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**Kristy Short** • Jan. 28, 2013



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Social media rocks. I get it. I'm out there...posting to Walls, tweeting, Linkin' it up! I'm also soaking up the information that comes in from my social media channels. But it will be a long time, if ever, that online networking forums can match the magic that takes place when practitioners are onsite together—exchanging ideas, sharing knowledge, and imbibing the expertise of peers.

So, while I totally “Heart” Twitter and Facebook, I dig the energy of face-to-face

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## Create Balance

Allow me to place one last plug for social media: Applied purposefully, it's a smart addition to any marketing program. Online networking is here to stay; that's a *for sure*. The important thing to remember; however, is to maintain a healthy balance between online and onsite.

That is, leverage the power of digital networking to market your firm and learn while also preserving traditional educational tactics like attending onsite events.

Compared to the super coolness of tweeting or blogging, onsite networking is sometimes considered old school. On the contrary, face-to-face forums are a long-standing and faithful tool in the profession—offering a solid venue for exchanging information and learning was'up in the ever-changing tax and accounting profession.

Participants work collaboratively to identify resolutions to common issues and pain points, and all within a supportive and non-competitive environment. And, hey, that's pretty coolalicious!

Onsite events provide participants with a level of energy and in-depth discussion that is difficult to replicate in a web-based environment. Brainstorming for solutions and defining best practices is a complex and dynamic process that is best supported by dedicated in-person interaction. For most, coming up with the next great idea is difficult to do in isolation—especially in the creative realm of marketing.

Typically, it's through a process of group idea slinging that viable solutions evolve and “Ah-ha” moments take place. Put several great accounting minds in the same room and inevitably the marketing Ah-ha's abound.

## Make Room for Onsite Events

Those that regularly attend onsite professional events are talking about more than

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more. It takes a village.

Professionals are hitting all the hot topics, and these are definitely conversations to get in on. Here are just a few examples of what peers are discussing (in addition to marketing):

- **Client Collaboration**—The ability to collaborate with clients in real time is critical in today's busy professional environment. Clients want immediate access to their financial documents and data, and a direct reach to their trusted advisor. Creating an online client accounting model is key to supporting an environment of collaboration. This might be one of the hottest topics around.
- **Single Client Database**—Creating a single database is huge right now! This is another exceptionally hot topic. Many firms are honed into discussions on how to build a single client database where information is entered once and can be assessed from one convenient location.
- **Cloud Technologies**—The Cloud is on everyone's tongue. Because many Cloud applications can easily be integrated with today's popular programs (such as QuickBooks), it's much easier to build highly efficient solutions to better serve clients on a 24/7 basis.

## Stay Plugged In

Staying plugged in to all that is going on within the profession is a balancing act. The marriage of social media channels with traditional onsite networking forums provides the balance firms require to get the information needed and stay ahead of change.

While social media makes it easy to access information whenever needed, onsite events support face-to-face connections that drive effusive dialogue and leverage the experience of the many.

Take a moment to see what onsite events are a good fit for your firm.

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