



TECHNO TRENDS

THE BIG IDEAS THAT ARE CHANGING EVERYTHING

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES FOR YOUR ORGANIZATION (PART II)

BY DANIEL BURRUS, CEO OF BURRUS RESEARCH



In my article last month, I discussed the new frontier of Web 2.0 and the importance of customer engagement, communication and finding your focus.

This month, I would like to share the guidelines that your staff can use to shape their posts around the company strategy. (Note: the following suggestions are general in nature. Please adhere to your state's HR laws and seek legal counsel as needed.)

BUILD TRUST: Your employees should use their posts to build a reputation of trust among clients, media, and the public. When they are reaching out to others on social media sites, they should take every opportunity to build a reputation of trust and to establish themselves as a credible and transparent representative of the company.

TRANSPARENCY: When participating in any online community, your employees should disclose their identity and affiliation with the organization, clients, and professional and/or personal interest. When posting to a blog, they should always use their real name, not an alias. *continued on page 2*

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SOCIAL GUIDELINES *(continued from page 1)*

BE DIRECT: When creating posts and content, your employees should be direct, informative, and brief. They should never use a client's name in a posting unless they have written permission to do so.

GIVE DUE CREDIT: If your employees post copyrighted materials, they should identify the original source. This includes sources for direct or paraphrased quotes, photos, videos, and anything else they did not originally create.

SELF-EDIT: Your employees should always evaluate their posting's accuracy and truthfulness. Before posting any online material, they need to ensure that the material is accurate, truthful, and without factual error. This includes doing a spell and grammar check on everything. Remember, content never disappears entirely once it's been posted. Should your employees find an error, have them correct it promptly. Since transparency is key, have them admit the mistake, apologize if necessary, correct it, and then and move on.

RESPONSIBILITY: Make sure employees know that they are responsible for what they post. Negative or questionable posts will not be tolerated. Additionally, while what they do on their own personal pages during personal time is their business, what they publish on those sites should not be attributed to the company and should not appear as endorsements from the company. If they choose to list their employer on a personal social network, then they must regard all communication on that network as they would in a professional network. Online lives are ultimately linked.

BE PROFESSIONAL: When posting comments, employees should refrain from writing about controversial or potentially inflammatory subjects, including politics, sex, religion or any other non-business related subjects. The tone of their comments should be respectful and informative, never condescending or "loud." Additionally, they should avoid personal attacks, online fights, and hostile communications. If a blogger or any other online influencer posts a statement with which your company disagrees, your employees can voice their opinion, but not escalate the conversation to a heated argument. Instruct them on how to write reasonably, factually, and with good humor.

PRIVACY: Employees should never disclose proprietary or confidential information. This includes product.

OBEY THE RULES: All employees should follow local, state, or federal laws and regulations; the company's internal rules (typically found in the employee handbook); as well as the rules established by each social networking venue. Ultimately their online activities will be a reflection on the company.

PROPEL YOUR MESSAGE FORWARD: Today's Web 2.0 tools are great for business building, provided that your employees know how to use them for the company's ultimate benefit. Therefore, determine why your company is using social media sites, and then let that purpose be known throughout the entire organization. Additionally, implement clear social media guidelines that employees can follow, and you'll have the people, processes, and tools you need to further your company's mission. Ultimately, when employees know how they are supposed to use today's Web 2.0 tools, they can do so with focus and purpose, leading the organization confidently into the communication age.

TECHNOLOGY NEWS HIGHLIGHTS

ULTRATHIN SOLAR CELL

In the quest for clean energy, solar cells continue to push forward as conversion efficiencies improve and costs go down. The latest development, an ultrathin solar cell from Sanyo, is only 58 micrometers thick (thinner than a human hair and one-quarter the thickness of the current market standard) and boasts 22 percent efficiency. The new design utilizes Heterojunction with Intrinsic Thin layer (HIT) technology in which crystalline silicon is sandwiched between two amorphous silicon layers. By decreasing the thickness, materials costs can be greatly reduced, cutting overall manufacturing costs by about 25 percent. Because they are flexible and lightweight, the new solar cells are expected to have a wider range of potential applications. They can even be attached to the outside walls of buildings to generate clean power.

For information: Sanyo Electric Co. Ltd., 2-5-5, Keihan-Hondori, Moriguchi City, Osaka 570-8677, Japan; phone: +81-6-6991-1181; Web site: <http://jp.sanyo.com>

AUGMENTED REALITY BOOKS

Wouldn't it be cool if the pictures in a book could come to life? With a Webcam, some plug-in software, and a copy of Drake's Comprehensive Compendium of Dragonology you can make it happen! The recently-released book contains a special drawing of a dragon that uses augmented reality technology to produce a moving three-dimensional image. When held up to a Webcam, markers on the page provide spatial reference points for the software to generate a model on the computer screen. As the dragon moves and roars, readers can even view it from different angles by rotating the book.

For information: The Templar Company Limited, The Granary, North Street, Dorking, Surrey RH4 1DN, United Kingdom; phone: +44-(0)1306-876361; Web site: www.templarco.co.uk

"VIRTUALLY WATERLESS" LAUNDRY

A revolutionary washing machine that reduces water usage by 90 percent is currently in the prototype stage and may be deployed in commercial laundries as early as next year. The secret to its amazing cleaning ability are 0.1-inch diameter nylon beads, which dislodge dirt and attract soil due to their inherent polarization. Under warm, humid conditions, the polymer molecules separate so that the beads can actually absorb stains. Best of all, they can be reused for hundreds of washes and are totally recyclable.

The machine itself contains two nested drums to trap the beads as they're separated from the clothes by centripetal force. In addition to saving water, the cleaning system reduces the amount of detergent needed by one-third, and saves energy by eliminating power-hungry spin cycles and dryer time.

For information: Bill Westwater, CEO, Xeros Limited, Leeds Innovation Center, 103 Clarendon Road, Leeds LS2 9DF, United Kingdom; phone: +44-(0)114-2699-656; Web site: www.xerosltd.com

MASK THE FLU

Soon to be available in the United States, the BioMask kills bacteria and viruses (including H1N1) on contact to not only prevent you from catching germs, but from spreading your own to others. The snug-fitting mask uses a technique called "intelligent filtration," which traps pathogens while allowing air to flow freely. Its cellulose fibers are also impregnated with zinc and copper to kill the trapped viruses by breaking down the cell walls. In tests on influenza A at concentration levels 50 times higher than those present in a typical sneeze, 99.9 percent of the virus was killed within one minute and all of it within 10 minutes.

For information: Filligent (HK) Limited, 7th Floor, 69 Jervois Street, Sheung Wan, Hong Kong; phone: +852-2542-2400; fax: +852-2542-2411; Web site: www.filligent.com

EXTENDED-WEAR HEARING AID

A new device called Lyric® is the first hearing aid that can be worn 24/7 for up to four months at a time. The size of a bean, it's designed to be placed inside the ear canal (just a fraction of an inch away from the eardrum) by a trained professional, so it's totally invisible to others. It utilizes the ear's natural anatomy to capture sound with exceptional quality, and can be programmed for a patient's specific hearing needs.

The volume level is adjustable by the wearer using a small magnetic wand. The water-resistant device can be worn during most daily activities including exercising, showering, talking on the phone and sleeping. The initial sizing and fitting appointment requires about one hour and subsequent replacement visits (every 120 days) take about ten minutes. Cost is around \$1,650.00.

For information: InSound Medical, Inc., 39660 Eureka Drive, Newark, CA 94560; phone: 510-792-4000; Web site: www.lyrichearing.com

ELECTRICITY FROM TRAFFIC

The process of converting otherwise wasted energy into useful power is often referred to as "parasitic energy harvesting," a term that has been applied to a variety of technologies from wave generators to shoes that produce electricity. Now,

Israeli engineers have come up with a way to convert the vast amounts of mechanical energy created by vehicles on roadways into clean electrical power with minimal energy waste.

The new system is based on piezoelectric principles which take advantage of the fact that certain materials produce an electric current when they are stretched or change shape. Specially designed piezoelectric generators are installed about 5 centimeters below the asphalt surface of the road. As cars pass over them, mechanical energy generated by their weight is converted into electrical power and stored in batteries at the side of the road where it can be used locally or sent to the grid. The device is currently being tested on a short stretch along one of Israel's main traffic arteries. It's estimated that regular traffic will generate up to 2000 watts per hour. The technology can also be adapted for use on runways and railroads.

For information: Innowattech Ltd., Technion I.I.T., Technion City, Haifa 32000, Israel; phone: +972-3-600-2525; Web site: www.innowattech.co.il

HEAT-RESISTANT BIOPLASTIC

Bioplastics are gaining popularity because of their eco-friendly characteristics, but their application has been limited due to the fact that they degrade at extremely high temperatures and humidity. A new bioplastic was recently developed, however, that can withstand temperatures of 275 degrees Celsius (525 degrees Fahrenheit). Derived from vanillin (an organic food flavoring) it could replace at least a portion of the petrochemical plastics used in automobile components and electronics. Just one such plastic – polyphenylene sulfide – is currently manufactured at a rate of 40,000 tons per year. The manufacturer hopes to commercialize the new bioplastic within five years.

For information: Teijin Ltd., 6-7, Minami-hommachi 1-chome, Chuo-ku, Osaka 541-8587; Japan; phone: +81-6-6268-2132; Web site: www.teijin.co.jp/english/about/index.html

BATTERIES FROM ALGAE

Swedish researchers have found a constructive use for the algae that blooms in lakes and ponds – making batteries. Recent efforts to replace the heavy metals used in today's batteries with conductive polymers have met with limited success. However, the researchers found that using those same polymers to coat a large surface area substrate greatly improves performance. So they took cellulose from Cladophora, a green algae from the Baltic Sea and coated it with a 50-nanometer layer of polypyrrole to create the electrode. They used saline solution as the electrolyte. The resulting battery is thin, flexible, and eco-friendly. It can store up to 600 milliamps per cubic centimeter and loses only 6 percent of its charging capacity after 100 charges. They could be used to power a variety of low-power devices such as wireless sensors and medical implants.

For information: Maria Stromme, Uppsala University, Angstrom Laboratory, Lagerhyddsvagen 1, Box 534, 751 21 Uppsala, Sweden; phone: +46-18-471-5800; fax: +46-18-471-5810; email: maria.stromme@angstrom.uu.se Web site: www.uu.se or www.angstrom.uu.se

BLAST RESISTANT "WALLPAPER"

The X-Flex™ Blast Protection System is an innovative wall-covering that's designed to stop flying debris, reinforce walls, and contain shock waves during an explosion. The self-adhesive wallpaper is constructed of a fiber-reinforced polymer (similar to Kevlar) and has been engineered to be applied easily to a variety of surfaces including drywall, brick and concrete. It can be used under a wide range of temperatures and environmental conditions, and is moisture, mold and fungus resistant as well.

In tests, a single layer of X-Flex prevented a wrecking ball from smashing through a brick wall. Developed in conjunction with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, it will soon be used in Iraq and Afghanistan to reinforce military bases, but a commercial version may be available as early as next year.

For information: Berry Plastics, P.O. Box 959, Evansville, IN 47706; phone: 812-424-2904; Web site: www.berryplastics.com

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