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The 12 Tenets of Social Media Marketing (and Why You Need to Learn Them)

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Marketing is a hard job. It fails almost as often as actors looking for their big break.

The delicate relationship between management and marketing is a dance roughly akin to that between fox and hen, but with far less goodwill. To management, you're only as good as your last campaign.

So let's look at "The 12 Tenets of Social Media Marketing" to see how you can up your success rate.

I. The public is the Lord thy God

Ultimately, you can succeed only if your communications produce results, which shall be known as return on investment, by reaching the greater public. This can be achieved only if your product doesn't suck and your communications are not only clear but also interesting.

Verily, if you can become a useful source of information, your message may be heeded, or at least looked at ever so briefly.

II. Thou shalt covet all media

Today media is a collective term for the producers of content for mass and, yea, also for niche consumption. Thou must niche or be niched. Thy niches may include surly teenagers in fly-over states, as well as disgruntled consumers. To communicate with them successfully you must approach them from the right perspective.

Thou shalt not piss them off by ignoring or patronizing them, for if thou do they shalt bite you on the ass.

If you pitch big-time media, you need to have big-time story ideas. However, despair not because these days everyone with a Web site, newsletter, blog, e-zine, mail list or forum is a journalist.

III. Ignore not peer-to-peer media

Become familiar with, and participate in, forums, mail lists, and discussion groups that pertain to your segment. Provide information of value and your reputation will grow. Thou wilt not be sorry that thou hast done this extra work.

Electronic media, of all kinds, is virgin territory for the intrepid marketer. Use video, podcasts, and blog advertising to communicate.

IV. Thou shalt think globally and speak in tongues

Many perceive that a global marketing strategy is only suitable for giants such as Procter & Gamble and Microsoft, which have big budgets to spend and big brands to promote. But the advent of the Internet is the final stage in a process of globalization that gives firms of all sizes the opportunity to sell their products and services to the many countries of the world.

Only market to countries where thy sales items—product, idea or event—affect their country and will be of particular interest to their readers. Bother to hire a qualified translator rather than relying on machine translations that can make you looketh like the village idiot.

Be careful to make your communication with simple words, avoiding idioms and complex sentence structures.

V. Thy communications must pass the "who cares?" test

Abandon ye all communications that are long-winded, formulaic, boring as hell, and laden with superlatives and marketing babble.

Write down your concept in one sentence. Then ask yourself, and answer honestly, "So what?" If it still sounds like a good idea, proceed to rewrite it, over and over, until it has not one extra word.

VI. Thou shalt learn to create artful blog and forum comments

Yes, yes, yes, despite SEC requirements, bosses, shareholders and lawyers, thou shalt participate in the social media sphere. Write thy comments in a human, and not a godly voice.

Maketh thy comments in one-paragraph, in language appropriate to the publication, and explaineth what thou art saying clearly.

Dispense with excessive exaggeration. Provideth contact details in your signature.

VII. Thou shalt not talk shit

No one in any social medium will tolerate bluff or bluster. They dislike anyone who takes forever to make a point. They particularly don't like flacks or interviewees who try to make simple concepts unnecessarily complex by burdening them with excessive technical jargon or MBA-speak.

Clearly and transparently communicate facts and insight pertaining to your company, its strategy, and its products... and therefore appeareth intelligent.

VIII. Thou shalt not make someone else speak for thee

Write thy own comments, blog posts, articles, and emails. Flog not. Do not think that nobody will know. Never, never let a lawyer write anything, for all they talk is useless double-speak.

IX. Thou shalt not refuse to comment when thy company is under fire

Diggeth a hole and place within it thy head only if thou carest not that thy brand image will turn to doo-doo. "No comment" is a fine phrase for royalty, criminals, and celebrities, but not so great for corporations that have a responsibility to shareholders, clients, and consumers.

Unfortunately, in difficult situations it may be impossible for representatives to tell the media the whole truth. Try to be honest about which subjects thou wilt be able to talk frankly about, and which you may find difficult to comment upon.

In accordance with the sixth tenet, it's better to give a concise response that is straight to the point than one that is evasive, lengthy, and obviously spun.

X. Concern thyself with thy overall marketing strategy

Thy overall marketing strategy is an arduous process that requires constant vigilance. To be successful thou must practice true multi-channel marketing in which you synergize your advertising, PR, Internet and sponsorship efforts to project a unified image and allow personality to shine through the corporate shield.

XI. Give they brand to the consumer

They will take very good care of it, for they will give it back to you in better shape than when they got it. Fear not that thy consumer shall have input in your brand. But heed closely thy clueless ad agency so it does not chargeth thee a hefty fee when in fact the consumer creates thy ads.

XII. Remember: thou must keep holy the Internet.

The Internet has changed the nature of marketing irrevocably in two distinct regards. It has changed the way companies communicate with the public and the media. Thy public often is thy media as well. Screw them not.

B.L. Ochman is a social media marketing strategist for S&P 500 companies, including McGraw Hill, IBM, Cendant, and American Greetings. She publishes [What's Next Blog](#) and [Ethics Crisis](#), where readers can confess their worst ethics transgressions and others can rate them on a scale of one to ten. She also blogs for [MarketingProfs Daily Fix Blog](#).

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