

Use Social Networking to Market Your Book

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Tuesday, 30 May 2006
Last Updated Thursday, 22 June 2006

Got a book or business you want to promote?

How about getting involved in a social network first. I know of several people who are active in online social networks (the most prominent is MySpace) as a means to promote their books. Learn how the "new" breed of social networking can help you to grow your business and sell your book.

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Sure, they do all the other things folks do when promoting a book, but most of their activity comes from the social community. It's called "buzz", and if you're not buzzing your book, then you're missing out big time.

While MySpace is the biggie right now, it's been primarily for the younger crowd. The fuss is about the average person-- that is, his or her participation in what's known variously as "social media," "social networking," "user-generated content," the "live Web" or the dreaded "Web 2.0."

All of that is changing because there is going to be a new kid on the playground - one who is ready to take on the challenges of running a business. Social networking, it seems, has gotten the attention of the big boys of the business world.

Don't believe that social networking can make a difference? How about these facts:

On Monday, March 27, about 40,000 mainly Latino high schoolers in Los Angeles played hooky to protest the Senate's proposed bill to crack down on illegal immigration. It was believed to be the largest such demonstration in L.A.'s history, double the size of the historic Chicano walkouts of 1968. Through the week, thousands more walked out in California, Texas, and Florida. Then, on Tuesday, April 4, 24-year-old Sandi Thom signed a £1 million, five-album deal with RCA/Sony BMG out of her basement in London, live via Webcast. She had just finished 21 straight nights of live performances--also Webcast from her basement. By the end, Thom was pulling in a nightly audience of 100,000 listeners. In both cases, the "audience," was drawn together by word of mouth on social-networking sites such as MySpace.

By the way, Myspace has about 72 MILLION members worldwide.

It wasn't that long ago when these social networks were merely upstart discussion groups with "Avatars" and people who flamed each other when they felt a bit off. Now, people are using personal blogs on places like Myspace to meet others, promote their books and music, and even gather large crowds for protests.

Now, the field is getting wider and deeper.

One out of three South Koreans already has a "minihompy" (mini homepage) on Cyworld, a social-networking site coming to America later this year. And TagWorld, a startup based in Santa Monica, California, is what bloggers are calling the "MySpace killer" for its deep menu of services, which integrates features from seemingly every successful network out there: blogging, plus a multipage site; a gigabyte of storage; a music player that serves up your own tunes (as well as those pulled down via a Music Discovery Engine); classifieds; and photo-, video-, and bookmark-sharing. As the name indicates, all of these bits of data can be tagged with short, descriptive names for easy search and retrieval by other users.

Unfortunately for us it's still in beta (test mode), but will be out soon.

Hey, if I were you, I'd find out as much as I could about TagWorld and become one of the early adopters. If you've got a book or business you're promoting, you can't go wrong!