



Empowering Times

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Dear Reader,

Web 2.0 - the participative internet, a completely new platform for marketers and advertisers is here! Are you ready for it? In **Thinking Aloud** we invited **Mr. JP Singh**, founder of the consulting firm, **Just Plain and Simple**, to be our guest writer for the month. He has wide experience in the field of marketing and is ideally suited to offer his views on the subject of social media marketing.

Podium features **Mr. Jaikumar Mani, Founder and CEO at 42ABCD**, a brand consulting firm, who shares with us the basics of social media marketing, the different tools of this field and how to use them.

The New Rules of Marketing & PR by **David Meerman Scott** is our book of the month. The author highlights that it is participation and not propaganda, which is what the new age customer wants. **Satyamvada Sharma**, student of Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies, and an intern at Empowered Learning Systems, reviews the book in **Between The Lines**.

Watch out! Not everything is good about sending constant updates, says **Vikram Nandwani** in **Figures of Speech**.

With this special edition on social media, how can **Empowering Times** stay away from it? If you are on Facebook, you can **'Like'** us to follow the updates.

Thank you for your continued support, we look forward to hearing your comments and feedback to make our e-connector even better. To see our earlier issues, you can visit our **Media and Archives** section or simply [click here](#).

Wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Geetanjali Sharma
Editor

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FIGURES OF SPEECH

Well... I checked your
Facebook status update.
I'm sure you didn't
check mine!

E1012 © Vikram Nandwani



THINKING ALOUD



'The greatest benefit of social media lies in the possibility of developing stickiness of relationships, if trust & confidence is built in the source as an authority or an expert'.

Social Media : A User's Perspective - JP Singh

I am not a very heavy user of social media sites. But, yes, I do have a presence and frequently participate on quite a few of them. As a practicing manager, my interaction is more from the practical business perspective rather than living and breathing in the internet world as does today's digital generation !!!

Wikipedia gives a description of social media as 'a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, which allows the creation and exchange of user-generated content.' Businesses also refer to social media as consumer generated media (CGM). A common thread running through all definitions of social media was a blend of technology and social interaction for the co-creation of value.

There is abundance of data about the high prevalence, reach, usage, etc. of social media and hence, let me not delve into those details and numbers. It is man's inherent nature and 'interconnectedness' that propels such developments. The story of human evolution is more about co-existence, co-evolution and collaboration than about destruction and fights.

Mark Zuckerberg, founder of Facebook in the movie, 'The Social Network' says, '*People wanna go online and check out their friends, so why not build a website that offers that. I am talking about taking the entire social experience of college and putting it online*'. There is definitely a social set up on the internet, which is very 'college-like' and this is a huge motivation to join any social media. Sean Parker, Co-founder of Facebook in the same movie says, '*We lived in farms, then we lived in cities, and now we're gonna live on the internet!*'

In my own personal life, as it happens to most of us, my contacts with close cousins, friends from school and college and early years of my career had all dwindled drastically. But, with LinkedIN, Facebook, Twitter and some other sites, I have been able to rediscover and reconnect with so many lost contacts, and more importantly, continued to be in contact with them due to ease of usability.

Interaction through social media is blurring boundaries of professional, social, personal and family space which were watertight compartments earlier. My own work timings are 24x7 with personal and professional time and space boundaries merging and becoming more and more nebulous and closer in feel to the now commonly used term 'cloud'; in a way, reinforcing the quantum physics description of the true 'wave' nature of matter.

There are certain other clear characteristics of this emerging medium. Let me use a few quotes from the same movie to demonstrate these:

Speed, Recency and Accessibility :

Marylin Delpy: The site got twenty-two hundred hits within two hours?

Mark Zuckerberg: Thousand.

Marylin Delpy: I'm sorry?

Mark Zuckerberg: Twenty-two *thousand*.

Marylin Delpy: [to herself] Wow.

Permanence:

Erica Albright: The internet's not written in pencil, Mark. It's written in ink.

Reach, Scalability and Usability:

Marylin Delpy : What are you doing?

Mark Zuckerberg : Checking in to see how it's going in Bosnia.

Marylin Delpy : Bosnia?

Mark Zuckerberg: They don't have roads, but they have Facebook.

In the early 90's the electronic media went through a revolutionary phase in India. Overnight, speed and recency of CNN made the print medium and other channels look archaic and insecure.

At a more micro level, in terms of usage for marketing, it does provide a strong tool. In conventional direct marketing that I used quite a lot, the key factors were direct, focused and two-way communication. Social media allows great efficiencies and effectiveness. However, conventional marketing wisdom of Brand Positioning, Style and Tonality are still valid and cannot be overlooked. A marketer can use divergence to reach out and target specific potential customers. Social media offers the marketer to reach masses at the same time customize it to the tremendous diversity of tastes and interests of the customers that are captured so well in the social media websites. It also offers an inward convergence helping the customers or stakeholders to reach back to the organisation. The greatest benefit of social media lies in the possibility of developing 'stickiness' of relationships if 'trust' & 'confidence' is built in the source as an authority or an expert.

There needs to be caution in certain areas too, e.g., in handling complaints and negative comments that can shoot out and spread with the same speed and reach. Life sciences and pharma players have to be very cautious in sharing information with lay consumers, lest wrong or half information creates problems. Specific tools, techniques and knowhow for this medium are developing as learning builds up, like for any new profession.

Hope the skills and mass of knowledge in this area develop and this becomes one technology application which is truly used in growing love and not hatred in humanity, staying true to its inherent characteristic of 'hyperconnectedness' !!!

JP Singh runs a consulting firm, Just Plain and Simple, based in Delhi. He is an engineering graduate from Delhi College of Engineering and an alumnus of Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. He was the former Managing Director of Bausch & Lomb - India and SAARC. He is also an Associate of Empowered Learning Systems. To know more about him and the firm, please visit www.justplainandsimple.com

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PODIUM



'From a marketer's perspective, it is a living and breathing entity, which is constantly changing'.

INTERVIEW: Jaikumar Mani

Jaikumar Mani is the Founder and CEO of 42ABCD, a brand-consulting firm, based in Mumbai. He is an engineering graduate from VJTI, Mumbai and an MBA from Indian Institute of Management, Calcutta. He started his career with NIIT, and prior to 42ABCD, he was Co-Founder & Director at Greysell Marketing Promotions. Jaikumar is also a musician and aspires to start a rock band soon. As an expert in the media and advertising field, we requested him for an interview on social media marketing. Read on to know more...

ET: What is social media all about?

JKM: Traditionally media was one to many, but this new media, which is still evolving, has created a level playing field with its participative nature. The move is similar to moving from autocracy to democracy. If one has an opinion, one can communicate directly, the media is more transparent and the interactions are visible.

From a marketer's perspective, it is a living and breathing entity, which is constantly changing. There is a lot an organisation can do through the social media. But, it is important to channelize what you want to do because now you can directly reach the target audience. Unlike the traditional media, where you can't do much if a campaign has failed, here you have opportunities to constantly engage with your customers. This is one media, which needs more of an effort than money!

ET: What are the different ways an organisation can use social media marketing tools?

JKM: Each social media tool has a specific purpose. An organisation should have a strategy on how to use social media and evaluate it on a continuous basis. The selection of the tool will depend on what you want to achieve. Here are a few examples:

- Blogs: involves content creation to engage the audience, but the content should be powerful and updated regularly. Blogs should not be simple updates. People visit blogs because they want knowledge, they are seeking wisdom and if they do not get it, you will not be able to engage with your audience. To build powerful content you can have a team or even ask experts from the industry to give their opinion on various issues. A good example would be Cisco - they use very basic things but they engage effectively with the customers.
- Twitter: is a micro blogging site which requires very frequent updates but, with caution. You don't want to divulge too much of information. Be very careful about what and when to tweet.
- Facebook: is another popular social media tool which allows you to create a Facebook page for your organisation. It is completely interactive. Along with having discussions, you can also upload pictures, videos or share links. You can use Facebook to drive customers to your website.
- YouTube: is very good for product companies or companies in the B2B space. A video about the features of the product can be broadcasted for no charge.

There are many more niche sites. The selection of the tool will depend upon what do you want to achieve from it.

ET: What may be the possible reasons for organizations to hesitate to join the social media platforms?

JKM: Some possible reasons I can think of are:

With social media, the conversations are happening at all levels. If there are any adverse comments, and things go out of hand, it is hard to control. Businesses prefer to stay away from social media to avoid any kind of unnecessary trouble. I have also seen organizations where they just do not understand social media. They think updating a blog in 1-2 months is enough.

Actually, it is not such a big deal. Your employees are already on one social media or the other. I would suggest rather spend 1 - 1.5 hours on it every day and proactively create your presence. Then, even in case of an adverse comment, it is easier to do damage control.

ET: Are there any pitfalls of using social media?

JKM: Social media is interactive, it is transactional in nature and you cannot do it half-heartedly. It requires the mind-space of the top management. Lot of organizations think of hiring a young intern to manage their social media initiative. They think that it is about being funky and young whereas it requires deep thought on how to leverage upon this media.

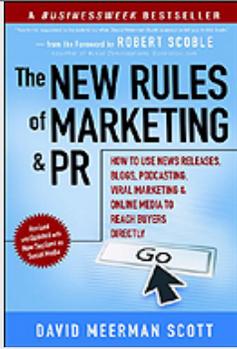
This is an evolving area and you cannot be too focused on return on investment now, though some social media tools offer very good statistics. Don't use social media to tom-tom about what you are doing. This is not a place to tell what you are doing. If you have presence in more than one social media platform, then the communication through these channels should not appear disconnected. They all have to be talking about the same thing.

ET: Can you share with us some examples of organizations that have used social media tools effectively?.

JKM: Cisco does a great job of engaging with its customers with very basic social media tools. Nike does a good job through events on Facebook. Amongst the Indian companies, I would say Wipro and Infosys. They have created strong online communities in the US and Europe. Their content is good and engage well with the audience.

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BETWEEN THE LINES



The New Rules of Marketing & PR - David Meerman Scott

The book is about the changing phases of marketing over the period of 10 years, from being a monologue to a dialogue, from being a broadcasting function to now transforming into an engagement function.

Marketing has moved from buying expensive advertising or print media to using Web for a faster and better reach. In today's e-marketing world a businessman does not need PR but just an internet connection and a PC to build a network for his business.

The author further emphasizes on the cost effectiveness of using social media or a blog or online videos to reach niche buyers directly with targeted messages. Use of web has thus re-defined the rules of marketing which now are more web-enabled market places.

The book offers excellent 'how - to' guidelines with examples from variety of businesses. Today's customer wants participation rather than just a propaganda from the marketing department along with authentic information. Therefore, marketers must shift their way of thinking from being mainstream marketers to strategists who can easily reach masses. This book definitely will help you develop your strategies for the same.

Use this book to know how to use the varied social media tools.

About the Author: David Meerman Scott is an online marketing strategist. He has authored several books on marketing and is also a well-known speaker on the same subject. His ideas on social media are very popular around the world and the book that we reviewed is now being published in 24 languages.

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