



SUMMER 2010

THE VOICE

THE OFFICIAL BUSINESS MAGAZINE OF THE MARKHAM BOARD OF TRADE



SETTING THE STAGE FOR BUSINESS NETWORKING IN MARKHAM

**ADVICE YOU
CAN USE**

Branding the Smaller Organization
BILL 168 Amendments to Ontario's Occupational Health and Safety Act

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The Official Business Magazine of The Markham Board Of Trade

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Moving From Interest to Action – Social Media

By Cyrus Mavalwala, ABC, Founding Partner, Advantis Communications Inc.



For companies exploring social media's relevancy to business, it's best to start by monitoring the ongoing online conversations that are happening about your industry or brand. Since many social media platforms have now evolved into mainstream communications channels, you should consider integrating these thriving communities into your marketing communications roadmap. If you're still stuck in the discovery stage, try moving forward by choosing a social media platform that enjoys significant online traffic and that is relevant to your business – i.e. where your prospects, customers or partners hang out online.

One high traffic social media platform that offers potential for a variety of companies is Facebook. Regardless if your business is large or small, if you want to communicate directly with stakeholders or increase sales, you might want to review the ever-changing opportunities of Facebook.

Facebook Evolves . . . Again

If change is the only constant in the world of social media, Facebook certainly doesn't disappoint. Facebook initially offered Facebook Groups – a destination for users to share an interest or hobby together.

Then came Facebook Pages, where an authorized company representative could build and administer a page where users could then become a "fan" of a public figure, brand or business. A challenge was that individual users were also creating Facebook Pages and it was blurring the lines of what was an official entity vs one person starting a movement.

In an effort to keep Facebook Pages in the hands of their respective brand owners and not individuals, Facebook introduced Community Pages. Launched in April 2010, these new Community Pages are devoted to a topic or experience and are owned collectively by the community connected to it. Users can choose to "Like" a product, person or company and add related content to help build the page. Today, Community Pages are still in beta and many are sparsely populated. When writing this article, even recognized brands like IBM currently didn't have a company logo. Since no one person can start or own a Community Page, the content is currently being pulled from Wikipedia and then augmented by fellow users. According to Facebook, Community Pages are meant to be the best collection of shared knowledge on a specific topic.

The Business Challenge

The latest Facebook challenge for businesses is to keep hosting your official Facebook Page while also monitoring and engaging stakeholders on the relevant Community Pages. Yes it's more work, but it's a necessary undertaking if you want to continue to monitor the conversations about your brand and industry. At this early stage, the Community Page landscape is vast, with content ranging from a specific brand to general topics like cooking or golf. It's also relatively uncharted territory. In fact, Facebook is still looking for users to become Community Page contributors to help produce content.

Still confused? Don't worry, you're not alone. To keep up-to-date on the latest Facebook happenings check out Facebook's official blog at <http://blog.facebook.com>.

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