

# Enterprise Network September 2008 Executive Forum

## The Power of Social Media Marketing

Thursday, September 18, 2008

By Suzanne Jones - Chapters, LLC

The evening of September 18 opened minds, uncovered mysteries and revealed new opportunities for over 130 attendees of Enterprise Network's Social Media Marketing Forum. Len Safco, founder of Innovative Thinking and event panelist, discussed how the combination of digital convergence (cell phones, Internet, hardware, etc.), social networks (LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.) and user generated content (blogs, etc.) are revolutionizing the way today's businesses communicate and market their goods and services. Len cited several YouTube examples that produced phenomenal results including Cold Stone Creamery's Mr. & Mrs. Strawberry Cheesecake and Blendtec Blenders 'Will it Blend' video series. Len underscored the need to use social media as a component of your company's overall marketing plan but not to rely 100% on using YouTube, for example, to deliver your message.

Other panelists included Kevin Donnellan, vice president of marketing, Ling & Louie's Asian Bar, Jody Gnant, entrepreneurial singer-songwriter and pianist, and Gerard La Fond, founder of redTANGENT. Jody illustrated the power of social marketing by recounting her participation in the infamous internet-based One Red Paperclip project where she traded the use of her home in Arizona for a year for a recording studio contract.

All of the panelists agreed that one of the most remarkable benefits of using social media as a business strategy is its incredibly low cost as compared to other more traditional marketing methods. Oftentimes it is free which helps stretch marketing dollars for start up and emerging companies. Gerard reassured the audience that utilizing social media methodologies was, in many cases, as easy as using a keyboard and that extensive technical expertise was not required. He did caution however, that you might give up some control as social media is viral by nature and you cannot predict blog comments for example.

The panel strongly encouraged every attendee to get involved *now*, even if it was just responding to a blog or creating a simple profile on FaceBook. Dovetailing the panel's advice, *The Social Media Bible*, written by Len Safco and David Burke, encompasses the Ten Commandments of Social Marketing that will reap tremendous benefits to a business' bottom line. These practical and effective commandments follow and all begin with Thou Shalt: Blog, Create Profiles, Upload Photos, Upload Videos, Podcast, Set Alerts, Comment, Get Linked, Explore, and Be Creative.

After the illuminating panel discussion, networking activities commenced amid hors de oeuvres and refreshments. The most prevalent comments expressed were how this outstanding forum delivered some real world how-tos in harnessing the power of social media. Marilyn Becker, owner of Get to the Point, a CFO for hire consulting company, stated, "This event was excellent and I learned so much. Now I finally understand how all of the components of social media work together and all of the options I have to choose from. I will maximize what I learned by creating a blog and video on YouTube immediately." This forum was another example of Enterprise Network's solid commitment to delivering world-class expertise to leaders of emerging businesses in the Phoenix area. The case studies, best practices and tips and techniques shared on social media marketing will be beneficial to attendees for years to come.

Reserve your space for our next groundbreaking forum on Thursday, October 23 where we will have the rare opportunity to hear Dan Quayle, chairman of Cerberus Capital, present on a compelling topic – Determining Businesses Worth Investing In.