



By: Lisbeth Tanz
Chief Wordsmith and
Social Media Strategist

A frequent comment I hear from business owners regarding social media is that it takes too much time. They feel that, if they're running a social media campaign, they won't have time to do the other marketing parts of their business, much less sell and run other business components.

And they're right. Done correctly, social media provides a nuanced look into your business; it creates conversation; it engages. Done haphazardly,

sporadically or without heart, social media will hurt more than help. You don't want to be left out of the social media sphere, but is it possible to outsource this newly important business tool?

Absolutely. But only if you pay careful attention to what you outsource. After all, the buzz about social media focuses on creating relationships and being social.

A recent blog post on SocialMediaExaminer.com by Chris Garrett, co-author of the book, ProBlogger, discussed the pros and cons of social media outsourcing. Here's the Cliff Notes version of his take on this issue.

Tasks You can Outsource

- **Polishing your message:** You probably have a lot to say, but may not be the best at writing it. Let someone else worry about the grammar and

spelling, you focus on creating relevant messages that reach your target audience.

- **Repetitive tasks:** Things such as bookmarking submissions, friend requests and posting of pre-written messages can all be safely outsourced.

- **Clean-up:** We all get them – spammy messages on Twitter, inappropriate comments on Facebook – these can all be managed (and likely deleted) by an outside person.

- **Software updates:** Who wouldn't want to outsource these? You have better things to do than manage software and IT issues.

There are more, but you get the idea.

Tasks Best Left for You

- **Message writing:** As noted above, let someone else fine tune it – but be sure the message comes from you or

someone within your organization that has all the facts and is tied into the communication structure.

- **Action items** – Anything that requires a legitimate response should come from you or another within your organization.

- **Brand protection:** Only someone familiar with the corporate culture and brand can accurately represent it. Don't risk damaging your image by outsourcing to someone who isn't intimately familiar with this important component of your business.

Net, net – don't jeopardize your relationships, company or brand by outsourcing too much.

Contact the author:
Lis@TheHiredPen.biz
www.lisbethtanz.com
(314)660-1515



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