

Marketers, media mustn't fear social media

Jovan Regasek, founder and CEO of ITWeb, recently [stated](#) that “virtual communities are bad news for the marketers. They are anti-commercial by definition. And they are bad news for the media owners”. As an entrepreneur, blogger and online trend watcher, I believe the opposite.

By [Tyler Reed](#) 13 Apr 2007

These so-called “virtual communities” (see MySpace, Facebook, YouTube and digg.com) are **not** bad news for marketers fact they are quite the opposite. Countless viral campaigns have successfully taken advantage of the power of these ‘virtual communities’. The only time that statement is true is when your marketing department **does not** plan and measure the campaign correctly. When planning to use [social media](#) as a part of a marketing campaign there are a few do's and don'ts

Do

Know Your Target Audience

Know exactly who your target audience is, focusing on a smaller group will more than likely yield greater results than trying to advertise to everyone. *Example:* Apple's student group on Facebook.

Research and trial testing

So you know your target audience, great! Select a sample group of people who match your target audience. Present some of your marketing material to them. Ask for feedback, they will tell you whether it will work or not.

Constantly monitor and respond

You need to constantly monitor your campaign. The more conversation there is about your product / campaign the more you will need to respond. A lot of this conversation will come from blogs. Thanks to services like [www.amatomu.com](#) and [www.afrigator.com](#), it has become easier to monitor the South African/African blogosphere. You can also use [www.technorati.com](#) and <http://blogsearch.google.com> for international blogs. Comment on blog posts, whether they be positive or negative. Not all bloggers are evil, some are more than willing to help re-build a damaged reputation.

Don't

Trick or mislead

We aren't stupid. Fool us once, shame on us. Fool us twice and you might as well do damage control for the entire duration of the campaign. Be honest with your audience. If you slip up, simply acknowledge it and rectify as best you can.

Wing it

Throwing something into the water and hoping it will float is plain senseless. You will either just be wasting money on a campaign that won't take off or end up being laughed at by someone who notices it.

Using social media for marketing is all about taking [intelligent risks](#) and [harnessing the power](#) it has become and will continue to be.

In South Africa our adoption rate for using social media for marketing is still relatively low, which is just perfect. We can learn from those who have failed before us. Remember, the **tortoise won the race**, not the hare.

- Adapted from original blog posting [Embrace the power of social media](#)

ABOUT TYLER REED

Tyler Reed (www.tylerreed.co.za) is a young Internet entrepreneur, blogger and online trend watcher who is currently studying for his BComm through UNISA. His passion for the Internet and related technologies inspires him to constantly keep an eye on developments on the Internet, specifically in South Africa, especially blogging, online marketing, social media, networking and online start-ups. He also monitors the South African blogosphere as an official author for Global Voices Online (<http://www.globalvoicesonline.org>).
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