

PressLines

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Determining the Role of Social Media in Your Business

An alien visitor reading any of the industry's marketing publications might well conclude that social media was the only thing happening in our global marketing arena. Social media definitely has the industry "buzz" at the moment and in truth, participation in social media is growing by leaps and bounds.

Defining Social Media's Role

As a result, marketers of all sizes and types are trying to determine what role social media should play in their campaign strategies. Most of the focus is going toward global social networking websites such as Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn, but there are obviously many other choices beyond those.

Ripon and Social Media

Like many of you, Ripon Printers is exploring social media. We currently have a corporate LinkedIn page and a number of our employees, including company President Andy Lyke, have individual pages. Sales Manager Jeff Hopp and Marketing Director Carol Cluppert are also doing a bit of tweeting. We invite you to connect.

Part of the interest in social media revolves around the marketing challenge of communicating with hard-to-reach consumer groups migrating to digital alternatives. A recent trend report from TargetCast tcm and reported by the Center for Research Media notes that "Marketers must take into account the evolving media preferences of specific target audiences...yet, while many may declare print media is dead...findings show that marketing messages in newspapers and magazines still score well in terms of consumer attentiveness and purchase influence."

Engage, Don't Sell

One of the things many marketers are discovering is that social media is wonderful for engaging with customers, but not much of a medium for selling. In fact, many social media users — younger



people in particular — not only ignore advertising at social networking sites, but also resent it. So unless there is a change in consumer perspectives, the best current roles for social media are:

- Creating dialogues with customers or readers
- Monitoring customer satisfaction levels
- Obtaining feedback
- Offering product-related advice
- Providing product video demonstrations
- And many other "soft" uses still evolving

A word of warning is that participating in social media also frequently puts non-marketing people in frontline communication roles. So, organizations need to

establish some social media objectives and then invest in training for those who will be offering any opinions, advice or other commentary.

Avoid Media Biases

Perhaps the most important point to remember in today's marketplace is to not get too fixated on any single medium. Clients engage with companies at different times and in different ways, and the integrated use of print, online and other media play important roles. But when it comes to making the sale, be certain to leave the heavy lifting to media better suited for the task such as catalogs, direct mail, newspapers, magazines, email and e-commerce websites. **RIPON**

Ripon Sponsors "Lean" Seminar for Area Manufacturers

As devoted evangelists of "lean" manufacturing, Ripon Printers invited manufacturers to a half-day seminar program that included a facility tour, presentations and demonstrations. The event attracted a wide range of companies from throughout the region and provided a unique opportunity to learn, share information and network with one another.

Ripon's managers presented topics that included "Building a Foundation for Continuous Improvement" and "Helping the Environment and the Bottom Line." The "Lean Marketing Demonstration" featured Ripon's new web-based tool that can add speed and efficiencies to marketing programs while improving results — all in the true lean philosophy.

To learn how Ripon's web-to-print capabilities can bring important "lean" principles to your programs, please contact your Ripon Printers representative or send an email request to sales@riponprinters.com. **RIPON**



To say "Thank You" to our customers, 188 of our 300 employees gathered for this group photo.

Celebrating Customer Service Week

Nothing is more important to Ripon Printers than customer service. So we took advantage of Customer Service Week to recognize and honor our customer service team (that means the entire company to us) and to consider how we can take our "customer delight" philosophy to ever-higher levels.

A Call to Excellence

The theme of this year's national celebration was "A Call to Excellence." Some of the activities Ripon Printers staged to recognize customer service included:

- A Monday **kick-off speech** by Ripon President Andy Lyke at the beginning of each shift. His presentation addressed the importance of serving both our external as well as internal customers if we are to reach the highest level of excellence.
- A **company-wide bake sale** with the entire \$400 proceeds going to the United Way. The sale was a fun and tasty way to serve others in our community. We complemented the bake sale with a **week-long food drive** that helped stock the local food pantry with 620 pounds of food, more than doubling our goal of a pound per employee.
- A mid-week **nacho fest** for all employees let our team participate in a Midwest favorite — sharing a meal and conversation with friends. We continued the homespun gatherings with a delicious, **company-wide potluck meal** for all three shifts and fresh popcorn for everyone on Friday.

Fun and Games

Throughout the week we had games for employees to play — word search, crossword puzzles, etc. — each geared toward customer service and different internal departments. We also placed flowers and balloons throughout the plant as well as large posters containing inspirational, service-oriented messages such as, "Let go of the predictable and experience the possible" or "Never say no."

You can learn more about Customer Service Week and perhaps plan a celebration for your organization by visiting www.CSWeek.com. **RIPON**

Satisfied vs. Fanatical

Is it just me or does it seem like more and more we just tolerate service that is only “OK?” I was thinking about this last week while I was reading a book by Ken Blanchard called *Raving Fans*. In the book, Ken reports that people are very reluctant to report poor service or bad quality, and would rather just live with mediocrity than confront the problem. In Blanchard’s book, he said that businesses should create what he calls “Raving Fans,” or customers who are so pleased with their experience with a company or product that they look forward to doing business with that company again and again.

To prove Blanchard’s point, a few weeks ago my family went to a restaurant that serves its food via a model train that snakes through the dining area. It was a fun place to eat, especially anticipating a visit by the



Andy Lyke

train as we awaited our food. Unfortunately, the quality of the food was poor. My son’s grilled cheese sandwich couldn’t have been flatter if it had been run over by a steam roller, and my burger was hidden underneath a pickle. Did I say anything to the manager on the way out? Heck no, who

wants that type of confrontation! I’m guessing, however, if that manager was worth his salt, he would have welcomed that criticism.

On the flip side, a couple of days ago I asked a person about the hours their business were open on Sunday. The website was ambiguous in my opinion. The woman listened, logged onto the website, and read what I was referring to. I don’t know if the website has subsequently been changed, but I appreciated her taking the time to at least listen.

Because I think we all want to do better (I know we do at Ripon Printers), do someone a favor and the next time you wish you had a better product or better service, let someone know. The customer who follows you will thank you for your efforts! **RIPON**

Ripon Printers Passes eKG with Flying Colors

Businesses that want to stay healthy need to get periodic checkups from their customers. Ripon Printers recently contracted with the National Association for Print Leadership (NAPL) to conduct a Competitiveness eKG Survey with a representative group of customers.

Unlike traditional customer surveys, which have little or no long-term value, the Competitiveness eKG helps companies promote positive change in their organizations. It provides reliable and valuable information on how a company:

- Rates in key areas
- Compares with the competition in those areas
- And how important each area is to its clients.

“Developing a truly customer-focused organization is now a business imperative. After doing our due diligence, we concluded there was no other diagnostic tool geared toward the printing industry that provides the depth and scope of this three-dimensional view or that can be used so effectively as a basis for strategic planning,” says Ripon President Andy Lyke.

Our customers gave Ripon Printers especially high marks in the vital customer service category. In fact, our top six scores — all of which respondents rated well above those given to sources they considered to be “best alternatives” — all relate to customer service:

1. Performance and helpfulness of CSR
2. Easy to do business with
3. Meets deadlines, on-time delivery
4. Prompt problem solving (job or order-related)
5. Competent people
6. Flexibility and responsiveness to your changes

We want to thank those customers who participated in the survey and also recognize the high regard in which you hold our service team. But don’t worry about us resting on our laurels, we have every intention of using the survey results to further enhance customer loyalty, identify new ways to add value for clients and strengthen our competitive positioning in the print marketplace.

To further discuss your needs and how Ripon Printers can customize your service plan, please contact your Ripon Printers representative or send an email request to sales@riponprinters.com. **RIPON**



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Maximizing the Efficiency of a PDF Workflow

With PDF now the defacto standard, Ripon Printers features a state-of-the-art PDF-based workflow. We process PDF files from preflight to proof to plate. Even if you supply native files, we create individual PDF files and use these to process your job.

Creating your own PDFs is the best way to ensure you get the results you are expecting. Supplying a secure and all-inclusive PDF is less susceptible to processing “issues,” such as font corruption, character mapping faults, linked file name problems (illegal characters, truncating long names) and other digital failures.

To retain control of your

content, we recommend proofing your PDF file versus your native files prior to submission. This allows your job to move efficiently through our workflow.

Dealing With Alterations...

If your job happens to require any alterations, there are a few items you should consider. When you supply the original PDF files, we are limited to the extent that we can alter files. Fixing reflowing type is very difficult, as is fixing individual images.

Simple type corrections are not a problem provided you embedded the required fonts in the PDFs. If fonts were subset, problems could arise. The most efficient alteration

handling is supplying new PDF files.

If you originally supplied native files and wish us to make alterations, please indicate to your CSR whether you want corrected native files returned. Due to the nature of our workflow, it may be more efficient for us to make the changes to our PDF files unless you want the corrected files returned.

Need any help creating or proofing your PDFs? Contact Jason Hauman, our customer education specialist. He'll send you our PDF settings or a set of Enfocus PitStop profiles that you can use to check your files for any potential printing problems. **RIPON**