

5 Social Media Myths And Excuses...Exposed

What Traditional Marketers Don't Want You to Know About Online BUZZ By Deidre Hughey

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Deidre Hughey is the founder and president of [The BUZZ Builder](#), an online resource for small business owners who want to understand how to utilize social media to build their online reputation. In order to measure the success of social media campaigns, she has redefined the phrase ROI (Return On Investment). For online marketing, your investment is "time" and your return is an "IIF" (Increase in Followers).

If you would like more free tips on utilizing social media, understanding online applications and online brand management, sign up for [The BUZZ](#) mailing list or subscribe to [The BUZZ Blog](#) RSS feed.

(P.S. If you purchased this Social Myth-buster, then you paid too much.)



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5 SOCIAL MEDIA MYTHS

Myth #1 – It's Just People Talking Online.

Myth #2 – My Prospects Aren't Online Anyway.

Myth #3 – I Don't Have Anything to Say!

Myth #4 – Social Media is a Fad.

Myth #5 – I Don't Have the Time!

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Myth #1 – It’s Just People Talking Online

“It’s just people talking online... I don’t understand what all the fuss is about.”

The fuss?

Okay. Listen. The **Web 2.0** revolution levels the playing field.

Oh wait, I see the glazed look in your eyes. I know, we’ve just begun and already, I’m slinging around technology words that you’ve never really understood. My fault, but I’ll fix it right now...

*Quick definition (more complete definition is at the end of this document): **Web 2.0** – The web used to be one-way...companies talking to the consumers. Over time, new technologies began to spring forth that allowed the non-techie to talk to another non-techie on the web. Now the consumer can talk back and talk to other consumers. Welcome to the new and improved version of the web – Web 2.0.*

Onward.

Okay. Look. The Web 2.0 revolution levels the playing field. With this version of the internet, you have just as much of a chance to make an impact online as the companies that have millions of dollars to throw into a campaign.

In fact, you may have a greater chance to have an impact, because you have a deep rooted sense of you.

The new web is all about having conversations and building a community. I like to call it “a following”.

Whether you’re a solo-entrepreneur, owner of a small business...whether the brand is the name of the company, or the brand is your name...isn’t “a following” what you want for your company?

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Myth #2 – My Prospects Aren't Online Anyway

"I have spent hundreds even thousands of dollars on traditional marketing materials. This is how my prospects expect me to talk with them...in fact, I can't imagine that my prospects are online anyway."

True. You may have spent a lot of money on **traditional marketing**.

*Quick definition (more complete definition is at the end of this document): **Traditional Marketing** – stuff you print up and hand to people or send to media outlets who in turn decide if it's worthy for them to print to show your market.*

Onward.

True. You may have spent a lot of money on traditional marketing. And you may be utilizing it well. I'm not saying that you should throw all of that away. But you can't deny the facts:

According to [Internet WorldStats \(Census, Nielson\)](#)
(as of Nov. 19, 2008)
United States Population: 337,167,248
Internet Users: 248,241,969
Penetration Rate: 73.6%
Usage Growth from 2000-2008: 129.6%

If your prospects aren't online now (though I think you would be surprised), the trends show that they will be...will be soon. It might be a good idea to have an active presence when they get there.

By the way, the 5 most visited internet sites in USA (according to [Alexa](#)):
Google, Yahoo, MySpace, YouTube & Facebook

Why is that significant? Out of the top 5 most visited sites, 3 of them are social media networking sites (MySpace, YouTube and Facebook). 2 of them are search engines (Google and Yahoo). Do you know what gets you to the top of a listing in Google?

Being active in social media.

Metatags are dead.

Google's in love with social media.



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Myth #3 – I Don't Have Anything to Say!

“Why in the world would anyone want to hear what I have to say? It’s so impersonal, I don’t have anything to say to people online.”

Sure you do!! You have more to say online than you do in your marketing materials. This is your chance to talk about who you are.

If you think that people don't want to know who you are, you're wrong! It's one of the things that **social media** has taught us.

*Quick definition (more complete definition is at the end of this document): **Social Media** – You share your information on your blog, online networking group, forum, etc. Your followers or the lucky passerby decides whether it is worthy of discussion and can comment to let you know. The passerby may become interested enough to follow you too. (Mmmm, invested time increases followers.)*

Onward.

Social media has taught us that your stories are EXACTLY what people are looking for! Because of the advances in technology, we're expected to do more with less. In the end, we've gotten so wrapped up in all that we have to get done in a day, we have little time to socialize. It's taken its toll on families, communities and businesses.

On top of that, media is filled with so many stories of corrupt businesses, we've become disillusioned and seek comfort in the referral from a friend in order to do business. How do you get referrals? You need credibility. How do you get credibility? You are visible, transparent and giving. You build relationships. How do you do this online? Read people's blogs. Comment on other people's sites. Join a community.

Have you done something newsworthy? Chances are people are already talking about you online. Join in on the conversations. Be there build your reputation and relationships with like-minded people.

This is especially true if a crisis arises.

People will always talk online about what you've done wrong.

However, if you already have a good online reputation and manage your brand on a weekly basis (at least weekly), you have a good chance of telling your side of the story and minimizing the repercussions.

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Myth #4 – Social Media is a Fad.

“People are going to get tired of social media and move onto something else. After all, it’s just a fad for the younger generation.”

Yeah, people thought that about the car, the radio, and websites.

Facts about just one online community, LinkedIn (stats published in Sept. 5, 2007 issue of USA Today)

1. Most users are between the age of 30 and 55
2. Over 1.4 million members are identified as senior level executives
3. All Fortune 500 companies have executives that are members of LinkedIn
4. On average, 25 new members join LinkedIn every minute

The truth of the matter is, from 2007 to 2008, there was a significant increase (150%) in money spent on Social Media Marketing by corporations. The current projections are that money spent on Social Media Marketing will increase by over 800% by the year 2012.

Why?

Social media has become valuable to people:

- as a means of connecting
- as a way of validating ourselves
- as a way of learning more about each other
- as a way of learning more about ourselves
- as a way of understanding what is true and false about companies
- as a guiding system to understand where to spend their time outside of the web.

The truth is, in a time when we have distanced ourselves from our neighbors because our days are so filled up with activity, social media has provided a way to reconnect with people. Social media provides a place where we can ask...”do you trust that company?” or “do you trust this group?” and getting honest feedback.

Social Media has become the new community.

It’s where we communicate.

And it’s here to stay.

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Myth #5 – I Don't Have the Time!

"I get overwhelmed every single time I think about social media. I honestly just don't have the time to be there and do everything else I do!"

Let's take this one piece at a time.

You're overwhelmed. That's okay. That's probably because either you don't know where to start or you think you have to spend hours of your life online every week to be a part of social media.

Where to start? The best place to start is by listening. Set aside 15 minutes every day and be a consumer of social media. Be a consumer by reading blog posts related to your industry, interests, etc. Set up a **news aggregator** so you have just one place to go to find the information (e-zines*, blogs*, podcasts*, etc.) that you enjoy reading. This will save you time in not having to go to the sites individually.

*Quick definition (more complete definition is at the end of this document): **News Aggregator** – a site that collects all of the new posts from sites that you have told it to pull information from, enabling you to go to one web location, saving you valuable time.*

Decide if there are any online social groups that you would like to join. Make your decision based on who your target market is and where they might be found. The more popular social sites are LinkedIn, Facebook, and MySpace. If you are looking to join a more localized group, the inSide### sites have some great advantages. Keep in mind that each social media space has its own rules of conduct, overall demographic and online atmosphere. You have to be comfortable wherever you end up, so visit first. Get your feet wet by looking around and listening to conversations before settling into the neighborhood.

You don't have to spend hours of your time online. Though it's easy to get lost online, if you are focused and put a plan in place, it can take less than an hour a week to grow an online following that can begin to have an impact on your bottom line.

If you don't have an hour to spend per week on social media, look at your priorities again. You will be missing out on an opportunity to grow your business in a way that you never thought possible.

Be a leader, the followers are looking for you.

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Longer (but easily understood) Definitions:

Web 2.0

Think about what the web was like in the year 2000. It was a conglomeration of company brochures online (websites) and monopolized by IT professionals and “webmasters”. As a result, most of the conversations were one-way...companies talking to the consumers. The Dot-com bubble burst in March of 2000 and during the shake up, the web began to change. New technologies began to spring forth that allowed the non-techie to talk to another non-techie (social networks). Eventually, technologies developed to allow the non-IT person to put a website online, we were able to become our own webmasters.

Ah...welcome to the new and improved version of the web – Web 2.0.

Traditional Marketing and Media

I have information. I spend a lot of money to print out my materials and hand it out to individuals (one-to-one: one marketing piece = one person). I send out a press release to the “players”: radio stations, magazines, local newspapers. This is one-to-many marketing, however, the “players” decide whether or not my news is worthy for print or discussion. If it does get printed or discussed, once the discussion is over, it’s gone. I could pay for advertising which would allow my message to last longer, but once my contract is over, my message is gone...I got what I asked for and/or paid for.

Social Marketing and Media

I have information. I decide to share it on my blog, my online networking group, forum, discussion board or broadcast it through a micro-blog. The rest of the world decides whether it is worthy of discussion and can comment back to me to let me know. In fact, since the web doesn’t forget...people can have discussions about my information for as long as it’s interesting to them and tell other people about it. And, with the click of a button, they can tell a friend and increase my followers. My message stays in the public eye indefinitely – for a minimal cost. Social Marketing levels the playing field.

News Aggregator

As you begin to read people’s blogs, you can spend an inordinate amount of time typing in the websites and looking at the individual blogs to figure out what message you have and haven’t read. This can become so tiresome and cumbersome that even if the content and information is incredible, you are inclined to stop reading them. A News Aggregator fixes that. Once you find a blog or website that you want to keep track of, you give the **RSS feed address** (yeah, I know, this one is defined too) to your News Aggregator and it will collect all of the new posts from sites that you have told it to pull information from. This enables you to go to one web location to view all of your favorite blogs, saving you valuable time. News Aggregators are free.


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Longer (but easily understood) Definitions:

RSS Feed Address

Every blog should have an RSS feed. An RSS feed is simply the blog site transformed into a simple, standard format that is easily communicated to a News Aggregator. You can recognize RSS by the following symbol . Typically, by clicking on this button, you will be taken to a new page that does not look like the same blog because it's been stripped of its colors, graphics and any other items that the standardized feed deems to be an unnecessary item. At the top of the page (in your web browser) you will be able to see the URL for the RSS feed which can now be given to your News Aggregator.

For example, my Buzz Builder blog is located at the following URL:

<http://thebuzzbuilder.com/social-media-buzz-strategy-blog/>

and looks something like this:



My RSS button is included in a larger button that also allows you to tag me in a social media platform.

Note: This is a quick comment about my website. I like Christmas, no, I LOVE Christmas and have changed my theme to reflect this for the month of December. Do not be surprised if this is not what my website looks like any other month of the year.

That would be...well, just weird.

Onwards.

Clicking on this type of "Subscribe" button brings us to the following screen:
For the purposes of this demonstration, we're simply going to concentrate on the RSS button.

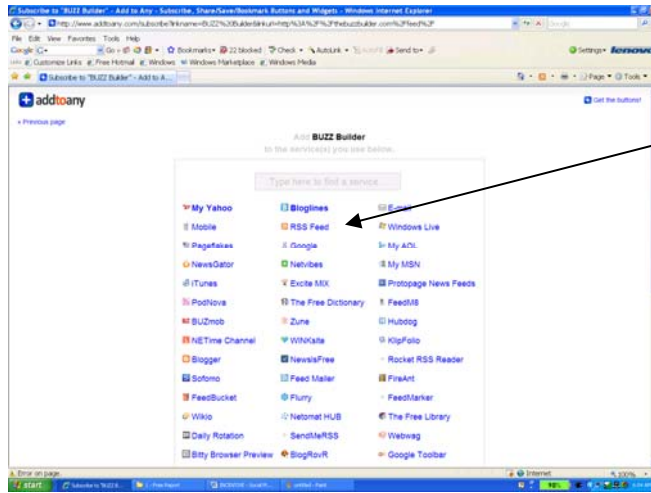
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Longer (but easily understood) Definitions:

After pushing on the “Subscribe” button:



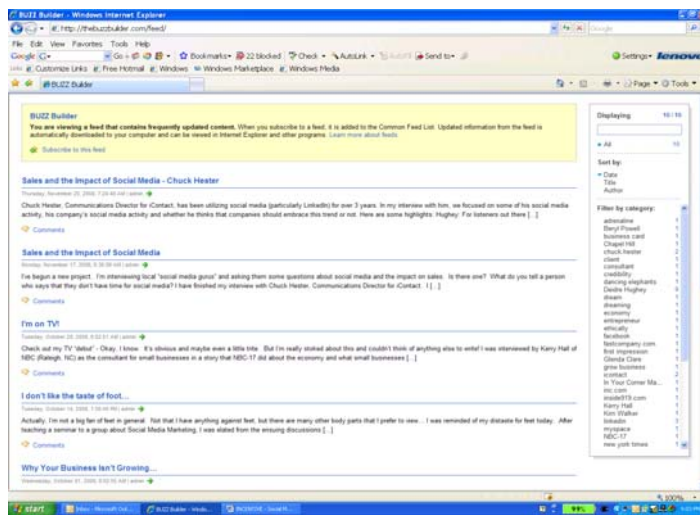
RSS Feed

The RSS button is listed near the top of the list.

Clicking on the RSS button, it takes you to the following URL:

<http://thebuzzbuilder.com/feed/>

and looks something like this:



It's the exact same blog, but now it's in a standardized format that can be read by a News Aggregator. Notice that all of the website graphics have been stripped from the blog – only the text remains.

Depending on your News Aggregator, the next step can be different. You can use the aggregator that comes with your Browser, simply by clicking on the Subscribe to this feed button. Personally, I can never remember to check my “Favorites” folder to see the feeds, so I cut and paste the URL into my News Aggregator.

Tip: I have my News Aggregator set as one of my tabs that comes up automatically when I start my browser. Now my news is ready for me – what I want to see and when I want to see it.

Let's look at what it look like in my News Aggregator (I use [Bloglines](#), but there are

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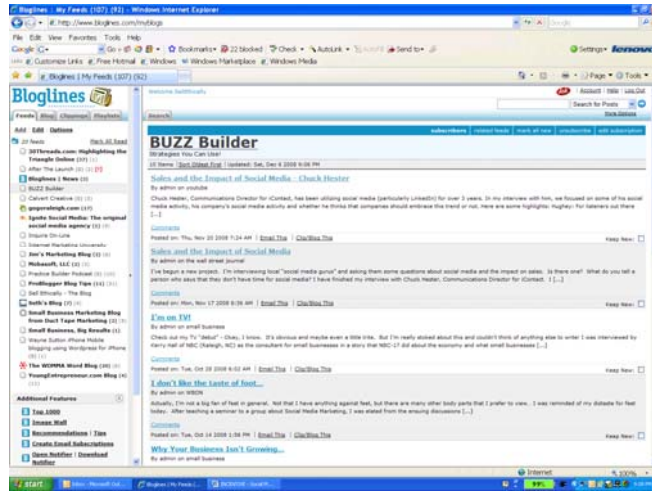
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Longer (but easily understood) Definitions:

many, many available...choose the one you like).

My Bloglines News Aggregator:



All of the blogs that I subscribe to are on the left side of the frame. Clicking on one of the blog names sends it to the main frame. This gives you a preview by showing only the title and the first couple of lines of each blog entry.

Now, at this point, you can decide which blog entries you want to read (if any) and click on the link to read the blog entry in its entirety. This is the beauty of the

News Aggregator. HUGE time saver.

News Aggregators ROCK!!

Follow me on Twitter for more free tips:

<http://www.twitter.com/deidrehughey>

You can find me and join my network at any one of the following locations:

LinkedIn - <http://www.linkedin.com/in/deidrehughey>

Facebook - <http://profile.to/deidrehughey>

If you reside in the 919 area code:

InSide919 - <http://inside919.ning.com/profile/DeidreHughey>

Contact me to speak about Social Media at your next event:

deidrehughey@thebuzzbuilder.com

See my [LinkedIn profile](#) for speaking recommendations!

Deidre Hughey is the founder and president of [The BUZZ Builder](#), an online resource for small business owners who want to understand how to utilize social media to build their online reputation.

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