



Presenting Yourself Online

Five Keys to Mastering Social Media in Your Business

By Jackie Ulmer

There is no denying the impact that the Internet and social media marketing have had on the network marketing profession over the last decade. As this mind-blowing, paradigm-shifting tool continues to grow and shape our lives in many ways, it's important to understand some basic principles so you can use it to create success in your business.

Here are five basic principles to keep in mind as you get started or fine tune your online business plan so you can achieve social media mastery.

1. Don't make social media your entire business plan. Don't dismiss every other proven method for building your business in order to focus all your time online.

If you are just getting started, develop your 100-names list of people you know. Sharing your business with this center of influence is a powerful way to develop your business skills and create some initial success. Day-to-day networking with people you meet is also important.

When I started my online efforts back in 1999, I continued to follow my business plan of building daily connections, while factoring a specific block of time into my day to focus on online efforts. This allowed my business to continue to grow while I learned the ins and outs of online marketing and began to develop relationships and leads through this new medium.

2. Don't hide behind the Internet. The Internet is a tool for connecting, not a place to hide out. Some people expect online automation to do all the work of building a business. This is a huge

mistake. Our business is all about relationships, and no one wants to have a relationship with a robot!

Once you make a connection with someone online, take the next step, which is to connect offline through a phone call or face-to-face meeting. Never underestimate the power of making that phone call. You will establish yourself as a professional, and more importantly, a real human being. Also, don't get bogged down with the busy-work of online tools. Limit your online activities to thirty minutes to an hour a day. That is plenty of time to market.

3. Know the difference between advertising and marketing. I like to network online the same way as I approach networking at an event or a cocktail party. Just as you wouldn't walk into a party shouting to everyone about your business, don't do this online either.

Online, as in real life, we are interacting with human beings, and just because we aren't face to face does not mean they are more open to receiving a blatant advertisement. You can market and promote yourself without ever mentioning your business or products by name. Get to know people, have a genuine interest in them and they will seek out information about what you do.

4. Keep it social and engage your audience. Remember that sites such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are social sites. People are not there to be sold.

Think about what happens on the golf course. People go there to enjoy golf and each other, not to promote their businesses, but social interactions on the golf course often lead to business transactions. It works the same way online. You want to be sharing socially more than commercially.

What are your areas of interest besides your business? Do you travel? Cook? Hike? Create engaging conversations with others around mutual interests. These snippets of conversation go a long way toward presenting yourself as a well rounded person. Just as when you chat with others offline about things you have in common, making posts and doing

status updates around common interests can create a lot of interaction.

5. Develop a consistent message and brand. The concept of branding yourself is often misunderstood and somewhat overused in the context of online marketing. In simple terms, if your best product is “you,” then your brand is what makes you stand apart from others. Your brand includes your unique strengths and is your most valuable asset.

When we think about established brands—Nike, Coca-Cola, Sony—we typically have an entire perception of what that brand represents. Your goal in developing your brand is to define who you are and the message you want to convey to your audience. Once you've defined this, you want to develop your social media presence in a way that stays consistent with this message. Your social media profile, status updates and content (such as articles and notes you write or videos you create) should stay consistent with the brand and the message you want to deliver.

The profile you set up on social media sites is a big part of your brand. On your profile page, tell people who you are and what you do—without specifically mentioning your company or products. Say what challenges you solve and who or what you are looking for online. Refrain from advertising and keep your language free of hype. Use a picture that shows you in a way you want to be represented. Use keywords and content that intrigue and entice your audience to want to find out more.

Your goal is not to sell on social sites, it's to get your visitor to click through to another site you have listed on your profile that does the selling for you. Then, it's your prospect's idea to learn more about you and your business, not yours.

On social sites, others judge and evaluate you based on the value you bring to the conversation. Social media is a powerful tool that gives you the ability to connect instantly beyond space and time. It doesn't replace the physical reality, yet in a way it enhances it. It offers you unlimited potential and possibility. What you do with it is up to you.

Be consistent, be authentic, develop a powerful message, and have fun making and furthering connections. See you on the Net!

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