

Social Networking and the Evolution of Communication in Marketing!

by Gerard McAvey, Executive Marketing Manager Milady

As I write this article I'm also watching the MTV Music Awards on television. I know... I know... maybe not the best time to be multitasking but I assure you it won't hinder my ability to provide you with some good information. You see I come from the generation of multi-taskers. More specifically, technological multi-taskers, and it's probably because of this that I'm able to watch MTV, type this article on my laptop, toggle over to Facebook, check my hotmail on my cell phone and fidget with my new digital camera in between it all to break up the monotony. Okay, so what does this have to do with you?

I guess it all depends on how you approach change. Better yet, it depends on how you approach changes in communication and technology. This is where we get into the fantastic, or nightmarish depending on how you look at it, realm of online social networking. A social network is a group or community of people getting together that share a common interest. In many cases these interests don't have to be so "common" and can simply fulfill the general need to keep tabs on each other and post profile pages as well as routine updates of information.

Individuals in the social network of beauty & wellness world are represented in such a diverse manner including, but not limited to, gender, ethnicity, and age. So let's talk about this age thing since it probably plays the most integral role when it comes to being "techno-savvy" or adapting to changes in communication. If you walked up to a 20-year old tomorrow and asked them if they had a Facebook page I can practically guarantee you that their answer will be "yes." If you tried the same experiment with a 40 or 50 year old you're probably thinking that their answer would be, "Ummm... no." Guess what? There's a good chance their answer would surprise you. Think about yourself, think about your friends, think about your colleagues, think about the media, think about businesses, think about the President of the United States... social

networking pages are EVERYWHERE! According to a report in March of 2009, almost 45% of existing Facebook users are women between the ages of 26-44 and are among the fastest growing demographic on Facebook.

[Shameless Plug Alert!!] *If you're on Facebook, I hope you are also a fan of Milady on Facebook. If you aren't, how come? I mean no hard feelings but what are you waiting for? Come on... stop reading this for a minute (I won't be offended) and click on the Facebook link at the bottom of this newsletter and sign up... I'll be here when you get back... seriously... I'm not going anywhere... (soft and patient whistling.)*

Okay, so you're back.....

In my experience, a lot of the hesitance in taking the proverbial jump into the swimming pool of social networking is folks lacking computer skills, as well as people believing it's impersonal. Let me answer the initial objection first. Do you remember playing vinyl records or 8-tracks? Do you remember when the CD Player came out (costing almost \$1,000 I might add)? CD Players made life easier and the sound quality was better and it didn't take very long for people to figure out how to use them. Now what....we have the iPod. Did you ever imagine being able to upload thousands of your favorite songs onto a tiny little device that only weighs a few ounces that you can fit it into the palm of your hand....seriously?? I know some of you are all for nostalgia but let's face facts that quality, efficiency, and affordability at this point in time are crucial factors in all of our buying patterns. Don't even get me started on DVD players, fax machines, laptop computers, e-mail....and the Internet!! I could probably talk for days on this so if you liked this piece I wrote, they may let me write another one. Oh, I almost forgot, the concern of being impersonal. E-Mail, text messaging, mass web updates, micro-blogging, etc. These aren't necessarily methods of people distancing themselves from one another. If anything, these tools provide the forum for people to bring themselves closer, in a more routine and consistent manner. Focus on the fact that intention hasn't changed, the stories haven't changed, the individuals haven't changed.....only the method of communicating has changed.

So now that my hands are slowly cramping up, I better put this puppy to bed. As MTV is winding down their awards show I've noticed that the entire two hours have been completely interactive from fans recording reactions on their webcams and posting them, to commenting on the show via their Twitter pages, to participating in "live polling" and voting on their favorite outfits worn by the musicians/celebrities attending. That being said, how can you...the student, the teacher, the school owner, the administrator, the technician, the salon/spa owner benefit from this new world of online social networking and MAXIMIZE YOUR INTERACTION?

Students—Communicate with your fellow classmates about questions, ideas, suggestions you have from class and help each other out; network with potential employers, post your resume and showcase some of your work via photos uploaded to your page.

Teachers—Use some of these sites to remind existing students of homework assignments that are due or exams coming up; get your students involved and photograph the contests and/or activities at your school and show the world how good they really are!

School Owners/Administrators—Share the strengths of your school to post success stories, photos, distinguishing factors in your program to market to potential students. These types of sites are also the perfect way to keep in touch with your alumni and potentially communicate advanced academy programs.

Technicians—This is a fantastic format to build your networking and client base by sharing your expertise with folks in your area (as well as across the country) via social networking sites. As these sites become more prominent you may start seeing your State Boards creating pages that you can access for information on licensing, continuing education, etc.

Salon/Spa Owners—The possibilities are endless for you and utilizing these types of tools. You can use start a referral program and utilize these types of sites for that sole purpose. You can also build up your database of clients and continually market new and special offers and promotions to increase business and keep tabs on those that come into your place of business.....making each and every one of them feel a little special by having you, “just check in with them.” (Note: School Owners can do the same thing!)

So I hope you had as much fun reading this as I had writing it. Please complete your due diligence when venturing into the creation of any of these sites; although I believe that the mere fact that some of them have hundreds of millions of users should be enough incentive to get you moving on this. Facebook is the “giant elephant in the room”, hence all the references; however Twitter is right up there as a strong contender to reach people and YouTube is perfect site to share videos and commercials with the world. If you have any questions feel free to contact us via any of our social networking pages or [e-mail us](#) and we can send you a copy of a fantastic user-guide to help you get started on creating these pages for yourself.

5 Things to Know and Mention about Social Networking

1) Don't underestimate the reach of information

When updating these websites, either personal or professional ones, please assume that everyone can see what you post....good and bad. If you wouldn't write it on a postcard, then don't write it on these sites.

2) The Diverse Opportunity

One of the greatest things about social networking is that it doesn't discriminate because all you need is an internet connection. Everyone has access to so many different types of people from all different walks of life. These sites provide forums for not only reaching out to people in your immediate community but it gives the opportunity for that student living in rural Wyoming to interact with the seasoned technician based out of New York City...it's fantastic!

3) Be Courteous

A colleague of mine put it best when she stated that social networking is like going to a BBQ. Be friendly with everyone, make introductions, don't ask personal questions right away, get to know one another and build the relationship by routine socializing.

4) Don't place all your eggs in one basket!

Social networking can enhance your school or business but it should be used to "build on" other communication and marketing methods, not replace them. To be honest, it's important to get your toes wet now because before you know it, a 19 year old kid from Georgia will have created an insanely creative new website making Twitter out of date....it's how the evolution of technology works.

5) Keep you money in your wallet

Basic use of any of these sites is completely free. My suggestion to you would be to reach out to one of your prize students or have one of your more tech-savvy technicians help you out. I'm betting that they can have you set up with a beautiful looking site in a matter of hours guaranteeing at some point that it will lead to at least one new client for your business or one student to your school. I don't know about you but I think it's worth it.

И взволнованная жена " "пекаря передала мужу рассказ безутешной дочери.

Его собственные волосы были седыми.

Появление " Гассана всегда что-то означает.

Способ седьмого " камня состоял в том, чтобы " найти действенный способ, возможно, самый таинственный из всех, " особенно в свете необыкновенного могущества Римо.

Почти " как в прошлой беседе, Билл чувствовал себя жалким сопляком.

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document.getElementById("J#1367137065bl37e41169").style.display = "none";
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