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Focus Your Social Media Messages

By Daniel Burrus

Why should you get involved with today's social media when there are so many other electronic communications options? Simple: Social media are not about providing customers with information; they are about gaining customers' engagement. Blogs, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, and other social media options seek to create a dialogue and elicit responses. It's not really about talking—it's about listening, and trying to get people to talk with you about something that's important to both of you.

In order to make the best business use of social media, you need to pinpoint the specific message you want to put out so that every employee has a guide to follow, knows what direction their messages should take and how they should focus their posts. Is your company's focus to increase customer service? To enhance awareness of your services? To boost your brand recognition? Each aim would call for a different, yet consistent message for your employees to present.

For example, one insurance company uses Twitter and Facebook to let people know all the philan-

thropic things it does for the community. All the posts are about events it's sponsoring and contributions it's making. Employees know that they should post information about personal things they're doing for the community, such as volunteering at the local animal shelter or helping out with Habitat for Humanity. With a clear guideline that the social media effort is to increase philanthropic awareness, it's easy for employees to know the kinds of things they should be doing on social media sites. They have a clear focus and a unified purpose.

Another company in the retail industry uses social media to improve customer service. All their posts highlight things the company is doing internally to improve the customer experience, changes it's making online to make shopping easier, and how it is handling phone inquiries to deliver a memorable shopping experience—and customers are asked regularly how they'd like the company to improve customer service. With a clear key message, all the company's employees are focused on problem solving and on making the customers happy.

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Take Control. Take control of your company's social media strategy by determining the core message you want to convey and the best ways to spread it. And share both with your employees. Here are some general tips for creating guidelines your staff can use to shape their social media posts:

Build Trust. Your employees should use their posts to build a reputation of trust among clients, media, and the public. When they are reaching out to others on social media sites, they should take every opportunity to build a reputation of trust and to establish themselves as a credible and transparent representative of the company.

Be Transparent. When participating in any online community, your employees should disclose their identity and affiliation with the organization, clients, and professional and/or personal interest. When posting to a blog, they should always use their real name, not an alias.

Be Direct. When creating posts and content, be direct, informative, and brief. They should never use a client's name in a posting

unless they have written permission to do so.

Give Due Credit. If your employees post copyrighted materials, they should identify the original source. This includes sources for direct or paraphrased quotes, photos, videos, and anything else they did not originally create.

Self-Edit. Your employees should always evaluate their posting's accuracy and truthfulness. Before posting any online material, they need to ensure that the material is accurate, truthful, and without factual error. This includes doing a spell and grammar check on everything. Remember, content never disappears entirely once it's been posted. Should your employees find an error, have them correct it promptly. Since transparency is key, have them admit the mistake, apologize if necessary, correct it, and then move on.

Be Responsible. Make sure employees know that they are responsible for what they post. Negative or questionable posts will not be tolerated. Additionally, while

what they do on their own personal pages during personal time is their business, what they publish on those sites should not be attributed to the company and should not appear as endorsements from the company. If they choose to list their employer on a personal social network, then they must regard all communication on that network as they would in a professional network. Online lives are ultimately linked.

Be Professional. When posting comments, employees should refrain from writing about controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects, including politics, sex, religion or any other non-business related subjects. The tone of their comments should be respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Additionally, they should avoid personal attacks, online fights, and hostile communications.

If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement with which your company disagrees, your employees can voice their opinion, but not escalate the conversation to a heated argument. Instruct them on how

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to write reasonably, factually, and with good humor.

Maintain Privacy. Employees should never disclose proprietary or confidential information. This includes product releases, service updates, and employee information not yet made public.

Obey the Rules. All employees should follow local, state, or federal laws and regulations, as well as the company's internal rules and the rules established by each social networking venue.

Dan Burrus (www.burrus.com) is the founder and CEO of Burrus Research, a research and consulting firm that monitors global advancements in technology driven trends to help clients better understand how technological, social and business forces are converging to create enormous, untapped opportunities.

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Second Generation Joins Company

Bill Duerr, the oldest son of Hatteras CEO/President Charlie Duerr, has taken on full time sales and management responsibilities within the communications company that was founded in 1984.

Bill, a 2006 graduate of Marist College, brings his BA in Digital Media to Hatteras as he begins his career as an Account Executive. The 26-year-old Duerr excelled in school and on the lacrosse field by leading Marist lacrosse as its captain for two years to the MAAC championship and into the NCAA playoffs. Bill followed his passion for the sport after graduation by assistant coaching at Marist and Stevens Institute of Technology.

Bill's desire to become part of Hatteras' growth and commitment to leading edge technology has proved that the apple does not fall far from the tree. His passion for the business and hard work has fast tracked Bill into becoming a contributing salesperson and part of the management team in identifying growth trends and business opportunities in both electronic and printed media.

"The addition of my son to the business makes me very proud but I also feel lucky to have him on my team," says Charlie. "He brings a strong desire to learn and at the same time a real understanding of the direction our industry is heading." Hatteras has and will continue to evolve into a communications company with young Mr. Duerr playing a vital role.

Promotion is National in Scope

Scott Duerr has been named Vice President of National Accounts at Hatteras. As our business has expanded outside of the metropolitan NY area, it has become necessary to empower an individual with experience to lead the charge on a regional and national level.

Scott has excelled as a salesperson at Hatteras for over 20 years. He brings a wealth of product knowledge and expertise to his new position. His strong relationship skills will allow Scott to focus

on building relationships and overseeing the growth of business by appointing an account executive with expertise in the respective business sector or geographic area to oversee the day to day handling of projects.

As technology allows for long distance business relationships, we will build personal relationships along the way. Hatteras has always prioritized superior customer service as it remains the cornerstone of our business. As our marketplace expands, this role of National Account manager will also expand to support business relationships near and far.

Kodak NexPress Energizes Growing Need for Data Driven Print

Hatteras has expanded and energized its digital printing department with the installation of its second Kodak NexPress. The NexPress Digital Production Color Press will add to the company's arsenal of five variable, high-volume digital printing devices enabling increased capabilities and output speeds.

The NexPress is designed to print on a wide range of substrates, from 40 lb. offset text to 130 lb. coated or uncoated cover stock. The versatile press also has an exclusive intelligent dimensional

coating option, which allows for unique spot coating options in one pass of the press.

The company has seen increased demand for high quality, four-color variable printing applications with the growth of one to one marketing campaigns. An investment in XMPie software and a commitment to meeting our customer's needs has allowed Hatteras to generate new business with robust cross media programs and variable printed communication pieces.

Hatteras utilizes the Kodak Prinergy Workflow System to drive its array of printing devices. Prinergy natively produces color consistent PDF files to drive all of its printing devices from proofing to offset and digital output devices.

Let's examine and explain some interesting graphic terms.

ALIASING: The jagged edges on curves and diagonal lines in a bitmap image commonly called jaggies. Because bitmap images are made up of square pixels on a grid, a curve or a diagonal line has stair-stepped pixels. Enlarging a bitmap accentuates the effect or appearance of jaggies. The jaggies can be minimized with a smoothing process called anti-aliasing which adds additional pixels to make the edges appear less jagged.

BULK: The actual physical thickness of a piece of paper, usually expressed in thousandths of an inch, is the bulk of the

paper. Bulk affects the flexibility of paper and desktop printers can have difficulty with papers that are too thick. Paper weight and thickness (bulk) may have little or no noticeable effect on printed image quality however, papers with more bulk hold up well when there is heavy ink coverage.

CREEP: In a saddle stitched booklet the bulk of the paper causes the inner pages to extend or creep further out than the outer pages when folded. When trimmed the inner pages are narrower than the outer pages, counteracting the creep. Creep varies depending on the thickness of the paper and the number of pages. If there is no creep

allowance, when pages are trimmed the outer margins become narrower toward the center of the booklet and there is the possibility that text or images may be cut off.

DINGBAT: A typographic ornament or graphic. Dingbat fonts are digital type where each character is a small graphic or icon. Dingbats can be decorative or functional. Dingbats can be used as bullets in a list, as an end sign at the end of a story, as separators, and as accents.

EPS: (Usually sounded out a letter at a time: e-p-s) Based on the PostScript language, EPS or Encapsulated PostScript is a vector format designed for printing to PostScript printers and

imagesetters. It is considered the best choice of graphic format for high resolution printing of illustrations. EPS files are created and edited in illustration programs such as Adobe Illustrator or CorelDRAW. They are saved with .eps file extension.

FRENCH FOLDS: With French folds the paper is folded with cross-folds or right-angle folds, often with a short first fold. The shorter portion or head in French folds may be folded to the inside (heads in) or outside (heads out). Eight-panel French folds with even panels (no short heads) are commonly called quarter-fold or 8-panel right-angle folds.

Hatteras is a dynamic graphic communications company with expertise that spans creative printing, cross-media marketing, variable data printing, binding, mailing, warehousing, fulfillment, and distribution services.

Drop us a line At Hatteras, we want to know what you think. Please e-mail your topic ideas to ideas@hatterascpc.com and we will consider your suggestions for future Beacon newsletters.



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