



Race Track Industry Program

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Your Social Networking Toolbox: What's in It?

SPEAKERS:

Sheila Merrigan, Program Coordinator, Ag Extension Administration, The University of Arizona

Monica Surfaro Spigelman, Writer and Crafter, Tucson Cowgirl Communications

Mr. Steve May: Like a normal boss he's asked me to do a little bit of overtime today. With the Groupon folks stepping out he asked me to at least fill in for him and do a brief introduction.

Social media is something that I think is very important. It's something that I've really enjoyed. I'm very active on Facebook, on Twitter. Twitter definitely, most recently Google+. I find all of them very fascinating.

I always tell people the main source of my news anymore is from Twitter. People find that very interesting but by following the breaking news Twitter feed, by following Thoroughbred Times and Blood Horse, both of which have really done a great job of grabbing hold of Twitter and using that to reach out to their customers. It's been a great addition for horse racing. I see it just growing and growing going down the road.

I'm going to turn it over to the real experts in this. The first panelist today is Sheila. Sheila — I never can pronounce it. Sheila Merrigan. She's been with the university for over 20 years now. This is her first time to come to the Race Track Industry program symposium on racing and gaming. Sheila's very involved in the social media aspect of the university.

It's one of the big takeaways I had from my time at the university is that the University of Arizona is very, very dedicated to teaching students about social media; getting them involved. I think they understand how important that is to any of their future jobs. I've made a very good friend actually, Anne Steward out here who's also very involved in social media. It's a very big takeaway that I've had from this.

I think we're very lucky to have someone that's very involved in this to show what possibilities we have out there in the racing industry to use social media even more than we are. I'll go ahead and turn it over to Sheila.

[Applause]

Ms. Sheila Merrigan: Thank you Steve. It kinda sounds like you should be giving this presentation. Would you click on the more button there and expand it to full screen for me?

Do you see the more? Yeah. Just down a little bit and go full screen.

Thank you. Okay. I do work for Cooperative Extension at the University of Arizona. I am not exactly an expert at this. When we started getting into the social media aspect I said you guys, you need to go out and get a social media expert; somebody like Monica perhaps. Have them really get our social media going.

They said no, we can't afford that. You're it. I said okay, this is going to be fun.

I've been doing this for about a year. Last February my colleague Molly Declaine joined us. She's a Vista — an AmeriCorps Vista volunteer. She has come on and she's been invaluable. She had not done much in the organizational role of social media but had the aspect of doing it personally. The youth side of it; which both were very, very valuable to me.

Before we get going I have to tell a little story on you guys. I was telling somebody that I was coming to present here. It's a bigger crowd than — I'm from Extension, we get 20 people in our crowds. It was a bigger crowd than I was used to and I said I'm a little nervous about doing this. They said oh, don't worry about it, they're great. They're a fun group of people.

I said okay, that's nice of them to try to alleviate my fears. Then we went to our monthly update meeting and I was telling them there that I was giving this presentation. Somebody said don't worry about it, they're a great group of people. They're so much fun; you're going to have a good time. I went okay. This got my curiosity up.

I started throwing it out there. I'm going to go to the Race Track Industry Symposium and give a presentation. Every response was the same. They're a great group of people; they're fun people to be around. I thought well, wow. I came in here expecting you guys to be sipping mint juleps or something. I didn't really know what to come into. I'm glad to be here and thank you for allowing me to share some of our social media with you.

In order to do that I need to give you a quick background about Cooperative Extension. It will be very brief because I understand that you do know quite a bit about Extension, but in order to understand where we're coming from with our social media — then I'll give you some ideas.

I know you're all very familiar with probably your Extension people within your own state. In this area we have Mark Arns who is our Equine Specialist and Peter Cuneo who is our veterinarian. You know that we do livestock programs. Not just horses but cattle.

You probably also know about the 4H programs that we do. A lot of kids are going through that so it's not just at the fairs but the crafts and photography, that sort of thing. You may also know about our master gardener programs which are also very, very popular across the nation and in Arizona.

That's just the tip of what we do. We have programs in all different aspects. We have programs that deal with nutrition, with healthy lifestyles; getting people out and walking. With the waters; huge in the southwest. Everything from wells to water sheds to water quality. Plants, whether it's in grazing types of situations or natural resources.

We've got nutrition programs. Our people doing the marketing. We do agriculture still. Sometimes not in very traditional formats, but we still do it. Basically we are the outreach arm of the University of Arizona; the original. Now everybody does outreach. We are the original.

Our mission was to improve — is to improve lives in communities. We have people that live and work through — in every part of Arizona. Living in that community is what makes us unique. We try to provide information to people throughout all of Arizona.

We're part of a nationwide program too. All of — Extension is in every one of your states. You've got people within Extension that you can contact for information. We are the link between the University of Arizona and the public. We try to take research based information and make it available to the public.

All of this is really important as to how we're going our social media. You can see that we have — I don't know if you can see the numbers in the back over there. We have over 200 faculty and staff within Extension. We have over 140,000 youth involved in our youth programs. Nearly 500,000 people within our — that participate in our programs in one year. That's 2010 within Arizona.

We have broad reach across the state. Social media is important; it's becoming more important to us. We're just gonna discuss some of what we're doing.

We have some sharing tools on the website. Our website is our mainstay. That's where all of our main information is. We link back and forth. Of course we have the Facebook, the Twitter, the sharing tools that you can send the information on to your friends and share that information.

We also have the links to our Facebook sites, our Twitter, our YouTube and then our Director's Blog. Off of our website, that's how we're connecting with people back and forth.

Our Facebook site, this is a look of it. We want to make sure we're branded on the left-hand side. It shows that we're part of the University of Arizona and that we're with Cooperative Extension. The main things that we want to make sure of is that when we were creating this — we came up with a plan. We didn't just throw up a Facebook page and say okay, now what do we do?

We actually had a plan in place as to how we were going to do that. What was our purpose? Yes, education. Absolutely. Awareness; try to get people to know about us. We wanted to have some fun with it too, while we were at it.

Content? What type of content? Are we just going to do text? Are we going to do multiple types of things? Videos? We had ideas about that. How are we going to keep things going? The worst thing you could do with Social media is to put something up there and then not add to it. Or keep it alive.

We needed a plan as to how we were going to continue to do this. Those were the three main things we were considering when we put up our Facebook.

We also have a Twitter. You can see that we have different types of things that we tweet about. Twitter's a whole different character — I mean an animal out there. You have 140

characters. You have to do things in micro sentences. There's a whole different language you use even that I'm still not 100 percent on.

We always link back to some place where people can get more information. We advertise our programs via that. Especially if they're happening in the next couple of days or that particular day. Different things that are going on with the national organization. We use Twitter in that regard and I'm gonna show you some other things that we do with it here in a little bit.

We have some blogs. Now Twitter's a little micro piece of information that you put out there. Blogs are just the opposite. You have to really plan for a blog and put more information out there. We have several more than this throughout the state, but we have our Directors Blog and our 4H Blog that we have. Our Vista Blog.

Then we've got this — one of our agents up in Yavapai County who's been doing blogs forever. He does a great job with his gardening blog. We also have — on of our new ones is our IPM people that are trying to put information out there.

Blogs are a great source of information for people. We also have a YouTube channel to show off our videos. YouTube allows us to put our videos out there so we're not taking up server space at the university. People can then find it two different ways. First off of the university website — off of our extension website. Then also, sort of serendipitously, off of YouTube if people are just — they don't necessarily have to be searching exactly for something but may come across our stuff. We're finding it to be quite useful.

Statewide there's a list of all of the different groups of our Facebook's sites at the very top you can see the three that are out of the state office which are the ones that Molly and I work on. Each of our counties — some of them are now doing their own Facebook sites. Some of them are doing, not only for their county, but also for their 4H program that's going on. Some of our statewide or regional programs are doing their own Facebook. Some of them are doing Twitters and blogs. Then the videos are in those particular categories.

There's a lot going on within extension with social media. This, now I thought I was going to be a one-up on you guys, but you know all about this. You have it on your nametags what a QR code is. Everybody out there knows what a QR code is, right?

Yeah, we've got heads — you're way ahead of me on this one. Basically this QR code has this particular information imbedded in it if somebody wants to read about that. Not only is this one me, but I also have one on here that I was really surprised to see when I walked up this morning. I've seen QR codes scattered around the resort area. There must be a game that's going on that you guys are playing, right? Something like that?

Well anyway, so QR codes I think have a lot of potential. One of the things that we did recently was to just sort of put this up to see if we could — people would click on this. We wanted — we were just sort of curious. Would people click on this to find out what's actually there? It was a — we have a publication on how to do — handle turkey without killing yourself. We wanted to put that up there. We had a few hits on it and we've got some other ideas that we're gonna try to use QR codes. I think there's a lot of potential there.

You're sitting there saying okay, you got all of these different social media things, so what? Yay, university's doing social media. What good is that doing you guys as — is it worth tax

payer money to do this? Well, I think it is. In this day and age where we have a much more limited budget within Extension we are trying to find ways to connect with people. This is proving to be a new way to connect with people.

We can maybe connect with a group that we traditionally not hit. It would be really nice to get that 18 to 45-year-olds. We usually hit the older — I'm not going to say older; I'm that group. Above 45 and we, of course, hit a lot of youth. We want to make sure we hit at that other group also.

We also don't have the resources to now go out and meet one-on-one the way we used to so much. We're looking for new ways of doing this. Social media doesn't take over anything else or doesn't eliminate anything else. It's another tool that we can use to reach people. I think it is a good thing to be doing it.

The types of things that we are looking at with Twitter. It was real important when we had the equine herpes virus that came out in May in the state we were able to tweet about and get information out there. As Peter Cuneo put out updates we were able to let people know about that. Then when the final situation report came out we were able to let people know about that in real time. As soon as we found out about it we were putting it out there.

There are some real advantages to being able to do things quickly with Twitter or Facebook. Is anybody noticing well, this @mentions at the very top — the "at" sign with the mentions. That means that somebody's paying attention and maybe acknowledging you in their tweet or retweeting something about you. We're getting a few of those, so that's encouraging.

We're just getting started in this, but we're getting a few of those. When our new dean came onboard that was fairly hot for a while so people were retweeting about that—or not retweeting, but at least mentioning that we were posting about our new dean. There are some good uses for it.

With Facebook, of course, with stats you can say just about anything. This is our demographics that we're using off of Facebook. You can see there that I said we were trying to hit that 18 to 45 age group. Well, we're not exactly there. Most of our folks are still above that 45 year which is kinda surprising that we're hitting that group on Facebook.

We've got our work cut out for us. We know we need to do some better marketing but we've only been at this for a few months. We've got to do some better marketing and hit a different group of people.

This graph is kind of interesting. The blue one is the likes — the new likes that we've had for each month along the bottom. The red is the average post views, and then the green is the responses to the post. The post interactions that we've had. We're cruising along there at our start. Then August comes along and then what happened in August? That looks pretty cool, doesn't it?

What happened? Well, who knew that flowers could be such an attractant on Facebook? We decided we'd have a little bit of fun and we decided we'd have a flower contest. We gave away some really cool prizes and stuff. We had people submitting photographs of flowers like you wouldn't believe. It was great. We had some beautiful flowers submitted.

In the meantime when people — when we knew we were getting this extra traffic on our site we were posting things about Extension and what we were doing and what programs

we had. Trying to increase our awareness while people were engaging in this little fun activity.

That was a lot of fun to do that and you can see September kept that — there was still some people coming back to check to see who won. It's fallen off a little bit since then, but we're higher than we were before that. We've got some more activity on our site so that's encouraging.

Food is not nearly as big a thing. We started doing a food contest a few weeks ago. There is not the reaction to food that there is to flowers. That was kind of a learning curve to us. Flowers, if you need to attract people do flowers, it seems.

This is a very important item right here. This information — at that time we had 211 likes to our page which is not very much — very many. We were getting about one a day average which is — that's okay. We had 211 likes. Well, at that same time if you count the people — the people that are liking us it's showing up on their Facebook. From their Facebook their friends are seeing it and maybe posting to it.

The actually people that could possibly have seen our stuff was over 50,000 just even having 210 people liking us. That is kind of an interesting stat to me that you're reaching that many more people even though you only have direct contact with that 211.

The types of posts are real important to us. We want to make it meaningful to people; what we're doing. When we had the fires in the first part of the summer we were trying to put up information that would be relevant to people and to point them to other places that they could go to find information. Other types of things that we try to post — ants.

Ants are another big topic. This was our biggest conversation. We got really excited about this. We had 11 people going back and forth talking about ants. That was kinda fun to do it that way. Again, the horse information was good to get that out there when the updates came out. When we had the equine metritis issue also we posted about that. We're using it as a way to get information out to people.

You can see that some of our agents and some of our other people are posting occasionally, adding to it which is very, very nice. Also we're trying to use things that are important to people's lives like Christmas or Halloween or something along that line. Letting people know about different publications that we have or different information that might be useful to them. We're trying to get that type of information out there.

Of course if one of our own people is doing good or has a — rather has something happening like our Operation Military kids which is a huge program for youth in this state. She was on — the coordinator was on the early morning show so we wanted to let people — make people aware of that, rather. Then also when one of our people does good such as one of our directors being appointed to the President's council on fitness. We want to let people know that we're out there doing things.

It's a way to do a lot of different types of posts and get information out there. As Steve said people use Facebook and Twitter as their sources of information. I know Molly uses Twitter and Facebook as her only source of news information and subscribes to all different kinds of news feeds. That's how she gets her news information.

A friend of mine the other morning called me at 6:00 in the morning saying — knew I had a family member hitting the road that morning and said the interstate is closed east of Wilcox.

I said how did you know that. She said oh, I was just checking my Twitter feed, now I'm going back to bed. It's the way people get information. There's lots of things you can do with it now.

What we need to recognize at the university is that this is a new way of thinking. For us it's a new way of thinking and it's not a singular activity. It's fine if I sit there at my desk and post a little Facebook post and let people know about this or that, but it's so much better if we can get our agents involved or our faculty staff involved and get a conversation going; connecting with people.

I've had people tell me oh, I can't call the university. Those people would think I'm stupid if I call them. I can't actually talk to a professor or a faculty member or something. Well, this is a way to maybe make it a little more friendly and to allow people to connect with us.

It is a group effort and we need to — that's something we're working on within Extension is to make that more widely known. It's also — at the university we like to lecture. That's kinda what we're known for, but it's a discussion now. It's not a lecture. We need to encourage people to have this type of discussion.

Plans for the future? Well, the QR codes I think have a lot of potential. We're not exactly sure how, at this point — how we can better use them. I know like in New York City at the Central Park they've got — at the bandstand or whatever they've got a QR code set up there. When you read it with your QR code reader there's a whole performance that goes on — a concert that plays for you right there at that same spot.

Or there's another one you can go to and it gives you the historical background. There's some really creative things that can be done with QR codes. I know there's an exhibit here — one of your exhibitors is doing QR code things. It's kind of interesting and we're going to look into that.

YouTube; we need to work on our videos. Everything from our professional — we have professional videographers at the university that we can use. So many people are now just taking their phone out and shooting or doing a little camera thing. That's fine too; it has its place. We have to use those better to do better marketing to get those set up.

Mobile technology; we're not sure. It's an up and coming thing and a lot of people are using it. Do we invest in optimizing our pages and our information for viewing on a mobile technology? Do we start invest in creating apps? What do we do? We don't know at this point, but we do know we better get in the game or we're not going to be ahead. We're going to be falling way behind.

With Facebook and Twitter there's three stages. We're still in the first stage I feel. We're learning, creating, planning, sharing. We're slowly starting to build our community. We need to move into that stage now and become much more active in that. How you evaluate your impact is going to be the big challenge.

I think that's what we need to do; those three stages. I think that's true of all of this social media that we do. We just need to continue to try to figure out the next steps and how to make it better as we go along.

I'd love to get feedback from you on what you have ideas for us. What we can do, what other ways to do it. We'll talk about that in a little bit. I want to thank you for allowing me to share a little bit what we're doing. Monica's gonna cover the more general aspect of it.

These are just little things that we are doing within Extension. I don't know if I did that or if it went on.

I thank you very much for your time.

[Applause]

Mr. Steve May: Before the next speaker comes to the podium I'd like to just tell a quick story. Last summer my wife and I went to Upper Michigan on vacation. While I was up there I figured I was away from the racing world, away from everything. It was great. I check my Twitter feed and it turned out that a guy that I had met earlier at the year at the Louisiana Derby via Twitter was actually about ten miles from where I was.

Later on that weekend we all went out to a baseball game. I tell you that just because it's — Twitter and social media has brought everyone together so closely. I just find that fascinating. This was a guy that I had met — he's a very knowledgeable horse player. Very opinionated on the racing industry, that's a definite.

He found out through Twitter he was gaping to be in New Orleans through the Louisiana Derby, we met up there. Again, we met up in Michigan of all places. We weren't planning anything like that but I think it's just a very good example of how Twitter has brought the world together.

This morning I had another kind of run-in with that. I didn't even realize it but Monica is someone that I've been following on Twitter for a long time. I just find it fascinating that I've met — I've got a list of people now that I've met via social media. I just find it fascinating.

Tucson Cowgirl is Monica's Twitter handle. Someone that actually — I think I've interacted with her in the past. It's just a fascinating aspect of this. I think it's something that the racing industry needs to try to embrace even more. There's been some race tracks doing a great job of this. Keeneland especially. They're one that have really dedicated time and money to interacting with their fans. Most importantly to try to increase the handle. They have someone in the paddock that's actually monitoring the races, giving out their picks. They've been very successful with that.

To give everyone an example of ways that you can try to include this into your business plan Monica Spigelman is going to speak with us. Monica has a very, very diverse background. She's worked for the *New York Times*, has been a journalist on many different things. For the past couple of years she's been — the last five years she has been an independent consultant on how to integrate social media aspects into your business. I think she's gonna shed a good insight into this. Monica is up next, thank you.

[Applause]

Ms. Monica Spigelman: Hi! Gotta wake you people up. Are you all marketers out there? I can hardly see with the lights out there, but are marketers out there? Raise your hand if you're marketers.

If you're not a marketer or you don't call yourself a marketer be aware that the world has changed. It's not in the process of changing; it's already leaped over the bounds and gotten there. Communications, marketing, it's all part of this digital age. Whether you're in the racetrack association or whether you're a retired United Parcel Service Division Manager

or whether you're just here wanting to communicate with different people you need to understand that the digital world is here and you need to get involved in it.

I hope today, unlike what we just heard from Sheila, is to not talk at all about myself. Although it's nice to hear that I am connecting with somebody already in this organization through Twitter. It's important to just give you some tools and to hear the big picture of what's going on in this digital world. Then from there we can go further. If you do not hear something that you wanted to hear as part of this presentation or if you're writing something down and you want to know the URL that I'm talking about or the particular research project that I'm talking about check into the Tucson Cowgirl site tomorrow. I'll have it up.

I'll have a page listing the resources of what we're talking about and the presentation. If you don't want to do that you can also just leave your email at the conference desk or with delight or with Steve. I'll be happy to get you a list of the resources that we have in this presentation.

Hello to you marketers. It's good to see you and it's nice to hear from people like Sheila who say that they're just getting started. That's important. Even if you're not into this yet, be persistent. Because what we all want is influence. What we're all here, I'm sure in this room trying to do, is to influence.

You have a great tradition in your organization and it does instill passion in the blood of so many. There are ways to continue to inspire this loyalty and advocacy at the local level. There are ways to gather new fans in the process. There's no question that you can do that; influence your organization through social media today.

Social media has permanently altered the landscape of business and personal communications. Because we're all looking for this influence; the need to gain brand awareness and to build the passion and loyalty of our audiences we ended to understand that marketing has changed. It's more about building it in many different sources and venues and not just in the old traditional ways.

Steve mentioned *New York Times* and when I say — when I hear that I say to myself I'll show how old I am by knowing you can find my articles in the archives. In the archives of the *New York Times*, but that's okay. Twenty, 30 years ago can you imagine even considering something like what's going on today in the world of communications and in particular my field of journalism? No. You know what's out there for our future.

You can leverage the contributions of the racetrack and equine industry. Look at all you have influenced in your community already. I'm sure you all support where the non-profits, support the local economy, offer recreational green spaces. You have so much to offer so you can influence your communities.

With the proper marketing strategy in place incorporating your brand marketing, your advertising, your social media, you're media relations and your partnerships. Influence is something that you can achieve.

Our focus today, though, is on emerging social media patterns and the digital niches that are best suited to promoting your partnerships and your great brands. Be mindful that social media, though, and I'll say this over and over again, is only part of your marketing toolbox. It's a productive too, though. It will help you establish a seat in the conversations that Sheila was talking about. Conversations you believe in and want to be part of. It will

also ensure that your operation is not just sitting on the sidelines while all these other reap the benefits of social media in all your different audiences.

Social media represents an unprecedented marketing opportunity. It transcends the middleman and connects organizations directly with consumers in your community. Unfortunately this is one thing that I disagree with Sheila on. She mentioned that I'm a social media expert. When you hear that word I'm not saying you should run away from it, but just be aware that you don't need a social media expert. You don't need anybody like me to do your job. You can be the social media expert yourself.

The internet, though, has helped this social media go mainstream. It makes collaborations of large groups of widely spread people possible. Its ability to store this large amount of information has quintupled in the last decade. I'm sure you all know that the majority of your customers and people across the United States and around the world have now high speed internet connections in their homes.

What this means is that the technical and the social environments have married. The internet is now actively social. Your supporters and your future supporters are out there in those numbers. They're sharing photos, they're making connections, they're telling stories, they're giving advice, they're watching videos. There are more than 1.2 billion email users. There are more than 500 million Facebook users. There are almost 15 billion photos on Facebook and Flickr alone. There are more than 55 million visits per month on Twitter and 133 million blogs.

It all sounds very impressive, doesn't it? Something else is now afoot. This is something to — please take note of this. This is very, very important. The World Wide Web has now gotten too big and noisy. You probably, or at least those of us who had been disillusioned with social media or just overwhelmed by all the different tools out there have probably been saying this for a while. Why I'm saying to take note of this is because Google and the other major gatekeepers, through their browsers, are now looking at this very, very, very seriously.

They are going to now do something about this noise. This is why it's so important to you to understand this. You cannot just have this formula of a Facebook page, a Twitter page, and go post there every once in a while and expect all the traffic to come rambling in. Uh-uh.

People like Google are now going to try to influence the way we navigate through this web and this mass of information. They are going to now start looking at more and more filters of information. While they are designing the filters of the future to guide us through all this slush you want to ensure that these filters, these gatekeepers and the personalization of information which is the next step in the World Wide Web right now. That this information brings you and your organization to the top and does not bury you at the heap.

That's why you need to be aware of effectively using social media to do the right job for your tools. In this session that's what we're going to hope to do. To give you this broad picture, but to try to help you avoid being buried by giving you some of the insights on these tools.

We are going to try to help you identify the platforms and your strategy in building your brand within these platforms. There are many formulas. People will all have their formula and I wanted to share mine with you. Mine sort of wraps around this very methodical

approach. I'm a journalist, I'm former corporate so I do things very methodically and look at it from a business perspective.

The formula is in this circle to ensure online influx. Obviously first you need to develop the goals that will get you to influenced the conversations you need to be part of. That's not just words. I'm not just saying words. It is very important to understand what you want to do on the web and what conversations you want to be part of.

Another thing you have to do is identify your voice, your brand. This is, again, where other parts of marketing come in; not just social media. You need to define your brands in these conversations and on these platforms.

The third part, which is very important particularly with this slush of platforms that is out there, is to aggregate and manage all the platforms, all the fans, all the contacts and all the communities that you want to contribute to and the ones you want to maintain on the internet. If you don't do this you're going to be overwhelmed. Aggregation is critical and a very important part of the influence circle.

The next is enacting processes that methodically help you connect and acknowledge all the people you engage with on the web on a regular basis. I think you heard Sheila before talk about it's not just a matter of lecturing; it's actually conversation. This part is very, very important. Anybody who thinks they're just gonna post some ideas out there on the web and think the world is gonna come to them, it ain't gonna work.

Then you have to understand how to distribute your messages in these platforms and widely crowd source what we call news vines and internet community. I can't spend a lot of time on this and probably won't in this presentation, but if you need to know about these various forms of distribution platform like dig and delicious. There are so many of them out there for you to make use of to distribute your information. It's a big wild, wild internet—western world out there. You need to find those places to imprint your messages. You need to know how to regularly distribute your information.

The final part of the circle is — which keeps it going in this circle is to monitor, to analyze, and to keep monitoring again how you're doing with your visibility. Are you on track with your plans? Are you measuring your return on investment? That's what keeps this circle going.

Today obviously, as I said, you can't tackle the whole formula, but we're gonna look at a few of the critical platforms where you can let your voice be heard. While there are so many I focus on the big ten. The big ten is, in my opinion, necessary to be part of your toolbox when you're creating your social media integrated in your marketing plan.

The ten are location-based social media sources like Foursquare. Social commerce sites like Groupon and LivingSocial. Google+ and I don't know if anybody's already participating on Google+. I'll talk about that because it's important — it's an important part to reckon with. Then you know the next one, Facebook, Twitter, even LinkedIn. LinkedIn is important too and I'll try to explain why I think that's important to be part of your toolbox in a few minutes.

Then there's YouTube and Flickr or other photo source collection sites; very important, particularly with your industry. I was out in the exhibit area and I was looking around at your beautiful magazines. You have such gorgeous visuals — important visuals. Whether

it's for the racetrack or the equine or your beautiful green spaces; you have so many visuals that are important to be shown out on the internet.

Then the final two are very important. Your blog; the blog is something that is different from your website because it allows interaction with fans and with customers and with very industry experts. Then your website is the final. The website, to me, no matter what you're hearing about all these other social media platforms, your website is your big mama; your mainstay. It's all the other points should lead back to your website.

It is the base with the fodder that brings people back to you. It is where your business resides. It's where you cultivate loyalty. It's where you realize your deals and your campaigns. It is the most important vehicle you have and you need to pay attention to it.

Let's start looking and hopefully quickly at all the different tools in your toolbox. I started with location-based and I'm bringing up Foursquare; location check-ins. Does anybody have a mobile phone and use a mobile phone and check in? If you don't your customers do. I see some of you do already, but your customers, your various audiences, all different age groups. Not just the younger age demographic, but also the older too are using location check-ins on Facebook on Twitter as well as on places like Foursquare.

These check-ins represent the where to social networking. Location is a layer of social information and it is becoming very, very important. Those using social media now want to know where their friends are checking in. It's not just the big players; Facebook or Google Maps are also involved with this.

You have companies like Foursquare that have more than 50 million users and are well funded. They're not going to go away. Foursquare is around for a while and location-based is around for a while.

About two years ago Mashable, the tech site Mashable wrote about Foursquare as the break-out social mobile media application at South by Southwest. I don't know if you know it but it's that music and media conference in Austin Texas. At that conference just a couple of years ago Foursquare reported adding almost 100 thousand new users during a 10 day period. That's just incredible. I think you would want to add 100 thousand users to your Facebook page or to your account. Foursquare did it in a matter of ten days.

During the same period at this fantastic conference Foursquare had 347 thousand check-ins just in one day alone. Foursquare is a location-based mobile application that allows users to check in at their favorite location, connect and share information with friends. I don't know if anybody here uses it. I'm a member of Foursquare and I'll regularly check it for information from friends on restaurants or to play games with friends about who's going to become the mayor of a particular location because I've check in there more than another. If I'm having fun with this your customers are going to have fun with this as well.

The best part of Foursquare is that you can use Foursquare to engage customers in getting new prospects through this fun medium. It is free in the modest version of it. It does take your time, so it's frankly not free. I think Sheila mentioned this as well. If you're just going to jump into something and then not actively participate and mature your participation in it it's not worth it. It is a free tool and you should investigate it.

The kicker in location-based platforms like foursquare is wrapped around this growing importance of mobile. I'm sure everybody here has some kind of a mobile device. Mobile

internet use is going to outpace desktop use by 2015. The value of check-ins is truly exploding.

I think many of you in this room can recall, like I did, that just a few years ago you just wouldn't think that we would be where we are today with mobile, but it's here. Check-ins generate excitement through deals you offer your fans via their check-ins. Through check-ins you are building your brand virally. Because what happens is people promote their check-ins through their own social media. It exponentially grows your brand.

Foursquare users truly enjoy the application because it is a fun application. You earn points, you claim a mayor-ship of a venue, you share tips and keep friends updated on experiences. Although the user numbers are small in comparison to like a Facebook or a Twitter, Foursquare is already experiencing a higher growth rate than more mature Facebook. Please keep that in mind.

It is time to position yourself in the landscape of location-based media. To get a foothold in it what you're going to do is you're going to claim your venue in a very simple process on Foursquare. By claiming it you're going to be allowed to use real-time check-in analytics about who's checking in. It helps you rewards customers who are checking in.

There are free tools on Foursquare as well to give you the ability to offer specials through Foursquare. Another step that's going to have to happen is that Foursquare will need to verify that you're the manager of your location. Before you're going to actually start out this you just make sure you're the person who's the one who's going to manage the Foursquare account. You're going to get verified.

Whether you claim your venue or not, and I can say this with certainty because I looked around at the various — some of the various participants of this particular symposium. I know that people have already checked into your location and have broadcasted information out about your locations even if you have not officially claimed your venue on Foursquare. I suggest you jump in and participate because your customers already are. In doing this you'll be able to create campaigns that reward loyalty with incentives and tie these incentives into repeat visits.

Number two on the big ten is social commerce. Looking at the various online marketing and ecommerce trends of 2011 what stands out is the incredible growth of localization. There's no better example of localization than Groupon.

Groupon dominates the category of localization. It promotes daily deals in specific cities through emails and social networks. Typically there's a minimum threshold of buyers needed to have a deal come to fruition; to take effect. The number of these daily deal sites aside from Groupon and LivingSocial has truly blossomed. The two big ones up there by a very wide margin are Groupon and LivingSocial.

There are differences though in the demographics and the manner of advertising with these two sites that you should be aware of if you're going to consider using this in your toolbox. For example one analysis which is comScore analysis. Again, I'll have these resources up on a website if you're interested in following through.

LivingSocial concentrates a large amount of its display ads about its deals in the top five properties. By that I mean Google, Facebook, Yahoo, AOL and all the Microsoft applications and scatters the rest all around the internet. While Groupon does just the opposite. It delivers only 31 percent of it's advertising on your deals to these big sites while 69 percent

go to all of different types of smaller publishers. Both of them are obviously effective or they wouldn't be so large up there. You need to consider that.

Groupon and LivingSocial really sit at the top accounting for 90 percent of all the visits among these group buying sites tracked by comScore. BuyWithMe which I saw in your program which is the only reason why I'm mentioning it is a distant third. I hope I'm not — I hope there's no one here from groups like that. I don't wanna insult anybody, but they're all important. Groupon and LivingSocial are on top.

Nielson released a study. If you're interested in Nielson and respect that organization you should know that, according to their study, LivingSocial users are wealthier. Groupon's users are a little bit older but I don't mean older like in 70's or something like that. They're just in the 35 and up level is who they attract. LivingSocial has a younger user group with 33 percent between 21 and 34.

I guess all these things are important to you. Again, going back to your strategy depending on the audiences and the conversation you wish to get involved in.

I've seen conflicting information on this but according to the Nielson study they say that LivingSocial visitors are concentrated in the south and the Pacific regions and that Groupon is concentrated in the North East. Frankly I've heard just the opposite from comScore. I'm not sure about that, but I trust Nielson.

Visitors to both of these sites are about 2/3 female. Groupon operates on a percentage model. That means it takes a cut — a large cut of the revenues from the vouchers which are part of your deal with the rest going to the organization. Once again when you're thinking about this think carefully about why you're using a site like this — social commerce site. So you know why you're using it and effectively go after the right type of deal for your strategy.

There is something to note, though that is very important about this social commerce promotions. To me it's the viral aspect of having people talk about these deals. What happens is you have to get people to participate to make a deal really be going on. Everybody is tweeting their friends and Facebooking and doing everything to get these deals underway.

In effect you're being publicized across the internet. That's a very big plus about social commerce. The aggregator sites which the Groupons and the LivingSocial promote their deals on keep the buying going even more.

Social commerce and Groupon and LivingSocial, the whole phenomenon is more than just a revenue stream. It's changing the way business promote their brands. If that's something you're interested in you should consider social commerce.

Google+. You may wonder why I'm singling this out but consider this: Google sites enjoyed 184.5 million unique visitors very recently. Facebook came in fourth with 160 million visitors. Okay, you might say well, that's pretty even why do I need Google+? I know you're asking yourself this, why would you need to start another page? Frankly you need to know that although Facebook is hugely popular, search is still a primary online activity for many people.

Where do most of you do your searches? I would say it's Google. Google will give greater visibility to the search results — in their search results, excuse me — to content that is

delivered and shared through Google pages. A little self serving? Yes. That is what is happening now and that's why you need to consider Google+.

With Google+ you'll get the benefits of a social media branding page plus the benefits of search. The content shared on the Google pages will more likely show up in search results. It is as simple as that. That's why it needs to be in your toolbox.

You should also know, though, that Google+ and specifically their page is a work in progress. You need to give it some time but it doesn't hurt to get involved with it right now. In my opinion Google is not known for failure. I would recommend that you evaluate and put it into your toolbox.

We all know this, so I'm not going to spend a lot of time on this. In an organizational Facebook page provides an outlet for more than 500 million Facebook users to connect with your organization. I think you want some of those 500 million people to connect with your organization so that's why Facebook page is very important.

I would be surprised if you do not have a simple version of a Facebook page, but if you don't please try to launch it as soon as possible. Even in the basic steps, as we've heard from Sheila, you can have a first phase to your approach. It can be, at first, just a place to greet fans, to tell them about your venue, to provide a link back to your website.

Aside from building your list of supporters your Facebook page is a form of market research and I think you saw that in Sheila's presentation as well. You can use the analytics of Facebook to learn a lot about demographic information about your supporters.

Facebook ads, which Sheila didn't talk about, which is something interesting though, can be targeted. Let's say you want to do an ad to an 18 to 25-year-old group in Southern California. You can do that with Facebook ads for not necessarily very much money depending on the length of your campaign.

There are also many web features and many add-on applications that people have created to get involved in the Facebook craze. That includes discussion groups, photo galleries, event promotions. You can engage your fans by posting your blog content here, by sharing pictures, by embedding videos. All of these help you start conversations on Facebook.

You should allow fans to post to your wall on Facebook. I've heard from many — I was corporate before and I work now with organizations like the Tucson Festival of Books which is the fourth largest in the country. Tucson Meet Yourself which is the largest southwest folk life festival. At first there's a concern among people, especially in executive authority wondering oh my god, if let people post what if something negative comes up? How am I going to deal with it?

You deal with it with authenticity and you have some filtering capability with Facebook as well. You should remember to allow yourself to post regularly. Especially when you have an event underway you yourself should be communicating and talking with the fans that make their way onto your Facebook page.

I want to just briefly mention something about contests and rules and on social media platforms. I'm speaking to the experts here, I know, about contests and regulations. You have very specific sessions, I know, during this conference that's dealing with it. I need you to be aware that social media has its own set of rules too.

Facebook has an online handbook to instruct you with these regulations, but you can also consider a third party application like Wildfire. It's one of the best, which can help you build entry forms and manage campaigns for small fees.

You can also have the contest hosted on your website so you can avoid some of the regulatory pitfalls that come if you don't understand regulation of contests on social media sites.

Twitter. I'm glad I know Steve through Twitter, but Twitter is that micro-blogging world which is a big world right now. We mentioned it in the slides earlier on but Twitter is a big, big and growing more big voice in the social media conversations. On Twitter you can and should be providing informational tidbits and links — always link back to the website. Remember it is your most important vehicle.

You can mix comments, engage conversations with people. You can provide promos, you can keep viewers informed on a various number of topics related to your industry as well. It's important, especially for influence that you talk about your industry so you can show your knowledge and your prominence in it. Your passion for it as well.

Remember too, I have this up here about your social media profile. You need to describe — this is for Facebook as well as for Twitter; in fact for all your social media platforms. Describe your organization using branded keywords. Remember, this goes back to that first point in the circle about your strategy. What am I trying to say? What's my brand mean? What are my keywords? Also a link to the website; it should also include this. All your social media platforms are a wonderful place to convey your brand and do it through the profile sections of each of the brand platforms.

Twitter also allows you to add Twitter members through things called lists. If you have tools like HootSuite it helps you organize your fans but also helps you organize a trend. RTIP is your hashtag — that's a Twitter lingo; hashtag. I've seen several tweets from you guys out there under this hashtag.

In an application like HootSuite you'll be able to organize all this on your mobile device, look at every tweet going on about RIT and know what you need to comment on regarding this particular hashtag. Again, going back to — I don't know if you remember what I said. To me it's all a very, very methodical process. If you keep your head about you and do it in a very organized way you're going to do a great job with your own social media.

Back in April, Twitter's Vice President of International Strategy had said that Twitter had 200 million registered, productive accounts. That means people who are regularly out there tweeting. Not just people who go on and get off in a day. Those numbers are growing tremendously fast. Again, more than Facebook's growth.

LinkedIn is a favorite of mine because I focus on the business end. It is not — I need you to understand it is not a resume based website for professionals. That's not the good of LinkedIn. LinkedIn has over 101 million members, including the executives from every Fortune 500 company. It is the most important social network after Facebook, Twitter and Flickr. It is a force to be reckoned with.

According to statistics 50 percent are decision makers in the company. Seventy-two percent are between the ages of 25 and 54. Ninety-five percent have a college education. If that's the type of person that you want to network with, that you want to talk to about — LinkedIn is the place for you.

If you want to build your presence on LinkedIn you get involved with LinkedIn answers. The Q&A portion of LinkedIn is very interesting. Lots of business people participate in it. The more you respond to questions that are on LinkedIn the higher you build your expertise level and respect in the community.

You can also use the LinkedIn advanced search functionality to search for particular keywords, to try to figure out a marketing plan that you're going to be working on, identify vertical markets that are important to you. It is a very good tool to have.

Another part about LinkedIn that's so important is the market research aspects of it. You can do polls within LinkedIn. All this is free, by the way. It can help you develop your own market research plan when you go back to your employer, to your industry. You can use it for good results.

Going quickly now. YouTube and Flickr I lump into one category. I heard Sheila say that she needs to get more involved with video and also with photography, I hope. With iPhones and digital devices now making video taking so simple you need to get this going. There are more than 10 billion YouTube videos watched each month in the United States alone. Ten billion.

If you had something — with your industry, to me the options are incredible. Horses, green spaces, lovely tracks, fun enthusiastic fans; you could have a ball with this type of video uploads. It's time to start uploading any good form of promotional or consumer interest content.

Another fact I have is that there are 24 hours worth of videos uploaded every minute on YouTube. It's crazy. It's the second largest search engine in the world. You should be part of it. You don't have to worry about doing a very fine corporate video to get involved.

Mr. Steve May: I apologize. I'm getting a sign from the back. We have a hard deadline at 11:30 and I want to be able to have a few questions. I hate to rush you.

Ms. Monica Spigelman: Okay.

Mr. Steve May: We have a few members that have to be at meeting at 11:30.

Ms. Monica Spigelman: Okay. We're up to blog would be number nine. Number ten is the website which we talked about. I want to just quickly put up the future. How much time do we have? A few minutes or are we over it now?

Mr. Steve May: Getting close.

Ms. Monica Spigelman: Okay. These are the future. I just want to make sure you understand this. Mobile which Sheila had talked about. Contests, the regulations are changing on social media. You need to be involved with that. You need to have sessions here about QR code and you need to know that that is an absolute part of the future and you should make use of it, but do not just make it a passing fad.

Filters what I talked about very early on is very important. Then having this well mixed toolbox is the most important. I'm not going to go into this but the most important thing I want to leave you with is don't forget your face-to-face communications in addition to all this fun stuff we're talking about; social media.

The face-to-face you're still talking about that individual person. That individual person coming to your track. Not just doing everything virtually. Don't forget that face-to-face communication. If you want, go on the website or ask Steve for some information in the future so I can give you a list of the resources that we talked about today. Thank you very much.

[Applause]

Mr. Steve May: I wanted to leave time for a few quick questions if anybody has anything they'd like to ask these experts.

I guess I have kind of one question. For virtually all of our racetracks at this point the resources both in human and in financial resources are extremely limited. What is your suggestion, from both of you — if a company has very limited time, very limited resources should they be a little bit involved in all of these different aspects of social media? Should they be heavily involved in one or two? What takeaway would you give to the audience members today? What suggestions would you give in that aspect?

Ms. Sheila Merrigan: I think my response would be that it depends. What is it you're trying to do? If you need to get alerts out really quickly that sort of thing maybe Twitter is the way to go. If you want to have more in depth types of information a blog might be the way to go. Facebook you've got a kind of a combination of things there and you can get a conversation going. I think you need to kinda analyze kinda what it is that you want to do and then determine which of these tools you want to use.

As you can see we, in Extension, chose which ones we wanted to use. We were slowly adding more to it. It's kind of — we have to determine which one works best for you.

Ms. Monica Spigelman: I say just the opposite. I think you need to do all of them. The way to do this simply is to get one of the aggregators which I can give you resource information on that as well. You can put on your mobile device an aggregator tool that will allow you to communicate to all the different sites almost at once.

I know you need to tweak your information but when you have the right tools you can spread that information out quickly.

Mr. Steve May: Stewart?

Audience Member: I would just like to make a point that I would highly recommend that in any strategy that you start working on that you consider mobile devices. A recent statistic shows that 42 percent of all Americans who own cell phones, 42 percent of those are smart phones. Within this key demographic that we're constantly talking about trying to attract into the industry 18 to 29-year-olds it's 52 percent. When you're looking at all these sorts of social media resources that you want to get involved with you also have to think about how it's going to be presented; how it's going to be accessed by these demographics on these mobile devices.

Ms. Monica Spigelman: Amen.

Ms. Sheila Merrigan: Good point.

Mr. Steve May: Well, actually, we're up against a hard deadline. I know several of you have to get to the mentor lunch. That will be upstairs at the Cottonwood Room at 11:30. Also Doug wanted me to re-mention that both of the animal welfare panels have been combined into one session. That will start at 12:45 back here — I believe back here. Thank you very much. Give a hand to our speakers.

[Applause]

Ms. Monica Spigelman: Good luck.

Ms. Sheila Merrigan: Thank you.



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