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### Food For Thought

“Everything that can be counted does not necessarily count; everything that counts cannot necessarily be counted.”

- Albert Einstein

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## Will Work For Food

### Walk for Breast Cancer

Our friends, parents, siblings, co-workers, our children; we've all been affected in some way by breast cancer. Sadly, most people think it's strictly a woman's disease, but thousands of men each year are diagnosed as well. When it comes to breast cancer, no family immune. We've had it strike twice in our family, lung cancer too.

In our desire to help find a cure, my wife, Carey, will participate in the historic Susan G. Komen 3-Day Walk for Breast Cancer in Seattle this September. This epic 60-mile journey over 3 days raises money to provide women and men the breast cancer screening, support and treatment needed, regardless of their ability to pay. Donations also provide leading-edge research teams across the country the funds they need to fuel their quest for a cure.



To learn more about this event, sponsor Carey, or follow her journey, contact Mark Palazzo via email: [mark@yourcreativemark.com](mailto:mark@yourcreativemark.com)

### Social Media Sites and How They Can Benefit Your Business

We've all heard of social networking sites like Twitter, MySpace, Facebook, etc. You may or may not already be a part of this social-networking phenomenon. Did you know that many industries are throwing themselves into this arena and capturing a whole new audience-base for their businesses?



Sound intriguing? Let's take a glimpse at just a few key strategies successful businesses use on social networking and media sites that you can emulate to grow your audience base.

### Successful Businesses on Media Sites Know Their Audience:

To reach the people you want to attract to your business, you need to know who they are and where they are “hanging out”.

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Don't know who or where your audience is? Check out social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, Yahoo Answers, LinkedIn, etc. and type in your industry, competitor's names, key industry phrases and see what's being said out there.

Are there fan pages? Complaints? Blogs? Read them all, and know what is being said by your audience.

To know your audience, you must:

- Listen to what they're saying.
- Listen to what they mean.
- Listen to what's bothering them.
- Listen to what makes them happy.

### **Before You “Represent” Your Company, Establish Rules As To How To Engage Customers on These Sites:**

Companies that participate in these sites generally have a set of ground rules as to how they will handle what is said “by the company” and how it is said.

Sharing of confidential information, personal information or engaging in disparaging remarks about competitors or individuals is a huge no-no. Successful companies establish rules on how to handle unhappy or disgruntled individuals, and establish one or two individuals to handle all social media correspondence.

### **Engage and Be An Active Community Member:**

Now that you've found the communities and audience you are looking for, and you've established the rules for communicating with them, join and engage in ways that will be useful and a good community member.

Leave comments on walls and on blogs; tweet people. Engage new visitors. When you can provide information or insight that eases their workload, respond. Respond with links to your resources, to other people's resources, to your competitors' resources.

When you listen to your audience, you'll find many ways to get your message out, when appropriate.

### **Keep Your “Brand” Consistent**

To be recognized for your usefulness and valuable contributions to these sites, it is imperative to keep your “brand” consistent. I've talked about “branding” in several past issues, but this is an entirely new type of company “brand”.

Branding yourself in social media circles is keeping your identity (or username) within these sites consistent.

When you become a community member, your user name is how your customers will recognize you and follow you and your input. If you are known as “gregshomeloans” on one site, but use “iloan4homes” on another, your audience will be confused and not relate the two names.

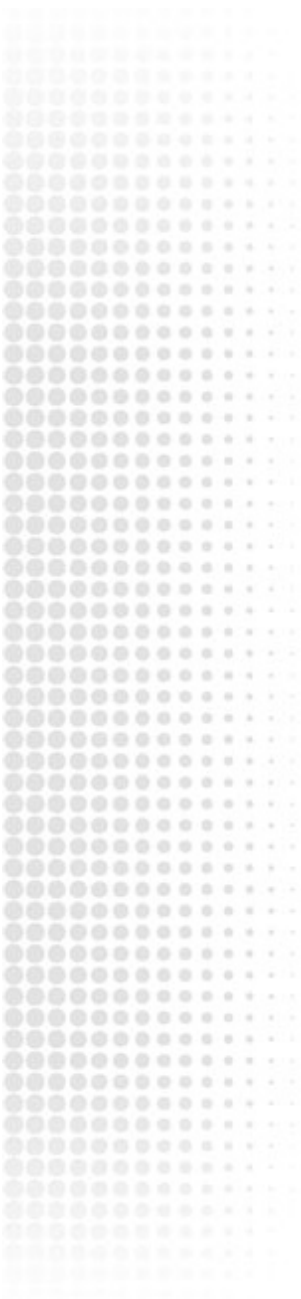
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Be consistent on all sites; your audience will most likely follow several communities on multiple sites, and consistency is the key to your recognition as an expert and authority in your industry.

Social media isn't about you. It's about your customers and connecting with them so that when they have a need, they have a friend online who specialized in that.

Remember, I am always here to help! If you would like advice and ideas on maximizing your social networking experience, please contact me to discuss how together we can brave this new frontier on the web.

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