

Bainbridge Business Connection

Bainbridge Island Small Business Entrepreneurial Roundtable

BBC At The Blue Ocean Café — <http://www.blueoceancafeonline.com>

September Chamber Luncheon — 16 September 2009

<http://www.bainbridgechamber.com>

Reflections by K. D. Kragen, BBC Staff Writer, <http://www.kavedragenink.com>

The Program: "How To Make Social Networking Work for Your Business." Panel discussion featuring marketing and Internet consultants, Shannon Evans (<http://practicallocalsearch.com>), Jenn Putman (<http://www.jennergy.com>), and Elizabeth Scott.

What a great gathering! What a great presentation by Shannon, Jenn, and Elizabeth! Kevin Dwyer did an excellent job as MC, too (even if he still struggles just a little with English as a second language). Thank you all for an informative and fascinating time. Thank you for all the hard work you put into this event.

Business marketing has changed drastically! "Pull Marketing" has been replaced by "Push Marketing." You need to blend your social marketing (SM) and networking (SN)—e.g. on Twitter (<http://twitter.com>), Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com>), Linked-In (<http://www.linkedin.com>), and Biznik (<http://biznik.com>).

You may also want to look at: review & local business listing sites, Yelp (<http://www.yelp.com>), Merchant Circle (<http://www.merchantcircle.com>), and iKarma (<http://www.ikarma.com>); Manta, a business search site (<http://www.manta.com>); GoogleMaps (<http://maps.google.com>), and YouTube (<http://www.youtube.com>).

Incorporate your marketing "brand" across all your domains, networks. Make your logo, art and color, and communications style consistent across your entire web presence. Then utilize specific individual SM tools such as Twitter—which, by the way, is a great mechanism for publishing daily business tips.

Don't just sell products/services using Twitter, etc. Rather, it is about building your e-presence, about contributing to the larger community, sharing with other businesses in positive ways such as reviews, endorsements, referrals, testimonials. Monitoring your competitors is also a big part of the power of SM.

Do you need Social Marketing? Consider the following questions:

1. Who is your audience?
2. Will you use it? Wise time-management is a factor in deciding whether or not to utilize SM.
3. Are you looking for sales only? Then SM may not be what you need.
4. What do you want from SM?
5. Do you have compliance issues? They may hamper your use of SM with legal constraints.
6. Do you have enough time to seriously dedicate to SM? SM is a time-sucking activity.
7. Will you be actively interacting across your web presence?
8. Are your competitors using SM?
9. Can you be a leader on SM?
10. Can you be responsible for your web presence on SM? You must maintain control of your content.

Last point came up during Q&A: Anything you put out in e-space—*anything!*—should be thought about carefully, edited and polished. Once you've posted something on an Internet site, blog or forum, even in an email, it tends to remain out there. Taking it back can be very difficult at best. Think twice before posting or emailing (or doing anything on the Internet). Is it too personal? Is it inflammatory or libelous? Netiquette: Keep your web presence courteous, professional, friendly, polished, and community building.