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Interview with an Industry Leader

Being the first in your industry off the starting block can provide great strategic advantage. Burgin Construction was that firm in the construction industry when it came to social media marketing. Three years ago, when no one else in their industry seemed to have picked up on social media marketing, Rhonda Burgin, Vice President of [Burgin Construction](#) in Orange County, California decided to be the early adopter. She took Burgin Construction, the company she and her husband, Brad started in 1989, into on-line marketing platforms designed for relationship building. Rhonda was kind enough to provide this interview to share their experiences in what some still consider an 'iffy' way to market successfully.

TM: What did your strategic process look like when you added social media platforms to your marketing plan?



RB: We looked at a number of different social media web sites and decided to try several, beginning with Facebook. As most of the available social media platforms had a membership level available at no cost, we could look at different programs and try them out with no risk. We continue to use a number of the free publications, and don't pay for very much of our social media participation. Our strategy is to always respond, be consistent with our posts across all of our social media platforms and our blog, and to use simple basic manners like saying *please* and *thank you*.

TM: Did you approach social media all in from the start or use a more cautious test the waters approach?

RB: As I mentioned, I started with [Facebook](#) first, and found I really liked the social part of it for building relationships with potential customers. Then, I added [LinkedIn](#), not for building customer relationships, but where I could build my own professional relationships. I don't add customer contacts on LinkedIn at all. When [Twitter](#) seemed to be picking up in popularity, we began using it, posting our own Tweets and also re-posting useful content from other sources.

More recently, we've started using [Google+](#) and [Pinterest](#). Google+ is still very new. I have found a number of vendors and trade specialists there that I want to communicate with. I don't yet see this becoming a popular platform for our customers. I find Pinterest to be fun, but at the same time practical. I mix a little personal and business content there. I have also begun to use [Houzz.com](#). It seems like a great site, and has already brought us one customer. Houzz is described as a destination site for home design enthusiasts.

TM: Who is the Burgin Construction CSMO -- "chief social media officer" -- in charge of strategy and implementation?

RB: I do the day to day postings on our various social media sites.. I find that between 6am and 11am is the best time for me to post so that I can be sure and hit all of the different time zones. I try to respond to people in a timely manner to keep up our relationships. I have out-sourced the writing of our blog. I provide the writer with topics and she comes up with the posts, unless I give her some very specific information I want included.

TM: What metrics, if any, are you using to gauge the success of each platform and the overall success of your efforts?

RB: Since we started, we have continued to increase our participation. In order to tweak things to our advantage, we did out-source our Search Engine Optimization (SEO). They track our statistics and tell us what needs tweaked, weather it is a specific keyword or blog topic.

TM: *Can you share your budget for the social media side of your marketing plan? Has this amount increased or decreased since you started using social media? Do you expect it to stay the same, be reduced or be increased moving forward?*

RB: We spend about \$500.00 a month. on our social media efforts. We got really busy for the last month, and decided to decrease spending just a bit. But, we expect to be increasing the budget again shortly to make sure we stay busy for the rest of the year. The amount we spend on social media increased about a year ago when we hired our SEO expert. It was a good choice and well worth the expense.

TM: *Thank you, Rhonda for sharing your firm's social media strategy. You have certainly shown that social media has gone beyond the iffy stage for legitimate marketing channels. Your experiences prove there are relatively inexpensive, simple and phased ways for any company to enter the realm of social media marketing and find success.*

VISUALIZE -- ANALYZE -- STRATEGIZE your way to social media success.

If you are ready to make the move to add social media and customer relationship building to your marketing efforts and need some help, contact Maurer Consulting Group. **Call 330.666.0802 today to set up a time to talk with Terri L Maurer, FASID.**

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