

Communication in the Digital Age

The Best Companies to Work with in the Wireless **Infrastructure Community**



How to Visualize Your Audience to Direct Your Brand!



Take Back Control



January 2015

Volume 12

Contents







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The Best Companies to Work with in the Wireless **Infrastructure Community**



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January 2015

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From The Editor



Let's make 2015 **The Year of the Climber** — employees whose and more often than not involves climbing the towers to perform tasks at elevation.

These jobs are considered to be dangerous; at least, probably more dangerous than yours unless you are a tower climber yourself. Among its readers, *AGL Magazine* numbers tower climbers' employers, including tower construction and maintenance companies, and tower owners and mobile network operators whose vertical real estate assets are built, maintained and repaired by tower climbers.

Companies, government agencies and membership organizations spend time and energy in an effort to shape the behavior of individual tower climbers so they do not risk falls that would not be arrested by safety equipment that is properly selected, maintained and used. "What's the problem?" some people ask. "Just have someone watch the climbers all the time, maybe through binoculars, and make sure they work safely."

Wally Reardon, project coordinator of the Workers at Heights Safety and Health Initiative at the Occupational Health Clinical Centers, a member of the New York State Occupational Health Clinic Network, said climbers "need a babysitter to make sure they comply with 100 percent tie-off" and that climbers "do not have control over their safety in the jobsite." Speaking at the Workshop on Tower Climber Safety and Injury Protection conducted at FCC headquarters on Oct. 14, 2014, Reardon said that 74 percent of the fatalities were related to free climbing (hence the need for babysitters) and that if tower climbers try to exercise control over their safety, nine times out of 10 the employer will say, "We'll find someone else to do it. Apparently, you don't want to work for us."

Reardon may be interpreting the fatality statistics somewhat differently than others do, and his call for babysitters may have more to do with companies that do not properly vet employees than with those that do. Nevertheless, he has a point. All the meetings, standards and training in the world won't prevent worker illness, injury and possible fatal consequences if employers and workers, together or separately, aren't compliant.

Is supervision adequate? Are babysitters needed? On the day before Christmas, the Associated Press reported that police cited two tower workers, aged 43 and 36, for unlawful marijuana possession at a tower site in the Hudson River Valley north of New York City. Apparently, they were contractors, not employees. Whether you believe possessing marijuana should be legal or not, you probably don't believe workers should have it with them while on the job. Maybe an incident such as this one supports Reardon's suggestion that contractors, at least some of them, need more supervision. Maybe tower owners and mobile network operators should send observers to jobsites, just to make sure.

Reardon said he read that the parent company of one of the wireless networks made more than \$2 billion in profit in 2013. "There's no reason why they couldn't afford to hire a babysitter," he said.

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From The Publisher



Are We Having Fun, Yet? Yes! I love this annual issue of AGL! It's fun to put together all the companies in the industry.

I enjoy using this issue to look at as a stat of the industry: new companies, personnel changes, new services (Who knew what PIM stood for four years ago?) and, sadly, some departures. It used to be a little bit of a break for the editorial team — a chance to not worry about articles and editing. Of course, in our new, high-speed world, that holiday/winter break never really comes with newsletters and social media. Oh, and that ever-popular email.

I love my day job — bringing first-time cell coverage to rural parts of the United States. It's kind of funny and a bit sad how many people become frustrated and annoyed with me when I'm in a cellular-free area. "Why didn't you call me back? I called an hour ago!" Because I'm usually in areas with poor or no coverage (duh!), I regularly have no broadband either for most of the day, or for days at a time. Imagine trying to sync your email with 1xRTT at 46 kbps (for young readers, that is 0.046 Mbps or, for kids still in elementary school, that is 0.000046 Gbps). I know it's difficult to believe that data transmission used to be that slow. Just about every email I receive requires a couple of megs of data to download some image, spreadsheet or PDF.

I've been having fun lately with the number of friends not in the industry who have called with communications questions — everything from building owners (in some actually small towns, not just big buildings in urban areas) to rural telephone companies to farmer friends — all being approached with small cell and even not-small-cell proposals. How much could I rent this or that for? What are the terms like? How can I minimize visual impact? Do generators make noise? How long does construction take? It's fun to watch a new slate of possible sites enter the

market as the technology and demands change.

Drive along most any road lately (in Virginia, West Virginia, Montana, Vermont, Colorado, New Mexico and North Carolina, among others), again both rural and urban, and you can't help but be annoyed with all of the fiber construction. Seems like 2000 all over again! How much stink'n fiber do we need? Well, we need more, that's for sure. But what we need is probably what we are not getting — fiber to the towers, and fiber to the towers in some of the places broadband is needed most: rural areas.

In looking back on last year, I find that I'm still impressed with the success of our educational tower climb back in July. All of AGL thanks everyone who participated in that effort. I still get chills thinking of how much there is to know, how much gear there is and how much training is necessary before hitting the climbing pegs. It was a lot of fun, too. However, as I continue to dig into the issues of training (not just for climbers) and what rules and standards are out there, I really want to drive some more of our focus at AGL to safety issues. There is so much work to do to make sure everyone comes home safe every day.

I'll preemptively say "sorry" to someone out there. I know there will be someone we missed in this issue — it is inevitable. Just know that if we missed you for any reason, we'll find some way to make it up to you.

Rich Biby, Publisher

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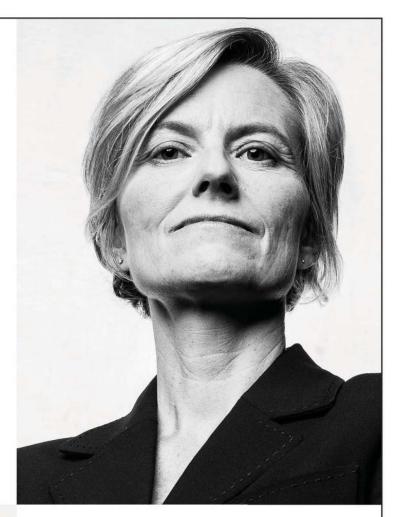


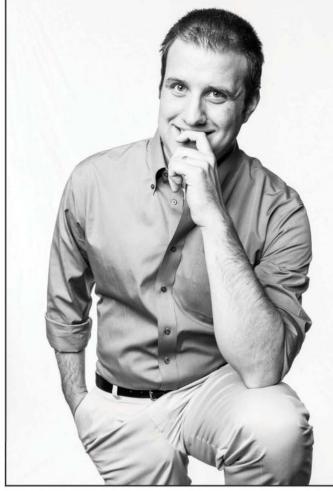


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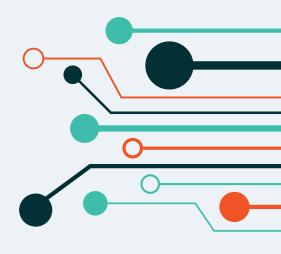












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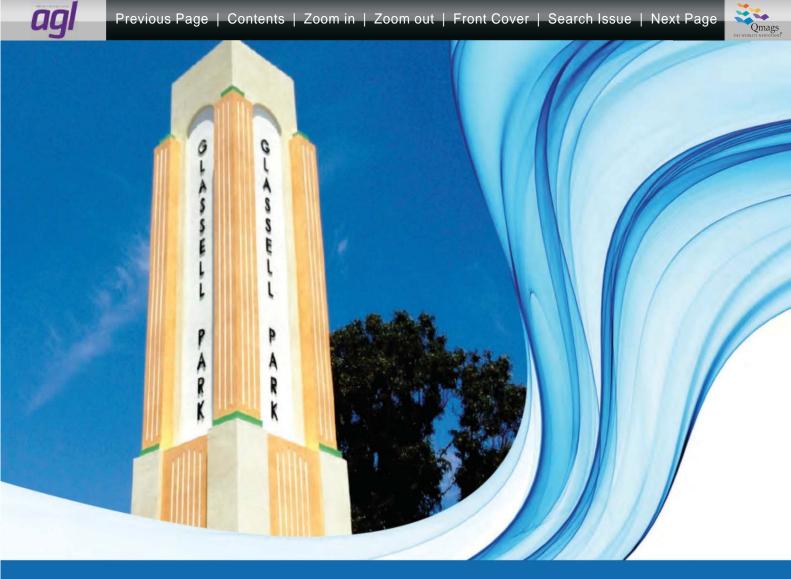




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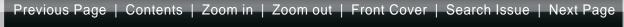
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hen you think about your brand voice, you might think of your company mission statement, your logo, the "About" section on your website, or the types of posts you make on social media. However, there are more opportunities to define your company and express its values beyond the places where you directly state them.

Online forums, the comments section on your blog or social media platforms, and review websites all offer a unique chance to set the tone for how your company communicates, and to create a sense of online community for your loyal customers and fans.

Here are a few tips to make these digital venues work for you.

1. Always be polite and courteous, even when someone is being rude, leaving a scathing review, or insulting your business for no reason. As satisfying as it might be to snark back at someone, you might lose the trust and respect of the many others reading your words in a public online space. Take the high road no matter how much pleasure you might receive from putting someone in their place.

2. Use correct grammar and spelling, and put the same care into your words that you would into your web copy. Forums, comments sections, and review responses might seem temporary, but like diamonds, copy on the internet is forever. Because online writing is permanent, you should put as much care in your comments as you would into other online writing.

3. Create a safe space for your fans. You may have an irate customer pop up occasionally who exceeds the boundaries of good taste or have online trolls (random users who post inflammatory remarks just to stir up trouble) attempt to degrade your platform. Always try to diffuse the situation in a way that protects the community you've made and treats everyone with respect, whether they've earned it or not. You may need a web development solution like requiring registration or enforcing login requirements to comment. It's often a good idea to create a comments policy and institute moderators on active sites.

4. Respond quickly. The key to making an online community feel close and authentic is showing that you care. One of the best ways to do that is to check in regularly, respond promptly, and never leave anyone's questions hanging for too long. It doesn't need to take up much of your time, just checking in once a day and scaling your frequency up as the size of the community grows.

5. Become a regular contributor in the comments section and leave exclusive content for the dedicated readers to enjoy. It rewards their involvement if they believe they will often get new information before others or that they feel they have special access to the company for input and questions. Who doesn't want to help shape the products they use and enjoy and these contributors can be a great source of market research and ideas?

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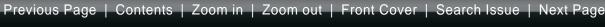
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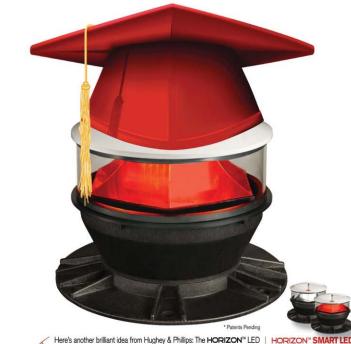
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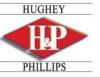


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SUGGESTIONS FOR GOOGLE **<<<**<

ith over 70% of the total search volume, you have to pay attention to Google and how they work. In 2014, Google's Hummingbird search algorithm update meant big changes for how companies approach SEO (search engine optimization). The algorithm is now more attuned to how people search for content and how they decide if a site has the information they need. Some people believe it's better for readers, but it definitely means companies need to step up their SEO game.

Keyword loading is out. Instead, Hummingbird focuses on phrases and whole sentences. While the mechanics of the algorithm are a closely guarded secret, what we do know is that the system now judges pages on the quality and readability of the content, rather than the density of certain keywords. Google gives priority to the same kind of content that readers are likely to prefer. That's good news for readers who found old school SEO copy unnatural and tiresome. The joke used to be that a SEO specialist walked into a bar, pub, brew house, tavern, taproom, lounge... Now that Hummingbird is honed in on bigger chunks of content and how they work together, you can put down the thesaurus and focus on simple, clear, concise language, rather than a shotgun approach to keywords.

Questions are in. Because Hummingbird is designed to pick up on whole phrases, long-tail keywords, and context clues, it's helpful to include plenty of questions in your web copy. A great way to do this in a natural way that meets your readers' needs is to have an FAQ section on your site. By including the kinds of questions your customers might already be typing into Google on your site, Google will be more likely to recognize that your page has answers and good content. "How To" posts, instructional videos,

tutorials, and other educational content can fulfill the same purpose.

Encrypt your script. Google is now giving an SEO boost to sites that deter hackers in order to create a safer browsing experience for its users. You may have noticed websites that have URLs that start with https, rather than http. That indicates a security encryption protocol is built into the site. Once this extra security feature was reserved for sites that handled sensitive information like credit card and Social Security numbers. Now it's increasingly used for sites of all sorts. Ask your web developer to consider this alternative. It will protect your website and may pump up your search rankings, but by how much is yet to be determined.

Watch it, share it. It's not just the web copy that determines the quality of your site's SEO. Image tags, video content, and social media shareability also affect SEO. That's in part because readers prefer sites that have a variety of visual content and short, concise copy. When visitors give posts or sites a +1 vote through their Google+ profile or share content on Facebook or Instagram, it is an indication of content approval and popularity. By using functionality that makes it easier for readers to share the content they like and that makes the most of Google's and other social media platforms' wide range of services, you'll not only improve your search rankings, but increase your chances of going viral.

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Log into your Google account and see how you phrased your last five searches by going to this address: https://history.google.com/history/?ctz=300. We don't usually think too hard about how we phrase queries for a search engine, but the way you type in your queries might be fairly similar to how your customers search. With that phrasing from your search history in mind, write down five searches you think someone would use if they were looking for a solution your company provides. The five search phrases you compose will include phrases you should consider in your SEO strategy.









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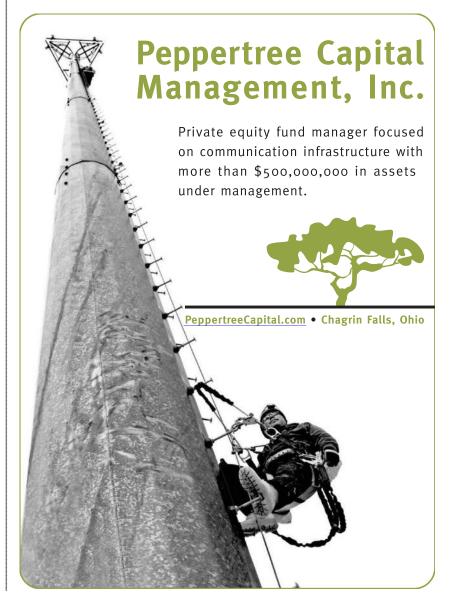
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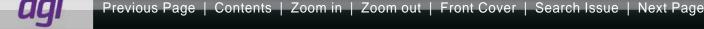
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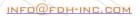
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n today's digital landscape, there is often only a thin barrier between a company and its audience. Today's customers are used to interacting with many of their favorite companies and enjoy a back and forth conversation with brands. The result is a move towards more casual, conversational marketing language that makes customers feel like they're talking to another person, rather than a stiff, formal entity.

Some brands that have done an especially great job at cultivating a consistent personality and knowing their customers inside and out are Taco Bell, Starbucks, Target, and Airbnb.

These companies have been successful because they know exactly who their audience is and what their needs are, and they are truly committed to integrating themselves in their customers' lives.

Taco Bell has found a strong niche in the college market and has catered to that audience with late night hours and speaking online like its customers speak to one another. They've proven to their audience that they get youth culture by taking up a brand voice and sense of humor that their audience finds familiar and approachable.

Starbucks has built up a loyal fan base by making customers feel like they're part of a cool club, with mobile ordering, seasonal drinks, and unique lingo for their product sizes. Their attention to the details, like selling iTunes products, offering branded home use products and stocking cute accessories turns Starbucks into a part of their clientele's overall lifestyle.

Target identified an audience who wanted to save money on everyday essentials, but didn't want a discount store lifestyle. By offering fashionable clothes, collaborations with luxury designers, stocking their own brands of organic and vegetarian-friendly food products, and rolling out slick marketing campaigns, Target made itself feel like a shopping experience. Customers appreciated being able to stick to a budget in style.

Airbnb knew that its customers wanted an experience that went beyond the typical hotel or resort stay.

Their guests appreciate the personal details that come from staying in someone's home or apartment, and getting to pick the price and location that works best for their trip. Airbnb picked up on that desire for personalization and offered customer service above and beyond that found at other hospitality companies, responding rapidly to requests or complaints on social media.

What all these companies have in common is that they look at who is using their products and services and mold themselves to that customer base.

They create deeply personal relationships with their fans, and invest in making those relationships even stronger. We've created an activity to help you understand your customers more deeply.

Imagine that you're at a party with members of your target audience. Close your eyes and take a minute to really visualize how the surroundings look and what the crowd is like. Forget your expectations and open up your imagination based on your experience with your customers. When you open your eyes, answer the following questions with the first impression that comes to mind:

- What music is playing?
- What is everyone eating and drinking?
- Where is the party being held?
- What kind of a party is it, a dance party, mixer, costume or dinner party?
- How old are the guests?
- Where do you think they live?
- What kind of small talk is taking place? Is it about sports, movies, a best-selling novel or shop talk?
- What's the party decor like?
- Are there more men or women at the party? Are they couples or singles?
- What kind of cars are in the parking lot?
- Does everyone seem to know one another?
- Was the party invite only or was it open door?

Once completed, you may have a few new ideas on how to conduct your customer communication.









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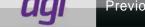
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INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA



acebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn — and every month it seems like there's a new social media platform. Each has its own unique format, audience, and etiquette. In order to decide which social media platforms would work best for your organization, you'll want to familiarize yourself with how each one works and who is using it. We put together this introduction to make it easier to begin thinking about your social media strategy.

Facebook: Facebook is the most widely-used social media platform out there with almost 900 million daily active users. Many people feel they can't do without it because of how heavily integrated it has become in everyday life. While the audience is starting to skew a little older, it still has enormous diversity in terms of age, ethnicity, geographic location, and more.

Facebook has made it tougher for businesses to get their free posts in front of users, but it also has

added powerful paid targeting tools that help your posts reach potential customers based on a variety of interests and other factors you can select. Posts do not have strict length limits, and you can include pictures and video for even more clickable, appealing content.

People often use a business's Facebook page the way they once used its website, to find out basic information like operating hours, location, and daily specials. All of this continues to make Facebook an extremely valuable piece of online real estate.

LinkedIn: LinkedIn is the most visible social media platform specifically for business. Individuals and businesses create professional profiles and are able to network with others in their industry and beyond. If your organization has a B2B focus, LinkedIn is an excellent way to reach out to potential customers and partners. It's also a great place to recruit fresh talent. Like Facebook, posts have a reasonably long lifespan,





and there are options for promoting content.

Twitter: Twitter has a very unique format, with a constantly updating live feed of posts from everyone you follow, a 140 character limit on posts (including the characters used to include pictures and links), and the use of hashtags (#) to help users find one another or posts on certain topics. If a hashtag is especially popular and getting a lot of use, it's called a trending hashtag, and these can be useful tools for businesses trying to find new customers or a wider audience.

Twitter users tend to be younger than those on Facebook, from high school through young professional age. Twitter also appears to have a strong appeal to minority users on social networking platforms. The constantly updating feed and short posts mean you'll want to schedule several unique posts throughout the day to stay in front of readers.

Instagram: Instagram functions much like Twitter, but with an emphasis on photographs and short videos. The platform offers a variety of tools for editing photos, often with filters to give pictures a fun vintage look. Like Twitter, Instagram uses hashtags to help users find one another based on common interests.

Unlike other social networks, Instagram was designed primarily for mobile users since there is no official desktop application or way to upload pictures without a smartphone. However, photos uploaded to Instagram are viewable on computers and can be shared through Twitter and Facebook.

Instagram users tend to be younger, with 90% of users under the age of 35, according to Business Insider. While Instagram is great for any brand with a strong visual aesthetic, URLs aren't clickable in the platform, creating a small barrier for marketers.

Snapchat: Snapchat is one of the newest social media platforms, and it also has the youngest user base made up of tweens, teens, and twenty-somethings. Like Instagram, Snapchat is an exclusively mobile app that allows users to share pictures, but with an important twist. The pictures, or Snaps, that users send last only 1-10 seconds before they disappear.

Users can also upload pictures to their Story profile that last 24 hours. While marketers are only just starting to use Snapchat as the platform takes off, there are a lot of exciting possibilities here for any business with a younger clientele.

Pinterest: Like Instagram and Snapchat, Pinterest is a highly visual platform. Users can organize images (or "pins") using different boards, much like you might make a mood board or bulletin board in real life. Pinterest is very business-friendly with features that let you highlight the price of an item and link to where you might purchase it.

It's also a great way to strengthen your customers' sense of your brand, whether by establishing a strong aesthetic or giving them an opportunity to fit photos of your products or services in amongst other things they like or aspire to.

Google+: When you create a Google Gmail account, you automatically get a Google+ profile. That means that a huge number of people are on Google+ whether they're active users or not. Google has also tied the platform to its search algorithm, meaning Google+ is incredibly important for improving your SEO, especially in your geographical area where Google+ pages are delivered as part of the search results. It's a unique case that a social networking site is so well populated with members and important for establishing an online presence yet has a relatively small amount of content generated and shared.

Setting up a Google+ profile for your business makes it easier for customers to find basic information like your location and contact information. When you upload your content to Google+, it creates more paths for potential customers to find you and can increase traffic to your website. You can add individuals as authors for different content and create additional links to your site from their individual pages which also can improve SEO. When visitors follow your page and +1 your content, it helps elevate your Google+ rankings which is important for local search on Google+ listings and Google Maps placement.

Now that you know the basics of these social media platforms, you can begin a more in depth review to determine which sites might work best for your organization, and how your social media strategy should take shape.











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National Wireless Ventures, LLC

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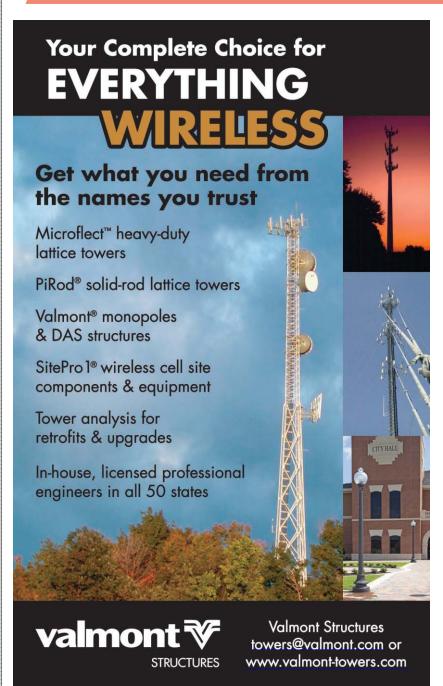
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National Wireless Ventures LLC, provides real estate services to wireless phone companies in order to improve

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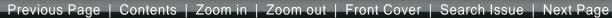
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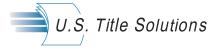
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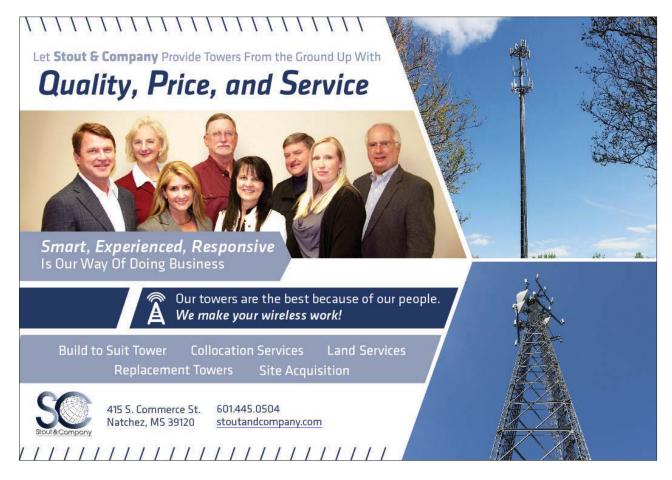


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Solid

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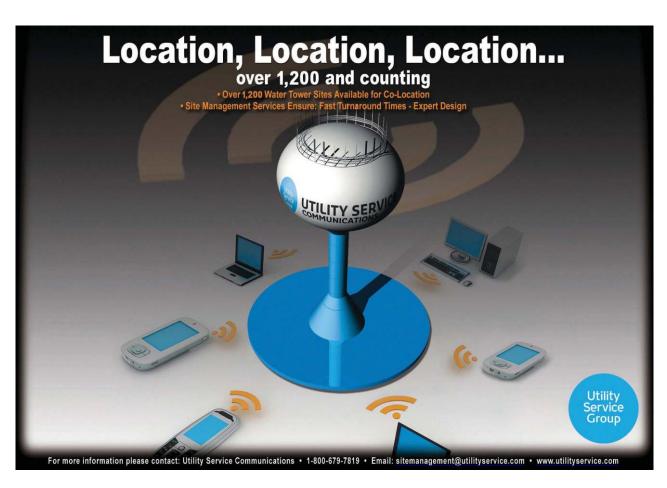
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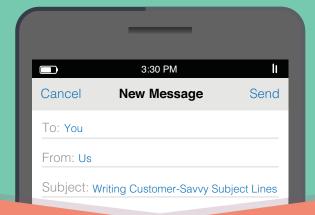






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National Wireless Ventures LLC, provides real estate services to wireless phone companies in order to improve network coverage and capacity. We specialize in site acquisition including leasing, zoning, permitting and construction management of wireless sites.

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SSC

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ITS - Integrated Tower Systems

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Day Wireless Systems

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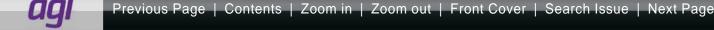
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"The Nevada Wireless Association supports the efforts of the Tower Family Foundation and has made them a recipient in our annual charity golf tournament. Best of luck to the Foundation as you continue to grow and help those in need!"

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"As a climber with 17 years of experience, I've seen firsthand the hurt and the pain caused by the loss of a fallen friend and fellow tower climber. I am grateful and humbled to know there is an organization that has resources to assist tower climbers and their families during times of need."

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"I want to thank everyone involved for making this happen! Synergy Concepts will be donating to the Tower Family Foundation and encourages other companies in the industry to donate as well."

Russ Chittendon Vice President of Synergy Concepts, Inc.

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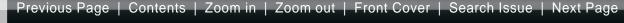
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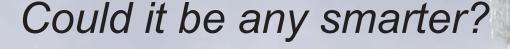
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/ FEATURES /

CREATING STICKY

SOCIAL MEDIA

POSTS



peanut butter and jelly. A sticky post is one iting it, clicking through a link, watching a video, or

Here's my formula for sticky social media posts that will engage your readers.

- Know your audience

First, consider your social media platform and posts can be longer, but the image might need to be

Even if you're linking to the same blog article, a post

A sticky post is one that attracts a lot of viewers and keeps them engaged,

on two different platforms might be talking to two slightly different audiences. How you write your post tweaking your copy or image selection from how you





should sound similar to the way you might talk to a friend at a party. You wouldn't dominate the conversation or only talk about yourself. You'd ask the

make some jokes and speak simply, even using slang or pop culture references. Your social media copy should have a similar tone.

money and convince them that effective social media campaigns are worth the investment.

Now that you've mixed up some exciting, fun copy based on your platform and audience, it's time to add the visuals Most social media platforms let you include a picture and on some like Instagram, Tumblr, Pinterest, and Snapchat, the visuals take priority.

Stock photos are easy to find and reliable, but they don't always jump out at the audience, who are inundated with these kinds of bland, posed shots everywhere they go online. Consider investing in custom illustration or graphic design, candid photos or quality photography by someone who gets your brand. Audiences might only skim the copy, but they'll definitely remember the image in the post.

Including relevant content from other sources in your social media strategy is a great way to provide your audience with additional information they want and to establish yourself as a thought leader. One way to approach this is by presenting the information with your own unique spin. Is there something you find particularly interesting or funny? How can this information be applied so that it's useful to

your followers? Talking

about your area
of expertise without specifically
talking about your
brand is a great
break for you and
your readers and
allows them to
think about you as
a fellow contributor or

with something to sell.

Now that you have the basic formula, you can put your own twist on it with your brand's own unique ingredients.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES:

Create a profile of your target audience on each of your platforms by characterizing at least 3 of their most prominent attributes.

Identify 5 sources of information you can monitor and occasionally re-post and augment on your own social media campaigns.

Develop several engaging social media campaigns and then plan the photo shoot required to augment them in the most effective way. Take your plans to the folks with the money and convince them that effective social media campaigns are worth the investment.



BUYERS GUIDE CONTRIBUTING AUTHOR

Meghan O'Dea is a freelance marketing and branding consultant. She specializes in copywriting, digital marketing strategy, and social media. She also has a background in corporate communications and has worked for a variety of companies from small tech startups to venture capital firms to nonprofits to large scale enterprises. Her goal is always to help people to achieve their goals by fully articulating them, online and off.

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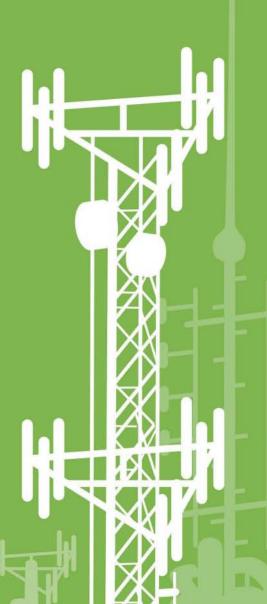
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TOWER TYPE
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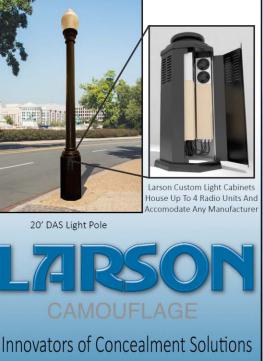
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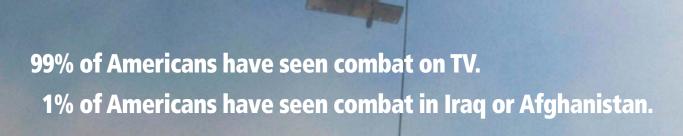
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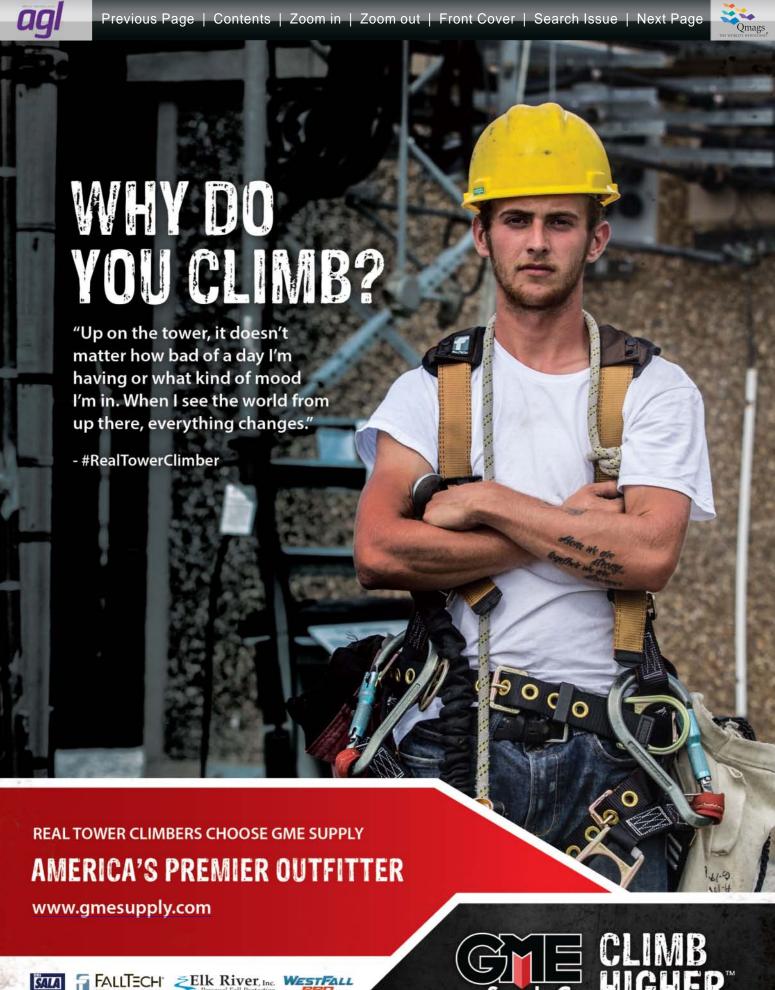
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