

# Your minimum social media presence

If you are in marketing communications – advertising, public relations, direct marketing, design or anything else involving promotion, you should be conversant in social media. You should know what it is and you should be using some social media tools yourself. How will you be able to recommend “new media” to clients if you are not on any social networks yourself?

I am not covering any new ground here, I know. However, I am continually shocked when I meet people who are in the marketing biz and who are completely out of the loop in terms of social media. Or, what I think is worse, is people in marketing who have dipped their tippy toes into social media only to have Twitter accounts they never use, or incomplete LinkedIn profiles with 10 connections or a blog that was last updated in 2007. Do you know these people? Are you one of these people? Don't be!

OK. If you buy in to the paragraphs above let's proceed.

## LinkedIn–your professional social networking site

- Set up your profile, and include a photograph of yourself. You can most likely use the same photograph on other networks as well. Make sure you have a robust description of what you do now, and an informative headline. If you have older profiles, get rid of them. Make it easy for people who know you to find you.
- If you own your company, set up a profile for your company. Include your company logo and website.
- Link your blog to your profile.
- Grow your network! When you meet people you'd like to do business with, see if you can add them to your network.

- Answer questions. LinkedIn has an “answers” section...see if you can contribute to it.

### **Blog already!**

- If you have a website, that is fine. But keep in mind that websites are static and don't invite interaction. If you can add a blog to your website you will keep it fresher.

### **Twitter**

- Set up a twitter account. If it is personal, use your name. If it is business, use your business name. Getting long and complex doesn't pay off. Remember, your name is part of any re-tweeting, so don't take away precious characters from the 140 you are given.
- Your Twitter profile should have either a photograph of you or your company logo. Do not use the Twitter bird. Be sure to write up a bio and include your website or blog URL.
- Follow people. Make lists (the newest Twitter feature)
- Tweet! Have something to say.

### **Facebook**

- In my book, Facebook is personal. However, you can and should set up a fan page for your business. It is a no-cost way of promoting your business.

To succeed in social media, you must invest some time, be consistent and be persistent.

To recap, get on one or more social networks already!!!!

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# Can you succeed in communications without new media?

It's hard to remember what communications was like back even a decade ago. When I started in advertising, we faxed insertion orders and delivered artwork. When I started in PR, we faxed press releases and mailed photos. Now, we all just use the Internet. In the past two or three years, we've evolved past email and launched into new media: blogs, Twitter, social networks, and so forth. "Old" media is dying a bit more every day. Newspapers are disappearing or slimming down. News broadcasts are relying on Twitter and Facebook for user interaction. We've become a nation of citizen journalists, wielding our cameraphones and uploading our viewpoints. I read somewhere that a large liquor advertiser will be spending 90% of its ad budget on new media. On the other hand, a study showed that 60% of Americans use print media to make shopping decisions.

In any case, there is a new paradigm in how people acquire information. Fewer people are turning to traditional media and more people are turning to new media. That is the reality and your communications efforts must reflect that.

A few days ago, I was having a conversation with a graphic designer. He's pretty old school, to such an extent, that although he has worked in web design, he had never heard of WordPress. I spoke with a technical writer who knows nothing about blogs, and dismissed them as useless. Do you think these people are ready for the present, not to mention the future? In my opinion, they will be left behind.

I believe that if you are in communications, you must learn about new media. You may not use it, but you need to know

about it. People are making lots of money training other people on how to use blogs and Twitter for communications efforts. In fact, for a mere \$395 you can go to an all-day Twitter conference. Why would people spend this type of money? Because we are looking to know what the next big thing will be. In the early 90s, glossy magazines were the big thing. In the early 00s, dot-com/websites were the rage. Now we are in the blogosphere.

In a sense, communications is way more challenging now than ever. We have a very segmented audience and extremely targeted media. I am not sure we have much left in the way of mass media. Communications practitioners have to become adept at many forms of media.

So, to answer my own question, no, you cannot succeed in communications without new media.

What do you think?

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## Person to Person

Facebook has exploded in popularity. MySpace is super popular. There are many other social networking sites I have never even heard of. All of this points to an increase in using the Internet to connect with other people. Person to person. How is this changing marketing? For one, marketing is increasingly more targeted. It is by-passing traditional avenues and heading straight to its most likely audience. I just checked out [www.gather.com](http://www.gather.com). Big national stores like Borders and Starbucks have a presence there. I wonder how their experiment is working out. Are you more likely to shop at either place because you joined a social group they sponsor on a social networking site? I guess that is the million dollar

question. On the other hand, can you afford to ignore a burgeoning movement in the way people communicate with each other?