

JOIN THE CONVERSATION!



10 REASONS WHY YOUR MINISTRY SHOULD BE USING SOCIAL MEDIA

by Randy & Donny Vaughn
The Marketing Twins at 1429 Creative
www.1429creative.com
817.657.4472

Why Social Media?

So why does your ministry need to get on social media? What are the real benefits?

Let's first define social media:

“Using online technology to create valuable conversation and mutually beneficially relationships.”

The world is communicating more and more online. But you have to think beyond just having a web site. Today you need to think and act in terms of a total web presence.

John Jantsch* says it best:

“If you're not participating in social media, you're not really online.”

*John Jantsch is a marketing and digital technology coach. He is an award winning social media publisher and author of Duct Tape Marketing.

In this e-book, we have provided ten benefits that we hope will prove to you why your ministry needs to be harnessing the power of social media.



10 Reasons to Use Social Media

1. "EVERYONE'S DOING IT" - OK, well maybe not everyone. My grandmother is not. But according to recent reports, 3/4 of the American population are online in some form or another - and they are talking, talking and talking. They are using Facebook, Twitter, blogs, email marketing, podcasts, and a variety of other online resources. They talk about a variety of topics. Why shouldn't they be talking about you?



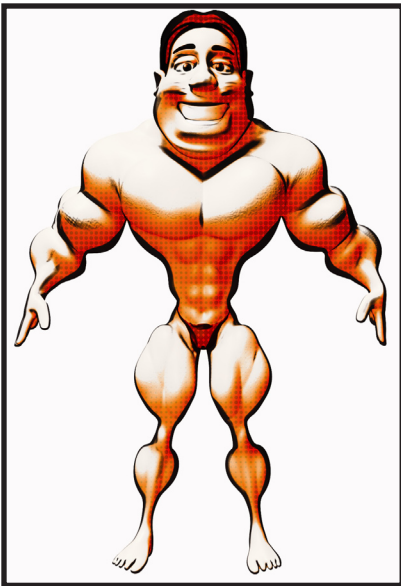
2. "OUT OF SIGHT IS OUT OF MIND" - As a missionary living in Africa for almost 10 years, I know how hard it is to communicate to the masses about what God is doing in your world. We were very well connected to our home church, we had regular visitors from the States, and still, when we'd come home on furlough, people had no idea what was happening with our ministry. There's a lot of clutter out there. People are busy and there's only so much information they can absorb. They talk about, pray about and even contribute to that which is on their minds. Do you want to continue to be unheard of? Or would you like more participation in what God is already doing in your ministry?

3. "POWER TO THE PEOPLE" - In the old world of mass communication, the TV and radio stations, along with major news outlets, dictated what people talked about. These water-cooler conversations brought people together around central stories. In their private lives, around the dinner table and at the local coffee shop, stories more personal or local also grabbed people's attention. Now, it is no longer the mass forms of media who drive the conversation. People rally to stories that impact their lives and they share with their friends about organizations who are making a difference (and those who are not). You don't have to rely on mass media to get people talking about what God is doing. You can launch a cause or direct people where you want them to see God's activity - and people will share that with their friends online. Wouldn't you want your ministry to be a part of people's everyday conversations?



4. **"WORD OF MOUTH ON STEROIDS"**

Word of mouth marketing is obviously most organizations' best friend - it is highly exponential and it costs you virtually nothing! Social media is like WOM online - people are talking in positive and negative ways just like they are in line at the grocery store, on the phone with their friends or sitting in a Starbucks. Online, people are talking on blogs, Facebook, Twitter and even online review sites - describing their experience with your organization (yes, even churches get reviewed online!). The great thing about WOM is that, while you can't **CONTROL** the conversation, you certainly hold the power to influence it. You can combat negative reviews with positive ones. You can feed people stories through pictures and video that get people talking more. Rather than sitting back passively, would you like to be active in creating the topic of conversation?



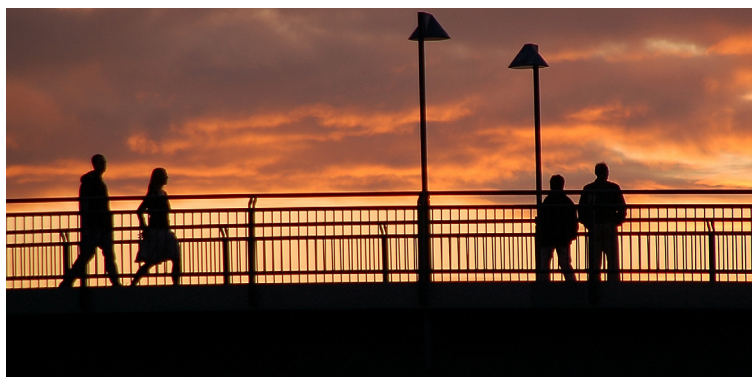


5. "LEAD & INSPIRE" - Some of you have enjoyed powerful platforms of leadership in the offline world. Your pulpit has given you a voice of influences over those sitting in the pew in front of you. Your articles for the ministry monthly magazine have been photocopied and clipped out and sent to friends through snail mail. But when you are not online, you are losing your influence. When you are sharing your thoughts in a podcast, blog or via Twitter, you are continuing to demonstrate thought-leadership that connects to a new group of followers, both local and potentially global. Isn't your message important enough for others to hear about it?



6. "CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE" - We get challenged all the time about the importance of social media for an organization whose major donors and heavy influencers are not technology savvy and have no idea what Facebook or Twitter even is. Although statistics continue to show that the fastest growing group on Facebook are those whom you'd think wouldn't be on Facebook. Facebook's greatest growth has come from people aged 35-49 years of age (+24.1 million)! From December 2007 through December 2008, Facebook added almost twice as many 50-64 year old visitors (+13.6 million) than it has added under 18 year old visitors (+7.3 million). Even if your donor is not on Facebook, you can imagine that some of the key influencers are. Maybe it's their children or grandchildren. Maybe it's other board members or their spouses. Don't you want to be engaging those people?

7. "KNOWLEDGE IS YOUR BRIDGE" - One of the best reasons to use social networking tools like Facebook is the access to a wealth of knowledge about people. There are plenty of safeguards and restrictions so that bad things cannot be done with that data. But you can learn so much about your constituents or your ministry participants by joining them in a social networking site like Facebook. Shepherds who encounter their flock in a crowded church foyer will get the typical lame Sunday morning line: "I'm fine." But when you are connected to their world during the week, you have access to know things about their lives that they are freely sharing with other people. They talk about their sick kids, their spouse's job loss, their mother's sudden news about cancer. You are connecting with them on a 24/7 basis rather than simply once-a-week. This is knowledge that allows you to minister to your people better or simply connect with their world on a regular basis. Would you like to be more connected to your people or less?



8. "WE'RE ON THE GO" - With the constant increase of use of portable communications devices and smart phones (i.e., iPhones and the Blackberry), people are getting information throughout the day and into the night. They are engaging in conversations even on Twitter while waiting in line to get their haircut. They are texting while in line at the grocery store. They are checking out what their friends are talking about on a number of blogs while on their lunch hour. And more and more people are spending their evenings looking at their mobile Facebook account while sitting next to their spouse watching TV.





9. "TEAR DOWN THAT WALL!" - Ministries, especially those involved overseas (see #2 above), can't seem to get information out quick enough to keep up with the fast-paced American lifestyle. The wall of communication is so tall! Simply relying on out-dated printed newsletters and stale text-only emails and the normal American will pay little or no attention to what you are doing. Churches have long battled the perception that non-believers have about them - often perpetuated by what they see portrayed in either fictional movies or in the non-fictional religious personalities on TV. Using video-sharing sites like Tangle or YouTube bring to life what God is doing. Showcase your ministry's recent experiences by posting pictures on photo-sharing sites like Flickr and SnapFish. Using such powerful social media tools, you can transcend the borders of your building's walls and take your message to the people through social media where they can share your video with their friends with the simple click of a button.



10. “SOMETHING TO RALLY AROUND” -

People are hungry to be a part of something significant. They want their time and their money to make a difference. Yet they are swamped with the mundane things like their job and they are consumed with taking kids to football, soccer and piano practice (sometimes all in the same evening). Ministries have the power to remind people of the greater things that God is doing. People WANT to be a part of something greater than themselves, but without proper communication tools, they are settling for “getting by” and “just makin’ it.” When ministries use social media in an effective way (hint: there are **ineffective** ways!), they have the power to raise awareness and offer people the opportunity to make a difference. Parents and children rally

together to transform their birthday party from a self-focused event to one where kids and adults alike make donations to charitable causes in lieu of presents. Christmas gifts become less about ties and blenders and more about feeding the poor. People rally to an inspirational message where they can link with others rallying around the same thing. Ministries champion causes. Churches rally people to the Cross. Social media is simply a powerful web of tools to enable that to happen in an inexpensive yet potentially big way.

What will you use social media to rally people to?



Are You In the Conversation?



**WE CAN HELP ESTABLISH A
SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY
FOR YOUR MINISTRY.**

VISIT:

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