

The Dog Ate My Status

 **Bethany Foyt**

According to MarketingProfs (www.marketingprofs.com), social media is redefining the way we market to consumers and business prospects. Major brands are increasingly using blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other outlets to reach customers in a deeper, more cost-effective manner than traditional advertising allows. In a report by Forrester Research, Inc., 95 percent of marketers say, despite the economy, they will continue to invest in social media or at least maintain their same level of investment.

Three excuses you've created on why you can't market through social media:

- » I don't have time to post every little thing across multiple websites.
- » I have no idea what to write: some sites don't give me enough text space, and I'm not used to writing in shorthand.
- » I don't have a following, so what's the point?

Three reasons why your excuses mean squat:

- » Times are hectic, and there's always too much to do, but do you have just one hour a week to schedule messages? With Hootsuite (www.hootsuite.com), you're able to plan out your posts, schedule them in advance, and stay connected without checking your social networks all day, every day. Hootsuite allows you to combine all of your social networks in one place. If you schedule one message, it will post on your Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn pages.
- » Having trouble with what to write is not an uncommon

problem in social media, especially if you weren't born in the "texting" generation. This is one area that takes a bit of practice. The simplest thing to do if you're wondering what to write is direct your audience to your website, an event, or another site for more information. (In other words, it's okay to "retweet" content as you build up your own.) In order to fully utilize the space you have for words, <http://ow.ly/url/shorten-url> (works within Hootsuite) and <http://bit.ly/> can help you shrink your URLs. This feature also gives you the benefit of tracking click stats for your posts, which comes in handy when trying to prove to your boss that your messages are getting through to someone.

- » Nobody signs up for a social network account and automatically gets followers ... unless you're Oprah. The first thing you need to do is search for colleagues, Partners, and customers across the network. Once you've tracked them down, follow them, add them as a contact, or invite them into your network. Congratulations; you've made the initial connection, and your cyber relationship has begun. Voila! You have a following that will grow with time.

If these three reasons don't motivate you enough to start your social media, start asking around. Pretty soon you will feel like you're the only one not utilizing these cheap and effective marketing tools ... and what's more motivating than peer pressure? 🐕

Bethany Foyt is the social media whiz kid at The Partner Marketing Group and can be reached at Bethany@thepartnermarketinggroup.com if you want to "connect" with her. In fact, reaching out to her on LinkedIn and other sites just might be the way to start building your own following!

