



DESIGNING STRATEGIES

Business Strategies for the Design Industry

A Maurer Consulting Group Publication

Volume 7 • Issue 34 • July/August 2010

What you can learn through social media participation is endless. I saw a Tweet on Twitter recently that caught my attention. I linked to Jay Baer's Convince and Convert blog (www.convinceandconvert.com) to read a guest post by Indra Gardiner: *Protecting Yourself from Social Media Lawsuits*. The title caught my attention in a big way, like only the word *lawsuit* can. She referred to a recent PRSA Counselors Academy event where attorney Michael Lasky, of Davis & Gilbert law firm in NYC did a presentation: *Is Social Media the new 'WildWest'* (Download presentation: www.prsa.org/conferences/counselorsacademy/presentationsattende)



On-line social media is the latest thing to hit the marketing scene in ages. Everyone is jumping onboard, mostly because everyone told them to. Some people take time to do research; others jump in blindly, assuming they can learn as they go. Whether they set up a company blog, Twitter account, FaceBook Page or some other platform, most are convinced it will provide marketing nirvana. The social media mantra is: Content is King. So long as you provide valuable content, you are promised the pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. Customers will flock to read your content, then beat down your doors to purchase your products and services. Right!

Visualize

Sound familiar? Did you jump feet first into the social media frenzy? Did you do any research first? How about a social media marketing plan – did you consider the need for one? Do you have a social media policy to control who can represent the firm on-line, and what they can or cannot say? Who is in charge of creating the content? Where might content come from? The Internet being what it is today, people often 'borrow' or 'lift' someone else's intellectual property and use it, never thinking that it might be copyright protected. Get permission. If you aren't familiar with copyright laws, find out who is in your firm or do some research.



You also need to be aware of the privacy policies for each of the social media platforms you use. When you quickly set up a FaceBook page for your company, did you read their privacy policy closely? Are you aware that literally anything you post there can be reused by FaceBook in pretty much any way they choose? What have you given them the right to use about your company that might be proprietary? You may not have planned to give up rights to FaceBook when you made that leap, but you did. Read all of those privacy policies for the social media platforms you are involved with as soon as you can. They should make a huge difference in what you post or if you post there again.

Analyze

I strongly advise that you view Lasky's presentation at the PRSA conference site noted above. It will be a real eye-opener for those who jumped into social media with no advice, and are proceeding in a loosey-goosey manner. Not knowing is not a defense for any lawsuit. It's your responsibility to know.



If you haven't yet created a social media marketing plan, you may well be wasting time and getting little or no payback for time spent. Create a social media policy now to put controls in place to protect your brand on-line. Let your plan guide you in creating the policy. Have you decided why you are using social media, which platforms you should use to achieve your goals, and set metrics to gauge your success? If not, you won't know who should be the voice for your company, what they should post and how to best achieve your desired results. Above all, be sure that your social media participation is being done legally; and that you aren't giving away the company farm to some social media platform, risking potentially irreparable damage to your company brand and reputation.

Strategize



Terri L. Maurer, FASID

Change Is Getting Closer

We've been telling you that change is coming to the Maurer Consulting Group web site, and it's getting closer and closer to completion. This project will bring some exciting changes in our communications with the design community. Once the site is launched, *'Designing Strategies'* will no longer arrive as an e-mail attachment, but rather through an on-line e-marketing service, allowing us to make the newsletters more interactive. We will also be incorporating a Blog into the web site to provide

high quality management and strategy content to you more frequently, answer questions by our readers and have a much more interactive relationship from our valued readers. Stay tuned for the BIG announcement and...**CHANGE!**

Planning Ahead?

If you're looking for speakers to present in your showrooms, or are interested in sponsoring a program of high quality business education to help you achieve success, contact **Maurer Consulting Group**. We're currently scheduling for the last quarter of 2010 and all of 2011, so contact us today – tmaurer@maurerconsultinggroup.com.