

Let Social Media Transform Your Worklife

"The ROI of social media is that your business will still exist in 5 years."

Erik Qualman, author of the book *Socianomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business.*

by Jeffrey C. O'Brien, Esq. Mansfield Tanick & Cohen

The first question that some readers of this article will ask is why the heck is an attorney writing about social media? The answer is simple: because I use it. I use it a lot. More importantly, I generate business from using social media sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, as well as through blogs which I write.

Professionals in the CIC industry of all stripes – management companies, attorneys, accountants, maintenance companies, to name a few – are all trying to get their hands around this marketing tool called "social media." For some, integrating social media strategies within existing marketing efforts is simple and straightforward. For others, especially businesses not used to using technology-based marketing tools, social media sites can be confusing and frustrating to navigate.

One criticism which I hear from folks who do not yet use these tools, or those that have found use of the tools to be difficult, is "social media is just a fad and I am not going to waste my time with a fad." Everybody wants to generate a significant return on their marketing expenditures, be it money or time. So it is understandable that businesspeople would be concerned as to whether use of social media sites is worth the time investment. Furthermore, for businesses not accustomed to using technology-based marketing, there is the added concern that the learning curve and effort required to become skilled in social media marketing will be for naught when "the next big thing" comes along. The important question is, of course, whether these concerns are justified.

Erik Qualman, author of the book *Socianomics: How social media transforms the way we live and do business*, is the creator of two very influential videos – "Social Revolution" and "Social Revolution 2" – which directly address the

"social media is a fad" crowd with statistics on the usage of social media sites. To give you an idea of how fast the world is changing when it comes to social media, the second video was necessitated because in just a year's time, many of the statistics from the original video had become obsolete.

Here is a sample of some of the statistics from "Social Revolution 2":

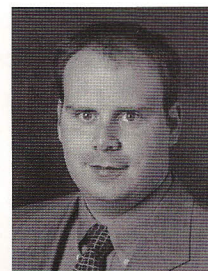
1. Facebook tops Google for weekly traffic in the U.S.
2. Facebook added over 200 million users in less than a year.
3. If Facebook were a country it would be the world's 3rd largest ahead of the United States and only behind China and India.
4. The #2 largest search engine in the world is YouTube.
5. There are over 200 million blogs.
6. 60 millions status updates happen on Facebook daily.

Qualman goes on to state that "social media isn't a fad, it's a fundamental shift in the way we communicate." To the

critics who demand ROI, he adds that "the ROI of social media is that your business will still exist in 5 years."

In future issues of *CIC Midwest News*, I will be discussing various aspects of social media, including the evolving legal guidelines for social media sites. Until then, for those readers who want to learn more about social media, I would invite you to learn by example by following my social media activity on LinkedIn (<http://www.linkedin.com/in/jeffreycobrien>), Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/obrienjeffrey>) and Twitter (<http://twitter.com/jeffobrien>), or my blogs, *The Business Man's Lawyer* (<http://blog.jeffreyobrien.esq.com>) and *The Vanilla Shell* (<http://vanillashell.net>). ■

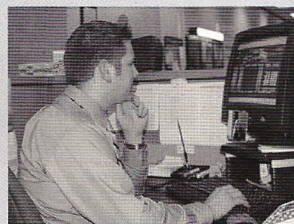
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O'BRIEN

Bright Idea: Google Docs

Have you ever needed to access a document, but weren't at your computer? Or maybe you're using a PC, and you need to send a file to a MAC. Google Docs can solve those problems. It works with either a MAC or PC, and can support Word, Excel, and PowerPoint. It even has its own version of Publisher. Upload your files from your desktop, or create new ones. The result? You can open



all these files anywhere, and share them with anyone. **Bright idea:** For those managers who often work from home, or pull out their laptops when at an HOA site, use Google Docs as a light version of a company Intranet. Create a central area for master documents that you can store, access and share.

—Laurel Zacher, Bigos Management