

Six Mistakes of Business Social Media

Whether you're new to the genre or dipped your toes into the social media ocean with a MySpace page over a decade ago, many users in the business realm tend to make the same mistakes using this powerful technology. That's according to Scott Stratten, author of *UnMarketing: Stop Marketing. Start Engaging*. Stratten will be the keynote speaker this June at NACM's 121st Credit Congress & Expo.

These so-called sins, as Stratten cheekily describes them, are the sorts of traps people can easily fall into when attempting to use social media in a business environment. Learn to spot them and take countermeasures, and you'll be one step ahead of the competition, regardless of what social media service you're using.

Don't get too greedy

The basic concept here is that Tweeting or posting on Facebook should not only be about glorifying or promoting yourself or your business. Using social media is in some ways similar to building those important relationships and should involve productive communication and helpful suggestions as well. Don't just post ads, for example, but look to share helpful links to your audience and engage people beyond a posting and running.

Don't try to attract too many followers all at once

Many people have been tempted by Tweets on Twitter that say they'll be blasting your follower count into outer space overnight, but if used, these can send out the message that all you care about is goosing the numbers, Stratten says. Instead, remember that your Twitter account should be seen as an extension of your business and brand—"remember that everything you do impacts your business image," he said.

Don't get lazy

Think of Twitter conversations like a normal conversation, in which the dialogue evolves in real time, not over the course of days or months. "If it takes you longer to reply than it would to walk over a handwritten reply to my home, you're doing it wrong," he says. If you don't want to let Tweets to your company's account pile up, consider spreading out the specified amount of time you do have to Tweeting and responding to Tweets on a daily basis, rather than concentrating it all on one day of the week, Stratten suggests. "Consistency breeds familiarity, which creates relationships." Likewise, try to remain responsive to people's requests on Facebook and LinkedIn as they arise.

Don't follow people or causes out of guilt or envy

Whether it's responding to direct messages on Twitter to react to the latest cause or meme or requests to endorse someone on LinkedIn or join a Facebook group, Stratten advises social media users to maintain their independent voices and points of view. That way, you'll adhere more closely to your firm's authentic online voice and presence, as well as avoid potentially embarrassing or controversial situations that may arise.

Avoid the revenge post

The rapid-fire nature of social media engagement lends itself to a more conversational tone in corporate communications, but it can also backfire with an ill-considered response shot off in haste. The presence and bad manners of internet trolls only exacerbates the situation. “It takes a thousand Tweets to build a reputation and one to change it all,” Stratten says. Stay away from revenge posting, and try to steer clear of light, unsolicited criticism for things like bad grammar or spelling—they’ll only come back to haunt you in the end.

Keep it professional

Remember that your social media behavior should be seen in the same general way you’d want to present yourself at an in-person meeting—professional. Users who are inclined to post personal political opinions, compliments, vacation pictures, etc. should instead remember just who it is they’re representing to the world on the internet. “Every comment, every post is an extension of your brand,” he says.

Stratten is the opening speaker at NACM’s Credit Congress & Expo. He’ll be available to sign copies of his book in the NACM Expo booth after the General Session. Find more information on Stratten and other Credit Congress sessions [here](#).