

Tech vs. communication

Recently, I have been noticing jobs that require someone with technology skills (html, programming) to handle web development and social media. It is interesting that in some organizations social media efforts are housed under the IT umbrella. But should they be? I don't think so. That is like asking the kitchen installer to cook a meal. Just because you know the appliances and how to work them does not mean that you can use them to their best potential.

Last week, I attended a social media workshop (not worth my while, but that is a topic for another post). One of the presenters was a tech guy, and he came out and said that he didn't know marketing. He understood the power and importance of social media tools, but not how to use them for marketing purposes.

Then there is the whole web developer versus web designer issue. A web designer is concerned with the aesthetics of the website, and the web developer makes the site work. Some people claim to provide both services, but in my experience, a web developer's websites never look pretty. And a web designer who does his/her own development probably can't do complex back-end stuff.

It boils down to what technology can and cannot do. Technology is a tool, a very specialized tool. And in the "internet age," keeping up with evolving technology is crucial. But technology alone cannot communicate, it cannot market. A superior tech website with no communications strategy or well written content will not do the job. Technology is not communication. Tech people are notorious for being hard to understand. They speak a specialized language and have skills that your average communications person just doesn't have.

The bottom line is that to have your IT department handle

social media does not make good marketing sense. Social media is completely about communication. It is not about the technology that allows said communication. I don't have to understand how Twitter works to use it for marketing promotion. I need to understand how people communicate, what information they are seeking. This is not to say you shouldn't involve your IT department—they can probably help facilitate what you are trying to do. Just leave the communicating to the communicators.

