoning example for the next generation (you know, how Tylenol dealt with crisis back in the 80s when someone tampered with its products...). This is not a crisis, per se, but it creates ill will. Some people will use Facebook less, and that translates into fewer eyeballs for its one major source of revenue, the ads. And do I have to spell out what less revenue means? If so, let me introduce you to the Seattle Post-Intelligencer, now online only.

It is ironic in the nth degree that Facebook is an online meeting place for friends. Friends like each other, generally speaking, and I am not liking Facebook right now.

