

## In the Trenches

### Anti-social businesses suffer

By Christopher Reardon

Whether you are pushing an Indy car full throttle or cruising in a hybrid, if you are not driving your business through social media you are not in the race.

John Kullmann is running with the bulls. Kullmann is vice president sales and marketing for Macrosoft Inc., a software design and development company in Parsippany.

"Our demographic matches the medium," Kullmann said.

For Macrosoft social media entails a multi-layered marketing e-strategy. The company maintains a corporate web site and nine microsites that focus on specific products or services. The company's Facebook page is updated twice daily and its LinkedIn page twice weekly with information of value to its audience.

Macrosoft releases one or two YouTube videos per month that show a mixture of social activities within the company to allow its 300 global employees to stay connected while giving the company a human face. The company also recently launched an alumni employee program accessed through a LinkedIn group.

Kullmann tweets five times a day, though he is not convinced of the value, yet retired his blogging activities, convinced the medium is dying.

Kullmann is not a one-man band and has a staff that helps him be the social media butterfly he is. Ken Tourney, principal of Schooley Mitchell Telecom Consultants in Madison, is chief cook and bottle washer and learned through exploration which social media tools were best for him.

"I don't think it's a key driver of growing my business," Tourney said. "It's another way I use to stay top of mind with folks who know me and have a general idea of what I do."

Unlike Kullmann, Tourney finds blogging an effective way to achieve that.

"I realized that was a good way to have a focused discussion about my business and the topic of telecommunications," he said.

Tourney also uses social media to connect with people on a non-business

"The purpose of social media is to connect with your current clients and potential clients, and their friends and their clients. The point is not to sell and market to those people directly," said Valerie Paik, business development and project manager at TAG Online, Inc., a full-service web company in Clifton. "Obviously, we all want a return for our investment but if that comes off as too salesy that turns people away."

"You want to take an approach of what can I offer people who have very precious time. What can I offer them that will really impact their lives?"

TAG Online recently helped a client accomplish this by creating a downloadable custom coupon application offering a 50 percent discount to a weekly workshop about succeeding professionally while maintaining balance.

"It's all about getting to know people and creating relationships," Paik said.

"Social media is not marketing. It's really a conversation," said David Deutsch, founder and chief strategist at Synergy Social, a social media consulting firm.

"Think of your web site as your business and social media as the bar after work," he said. "You don't go to the bar to market yourself."

Deutsch recommends sending out relevant, high-quality information that people will find valuable and stimulating.

"Move away from the idea of ROI and to ROR. It's about a return on your relationships," he said.

"Who are your clients and how do you deliver value?" asked Angela Kubisky, executive vice president, membership and marketing at the Morris County Chamber of Commerce. "When you have a Facebook page it gives you more opportunity to exhibit your successes from your clients' perspective."

Kubisky also encourages businesses to ask questions on their Facebook page as a means of raising their visibility.

But does it all pay off?