

Me! Me! It's all about ME!!!!

Two-year-olds LOVE the word me. They are just learning that they are individuals and that they want whatever their siblings or friends have. "Me too," they shout. "Daddy, Mommy, look at me!!!"

You would think Twitter has been overrun by a nursery school. In endless posts, self-promoters don't use the word me as such, instead, they go on about their blog, their client, their big idea. Post after post after post. Never "engaging" with others, never re-tweeting others, and certainly never sharing anything useful.

Take for example the life coach who just came up with a brilliant idea. She is going to make sure you hear about it—she even created her own hashtag. And she wants you to join in. Or the business development "expert" who wants you to like her Facebook page, and asks you every SINGLE day, several times a day. Or the PR guy who constantly tells you how great he is because his VIP clients have been featured in the media.

Sure, you should use Twitter and social media outlets to promote your business (and yourself if you are your business). HOWEVER, if all you do is self-promote, then you are mired in ME-ONLY thinking. In other words, you are being egotistical and/or narcissistic in your use of Twitter. Twitter is a SOCIAL media platform. Social means that there is more than one person out there, right? You want to INTERACT with other people, not just have people look at you.

Think about the Twitter users you enjoy following. What makes them stand out? I bet they:

- Share interesting articles and insights
- Interact with you (answer your questions, comment on your tweets)
- Re-tweet what you share

In other words, they don't only talk about themselves. They have grown out of the "terrible twos" and have learned that there is an US or a WE out there, not just a ME.

How should you deal with the "me-all-the-time" tweeps? Easy. Unfollow. You won't miss their egos clogging up your stream.

What do you think about my post? Ha ha! Just kidding.

Seriously, though, how far should self-promotion go on Twitter?

Don't buy your own PR

In the age of self-publishing and social media, it's easy to put out information about your brand or yourself out there. It's easy to gain "followers." The lack of filters makes it easy to connect directly with people. But that doesn't mean that what you are saying is true. Keep that in mind. Just because you put in on your blog and somebody shared it on Twitter DOES NOT MAKE IT FACTUAL OR TRUE OR EVEN RIGHT. It just means that someone liked what you have to say.

In fact, just yesterday the disheveled leader of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmanidejad, claimed to the United Nations General Assembly that the U.S. was behind the 9-11 attacks and that most of the world believes that. To a rational person, this is hogwash, and yet there are nutcases out there who agree with this maniac. **Let me emphasize again: having followers does not**

make you right or true.

Many people and companies are falling prey to the lure of large numbers. They believe that because they have large numbers of followers, they are “all that.” They may be, but they should question it. Just today, I read a blog post by a book author, talking about herself and her concentration. It was purported to be about happiness, but it really was all about her. Another popular blog shared this morning what the blog author does as a morning routine, as if this is what we all need to do. What is happening is that because it was easy to get ideas out there, and to get positive publicity for such ideas, these people believe that everyone cares and everyone agrees with them. But that is just not accurate.

I am not saying that you should not self-publicize or promote yourself or your brand. **I am just saying you should not fall prey to the numbers game. Just because you have supporters does not mean everyone supports you** (go over to the Washington Post and read what happened to Mayor Adrian Fenty if you want a real-life example of buying your own PR at the expense of a reality check).

If I can paraphrase a famous line: publicity corrupts, absolute publicity corrupts absolutely.

(And for some comic relief, read Christopher Elliott’s interview with Delta’s head of customer service, who thinks Delta has the best customer service. Clearly, she hasn’t flown Delta.)



Some non-connected thoughts

This is not a post about marketing communications per se, but it does have to do with communications. This is also not in any particular order.

Heads in the sand

I wrote a few days ago about my stay in a Rochester hotel that did not live up to its advertising. Like I said then, there was nothing WRONG with the hotel, but it wasn't particularly right. Since I made my reservation online, I got the following email from the hotel:

Thank you for staying with us at the XXX. We sincerely hope you enjoyed your visit with us and that we were able to exceed your expectations. We look forward to serving you again when your travel plans bring you back to the XXX area.

They "hope" they exceeded my expectations. Well, they barely met my expectations but are they interested in knowing what my expectations and experiences were? No. I responded to them that if they cared about my expectations they would ask for feedback, and guess what, I have gotten no reply to that.

If you want to stick your head in the sand about your product or service, you are doing so at your own peril. If you are wondering why sales are down or employee morale is low, perhaps you need to FIND OUT instead.

How you present yourself (or, there are other people in the room)

I was at a couple professional development events yesterday. In both cases, there was at least one audience member who, during the Q&A, seemed to forget that there were other people in the audience. In the first case, the questioner went on and on about her business and finally got in a question (if asking

a question that applies only to you is asking a question). In the second case, the questioner shared a very personal, and in my opinion, inappropriate, story as a set up to her comment (no real question). Both these people clearly see the world as subordinate to their own personal needs and desires.

This last thought leads me to:

Self promotion, arrogance and the cult of celebrity

Although the rise of social media and citizen journalism is, in general, a good thing, there has also been a rise in the amount of people who think they are superior to all the rest of us, and now, because they can harness great followings and share their every thought with the masses, have become ubiquitous and often, quite obnoxious. I wrote recently about people who actually create Wikipedia entries for themselves (talk about arrogant), and yesterday, my friend and colleague, Daria Steigman told me about the hoopla surrounding a “famous” PR person and a comment on a blog. Read the whole thing here and draw your own conclusions.

However, let me add my conclusion, I think Kami Huyse is generally right that people have become arrogant, but what she doesn't realize is that she herself is being arrogant by claiming “I don't have time to Google you.” Why is her time more important? Now let me be clear—people who think that “Google me” is a response to other people who ask how to contact you or more about you are clearly arrogant. BUT, if I truly want to know more, chances are I WILL Google you.

In the end, it is up to each of us to give attention to the people we respect. If we don't respect someone or we think they are arrogant, then let's NOT follow them or read their blogs or buy their books or attend their parties or whatever. Self-promoting and arrogant people will eventually lose their followings IF enough people realize that just because other people think someone is great does not mean that he or she

really is great (after all, lots of people liked Stalin ...).

