

How to Build Your Business with Social Networking

Call facilitator and IdeaMarketers.com official communications expert Nancy Gerber discussed the lucrative universe of social marketing and its many benefits to online entrepreneurs.

Participants included the following IdeaMarketers.com experts:

- Visibility expert and entrepreneur Nancy Marmolejo - www.VivaVisability.com
- Article marketing expert and Internet marketer Jeff Herring - <http://greatarticlemarketingnetwork.com>
- Online marketing expert and direct response copywriter Michele PW - www.michelepw.com
- Communications and relationship specialist Nancy Gerber - www.sstones.com

This is a transcript of the highlights from this panel discussion. An audio recording of the entire panel discussion sponsored by IdeaMarketers.com is available at <http://www.ideamarketers.com/experts/calls/socialmedia.cfm>

What is Social Networking?



[Marketing consultant and direct response copywriter Michele PW](#) stated, "Social networking is really a way to take the tools of the Internet, all of the technology out there, to harness the Web. It's actually putting a relationship on top of it, so now we're adding the human element to the technology that is already part of the Internet. Social networking takes it a step farther and goes into developing a relationship."



[Article marketing expert and Internet marketer Jeff Herring](#) adds, "I like to think of it as something that started with college students, and then worked its way into Internet marketing as a great way to build community and to build connections between people that can promote both the connection *and* your product."



[Visibility expert and entrepreneur Nancy Marmolejo](#) says, “Social networking is a *voluntary* relationship that you create with somebody. It’s a very reciprocal type of relationship, so it’s not some random fan that’s coming at you from nowhere. You *agree* to be friends with people; you *approve* things. The user has an enormous amount of control over it.”



[Nancy Gerber](#): “So it’s sort of like the ultimate permission marketing.”

Benefits of Social Networking for Subject Matter Experts and Info Marketers

Building Relationships and Extending Your Reach

[Michele PW](#) : “They’re a great way to be building relationships with your leads that will eventually lead to sales. For some of these platforms, they even bypass an E-mail. People are checking their [Facebook](#), checking their [MySpace](#), over and above checking their E-mail. Social networking is a great way to really build these relationships and be in a medium that allows you to actually to touch your prospects, people who have agreed to want to hear from you. This *is* the ultimate permission marketing.”

[Jeff Herring](#): “For me, it’s a great way to extend your reach, because you’re able to get your name and information to different sites and *reach* people that you would not have otherwise.”

Investment of Time and Effort

[Michele PW](#): “You are reaching people and giving them a chance to get to know you. Unlike Pay-per-Click (ads on the right side of the screen for Google), which has its place and is a wonderful place to get traffic, this is warm. People have already experienced you somewhere else—they’ve been on your profile, they’ve gotten to know you, they’re interesting in what you’re selling. It doesn’t happen overnight. You have to be willing to invest in it to get these relationships.”

[Jeff Herring](#): “There’s no ‘get rich quick.’ You *can* get rich over time, if you stick with it and build your platform and build your reach there.”

[Nancy Gerber](#): “And I think that’s a really important point. What’s really important is that it’s an investment of time and effort, more so than money.”

[Nancy Marmolejo](#): “The investment is how important a relationship is to you. So for some people, that’s going to take some time. It’s really looking at the final outcome of what you want to get out of it. It’s the relationship building that leads to the quality sales and the quality web traffic. When you have a social networking page, it’s like this wonderful at-a-glance view of who you are, what you’re doing—as opposed to somebody going to your website and having to click around. You can go to somebody’s [Facebook](#) page, you can go to somebody’s [MySpace](#) page, and get this at-a-glance idea of who they are, who they associate with, who they consider important. It’s everything under one roof. It came from the younger generation, and that’s how they operate. They don’t want to sit around and click to these various pages.”

The Major Social Networking Sites: Which Site Is For You?

[LinkedIn](#), [MySpace](#), and [Facebook](#):

[Michele PW](#): “LinkedIn is more formal, more corporate. It has résumés for places you work. There are lots of business owners on there, but it does have more of a corporate feel to it. Interaction between people is a lot different. You really have to know people to invite them to connect with you.”

[Jeff Herring](#): “I think Facebook is much less formal. It still has a professional look to it like LinkedIn, but you can write on people’s walls virtually. You can send little notes. It’s an awesome place to have a presence and build lots of friends and connections. Not more than a few weeks ago, it was featured on *60 Minutes*, as an up-and-coming site that started in the college networks and then burst upon the scene.”

[Nancy Marmolejo](#): “MySpace is probably the least formal of all of them, because you can customize the look and feel. It is primarily geared toward social reasons, although the business use of it is increasing more and more. MySpace really lets a person see who you are as a person. There are just a lot more gizmos that go with it. Facebook, however, introduced these outside applications. It tends to create clutter and a little bit of overwhelm on the user’s part. You can send virtual flowers; you can send virtual karma. I think that is still working itself out. MySpace doesn’t have outside applications. You can import certain things from other programs—but, for the most part, you get what they give you. Facebook, right now, is really the hot place for business. Everybody wants to make sure they have a Facebook page up, and I think you want to also have a MySpace

page up because of the impact it has on your web traffic. You might make more personal contacts through Facebook, though.”

Amazon

Michele PW: “Amazon.com did a study as to where people were spending time on the Internet and where marketers were actually marketing. What they found was that 29 percent of web traffic goes to Amazon. Only 10-12 percent of marketers were spending any amount of time on there, so there’s a huge discrepancy. Reversed with that was LinkedIn—something like 20 percent of marketers were focusing on it, but in terms of traffic, it was only 5 percent. If you’re trying to reach a specific, targeted niche audience, it’s not a bad place to be, and it doesn’t require a lot of extra work. Facebook and MySpace are better for those kinds of purposes.”

Nancy Gerber: “Amazon is starting social networking, and there’s a way of getting in there to start networking with other book lovers, which might be great if you’re an author.”

Michele PW: “One thing to think about when you’re considering where to spend your time: if people are on Amazon, they’re looking to *buy*. If they’re just doing a search on Google, they’re just looking for information or *pre*-information. If they’re actually on Amazon, they’re considering purchasing that information. If you can get them as a lead then, they’re willing to spend money. They’re higher quality leads. You don’t have to have a book. You don’t have to be an author. You can set it all up for free, and you can still do the social networking part.”

Nancy Gerber: “We need to pay attention to what *people* are doing, rather than what we might *think* people are doing or what the marketers are doing. We want to get to places where people are hanging out, not where marketers are hanging out.”

Michele PW: “Always remember: you are not your target market. Just because you think it’s a good idea to be on LinkedIn doesn’t mean that’s where your target market is.”

Ning - www.Ning.com

Jeff Herring: I discovered Ning sitting, in of all places, in a Starbucks here in Alpharetta with Mike Stuart—the Internet audio and video guy—and his daughter, whom I was teaching about article marketing. He told me about Ning, a site where you can create your own MySpace under your control in your niche. You invite people there, they become members, just like MySpace. For instance,

my direct Ning site is ArticleMarketing.ning.com. This is the first domain name I ever bought—within an hour, I had a site set up just like a MySpace, but in my niche, under my control, for members. You can have blogs and discussion boards. We ask people questions, they start discussions. Basically, they're building your website for you and forming a social network right there on Ning."

[Alexa](#) Rankings - www.Alexa.com

[Jeff Herring](#): "Alexa ranks the traffic of different websites. Unlike Google page rankings, where the higher you are the better, on Alexa, the lower you are, the better—so number one is the best. That's Yahoo. Number two is YouTube right now. Anything ranked under a million is good. If you're ranked in the top 500,000, that's better. Anything ranked 250,000 or lower is doing real good. 100,000 or lower, you're doing great. All of these different social network sites that we're talking about are ranked in that top 100,000. Go to Alexa and type in the name of the social network site—or any site, for that matter—and you can see the traffic rank based on the last week and over time."

How to Get Started as a Social Marketer

[Nancy Marmolejo](#): "First of all, what I suggest to all of my clients is that they choose one or two of these social networking sites and just work on those for now. You don't have to be on all of them. I always tell people to put 70 percent of your energy into one of these sites, and 30 percent of your energy into the other one. I spent an enormous amount of time developing my MySpace page, and it's pretty much running on its own right now. So now, I'm pretty much on Facebook about 80-90 percent of my social networking time. You need to give yourself permission to set limits around this. It can be very addictive. Keeping up with social networking is not about keeping up with the Joneses; it's about working from a place where you're going to have success. Find out where you can delegate this. Ask anyone group of people under the age of 18 to help with Myspace, and they'll do it faster. They grew up with keyboards in their hands. We need to take advantage of that. If a teenager wants a really cool job they can do whenever they want, that is a great job for a college student or a teenager to earn some extra cash."

[Jeff Herring](#): "My 13-year-old son, Jonathan, who taught me how to do PowerPoint, has started his own little MySpace business among his friends."

[Michele PW](#): "If you really feel like you have no time to do this, I invite you to look at your priorities. The more time you're going to devote to marketing, the more you're going to get out of it—and the more you're going to see the results

later in terms of sales increase, increased leads, increased clients, that kind of stuff. I know it's hard, but I've found it can develop a momentum of its own. Look at it as making an investment in your business."

URLs for Panel Experts' Social Networking Sites

Nancy Marmolejo: <http://myspace.com/2comadre>. One little tip: on MySpace, you customize your URL. Try to use the same one consistently on all of your social networking sites.

Michele PW: "Facebook does have an application that you can do that will point you right to your Facebook page. Mine is <http://profile.to/michelepw>. It makes it very easy. My Twitter is the same; my Myspace is the same.
<http://myspace.com/michelepw>."

Jeff Herring: "I want to back up a second, because I did a little bit of research while you were talking on Alexa. Every single site that we're talking about is ranked in the top 1,000 websites. Ning is 965, Squidu is 743, Twitter is 646, LinkedIn is 215, Digg is 160, and Facebook is ranked number 7. MySpace is ranked number 6. I direct people to <http://articlemarketingspace.com>—that's a redirected domain name to my Ning site, where you can check out what you can do with a Ning site for free within an hour."

Nancy Gerber: "I just want to make sure that the listeners heard that there were a few more sites that Jeff just mentioned that we don't have time to discuss right now, but that you're certainly welcome to check out. Twitter, Squidu, and Digg. All of those are also social networking sites."

How to Profit from Social Networking Sites

Nancy Marmolejo: "In the first 90 days of really diligently working on MySpace, I had \$10,000 worth of new business. That was getting new clients, people who had gotten my E-book, and we just got connected. I used the social networking pages as a way to share information and build the trust, to build the likeability. There was even one person who likes the song that I had on my page. She said, 'I already know we're going to connect.' Whether you want to measure it in dollars or the value of the relationship, you need to look at it from all of those perspectives. If you get more traffic, you get more business."

Nancy Gerber: "You already had some kind of product to offer people, even if it was just a little free E-book or E-zine—you had something that people could become even more connected with you once they initially connected."

[Michele PW](#): “I was contacted by three different people to do teleclasses, which did result in more sales, and I also reconnected with some people I had met a few years ago at an event. They bought my books, and one of them actually became a client. It’s more than just new people. It’s also reconnecting with old people.”

[Jeff Herring](#): “On the Ning site, you invite people from other sites or your list. They become members and create their own page, just like you would on MySpace, and Ning has this nice function where you can mail out to the membership of your site. Every Monday, I have my Monday Morning Madness session. It mails out only to the people that are on my Ning site, and it’s usually a discount on one of my products. Only if you’re on that Ning site can you get that discount. So I send two E-mails, the first one to the Ning people. The second E-mail is to everybody else on my list encouraging them to come join that so they can get the special. I ran that for awhile, so every Monday morning, there’s some income from this. One Monday, I forgot about it, and by about 2:00 that afternoon, I was getting E-mails. ‘Hey, where’s the Monday Morning Madness?’ So it builds that wealth, you build that following, and it gets people to demonstrate buying behavior and they get to experience your products and get on the rest of your lists.”

[Nancy Gerber](#): “Once you’re connected with people, couldn’t you do surveys to find out what kinds of products in your genre people want and would be willing to pay for?”

[Jeff Herring](#): “Absolutely. On a Ning site, there are blocks for a blog, a group discussion, and forums where you can do surveys. I’ve asked them to help me name things, or asked them their biggest challenge to help me create products. It’s a wonderful way to build loyalty, and it’s a great ‘stick’ strategy to help people stick around. It’s a great way to build community.”

[IdeaMarketers creator and author Marnie Pehrson](#): “Last week, I set up a page for the IdeaMarketers site. First, I invited the experts to come in and set up an area to promote all of them, and then I sent an E-mail to our main list saying ‘Come be our friend, come get on the fan page for IdeaMarketers.’ This one lady asked to be my friend, and just as I was accepting the invitation, she called me on the phone and said, ‘I want to be your expert on this subject. I just want to go ahead and pay for the whole year.’ As we were talking, she said, ‘I noticed that you’re promoting your experts on Facebook.’ It’s not that she came from Facebook originally, but because I was active on Facebook and actively promoting the experts on there, she saw that as a perk for being an expert. It helped me get an easy sale right there.”

Social Networking Etiquette: Do's & Don'ts

[Jeff Herring](#): “One of the things you see often is somebody joins and immediately begins to sell and market. At the very least, that’s going to turn off everybody there—and, on some sites, that will get you booted out right away. So go slow. Network, connect with people, have discussions, join in the party before you begin to market and sell. Build your presence. You’ve got to think long-term here. Spend a month getting known, answering questions, developing a following and connection.”

[Nancy Marmolejo](#): “There’s some subtle ways you can at least get some of your information out there, even in your signature where you link back to your website, so it’s not quite so blatant. On MySpace and Facebook, when you want to invite somebody to be your friend, you have the option of sending a little personal message. That’s always a really nice thing to do, because you’re showing them that you’re not just out there trying to amass friends. Put a little personal touch to it. On these social networking sites, you create your own blend of the personal and professional. You have the option to put in some personal information. Just be wise. If it’s anything that’s polarizing, stay away from that.”

[Michele PW](#): “Facebook was designed to augment offline relationships, where you actually knew the person. LinkedIn, as well, is like that. You need to be careful that you know what’s accepted and what is not accepted. You can get banned or kicked off, which is also a problem.”

[Nancy Marmolejo](#) adds, “Keep a relationship-building mindset throughout. Don’t get them with your big banner ads saying ‘Click here’ or ‘Buy this.’ You want to really be of service. Give information, give support, show interest in what other people are doing. It’s not just ‘me, me, me.’ When people see that you aren’t just pushing all the time, they become more interested.”

[Michele PW](#): “Don’t be too quick to start selling. Put the relationship first; let the selling come later. Think of how you would approach somebody offline. If you keep that guideline, then you’ll be fine.”

[Nancy Gerber](#): “Everybody has been to the networking meetings where the person goes around just shoving their business card in your hand whether you want it or not.”

[Jeff Herring](#): “A great way to think of that is: Don’t propose marriage on the first date.”

Questions for the Panel

[Real Estate Investing Expert Nancy Spivey](#) asks, “If you don’t have the people there that you already know, how do you start engaging in conversation?”

[Nancy Marmolejo](#): “This is where you need to just let things go naturally, and just remember what you do when you go a regular networking event. Sometimes, it’s just a matter of knowing a person, because they might connect you with people that they know. It’s not necessarily a transaction that’s going to occur between you and them. They might actually be sitting on a huge network. You gain their trust and you gain their confidence, and then they start introducing you to that other network. That’s where the success is in relationship building. We have to go beyond the mindset that ‘This is going to make me money because this person is going to become my client.’ This person might be a vehicle towards a larger audience. This person might just be somebody I want to keep in my back pocket, because you don’t know what’s going to happen. There are little gems hidden all throughout.”

[Michele PW](#): “With MySpace and Facebook, there are ways of importing your blog and articles. You’re giving them articles, they’re on your list, they see when you update. They may start approaching you with questions. By providing information, you’re actually helping to build the relationship, too.”

Final Thoughts

[Michele PW](#): “Don’t rush it. This is really a good investment. My business overall has gone up, my whole monthly income has gone up since I’ve been doing this. It’s boosted everything. Don’t be too impatient to start seeing the traffic. All of this is going to take time. Don’t be digging up the seeds to see if there’s roots.”

[Nancy Marmolejo](#): “Give it three months before you really start looking to see the results, because it can take time. Always maintain a relationship-building mindset. Never step out of integrity. If it doesn’t feel right to you, just don’t do it. I want this to be really comfortable and positive for people.”

[Jeff Herring](#): “Number one: get started. Number two: pick one to get involved in and build it up. Get it to where it’s managing itself, basically. Then, step three: pick another one, and do the same thing again.”

Panelist Websites

- Visibility expert and entrepreneur Nancy Marmolejo - www.VivaVisability.com
- Article marketing expert and Internet marketer Jeff Herring - <http://greatarticlemarketingnetwork.com>
- Online marketing expert and direct response copywriter Michele PW - www.michelepw.com
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To listen to the recorded call, go to <http://www.ideamarketers.com/experts/calls/socialmedia.cfm> . On this page you may also enroll to receive updates on other informative calls with official IdeaMarketers.com experts.

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