



Tom's Message Board

A Case for Social Marketing

So, how 'bout them Egyptians? In a matter of days, an eRevolution was sparked by a group of young activists on Facebook calling for nationwide demonstrations to restore people's dignity and ask for reform, freedom and social justice. In the end, the 30-year dictatorship regime of Mubarak was overthrown in 18 days of peaceful demonstrations. Does this make a case for social networking?

As I meet with clients with my Catamount Marketing hat on, I'm asked questions about the role of social networking in their marketing. Unless one's been living under a rock for the past 24 months (love that Geico commercial) the world is all a "Twitter" about social networking, it's impact in marketing, how to incorporate it into a marketing strategy, it's potential to make or raise money, it's staying power, whether to use LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter, and social networking's purpose altogether. These are all good, valid questions when dealing with an evolving topic like social networking, but from a social marketing perspective, these questions are misguided.

I can't advise on this topic any better than author John Jantsch does in his two superlative books on small business marketing, *Duct Tape Marketing* and *The Referral Engine*. He says, When considering your social marketing strategies, tools, and tactics and how they fit into your branding and marketing, the ultimate question is – "What do I want the relationship with my customers to look and feel like?"

From this simple, but holistic point of view comes the filter for how you might analyze every social marketing tool, tactic, avenue, and investment. (Frankly, it's the question that can inform every marketing decision, but many of the social tools are much more about relationships.)

Once you have a picture of the way you want your prospects and customers to experience you, your products and services, your people, your brand you will be much more equipped to determine if you can enhance and amplify that relationship by setting up a Facebook group, finding and being found on LinkedIn, installing Twhirl to keep up with your Twitter world, creating and promoting company videos on YouTube, building networks within StumbleUpon or, lest we forget the obvious, blogging.

From this ultimate social marketing question you may actually conclude that you don't need any social marketing tools, that your relationships are about conversations, connections, community – holy crap – I just defined social marketing! Now what?

So, what do you want the relationship with your customers to look and feel like? What do I do about it? What I do next? You can start by giving me a call to schedule a time to meet to discuss your business or organization, your clients or constituency, and your story.

Viva la eRevolution!

For more small business marketing tips by John Jantsch, go to: www.ducttapemarketing.com

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