



Working the Web

Ellie Becker and Bernadette Nelson | Nov-01-10, 07:00 PM |

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Inbound Marketing Lessons from the U.S. Air Force & Other Experts

Did you know that, recently, the U.S. Air Force ensured that everyone from Airman to General has access to social media – even on government computers?! Yes. According to Captain Nathan Broshear, Chief of Public Affairs, 12th Air Force, his team is enabling members to directly communicate their experiences on the front lines to the public.

This was one of many surprising takeaways about the state of online marketing from the Inbound Marketing Summit 2010 (IMS10), held last month in Boston. Many of the top digital marketing thought leaders – from David Meerman Scott to Chris Brogan to Brian Halligan and Dharmesh Shah – shared current and future trends. More than 500 attendees came from as far away as Hawaii and the UK – and as near as here.

Here are more highlights:

Integrate Online & Offline Efforts

Back in June we made this point here. What we do off line is still important – speaking engagements, industry events, networking, retail experiences. Now the online world allows us to amplify these efforts to those who couldn't be there in person.

Can't Create Content? Then Curate.

Everyone is pressed for time today. You can bring value to your audiences by finding, aggregating and delivering the best information of importance to them. Tools are springing up to enable curation. A good example is Paper.Li, which allows you to create a list of your most interesting twitter followers and automatically provide their insights in the form of a daily free 'newspaper' delivered to subscribers via email.

Referrals are Still the Engine of Business

While much is said about using your website for lead generation, John Jantsch, author of "Duct Tape Marketing," reminded us that the more referrals we get from happy customers, the less we need to generate new leads. He shared excerpts from his new book "The Referral Engine" (Portfolio, 2010): Online and offline we need to understand who our ideal customers are, listen to them and exceed expectations in order to get our businesses marketing themselves.

Win with Real-Time Marketing

David Meerman Scott's, "The New Rules of Marketing & PR" heralded the coming changes in marketing several years ago. He shared compelling examples from his new book, "Real-Time Marketing & PR," of how nimble marketers are now using the 24/7, instant qualities of the Internet to build their brands and level the playing field. For example, the upstart online entertainment media outlet, TMZ, scooped the L.A. Times, breaking the news of Michael Jackson's death.

The Web can Humanize Business

By allowing us to listen to our audiences and understand their needs, the Internet helps us to create more meaningful

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products and services, according to best-selling author and top blogger Chris Brogan. Building our lists with care and respect helps us to follow through and treat audiences the way they want to be treated. Technology can also identify top fans through multiple touch points so that we can reward them and turn them into advocates.

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