Advice you shouldn’t ignore!

Last week was Digital Capital Week here in Washington, DC. The event consisted of workshops, meet-ups, parties and other events. It was well attended and well tweeted. As is now the custom, event attendees tweet out the little nuggets of shareable information followed by a hashtag, thus sharing with their following and publicizing the event.

Here are some that I saw:

“Be authentic.”

“Search your name on YouTube to see if there is any videos of you that you’ve forgotten.”

“Engage with your followers.”

“Blogging is hard work.”

My reaction to these on my Twitter stream: Really? Is that so? I have never heard that before.

On my Google Reader this morning, I came across this piece from HubSpot: “Responding to a Social Media Crisis: #Intuit Outage Takeaways.” Here are its four rules for dealing with such a crisis:

> ***1. Practice what you preach****. If you tout the importance of transparency, then make sure that you can be transparent during a crisis, too. For example, at HubSpot, we use* ***trust.hubspot.com*** *to show our portals and report on downtimes.*
>
> ***2. Respond fast, respond often****. You’re only hurting yourself if you wait too long before releasing information, and when you finally do speak up there isn’t a lot of substance to what you’re saying. Give frequent updates, even if the update is just “no new information”.*

*3. **Apologize for the right thing**. Make sure you aren't alienating your customers further with your apology. They may be more upset if they feel like you are not addressing how the error impacted their livelihood.*

*4) **Make amends**. Try to find a way you can make it up to your customers. They are the backbone of your business, so it's in your best interest to keep them happy.*

Read more: http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/6101/Responding-to-a-Social-Media-Crisis-Intuit-Outage-Takeaways.aspx#ixzz0raltVJsj

All these pieces of advice are fine. They aren't saying anything new, but we are supposed to think that social media somehow needs these rules. Being authentic and credible? Yes, you should be IN ALL ASPECTS of life. Engage with your audiences? Yes, of course you should. And the Hubspot advice to deal with a "social media" crisis? That is just plain crisis communication 101.

Social media may be new media, but the communications "rules" and advice that apply to older media apply here too. Perhaps because so many people are coming into media/communications because of social media, that so-called experts can recycle this advice and call it social media expertise.

My conclusion is that people are very eager to learn, but they are being snookered by the "social media experts" who seem to recycle advice and bring very little value to the conversation. So my advice, and this you should definitely not ignore, is to question any advice social media experts give.

P.S. If you need someone to tell you that being authentic and credible is important, then I really don't want to do business with you.

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