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Radio's Online Content Crisis

Posted on: Aug 21, 2010 in [Digital Strategy](#), [Insights](#), [Radio's Future](#)



"You've joined the conversation, now what?"

So begins [a piece from Morgan Stewart in MediaPost](#) illustrating that social media is about much more than being on Twitter and having a Facebook page. In fact, it's about that single critical element that broadcasters claim they don't have the time or the talent or the staff or the motivation for.

It's about content.

Stewart writes:

We got a unique glimpse into fueling conversation yesterday when [Groupon](#) launched its first-ever nationwide deal to the Gap and created a buying frenzy by offering a \$50 gift card for \$25. At the peak of the day, the site was selling 10 Groupons per second and having trouble keeping up with the traffic. Last month, it was the [Old Spice Guy](#). The highly interactive YouTube video campaign drew audiences in not only because the content was clever, but also because we were all in awe that it was being published in near-real time without sacrificing quality. On the surface, these two examples look nothing alike. One was purely branding, while the other was purely promotional. Old Spice was delivered through video on YouTube. Groupon was delivered through email. But dig deeper and we see that while neither was initiated through Facebook or Twitter, these channels played a critical role in both cases. These examples show us something critical for the modern marketer: social media is about content, not platforms.

"Great content draws consumers in," writes Stewart. "They will will re-distribute, remix, and engage with it through social networks as they see fit. Consumers drive your success in social media. Brands direct their destiny

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About

MRM President Mark Ramsey has worked with innumerable television

through content.”

That last sentence is the key:

“Consumers drive your success in social media. Brands direct their destiny through content.”

Too often, radio is an industry where talent and other station personnel must be cajoled, bribed, or begged to create content online. How good can this content possibly be when you have to twist an arm to create it?

The answer is right in front of your nose: Just measure the social media surrounding that content. If you see it shared, then it's resonating. If you see a lot of consumer comments, then it's resonating. If you see metrics indicating lots of eyes are on it, then it's resonating.

And if you don't, then it isn't.

Don't mistake the presence of stuff for the presence of value.

Not only does most radio content online *fail* all these tests, most isn't even *evaluated* according to these tests. How many managers even know what their metrics are? How much content is designed to be easily sharable? How many opportunities are there for listener comments? How many managers have Google alerts set up for their station brands? How many managers search Twitter for references to their brand and respond to comments that are relevant?

Not enough time. Not enough talent. Not enough staff. Not enough motivation.

In this world where every brand is media, those brands are also creators of content. Consumers do not care what you have the time or talent or staff or motivation for. They only care whether you bother to create content that excites them. That is the content they will value and share.

And if you're not creating content worth valuing and sharing – if you're not making it easy and worthwhile to share – then your content might as well be invisible.

Because “invisible” shall eventually be what your brand becomes.

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[Jeff Vidler](#) 1 day ago

Great piece, Mark. Maybe it's just semantics... but I'm inclined to re-phrase Stewart's last sentence on social media from: "brands direct their destiny through content" to "brands direct their destiny through providing value." Content is one just one way to provide value. Other social media activities like coupons, giving listeners "badges" or bragging rights and reflecting shared values also deliver very real benefits... and even though they don't represent the kind of "content" that radio people normally think of, they can fit every bit as comfortably into radio's on-line value proposition.

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[Mark Ramsey](#)  1 day ago in reply to [Jeff Vidler](#)

That is an extraordinarily excellent point, Jeff, and I'm so glad you made it. Thanks!

[Like](#) [Reply](#)



[Gordon Marcy](#) 1 day ago

Facing the brutal facts is never easy but therein lies the answers.

Fair or not, you know some of things said to be holding radio back: voice-tracking, cyber jocks, lack of local programming, song repetition, little investment in creative, etc. I know from first-hand experience how these tactics can produce pent-up creativity in the staff.

With visionary leadership, mastery of new media and an unleashing of the talent, radio can once again reinvent itself through innovation. I truly believe that.

And when it does, radio still has one significant technological advantage over its online only competitors. Radio spectrum.

Keep prodding Mark. You're message is needed.

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