

Episode 89: What is the role of social media at work?

A friend pointed out that we had not covered Social Media on the 3 Minute Mentor. This is strange given that you probably found T3MM through some time of Social Media tool. The question today is not how we use it, but how our *companies* should use it.

1. Role of Social Media

All companies have Marketing and Communications teams and strategies; typically one-way communication. From the early days of forums or blogs, this became a two-way conversation; social media is always two-way. In other words, you need to both speak and listen – it is not just a publication tool. Social Media is also a great way to both build and sustain a broad set of relationships. You can both engage with and connect to people who are interested in you. However, you should not consider having a Facebook page as having a strategy. Also, Facebook is often a B2C tool and social media works well for B2B. While Social Media may seem like the Wild West, do not sacrifice your messaging discipline. Few companies will have lots of extra budget, so something else may have to go.

2. Lessons to remember

Here are 5 lessons I have learned when starting Social Media at various companies. You need to have:

- ① Coherent strategy – what you want to do and what you need to achieve
- ② Be clear on your audience – the better you define it, the better you serve it
- ③ Think like an editor – have a clear storyline and stick to it
- ④ HIT – Social Media is very transparent; Honesty-Integrity-Transparency is key to a successful approach
- ⑤ Measure – everything in business needs metrics and Social Media is no different

3. Work or personal brand

Another thing that makes Social Media different from other MARCOM is its social nature. Not only do we connect to companies, but we also connect to the people. If that's you, you need to consider yourself a brand. What personality do you want online and does it fit with your company's brand. You, like your company, need an editorial policy; focus your messaging. Try and use the tools on the web to track and see if you are coming across. Avoid letting your personal and work world combine - my Facebook is for family and friends; for work, use Twitter.

Bottom Line: Social Media is a critical tool for the future but it does not mean you need to throw away the rules and laws that your company has in place.

