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SOME KINDS OF LATTER DAY LUDDITES.

Dave McClure • Jan. 24, 2014

From Dave McClure's Bleeding Edge Blog.

It is popular among my learned accounting colleagues to portray the elders of the profession who have not signed on to the concept of a Social Media Strategy as some kinds of latter day Luddites. They just don't get it, the poor fools, and any accounting firm that doesn't spend a gazillion dollars on "Social Media Marketing Consultants" is doomed to failure in the 21st Century. You just aren't going to survive without a social media strategy.

Really?

Call me a curmudgeon, an old fool, a Luddite or worse, but I don't think any of the dollars spent on a "Social Media Strategy" have ever brought in a nickel of new revenue to any accounting firm, or ever will. But before you call me an old fool, I would note that I nonetheless endorse a social media strategy for accounting firms.

The social media outlets that are most commonly used are Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, all public companies with strong reputations and millions upon millions of users. This means that those millions see the news about your firm, see your opinions and rants, and are so enamored of this that they hire you to do their accounting, audit and tax filings.

Only it does not.

Most of the people who use LinkedIn do so for two reasons: to keep abreast of their business friends so they do not lose contact, or to attempt to mine the list in order to sell stuff. Note that most people appreciate the former, and avoid the latter. I have never bought anything from a LinkedIn contact, and I never will.

Then there is Facebook, whose declining population has been admitted by the

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its sales.

Finally, there is Twitter, a service that has gotten more executives fired than any other online venue in history. If you really care about what the people you “follow” had for lunch, you may be fine. But don't look there for any kind of marketing boost.

Laying across all of this is the simple truth (see <http://www.foxnews.com/tech/2014/01/05/click-farms-making-millions-by-duping-social-media/>) that all of these services are pranked. That is, you can buy untold thousands of “likes,” “connections,” and “followers,” but none of these amount to anything in terms of real, measurable gains in customers or market share. And if that is the case, why waste money on them?

I could mention that the Emperor is not wearing any clothes. I could cite all of the marketing trends of the past that likewise did not amount to a hill of beans when it came to actual sales (remember “Just In Time Inventory?”) Truth is, the success of any accounting or tax firm is usually based on personal relationships, a strong reputation and excellence in executing the basics of accounting – not how many “likes” your page gets on Facebook.

Worse yet, we now know that there are firms called “Click Farms” that can sell you thousands or even millions of favorable impressions on social media for about half a cent each. And each as phony as the day is long.

So does this mean that an accounting or tax firm should abandon its social media presence and instead focus on other media to get their messages across? Not exactly.

In the seventies, no accounting firm could survive without a Yellow Pages ad, even if that ad did not generate much of any new business. In the Eighties, the same became true of having a presence on one of the major online services. In the Nineties, it was

required that firms have a web page. In the 21st Century, you need to be on the three

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Which means I am convoluted on the subject of social media. I hate what they are, but belong to all three. I dislike their contrived presentations of companies, but don't know of anything better in the culture of today. Going to lunch with someone who is tweeting, linking and Facebooking in remains an excruciating experience, but I know of no way around it. It is the culture of the 20-Teens, even if I have trouble adjusting to it.

=————=

Reality Check

A compendium of ideas, products, rants and raves from the viewpoint of the author. Not that the author has no financial interests in any of the products mentioned. Feel free to disagree, or to share your ideas by sending them to davemcclure@cpata.com.

Internet Site of the Month. **Windows 8.1 Wifi Connectivity Issues.**

([http://www.fixedbyvonnie.com/2013/10/how-to-fix-limited-or-no-](http://www.fixedbyvonnie.com/2013/10/how-to-fix-limited-or-no-connectivity-wi-fi-issues-in-windows-8/#.UrPjzBF3szs)

[connectivity-wi-fi-issues-in-windows-8/#.UrPjzBF3szs](http://www.fixedbyvonnie.com/2013/10/how-to-fix-limited-or-no-connectivity-wi-fi-issues-in-windows-8/#.UrPjzBF3szs))1. Ouch! If you ignored my advice and upgraded to Windows 8, you may find that with the Windows 8.1 patch you have a slew of Wifi issues. They appear to be driver issues for Wifi, but Microsoft has been pretty mum about it. While they sort these problems out, this site may help you get a temporary fix. Temporary – not permanent.

[Thumbs Up] – **eSignature Pads.** People continually send you documents in PDF format, but lock those documents so that you can't alter them. This is fine, but it means that you have to print out the document, sign it physically, then fax or scan the document back into the computer. An easier solutions is an e-Signature pad, which is designed to let you put your "John Hancock" into the document. There are literally hundreds of units on the market, though Fujitsu, Ambir Technologies and Topaz seem to lead the pack.

[Thumbs Down] – **Online Games.** Seems like everyone on Facebook has tried one of

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to buy a touch screen monitor, any more than you should upgrade to Windows 8 in the middle of tax season. Both require some caution, particularly since the prices are still a tad on the high side. By May, when you have the time and patience to upgrade, prices should be lower. But remember, you will still have to deal with the fingerprint on the screen. Keep plenty of isopropyl alcohol handy.

[Thumbs Down] – **Personal cloud storage.** Strangely, the cloud storage solutions from Microsoft, Google and Yahoo seem more interested in stealing our personal data to re-sell than providing useful and bug-proof data storage. Read the license agreements carefully, since most of them are weasel-worded to make it sound like they are protecting your privacy even when they are selling your data. Caveat Emptor – let the buyer beware.

[Thumbs Up] – **Big-Screen Televisions.** If ever there was a time to purchase a large monitor, this year is the time. The manufacturers are hurting still from the disastrous Christmas season, and now is the best time to buy a combination big-screen TV and monitor. Recommended is the 32-inch model for around \$175, but make sure it has inputs as a monitor.

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