

Social media 'experts'... copy that!

 By [Samantha Wright](#)

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There has been a trend in the past few months for a multitude of small companies to pop up declaring expertise in social media. I'm starting to worry though. How many of these companies really understand the ins and outs of building (and maintaining) a brand?

It seems to me that a host of 20-somethings cottoned on to the idea that easy money could be made by feeding off small to medium enterprises. Approach the CEO, throw some marketing garble at him about target audiences, social media platforms, engaging with your audience and chuck in some "advancing technology" for good measure.

Bombard him with some Facebook statistics about the number of users around the world and then show him your twitter followers and describe how this is an indication of how you were able to utilise social media to build your personal brand.

Bam, client signed.

It's getting all too familiar.

Successful businessmen know a good thing when they see it and as we're all still waddling in unfamiliar territory they can be excused for having the wool pulled over their eyes. It frustrates me to no end that the current crop of "social media experts" are pushing content that tends to be plagiarised. They tout their business blogs as the "new age marketing 101 solution" and post witty adverts and Facebook timeline pictures. Yet they fail to credit the international marketing journal who ran an almost identical article two weeks before.

Wits... or halfwits?

Call them out on it and they shall break a sly smile, knowing that their target market doesn't have the time nor inclination to read said marketing journals and thus their "reputation" is safe. Their "personal brand" consists of some funny pictures shared and some crude jokes copied and pasted off another site, or copied from an American tweleb (twitter celeb for those not sure) who is in fact naturally witty and creating content as opposed to riding on the coat tails of someone else's imagination.

So what?

These "social media experts" could seriously damage your business reputation as well as their own. Do you really need to be paying someone R10 000 a month to manage your online presence? Who is this someone you're paying? Those are

questions any business needs to start asking.

Here are a few more:

- How much experience does this entity have in other marketing platforms? Any good marketing firm will know that social media can only work hand in hand with your current marketing strategy.
- Can we eventually manage this in house? For SMEs there is no reason why you should not be able to eventually manage your online presence in house. Be wary of the man who tells you otherwise.
- Ask to see the portfolio. A company that boasts a selection of clients or past work that you can look up and research should always be preferred over a company that only has their employees own "brands" featured in their portfolio.
- Check for scandal. You'd be horrified at the number of "social media experts/specialists" making the online faux pas. Be careful that your business does not fall into the hands of someone who could potentially cause long lasting harm to your brand.

Ironically, the legitimate guys who have added social media to their list of marketing skills are not the ones touting retainer fees or monthly payments.

When it comes to social media for small to medium enterprises the "experts" (you can spot them easily, they refuse to call themselves social media experts) won't be attempting to snatch money out of your hands each month. They tend to suggest training for current staff and evaluations of existing platforms in operation. They offer suggestions, make tweaks and hold your hand through the process. Once you can happily walk through the new online territory they hang around to catch you when you fall.

Eventually you wonder off and are able to negotiate the jungle alone, just fine.

ABOUT SAMANTHA WRIGHT

SamWright is a full-time content creator at techgirl.co.za - she is a gaming and technology blogger and YouTuber, as well as an Esports MC and broadcaster who went on to host some of South Africa's first million-rand competitions before heading overseas, where she has hosted at Gamescom (Europe's biggest gaming expo) and in China (for a \$850,000 tournament). She currently consults to brands on how to reach a switched-on generation...

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