

## Talk To Me, But Listen First

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There has never been a time like the present and a medium like the Internet, to provide people with the desire and ability to be heard. Everyone is "talking" either through videos, blogs, Tweets, or other Internet based solutions. But, is it all about people talking, or is it about people listening?

From a marketing perspective, Social Networking has been called "The Wild West," and though it is the hot buzz word, it is still untested with respect to a Return on Investment (ROI). Yes, in some cases companies claim that certain Social Networks have created value added at either, or both, top-line exposure and bottom-line revenue, but by-and-by, they are more of a distraction for a company, as workers feel that they need to converse with friends, colleagues, or an unknown entity throughout their work day.

Social Networks do point out one very important fact, people want to be heard, and they are willing to provide feedback as well engage in a dialogue, but you need to earn their trust. The interesting part of this is that people are open to exchanging information and engaging in a dialogue with the general public via a Tweet, through their LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, or one of a hundred other Social Network websites, but when a Company tries to engage a person there tends to be closure on communications.

So, why is this? Well, many Companies have used marketing methods that talked to the consumer, they did not listen to what the consumer said, and most of all a Company would tell their story, but this may not be what the consumer wanted to hear.

We have seen a steady change in how a Company will engage a customer, though the open dialogue and trust side is still very new for both parties. It will take some time for the customer to believe that what they are saying is being taken seriously, and for a Company's marketing department to believe that in many cases the customer knows best.

The world has changed and information is truly at a snap of a finger via the Internet. People are more empowered, in control, and informed than at any time in the past, and this is only the beginning. So, for a Company looking to be effective and utilize the power of the Internet, they need to be good a listener first, and a marketer second.

There have been examples of different Companies trying to engage a group via social networks under the guise of a regular person so they could try and find out information on their product or service, but once they are found out, it can become a bigger mistake for them than they could have ever anticipated. In fact, I received an email a few weeks ago on "How to Tweet for Business." Once I clicked on the link I was taken to a website that had a step-by-step approach on how to use Twitter for business, but not be overbearing and lose the conversation. The site noted on how to construct the 140 characters, and how you should only mention your company or website address on maybe every 7-10 tweets. So, what are we doing? We are becoming a skill for a Twitter conversation, which in many cases carries a total disregard for the person(s) we are communicating with.

This shows that it takes time, understanding, and the ability to be a good listener to earn the trust of your customer, but once you have established a relationship, the information, feedback, and loyalty could be worth its weight in gold.

From a general use perspective, Social Networks will continue to evolve and the consumer will

continue to dictate which solutions will survive and how they want them to work.

From a marketing perspective, Social Networks will continue to be "The Wild West," but a good marketer will follow the process and track how people are communicating, as well as become better listeners.

I thank you for your continued support of Luxury Experience, and as always, your comments are welcome, so please send comments to: [Efnesta@L-E-Company.com](mailto:Efnesta@L-E-Company.com).

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