

media is not where spare cash is thrown.

**Toby:** Absolutely.

**Dina:** I think if you start the conversation - and work towards a resolution together with the blogger or reader, its so much more powerful.

**Rajesh:** You have hit the nail on its head.

**Toby:** Involve the customer in the process Dina?

**Dina:** Take Silky Kumar - had I been the PR agency or the brand manager, I would have asked that blogger "Ok, we messed up and we value your views, how might you take this forward. What are your recommendations?" I don't think anyone should have 'solutions' - that's again going back to a one-to-many world.

**Toby:** That said how many companies have a process in place to react to this type of new way to hear their customers?

**Dina:** The point Toby is how many are listening?

**Rajesh:** The issue is what is the value of the blogger, just the writing? Why not the inputs? Those are far valuable.

**Rajesh:** They are BEGINNING to listen, I can tell you that much.

**Toby:** I've been finding that more are listening but they don't know what to do with the information

**Dina:** I was with Mid-Day the other day and told them Rajiv at Watblog.com had written about some plagiarism their publication was caught out doing - they had NO IDEA.

**Toby:** I heard 2 F-100s, which have social media tactics in place, recently say they were trying to understand how to talk to the bloggers within the bloggers' world and that they are bringing in someone who understands the space- people who have experience in relevant verticals. For example, healthcare has been slow to enter this space, but at a conference I spoke at recently everyone a room of healthcare marketers knew what RSS was all about.

We had to change the session before we began. We built it too elementary.

But at the same time I'm still finding that people in organizations where one would assume they have knowledge about social media do not.

**Dina:** The challenge I find here today is even more basic.

Even an organisation like Unilever, which tom-toms its success over something like Sunsilk GOG, do a simple search on 'shampoo' on google.co.in and they don't figure anywhere there.

**Toby:** I've been asked to speak to a marketing division of a Fortune 100 technology company. The CEO is blogging, but the staff people don't know anything about social media, let alone what RSS is all about.

**Dina:** I feel a lot of us keep talking about blogging, and that's quite daunting to them, but even if they learnt how to listen and started having conversations, that's a huge step ahead. People are not having conversations around their brands at all - all the conversations are within their walled gardens.

**Toby:** I'm seeing that too.

**Toby:** Companies who have a blog or build a community might address comments within that environment, but they rarely venture out into other people's blogs.

**Dina:** THAT'S the problem, if all you do is run your own corporate blog - you will get nowhere, unless you step out.

**Toby:** Delta launched a blog this summer. They seem to still be finding their 'blog wings' but they are listening and responding to comments.

**Rajesh:** Even that Dina, where are the corporate blogs? It's mostly entrepreneurs are blogging, corporate blogs are just about beginning to emerge.

**Toby:** It took a few years for the corporations to step into the space in the states. The auto industry seems to be more visible than any other. Also the Not for Profit(s)- very creative work.

**Dina:** I feel just talking blogging restricts us, social media is much more. I was telling Levers - even if it's a detergent used in rural areas, why not bring alive little videos of all the ethnographic work we do there? Share some of those 'stories'. Am realizing myself that approaching this whole thing from a blogging angle is very restrictive and gets loads of barriers up - it's about giving up power and control or conversely yielding much more.

Rather than that, have platforming strategies, not blogging strategies - they do small things - little things. Get themselves ranked up on Google

Remember the Coke - Mentos stories? Thousands of users

**“ Social tools of the digital generation have empowered people in such a way that all media is now social. They can repurpose it, comment on it, send it, and move it back and forth. And the sharing of opinions around it is accelerated.”**

just made those videos. Coke is also on Second Life. They are going where the users are.

**Rajesh:** But still tactical, no? My point is unless this fits into the strategy; and all brands need a unique strategy, for they are unique.

**Dina:** Yes, absolutely, sooo.... every brand today needs a social media strategy, not just a blogging strategy.

**Rajesh:** It is about an overall business / marketing strategy and INTO THAT seamlessly fits in the social media strategy. Unless that happens, it is tactical.

**Toby:** "It wasn't until I started developing our 2007 strategic marketing plan that I finally figured out my problem: I was trying too hard to develop a social networking strategy instead of incorporating social networking into my marketing strategy." Quote from an interview I did with the VP of Marketing, Goodwill of Greater Washington - Brendan Hurley.

**Toby:** Goodwill is a not for profit.

**Dina:** I wrote this piece for campaign India recently. "Why should we care as advertisers and marketers - all media is now social."

#### Key points:

- Social tools of the digital generation have empowered people in such a way that all media is now social. They can repurpose it, comment on it, send it, and move it back and forth. And the sharing of opinions around it is accelerated.
- Today, media is owned by the people who use it. The lines between producer of messages and consumers are blurring. This is a many-to-many world, where traditional media rules do not apply anymore.
- Merely pushing messages to your customers or target consumers will not work. Organizations which will win are those that more easily enable individuals to build relationships and communities with people they trust.
- Your teams must participate and engage your influencers and communities in their spaces, and not yours.
- Do you as a brand manager know who your top 150 influencers are? Have you got strategies for them? Are you prepared to acknowledge the risk that they may rant and not rave, still taking that leap of faith, because of the opportunity for open dialogue you have created?

**Rajesh:** We are now clear about tracking influencers on two parameters:

1. Comments
2. Interests

**Dina:** Tags are so beautiful here, as a technology that enables this

**Toby:** Links as well

**Rajesh:** Then how can we reach into their knowledge and get them to join our brand development process. I am sure you have seen the movie 'Big', stars Tom Hanks. No one knows which toy will work, better than a kid.

**Toby:** Love the part where he goes into FAO and plays

**Rajesh:** At many workshops we conduct for brands and corporates, we play a bit with tweetVolume that allows you to check buzz around keywords - it's fun, except that we still have less than 600 people on Twitter from India. That should change this year...

**Rajesh:** You are into Research, Dina. What will Mosoci do?

**Dina:** What we are planning with Mosoci is to help companies reframe value in a web 2.0 world, through immersions and research; through facilitation of futures and scenarios; workshops, boot-camps etc. At the Mosoci blog, we are putting in our life-streams, it's an aggregation of our personal blog posts, we have our bookmarks through Furl, we have our Tweets, Facebook contact et al.

**Toby:** Rather like a master dashboard.

**Toby:** If it could reside on my browser, where I could access what I wanted when I wanted.

**Dina:** Much like Facebook is becoming one of my key dashboards today.

End of Edition 5 - Part 1 (To be concluded)

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