

## **1) Social media seems to be the buzz word for marketers. While the brand building can't be denied, how do you make the medium regulated and accountable?**

Social media is a non-regulated and more personal space than the traditional media space. **This means that users themselves set higher demands on brands wishing to engage with them both in terms of content and the distribution tactics used.** In short, it is only really valuable to target social media destinations if you have something relevant to say to these people. **Rejection by the audience makes you accountable.** So like with any other media plan it's crucial to set goals and define your message and target audience. **This** makes it much easier to evaluate your achievements over time and in turn allow you to understand, which social media channel fulfils your goals the best.

## **2) Is it only about getting your branding in the space where your ideal demographic is, or are there other steps you can take?**

Getting your branding **and content right is crucial**, as this is a pull-driven environment. You therefore want to make it as easy as possible for people to share the content, and ideally you want to create content that works in the environments where people are, instead of taking them to a separate destination i.e. think Widgets on **Facebook**. **The** difference between traditional ad campaigns and social media is the latter's endless need for content. When your content dries out, so does your audience. That means you need to prepare more content than you ever anticipated.

**Insight:** Focus on the content that creates stories. Stories are conversations. Keep looking for the good stories and spread them. Remember that the story behind the story is often the most intriguing.

## **3) Do/should the social networks plan to standardise accountability? And how would they do this?**

I believe that somewhere down the road you will see standards emerge as the benefits of this in terms of planning and accountability are what media agencies and **brands are** looking for. In my opinion the social networks will also have to come up with more compelling standardized formats if they want to compete for the bigger media budgets. The issue here is that most of the networks are actually quite unique, which means they will have a challenge offering accountability and more standardized rich media formats across different platforms.

**Insight:** Let behaviour drive your media choices. Asking questions is important. Monitoring behaviour is even more important. You cannot ask users what they want next, but you can see what they do. Give them alternatives and they will help you find the right answer.

## **4) What are the challenges and pitfalls involved in making social media accountable?**

These platforms were developed around social activities and personal communication. Brands don't necessarily have to be accountable in the same way that they are in more traditional advertising funded business models. At least not yet. I think the way forward to making the space more accountable is to create media properties around the social networks. An example is what Bebo are doing with Kate Modern, where they make use of their huge audience to build successful media properties that brands can tap into as sponsors.

**Insight:** New formats will be needed in order to meet the users' needs and the needs of the analysts, media buyers, producers, marketers, webmasters, editors and media owners.

### **5) What are the risks for a brand that doesn't strive to make its social media accountable?**

Having worked with social media for a long time, where GoViral succeeded was, for a sub-set of the channels, to package a previously non-accountable area like viral marketing in to something accountable. The way viral marketing was presented, with clear monitoring to remove risks while maintaining the potential, changed viral marketing in Europe. It made it accountable. In the US the evolution took a different turn, with people providing viral products without guarantees. That led to a lot of disappointed clients turning away from viral video even though the potential is huge. Brands that do not demand proper KPI's and accountability on their social media campaigns risk experiencing the same disappointments as US brands did with viral marketing.

**Insight:** Ensure that your activities can be tracked. Monitor and track engagement - not just awareness. This is where the real value is.

### **6) What pattern do you see accountability of social media taking in the future? (ie, regulated, self-regulated, too difficult to regulate)**

It is an area that will be very hard to regulate. As mentioned I think we will see attempts to self-regulate and standardize but the evolution will probably be more based on commercial success. The most successful formats and media packages will gradually become the standard as clients increasingly demand them.

So the push for social media to be more accountable and in turn successful will be closely tied to the time/money you invest in the content and your ability to build a strategy that you can measure. Use more insights/intelligence about the fundamentals of social media and we will see many more successful and accountable campaigns in the future!