



From Me to We

The Humanization of Business

By Dr. Josephine Gross

Throughout this issue on social media you will notice a consistent thread. Pretty much all our contributors, while offering different experiences and arguments to prove their points, echo the same message, which can be summarized as follows: to tap into the power of social media for growing your business, set aside your agenda, connect with others, engage in open-ended conversations and explore ways to be of service. In other words, be *social*.

To be social is to be aware of others and devoted to their welfare.

Originally, commerce was an inherently social process. To sell your goods or services, you had to interact with others, find out their needs and offer a solution at a mutually agreeable price. If you treated your patrons poorly or sold substandard products, locals would denounce or shun you.

As commerce scaled and grew into larger organizations, the social infrastructure didn't expand accordingly, thus creating a discrepancy. When you were dissatisfied with a product, you could still tell your neighbor about it, but your local impact became inconsequential to that product's overall success.

With production and selling becoming more removed from the consumer, companies tried to bridge the gap by resorting to a promotional and self-serving form of communication called mass advertising. When proximity and mutuality disappeared from business, so did the human aspect, allowing for some bad habits to creep into the way goods were sold and customers were treated.

"With the rise of social media, the social element is reentering commerce with a vengeance," says marketing expert and author François

Gossieaux [*see Lead Interview*]. Recent reports show that the one-way communication traditional advertising uses no longer works. People don't want to hear from corporations, they want to hear from each other.

Humans are wired to gather in groups, work together for common goals, extend and return favors and bond over shared beliefs. The Internet has erased the geographical limits to the communities we can belong to and participate in. Social media have redefined who are our friends and neighbors, offering endless possibilities for multiple partnerships.

The power of communities is profoundly changing the world of business. In Web 2.0, selling is no longer a top-down affair. It happens in mutuality, through friends chatting with friends.

The beauty is, for network marketers this shift requires much less of an adjustment than it does for traditional business, since our central principle is already relationship marketing. The caveat is, we need to realize that tribes don't form around products or companies; they gel around shared challenges and aspirations. They thrive on openness, participation, collaboration and authenticity.

To capitalize on this new order in business, don't market like a corporation. Relate from a human perspective and connect to what's alive in others. Expand your awareness from "me" to "we" and mobilize your intention to contribute to the whole of which we all are parts.

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