

47 Tough Social Media Questions – Part III

By Randall Craig

What are the best questions to ask when someone comes to you with their "great" Social Media idea? In the first two parts of this series, we looked at 16 questions, then an additional 16. In this final article, we add a final 15.

33. How much of the initiative is defensive?

A defensive plan is one that does the absolute minimum, just so that the organization doesn't embarrass itself in the marketplace. There is nothing wrong with this – as a stopgap measure. On the other hand, most organizations don't have limitless resources, so spending time and money on a defensive plan takes away from the impact of a strategic Social Media plan.

34. Can the proposal be phased in?

35. When do the milestones occur to review progress? And what should we look for on the first milestone?

36. How does the strategy take advantage of Mobile?

Mobile now means several things: building web pages for different screen sizes; building "apps"; taking advantage of the user's location; taking advantage of the *just-in-time* nature of mobile alerts. If the Social Media plan only speaks to establishing presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, and Twitter, then it is probably one of the best plans... of three years ago.

37. Who else has reviewed this proposal, and what reservations did they have?

38. How does this initiative change our...Marketing strategy? Advocacy strategy? HR/recruiting/volunteer strategy?

39. What internal policies will need to change if we implement?

40. Where does this plan lead? What does Phase Three look like?

It's tempting to say that since Social Media is changing so quickly, planning for a future phase is futile. Not so. Choosing now what a future might look like is a critical double-check to ensure that, all else being equal, the current phase is directionally sound. Of course, change will happen, but mid-course corrections are only possible if you know the ultimate destination.

41. Who within the organization will you need to work hard to get buy-in from?

42. Will any external stakeholders be affected negatively or will relationships be altered by the plan?

Very often, suppliers (and other sponsor/funding partners) are left out of the mix. Does the content and community that is being proposed include anything of value for these

stakeholders? And separately, are there any new advertising or sponsorship opportunities that will become available as a result of the strategy? (Note: If the strategy is being developed with a view to increasing sponsorship revenue, who will be responsible for doing the actual selling?)

43. Who are the bloggers, tweeples, etc. who are most influential in our market?
44. How will the initiative be launched?
45. What books have you read/What blogs/Tweeples do you follow? What do they say about this type of plan?
46. How has this plan worked in other industries?
47. Do any of our suppliers or customers have Social Media strategies that we can “camp on” to?

Where do you start? First consider how critical Social Media is to your overall strategy, and then choose how many questions need to be answered to justify your investment. You may not have to answer all 47 questions, but answering the toughest ones will yield the greatest benefit.

Postscript: How good is your current Social strategy? Try this (no cost) self-audit – it generates a report on how you can improve: <http://budurl.com/108smaudit>

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