

The Social Media Lawyer: Building Your Company's Social Media Brand

by Jeffrey C. O'Brien, Lommen Abdo Law Firm

Much of the discussion involving social media marketing focuses on *individuals'* marketing of themselves online. Social media sites can be more than just tools for building one's personal brand. There are a number of online tools which can be utilized to promote your company and generate business.

Here are three areas that every company should focus on when building their social media brand:

1. Company Pages

Several social media sites have the ability to host a company profile or page. Facebook, LinkedIn and Google+ all provide this option. As social media's

influence continues to increase in terms of search engine optimization (SEO), it is essential that companies take advantage of, and populate these sites with pertinent information about their products and/or services. These sites can be used to promote special offers and announce upcoming specials and/or events.

2. YouTube

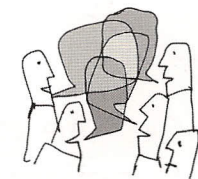
YouTube is the most popular search engine on the web, more popular than Google, in fact. Companies looking to maximize their online reach and influence should look for ways in which they can take advantage of YouTube's video medium. Is your company holding seminars? Consider recording them and posting to a branded YouTube channel.

While there was a time when YouTube limited videos to 15 minutes in length and a small file size, users can now post files of up to 20 GB in size. This increased size limit allows for greater use by companies who are looking to post video content online, be it a seminar or a how-to demonstration.

3. Company Blog

In 2012, content marketing is king. How then is your company educating people, and providing content to them in a manner which will garner the company additional business? Have you considered a company blog? A blog is an excellent way in which to score high in SEO because of the frequency of new content posted to the blog. A blog can be built into a company's existing website. A company can designate a single individual to write the blog, such as a chief marketing officer or business development person. Or it can create the blog in a manner which allows for multiple authors. There is no one right way to set up a company blog. Each company is going to have its own needs and objectives, and a talented web developer will be able to design a blog that meets them.

There is still a place, of course, for paid advertising – especially when it's on the pages of *CIC Midwest News*! However, social media and blog sites serve to complement traditional marketing tactics and amplify their reach beyond a single audience.



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LANDSCAPE PLAN *continued from page 29*

Getting Started with Your Plan

Establishing a long-range landscape plan starts by communicating the property's landscape needs to the board, all the homeowners, and a knowledgeable landscape company or horticulture consultant. This can be the most difficult part, getting everyone to realize the need for planning before things are out of control and the budget is being spent patching day to day issues, gaining no ground.

1. Communicate the vision
2. Clearly identify the importance for the long-range goal
3. Plan for the unexpected:
 - trees hitting the roof
 - shrubs growing too rapidly or not growing at all
 - pests that eat the flowers
 - the low area that always stays wet
 - landscape beds that will always need adjusting to keep up with the growing plants and trees.

Cost

At a minimum, properties less than 15 years old should reserve 20% of the land-

scape budget, and properties greater than 15 years should reserve 30% for extra yearly services above and beyond the weekly grounds maintenance contract. This is to make sure the property is maintained properly and the forecasted service life of the landscape is met or exceeded.

Think of your long-term landscape plan as a way to beautify each home, and the community as a whole for now and many years to come. First impressions count, and it's important to have a well-planned and well-maintained landscape in the common areas. Choose a lawn care/landscape company that will work closely with your board and manager to create a multi-year, environmentally sustainable landscaping plan that works within your budget. You want your landscape to reflect your goals, enhance your property values, and look good throughout changing seasons. ■

Alex Shuda
President

Alex's Lawn and Turf, LLC
(651) 247-1444

Jeffrey C. O'Brien, Attorney at Law
Lommen Abdo Law
(612) 336-9317
jobrien@lommen.com.