Beware the social media echo chamber

Sarah Palin may be forgiven for thinking that many people in the U.S. agree with her viewpoints—after all, she gets confirmation all the time from her Facebook fans. Last week, Politico reported that Palin posted a criticism of President Obama on her Facebook page. If you check out the entry, you will note that there are dozens of supporting comments and more than 19,000 people liked her words.

You could also be excused for thinking that Sarah Palin has lots of support. But you would be wrong. What she has is support among her supporters—that is, she is preaching to the choir. She is not going to get push back from people on Facebook, because after all, they (presumably) have indicated that they "like" her. Sure, there are probably several people in there who "liked" her to follow her moves, but overall, these are her fans, her base, her **echo chamber**.

Politicians—and marketers—need to be careful that they aren't getting to overenthusiastic about the echoes they are hearing. **Your supporters will mostly always like you and agree with you. But if you are always listening to those who like you, you will be unaware of why those other people out there don't.**

Social media, especially the concept of Facebook pages, is the very definition of an echo chamber. You are sharing content with those who are already predisposed to liking what you say and do. Same thing happens with your Twitter stream—you have chosen to follow and be followed by certain people. If someone in your Twitter stream annoys you or doesn't agree with you, you can block him/her.

I am not saying that brands should not have Facebook pages, or that you should not select your Twitter stream. What I am

saying is that you have to be aware that you may be speaking in an echo chamber—hearing back what you want to hear.

What do you think? Do you find yourself in an echo chamber?