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A Smart Girl's Guide to Practical Marketing
and Public Relations

Chapter 5 - Social Media Not the Next Frontier for Teen Sex

"Social media is like teen sex.

Everyone wants to do it. No actually knows how.

When finally done, there is surprise it's not better."

~ Avinash Kaushik

The marketing world is all a "Twitter" about the new hot viral marketing tool social media. Like so many of our fair ladies, we have only recently put our arms around the various social media so we won't flatter ourselves that we could rent to own MySpace. We will put our own special marketing perspective on it and give you a few cautionary tales along the way. And we want to officially coin the term "social-media-ize" right here — because we can (we copyrighted *SMASH* ... so nah-nah).

We realize a small minority of Gen X and Baby Boomer women tinker with social media and for the most part, the majority of women still don't know if a "Twitter" comes from a bird. So for the record, what is social media? Social media offers generally a free Internet-based place to share and discuss information among friends, colleagues and associates. Some big-head marketing gurus suggest social media sites take the place of websites (ah, that would be a "big" NO ... because as you know from our ranting your website is a must-do priority). Social media can add to your Web presence as in: $1 + 1 = 2$ and maybe 3 or 4 if you hang out at all of the social media joints.

What are the social media joints? The big ones include:

- MySpace
- Facebook
- LinkedIn
- Twitter

We've tried them all and will share our reviews from a marketing perspective in a moment. The primary takeaway: Choose your social media site with great care toward your purpose. Do you want to use it to play, flirt and post salacious photos of yourself dancing and kissing other girls (won't your boss be proud)? Then we're going to steer

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you toward the safe “place” to be risqué (and we don’t recommend posting any sort of controversial pictures of yourself dancing on tables or kissing donkeys). Oh, we’re not goody-goody so please don’t be thinking, “You’re bores!” No, girlfriends we’re smart! We know better. We kiss our donkeys in private!

MySpace – The Great Teen Sex Party

How old do you have to be to figure out that posting your teen sex party on MySpace could get you expelled from school? Seriously, we marvel over teenagers who quit wrecking cars and start crashing their images instead ... on MySpace. Oh, and our personal favorite: the girl-on-girl fight action. Yeah, baby! Oh, wait is that YouTube? No, the absolutely irresponsible and dare we say stupid teenagers who use MySpace to do everything from hook up to make a list of who will get pregnant with Joe’s baby.

So what’s our point about using MySpace to market and teen pregnancy, you ask? Do I have to tell you? Okay fine. Teenagers and Gen Y adore MySpace. Older folks who have a MySpace page go for the “pick-up” scene. How do we know? Well, we posted a MySpace profile and within a few hours old boyfriends showed up, wondering what ever happened to us? Yeah, right buddy. Go take a hike to Classmates.com. We don’t recommend MySpace for serious-minded business2business marketing *unless* you want to reach a much younger demographic. And then it should be business2consumer marketing since most people under the age of 20 don’t own businesses. On MySpace, you will have a pretty interested target market crashing on their buddy’s virtual sofa and shooting the breeze with other Hush Puppies (see ... they wouldn’t even know a Hush Puppy from a Daf Marten).

Your primary marketing tool on MySpace involves one thing: MySpace advertisements (think Google ads) for the Gen Y set. MySpace ads much like Google ads may confound your marketing person. It’s not a simple pay-for-play situation ... well, sort of. You “bid” on ads and the number of hits determines the cost. So (if this makes any sense) you bid \$500 for an ad and once the hits reach that value, they turn the ad off like a faucet. Got it? Hard to grasp ... and we don’t know how valuable, as we avoid MySpace. With that let’s move on to the perennial favorite.

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3L is... NOT Sharing Ridiculous Facebook Minutia

Oh, Facebook we love you. Unlike its forefather, Facebook generally does not appeal to the “tweens” or sex-crazed singles looking for hot bods. Scary! We once searched for an old friend who turned out to be gay and to our shock (and some might say “horror”) our now-homosexual old friend had some ... how shall we say this delicately? Explicit male photos on his page. Why does this matter? Whether on MySpace or Facebook, which does attract business-minded Gen Y, X and Boomers, you might want to rethink such “candid” photography ending up on your page.

Facebook is a really great virus you want to catch. If you have enough “friends” on your list you can make broad announcements — and these go out instantly to your universe of current and prospective “friends” (a.k.a., clients and customers). Your “peeps” can tell their “peeps” and you’ve spread the best virus ever. We used Facebook to tell everyone about the day Oprah/Harpo productions called on 2L’s first book *Second Bloom* to basic announcements about progress made on PR campaigns. Drop the “O” bomb friends and watch the fire burn among your Facebookers. They will react, dance and strip naked.

No worries about building your Facebook profile either. You need these handy tools on-the-ready:

- A great headshot — and yes, it can be personable
- Clean copy to upload about you and your business
- Some fun photos — preferably no table-dancing shots
- Video if you have any high-production value



SMART GIRLS: Do not mistake a Facebook profile for a website in terms of power and importance. No joking here.

We also love the “groups” capability. You can form a group, post background information, invite friends, create announcements/events, and post comments (think blog). We formed a group for *Second Bloom*, which came in handy when we held workshops. We could rapidly announce and market to our friends. Speaking gigs ... same thing. Facebook groups have a hair-trigger response, which is just perfect.

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Facebook offers fantastic ease-of-use. It guides you through your profile upload and over time the tools become second-nature. Less computer-savvy girlfriends may hit some stumbling blocks but tinker and overcome. Worst-case scenario, hire a social marketing expert to give you pointers; however, you will need to maintain your profile regardless so you might as well learn it.

Okay, so we shared the best of Facebook ... now let's cover the worst way to use Facebook to push away business. Please with a cherry on top do not post horrible, horrible drivel. Jane is drinking coffee. No friends. Coffee is let us spell it for you, b-o-r-i-n-g. Who gives "a-you-know-what" if you're drinking anything at all let alone your morning cup? Then our personal favorite, "Betsy is reading to her children." Really? I want to know what Betsy is reading her kids while she writes on Facebook ... hmm ... is she reading Facebook postings? Oh, we hope not.

Our point: You don't look terribly clever or interesting posting mindless minutia on Facebook. Remember, a community of your peers and associates will read it and think ... you're not clever or interesting. Make your posts work for you like we described earlier about *Oprah*. Attract positive attention and interested readers. Spread the word about your business and increase visibility. Posts about your daily caffeine intake will not be read much less commented upon. You waste your time and you waste your short-lived reader's time. Hey, do you think you can get in a fight and "un-confirm" friends? I think in the real world that's called "rejection."

And finally, this warning comes from an eWomen Network executive director: Facebook should not be your sole place to do virtual business. In fact, you might want to carefully consider how much you promote your profile if you have unwanted revelers "tagging" your pre-professional party days. A picture of Sue chugging beer from a keg won't go over well with Sue's prospective client or boss. Or even worse, Sue falling down drunk in the bushes in front of Chico State frat house won't build Sue's reputation as a serious business woman. So buyers beware: You could be tagged at any-time and receive some unwanted attention. Considerable thought should be given to whether you choose to keep your Facebook profile personal or professional, meaning don't confirm professional associates as friends if you wish to keep it private — and even then be careful.

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If you're LinkedIn Does it Mean You're Kevin Bacon?

I read somewhere that everybody on this planet is separated by only six other people. Six degrees of separation between us and everyone else on this planet. The President of the United States, a gondolier in Venice, just fill in the names. I find it A) extremely comforting that we're so close, and B) like Chinese water torture that we're so close because you have to find the right six people to make the right connection ... I am bound to everyone on this planet by a trail of six people.

~ Six Degrees of Separation

LinkedIn emerged around the same time as Facebook or maybe before. No historical relevance so we won't research that question other than to say LinkedIn offers another business connection social-media gathering spot. LinkedIn is your "sensible" business networking venue. You won't find frivolous banter or outrageous photos and video. You will find an array of headshots and staid profiles to match. We would say LinkedIn is more like an interactive resume.

What does LinkedIn have going for it? Safety, security and a steady paycheck ... no wait! Sounds like a government job. Well, it comes off like a human resources department where your name can be linked to your references. You can volunteer or ask for a reference to be posted by clients. We do have our profiles posted but to this day — and it's roughly a year from original posting — we can't brag about any business won from LinkedIn references. Maybe we're not using it right. (We probably just invited a deluge of LinkedIn "fan" mail protests.) LinkedIn has a wide array of networking groups you can join which helps you spread the word about your business. We were able to market M Communications internationally. Like any networking group, the main goal is to join groups that are a good fit for you and participate in online discussions. Reminder: Business groups are to discuss business and not fall fashion.

We can't give you any LinkedIn cautionary tales. The media is just too humdrum to invite wild photos and slightly obscene video posts. If you have little patience for what "Sue is doing" at any given time and you want to avoid any unwanted "tags" being connected to your name, LinkedIn offers the perfect RV campground. You will be able to see your neighbors (maybe too closely) without having to socialize with them. If you want you can peek out the window once in a while just to see what's going on.

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We thought "Twittering" Meant you were a Parakeet?!

We want to give a callout to a dear friend of ours who introduced us to the term Twitter. One evening during a networking event said friend mentioned her new pastime playing on Twitter. Our ears perked and thoughts of birds chirping and Uncle Ramos singing "Zippy Do Da" came to mind. What "twitters" anyway? We soon discovered that when you "tweet" you pretty much chat in a vast public chasm where the "tweet" echoes throughout all eternity" (okay, are we bugging you now with movie references ... just tell us to stop). And apparently your friends become your "Tweeple" — this according to friend and fellow writer J.T. Long.

So far we have no love-loss for Twitter. We're just not "Tweety" birds and need a lot more room than quick snapshots of dialogue to make our point. We're marketers and writers, what do you expect? So who "Twitters?" Not totally sure about the demographics quite yet. We can assure you men don't Twitter. Men don't want anything to do with anything related to "chirping." Can you imagine this conversation?

"Hey, Fred I saw you on Twitter last night," says Bob.

Bob folds his arms, eyebrows raised ...

Bob is from the NASCAR crowd and doesn't go for "girly" stuff — and any word with the syllables "twi" and "tter" does NOT attract "manly" men. So readers note: Any intent to reach the male demographic will be wasted — and not because a few do "Twitter" but none will admit it. Truth is young males in love with PC games such as *Ultima Underworld* sure don't "tweet" to each other. So, we're left with young girls and female Gen Y, X and a few Hip-to-be-Square Boomers. In fact, our friend who introduced us to the term could be categorized in the Boomer demographic. We feel completely confident to suggest that the majority of Twitter fans fall under age 25 — better known as the "text" generation.

These gals love to text anything and "Twitter" definitely requires refined texting skills complete with the non-words and gibberish. Text typing replaced good, old-fashioned typing skills. Ever watch Gen Y text with their fingers moving in rapid tempo, tiny keyboard memorized? Who has a clue how they do it. Now give "Generation Text" a quick-and-dirty medium to banter back and forth — and you've got text heaven or better defined as "Twitter."

In our ever-changing social-media world, we will probably Twitter and meet some more "Tweeple", but for now we'll just hang our shingle on Facebook, which leads

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to a major point. Not that you can't "social-media-ize" in every outlet but for real results we suggest you pick one and stick with it. Why? If you disperse your marketing efforts across different social media you will ultimately lose track of feedback and response. It has become, "So many social media so little time." Social media creates intimacy and friendships and builds relationships, much like business-relationship building versus cold calling — especially for service industries. Commoditized products are another story. So getting overwhelmed and lost in your social-media outlets creates relationships that drift into mostly nothing — hence, no real results. Whether you chose to Twitter or Facebook or LinkedIn, do make a choice and focus. Warning: Do not spend all of your time online people! Do not forget you have a business to run as well.