

Is social media the right venue for you?

Sometimes it seems like everywhere you turn someone is telling you to be on Twitter, Facebook and so forth. Lots of companies are now advertising that you should follow them.

Let me say there is a huge benefit to being on social media. Some companies will find most if not all of their target audience on social networks. But, and there always is that but, if you are not prepared to be on social media, don't be on it. It can hurt more than help.

Let me give you an example of how being on social media when you are not ready can actually cause more damage than any benefit. Last week, I bought a mattress from Sleepy's, "the mattress professionals." The mattress was supposed to be delivered on Tuesday, between 3 pm and 7 pm (and, no, this is not the cable company although Sleepy's gives them a run for their money). By 6 pm, it was obvious the delivery was going to be delayed. I tweeted to @sleepys several times. No answer. Mattress finally got delivered at nearly 9 pm. I did not receive a tweet back from Sleepy's until nearly 5 pm the next day, asking me to email my concern. The next day, they tweeted to email my concern (which I already had done.). By Friday, I had an email from them asking me to test the email address!!!! And, someone from customer service finally called me Friday afternoon.

Although there are many things wrong with Sleepy's (and if you are interested in my opinion of this company just drop me a line), **it adds insult to injury for them to be on social media and not to respond to social media.**

Social media for companies, whether it be for customer service or for image, requires a sizeable time investment. It

requires monitoring for mentions. It requires responsiveness.

Is social media the right venue for you? Here's a checklist to determine the answer:

- **I have the time and/or the staff to manage social media.**
- **I have the understanding of how social media works.**
- **I will respond to customer complaints on social media like I do on traditional outlets.**
- **I will monitor for mentions consistently/constantly.**

If you can't commit to this checklist, social media may not be the right venue for you.

If your company does not have the staff/time to deal with social media, do yourself a favor, and do not get it to the game. You will make matters worse. By saying you have social media outlets, you are encouraging your customers to contact you there. If you are not there, then your customers will become even more frustrated. Frustration can lead to anger and upset. And because of the power of amplification, the problem will get transmitted to more and more people.

Your thoughts?