

Small companies —big ideas

By Keith Scandone

Just when we downsized our content into bite sized portions like blogs to satisfy our Attention Deficit Disorders, they introduced Twitter. And now what used to take 350 words for people to explain on their blog is being squeezed into a 140 character limit. Then consider that your tweet, if you tweet, is among the estimated 28 million tweets being shared per day.

So, with that kind of competition in the social media, ADD driven marketplace, why should you bother creating a presence for your business on Twitter, or Facebook for that matter, which has even more staggering stats? Well, I guess another way to look at it is with 28 million tweets per day being shared on Twitter, (a number which will be wildly inaccurate by the time this article comes out), how can you not?

Social media is obviously a pretty fast paced, competitive and overwhelming piece of the marketing landscape these days. Although if you plan on running with it and not away from it, there are more and more companies out there providing a road map to navigate through the congested Internet highway of tweets, Facebook pages and LinkedIn connections. And two of those companies, which are located in Philadelphia, are Chatterblast Media and Two Birds.

Chatterblast Media is run by **Evan Urbania** and **Matthew Ray**, both of whom have backgrounds in marketing.

Unlike the stereotype that is often linked to companies like theirs, they are doing more than just writing a few tweets for their clients. They consider themselves “consultants for the digital world,” according to Urbania. In addition to creating a marketing strategy that may include Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, among others, they also play a large role in monitoring who is talking about your brand and what they're saying. Or on a larger scale, what people are saying about the industry as a whole, which then enables them to work with their clients to forecast trends and proactively pursue opportunities in the social media space. They are using tools within Twitter to actively monitor what is being discussed about your brand, in addition to using outside tools, such as Radian 6, to drill down even deeper. While they don't say having a website is mandatory, they definitely stress its importance, as they use a client's website as a home base to drive a lot of social media traffic back to, and create conversions. They are then able to track referring traffic to the site through the stats package, which only helps fuel the campaign.

Among their client experience thus far, Chatterblast has been working on a plan with a national non-profit organization.



They also have been working on a pilot VIP program for a major car company, and have been handling a campaign for an Outdoor Sports Convention.

two birds

Unlike Urbania and Ray, who both came from a more traditional marketing background, Two Birds was formed by **Alexandra Golaszewska** and **Jennifer McAleese**, who had previously handled a lot of online marketing, with a specialization in public relations. Golaszewska and McAleese collaborated previously through their companies, Eastern Star Communications and FlatWorld Interactives, respectively.



Through Eastern Star, Alexandra continues to provide design, marketing and communications services, while Jennifer still runs FlatWorld Interactives, which provides some pretty cool touch screen software.

While they too use monitoring tactics to assess their clients positioning and to generate a plan, they like their primary focus to be on making connections with those that are following their clients or interacting with them. They create conversations with the followers and fans to allow them to expand on the clients growing loyal base. That in and of itself is the brand promise that they are establishing for their clients through social media. Among their biggest challenges, much like Chatterblast and the rest of the social media marketing teams are facing, is finding a return on investment for their clients. While it's not an exact science, they are seeing that retweets and event RSVP's, among other tactics, are providing some metrics to help prove conversions or brand recognition through social media.

In addition to creating strategies for clients, monitoring the social media space and helping to implement messages, Two Birds is often helping clients simply get positioning properly, as they are doing for Project Home. They are giving clients the basics on Twitter or Facebook, setting them up, and then stepping back, merely providing outside assistance when requested.

Marketing has often been about one way communication, through TV or print ads or even a brochure-based website. Although social media has created two way communication, companies like Chatterblast and Two Birds are important because they help companies reactively respond as well. Meaning that when customers have questions, offer praise, or even complain, brands now have the power to pick up on that, and respond to the community as a whole, or to that individual. It is direct marketing in the interactive world.

Both companies are continually building relationships with other marketing, public relations and communications firms to expand their offerings, and to collaborate with them on projects that require outreach on a larger scale that stretches across multiple platforms.

Keith Scandone is one of the principals of O3 World, an interactive agency specializing in Web design and development. He handles Marketing and Business Development for the company. Contact him at: keith@o3world
