

Written by Victoria Fouts

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Alice Martin is the founder and president of ShroomSocial, a social media Web site. She sat down with *AFM* to talk about how to maximize both personal and professional potential through the use of social media.



AFM: So, how are you involved with social media?

AM: I have a business doing social media for brands and companies throughout the United States and in Canada as well.

AFM: Tell me more about ShroomSocial.

AM: It's a marketing, social media company that I started a few years ago. I help write and create content for brands and companies; so, I'm their voice. I actually go into their account whether its Facebook or Twitter or whatever social we are pushing for that company. I will do some actual engagement as well. Sometimes, I will have to be the wine company's voice or a whiskey company's voice or a beer company's voice. Sometimes, it's something really girly and frou-frou. So, there are so many different profiles and a different voice for every single brand and account.

AFM: Is it difficult being able to change your voice to fit so many different brands and companies?

AM: It's almost like you have to get into character and feel that brand; know the brand and what they are actually wanting to express and be that throughout the whole Twitter, Facebook and messaging. When you have been with that company and have been doing it for so long, that voice comes natural and can be expressed out there.

AFM: How can you best use social media in personal vs. professional life?

AM: So, I run profiles and I have my own personal profile. I don't really solicit my business or anything like that on there and I use it as my personal "I'll say what I want," yet broadcast some news and other things that are happening to help support things I believe in. Once in a while, some of the brands, I will use my account and support it on there. But it is really good to have a personal account and a brand account as well.

AFM: How can using social media help a business or an individual looking for professional opportunities?

AM: Well, there are different social media outlets for everything. For instance, if I am looking for a job there is a different social media site to use. Twitter is "Hear Me," Facebook is "See Me," and LinkedIn is "Hire Me." So people should be on LinkedIn if they want a job. There are different social sites for needs and wants of what you want to express.

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AFM: Does it seem like a lot of people aren't aware of that and just use one system to cover everything?

AM: I think a lot of people try a bunch of different things and just don't know what to do. So I do what I call a "Spray and Pray." But if you are able to understand what each social media outlet is actually used for and what they actually need, they can go, "I need a job. I should be on LinkedIn" but they don't know. If they go on Twitter and say, "I need a job," nothing happens. Or on Facebook, "I'm unemployed" and share with their friends, "Do you have a job?" So they should know what outlets to use for what they need. And it's important to talk to somebody or get some advice from someone to tell you "This is what you need right now" and "Focus on this instead of this" to get the results they are looking for.

AFM: Is there such a thing as being too involved in social media for a company?

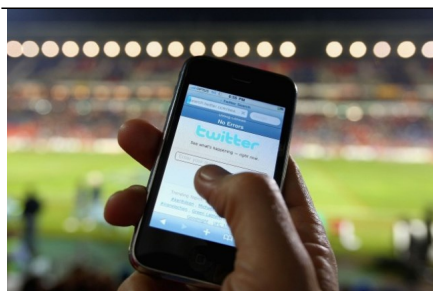
AM: I've seen some. When a company gets a little too expressive. For instance, on every single comment on Facebook they are replying to everything, tagging a bunch of people and they want to start this whole chain and encourage people to tag their friends. Or on Twitter they are constantly doing shout outs. Even on company profiles, I've seen it done before where they are constantly doing shout outs rather than engagement and content as well about the product or asking people how they are doing. So, they can be too excessive in a message as well.

AFM: What are things to avoid when using social media?

AM: Well, you shouldn't curse or be negative. But you know sometimes, if it's a personal account, it can get that way. For a brand or anything else, you should always stay positive, upbeat and draw people in a good way that's grateful. Show gratitude at all times.

AFM: Are there any drawbacks to using it?

AM: There can be, absolutely, if you say the wrong things. If you correct it in the right way, it's just like anything. But social is the most economical way to advertise and get your word out and be interactive with the customer instantly.



AFM: What is your favorite site to use?

AM: I think the most powerful one is Twitter. In using it I know I can drive people to Web sites and drop them on a certain page if you need page views or things of that nature and have it actually counted and get the ROI on it. Twitter also helps with some SEO rankings. When it's done right it's very powerful and you can direct someone immediately. Say for instance you want to buy a wine and you ask me, "Hey, where do I buy your wine?" I can give you the link right away and send you right to the app on your phone instantly.

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AFM: Can it be overwhelming?

AM: There are different accounts within Twitter. There are promo accounts and there are brand accounts that send out maybe a few tweets a day. But that's the benefit of being a known brand. They don't really have to tweet that much. People will retweet them to their friends and it will be posted thousands and thousands of times. So there are many different levels of Twitter accounts. There is so much to be learned with Twitter. For instance, I have a Twitter account and let's say I have 30,000 people following me and I follow equal amounts. There is no way I can go onto my timeline, the feed, and actually know people. So, what you do is put things in lists.

AFM: So it's important to organize your Twitter lists?

AM: It is. Very. And that's how you can get through it.