

Digital and Social Media

Seven Questions for Teresa Siles



Teresa Siles, Director of Social Media, Nuffer Smith Tucker

Upfrost recently caught up with Teresa Siles, Director of Social Media at Nuffer Smith Tucker (who is hosting the second annual San Diego Social Media Symposium in conjunction with SDSU's Digital and Social Media Collaborative on January 28). Siles talks new technologies, ROI, and resistance to social media.

When did you start specializing in social media?

Nuffer, Smith, Tucker has been engaged in social media for many years. We often joke that we've been "doing social media" since before the term was even being used. In early 2000s, we developed online communities for brands. It's important to note that while we've developed a social media practice, we don't view social media as the "be-all and end-all," but rather as an important tool in our arsenal.

How do you stay on top of the new technologies?

New technologies are introduced daily. Keeping up can be a challenge and I couldn't do it without a great team. Our account staff is constantly learning about the latest tools – whether it be through reading blogs and industry reports or attending workshops, and webinars.

What do you see as the biggest resistance to using social media?

Many companies are worried about people talking negatively about their brand in social media. They worry that they will lose control of their brand messages. Many companies also are worried they just don't have the time to be involved in social media.

How do you suggest companies overcome the "control" obstacle?

First, I point out that the brand-related conversations (good and bad) are happening whether you like it or not – companies just need to choose whether they want to be part of the discussion. Those worried about "losing control" over their message need to realize that they never had control to begin with.

Which skills are needed to generate effective social media campaigns?

Patience and flexibility. First, people need to understand that social media shouldn't be looked at as a short-term campaign, but rather a long-term relationship building strategy. You shouldn't start a Twitter account to promote an upcoming event or dive into Facebook to talk about a new product. The most effective social media efforts are built organically by offering relevant content and providing value that earns trust via social media, and this often doesn't happen overnight.

Which metrics are companies using to measure their ROI?

Social media metrics are continuing to evolve, and there are numerous perspectives on this issue. Commonly used metrics for social media measurement include the number of page views to a website, followers of a brand on Twitter or Facebook, time spent on a site or referrals or sales coming through a particular platform. Many companies are also now looking at sentiment around their brand, i.e., is the conversation positive, negative or neutral. That said, all of these metrics are somewhat limiting and there is no clear-cut answer on how to calculate ROI, especially when you understand that social media should be viewed as a long-term strategy.

Do you have favorite social media sites or tools that you would recommend to those who want to learn more about this topic?

I recommend Mashable.com and the Word of Mouth Marketing Association website, womma.org. Mashable is constantly updated with the latest news related to social media and technology, and the WOMMA site is a great resource for case studies, social media headlines and information on how to use social media tools ethically – WOMMA's ethics code is a "must read" for anyone engaged in social media.