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Social Networking Changes Everything

The new marketing and public relations model.

by **Diana Ennen**
Virtual Word Publishing



It's pretty obvious that the marketing of today has changed. You have newspapers going virtual/web only, Twitter and Facebook replacing postcards and phone calls, and potential clients now being the main target of your press releases as opposed to editors.

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It's all changing and to do PR today, you need to change with it. The good news is that it's never been easier. The bad news, you need to learn a new way to do things. Fortunately, there are tips that can make it easier and I'm here to show you a few.

First, no one can deny the power of social networking. And those that do are just plain wrong. I've been in business since 1985 and I liken this to way back when emails became a way of life. Many still contended they wanted to do it the old fashioned way and nothing would beat a letter. (I know it's hard to even imagine this today.) It wasn't long until they realized their error, but by then their competition was way ahead of them. Don't make the same mistake now. You absolutely need to get with it and get on board. I can practically guarantee you within weeks you'll be hooked and wondering why you ever hesitated. It's so easy, and the potential so great, you need to start today.

Let's break it down. Twitter first. Forget all the "I don't care what they ate for lunch excuses," that's where your competition and peers are and you do need to be there too. Sure you do have a few tweeters who will update you on the latest hot dog they ate, but that's rare. What you do have is more and more businesses networking and connecting with each other in ways never thought possible. It's also more than just networking back and forth, you can have chats, host events, get more publicity for your articles and press releases and even announce your seminars and radio shows. And that's not even the half of it. There are entire books written on this, so my first recommendation is to get them. Why struggle and find your way around when you can easily read the tips from those who know exactly what you need to succeed.

Also, while you are getting your feet wet, don't jump in and start posting and selling and ranting and raving. Take it slow. Sign up, take a sit, remain quiet for a short time and read what others are posting. Follow the leaders in your industry and take advantage of their knowledge. It can almost feel like walking around with them all day and looking over their shoulders for their secrets. What's cool is they give their tips freely, why wouldn't you want to take advantage of that? As an example, if someone were looking for information on starting a virtual assistant business or getting publicity for their business, they could follow me at [Twitter.com/dianaennen](https://twitter.com/dianaennen)

Now the key many forget is that not only do you need to follow them, you need to listen earnestly to what they are saying. Go to the sites they recommend. Actually do the things they suggest. And most importantly, if you have the opportunity to contribute and honestly have something of importance to say, do! Even if they aren't following you, once you list their twitter name @name, it will go to them. Best yet, you might get a retweet or even better a RT and follow back. As many say, those are the ultimate compliments.

Now it's important to learn the social media lingo — Hashtags, Retweets, Fans, Follow Friday — this is just a few of the many names you need to know to do business better. It can be overwhelming. No, in fact it is overwhelming. However, if you keep it simple and take it a step at a time, you can do it. When you see a term you don't know, look it up right then. Write down your interpretation and do the investigating to find out more about it. Here are just a few to help you on your journey.

What's a retweet? That's when you find someone's information useful and you want to pass it onto your followers. So basically RT (retweet) is good content that you pass on. Many RT just to RT. Don't be one of them. You know your followers and what they want and need, that's what you should be RT'ing. We highly recommend signing up for TweetDeck for ease in doing this. A click of a button and you can



tweetDeck for ease in doing this. A click of a button and you are there.

Next you need to know about Follow Friday. This is definitely one of my favorites. Think of Follow Friday as your day networking at a business get-together, only better. You get to stay in the comfort of your own home, and you get to immediately make the connections, not when you get home with a handful of business cards. Try and plan your week so you can participate. Remember this can be even more effective than a Chamber meeting or an expensive business seminar. So plan a lighter load on Friday whenever possible. You want people to mention you so mention them. Also, don't just list 20 screens of twitter names that you want people to follow.

Tell your followers why they should follow them. What do they offer that your followers would be interested in? Remember to put #followfriday in your posting. (By the way, see that # in followfriday. That's what is called a hashtag. Cool huh!) And finally, you want people to retweet your followfriday postings, so keep your count to 120 instead of 140 so they can easily do this. In fact, do this for all tips or postings you wanted retweeted.

Finally, try and post on Friday mornings. I don't know about the rest of you, but I'll often go down my postings to find those I want to list. I know I want to list them before hand so it's not that I'm just going down my friends column, but often times I don't have their information readily available. By posting on Friday you are giving it to them.

Finally, sign up for Trilalerts for your keywords. Start following those of interest. For example, I'm a virtual assistant, so I've signed up for virtual assistant updates. Now I can follow other virtual assistants easily. I do the same for Publicity, etc. Who do you want to connect with? That's who you sign up for. Follow the media. Sign up for Facebook and Twitter for the newspapers and TV stations in your area. Look for business reporters who tweak and follow them. Learn their style and what they are looking for in their articles.

Also, follow some of the owners of the many article and press release directories who tweet. Some of the best are on there and giving away secrets to success left and right.

Facebook is pretty self explanatory. The key here is to spend some time to expand your network. Fortunately you get notices when someone responds to your posts, so try and go and follow-up as soon as you can. However, be careful that you don't get sidetracked doing this too often. Build relationships. You can have thousands of friends and fans, but can you honestly connect to all of them. I know I sure can't. Twitter also now allows your tweets to be sent to your Facebook page too. This is definitely a plus. Just make sure that you don't do this to all of your postings, only the ones you feel would interest your friends on Facebook.

Article Submissions, Press Release Submissions — I also say you need to send out articles and press releases religiously. Many question how some succeed with this and others don't. What's the difference? The main thing is that they know what to do. They realize the difference that page ranking can make and don't waste their time on sites that don't get results. They sign up for Google Alerts under their keywords and then check out the sites that frequently get spidered. Then they send to those places and add those sites to their database. We do have a fabulous PR informational package that is free to anyone who emails us.

Marketing a business and social networking doesn't have to be expensive if you just remember to network and use all the tools available to you. In fact, it can be fun as you get to meet new people and develop new ways to sell you and your business. Also, keep in mind if you don't want to do it yourself, there are excellent qualified pros and virtual assistants available to assist. You don't need to do it all. You just need to do it!

Diana Ennen specializes in publicity and marketing and is President of [Virtual Word Publishing](http://www.virtualwordpublishing.com), and author of numerous books. Email her at Diana@virtualwordpublishing.com. Free PR Informational Package available. Twitter - <http://www.twitter.com/dianaennen>

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