

Six tips to improve your online communication



By [Melissa Attree](#)

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If you remove all the tech and jargon and 'stuff', embracing Web 2.0 concepts and thinking, it's relatively easy to make a good first impression, and, let's face it, when it comes to communicating through the web, that's all we have. Here's a short list of some things I've picked up or noticed along the way that irk me.

I'm a marketer and a social media 'worker' so I tend to look at the global process. The following tips are intended to assist you:

1. Understand that if you send emails from an address, I, and most people these days, will slap a www onto the end of your email address and look up the website... If nothing happens, it makes me nervous. If your website is under construction, post a makeshift page in the meantime, or poke fun at it or take this 'space' to enhance your brand offering like people do with their error 'page not found' 404 pages - click here for some [great examples](#).
2. Have a decent email signature - heavy graphics aren't absolutely necessary, just include as many points of contact as possible. Oh, and having no signature if you're soliciting business or support or publicity is just dodgy.
3. If you're running a business, do your best to at least register a web domain for your emails - it doesn't look professional if you're sending from an address that is issued by a stock standard Internet service provider. A domain costs more or less R200 or less a year.
4. On your blog or social media presence (Twitter, Facebook, blog etc), try and be a real person (that is, if your aim is to make real, human, professional connections). I want to know who you are, your website or blog address and how to reach you... otherwise contact opportunities fly by and you're lost in the ether.
5. "The times they are a changin'..." Either sit back or embrace it or maximise the opportunities that progress offers. My advice? Don't have a media room or press office without [RSS](#) - no argument. In South Africa, only about 3% of Internet users (I'm guessing here) use RSS readers so you need to offer RSS for an RSS reader as well as email subscriptions, [Feedburner](#) is a good solution - this service delivers all your updates via 'traditional reader' RSS, plus gives you the valuable email subscription option.

If you have no RSS built into your site and call your press releases or news or opinion articles on your website a *blog*, that's just false advertising. There's a reason that major publishing companies are building their websites using blog platforms with built-in RSS... think about it.

6. A Facebook fan page or group alone does not equal a social media strategy; I don't know how to put it any simpler. As Andy Hadfield, online strategist at FNB, says, "Pokes are for free."

Embracing Web 2.0 marketing concepts shouldn't be tough; they're just a natural extension of the age-old pillars of brand-building in a different, exciting space. Pay attention to the details, be honest, be creative.

Most of all, remember that Web 2.0 is not about the tech; it's about the people. Communication has always been about people talking to people - that will never change.

•Adapted from [original blog post](#) published on 6 November 2008.

ABOUT MELISSA ATTREE

Melissa Attree is a social media strategist, blogger and marketing professional who is fascinated by the bright, shiny thing called the Internet. Read Melissa's blog at <http://melissaattree.wordpress.com>. Follow her on Twitter at <http://twitter.com/melattree>.

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