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Personal vs. Corporate Branding on the Social Web

Social Media Breakfast



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Social Web



Major Social Networking Web Sites & Media

The major web sites and media

- Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- Blogging

Other media

- MySpace, YouTube, Plaxo, etc.
- Face-to-face networking

This presentation focuses on social web and media for business purposes



What's On Your Mind?

Individuals

- Set up personal profiles
- You become friends with other people, and it's reciprocal; the other person needs to OK you as a friend

Companies

- Set up company pages
- You can become a fan of a company, and it's more of a one-way street
- Especially relevant for B2C companies, but B2B use is growing



twitter

What's happening?

All accounts are individual

- There is only one kind of account with one user name & password
- Because they are individual accounts, there is some sense that tweets are coming from an individual, but this is changing
- There are services which will allow more than one person to use an account (and append initials, for example, at the end)
- You can follow as many others as you like, and it's not automatically reciprocated



Network Updates

All individual accounts, very resume-like way of presenting yourself

- There are company listings in LinkedIn, but you still only link with the employees
- You are encouraged only to connect with people you know, then the connection is two-way
- The Q&A section is a good way to break out of the resume structure, prove your expertise, connect with those outside your sphere
- Groups are forum-like spaces, and are also a good way to connect with others



Blogs

Company sponsored or individual

Blogs can be completely personal, or can have a corporate mandate

- Multiple authors can contribute to a company blog and therefore have their own voice and persona
- Commenting on other blogs is an individual activity



Branding: On- and Off-line



	Corporate	Personal
Name	Business name	Your own name
Logo or mark	Logo or logotype	A personal way of typesetting your name (logotype)
Visual Position	Colors, imagery, typography and graphics that are applied to Web sites, marketing materials, packaging, uniforms, corporate identity, also Twitter backgrounds, etc.	Everything under corporate, but also personal look
Voice	May be dictated by corporate standards, may be screened by marketing, lawyers, etc	Often dictated by subject and situation
Reputation	Reviews	Reputation
Business Structure	More than one person (or want to be)	Just one person



Online Specific Branding Elements

Avatars & Favicons

- Have reduced the idea of a “logo” to a small, square icon.
- Used universally as gravatars (global avatar), or case-by-case on different platforms

Domain Name and Handles

- Availability is key when creating new business/product names
- Personal vs. corporate identity of yourself

Content Rules... so Voice is More Important than Ever

- What topics you discuss
- How do you express yourself



Personal, Corporate or Somewhere In Between?



Corporate

Personal



**Employee (or more than one),
representing the corporate brand**

**Solopreneur, consultant
or freelancer**

The goals are the business' goals.

People are hiring you, therefore they want to know, like and trust you.

You may have some room to show personal expertise and personality.

Giving a sense of your personality is generally OK, and probably a benefit.

Or, postings may be very impersonal.

Disclose personal information at the level you feel comfortable, because you to be true to yourself.



Corporate

Personal



Large corporation

Small Business Owner

Real Estate Broker

Financial Planner

Person
who owns
more than one
business

Hair Stylist

Consultant

Freelancer

Public Speaker

Job Seeker



How to cultivate a corporate brand using social web

To promote “more” than yourself

- Register your business name on all major sites
- Use your business name (with or without your own name in addition)
- Use a logo, rather than a photo for an avatar

Don't go too far and be too impersonal or stiff



How to promote a personal brand on the social web

If you want to create a strong personal brand

- Use a consistent name
- Use a consistent way of representing yourself (avatars and profile images)
- Get a good head shot and use it
- Have a consistent look between web site, business card and social web
- Figure out where to draw the line with non-business-related information

It takes focus to maintain consistency with a personal brand that is being used for business purposes



How to balance when you're in the middle?

- Use your goals and plans for your business (or your career) as a guide.
Focus more on where you want to be, rather than where you are now.
- Clarify your goals with the social web.
- You can have multiple accounts.
(ie different names on Twitter; personal profile vs corporate page on Facebook).
- On Twitter you can name your account(s) appropriately. (but beware of name length)



Questions to Ask Yourself

- Can my business be bigger than me?
- What type of business structure do I have (sole proprietorship, one-person consulting, multi-person). Do I want to sell the business eventually?
- How do I want to grow?
- Are clients only hiring me (or paying a premium) because of me?
- How does social media fit into my business or marketing plan?
- What am I doing outside of social media that needs to complement my online brand?
- How are my potential clients using the social web?



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