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It's 2014: Social media and marketing terminology you should know

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As we begin a new year I'd like to get back to basics with social media essentials. Fact - We are in an industry that is slow to pick up on new technology. However, when something as big as social media is changing the way people communicate and conduct business it's important to at least know some of the terminology. Plus, you need to keep up with that new guy in the office that somehow seems to be a walking Wikipedia and keeps landing meetings from LinkedIn.

Social Media: What does social media really mean?

Many people think of social media as being Facebook or LinkedIn but social media is not just a mix of sites. It is media produced to social network based on people's social graphs. Think of your social graph as your profiles, the information you provide to various networks (interests, hobbies, business information, location etc). What you include in your profiles and what you post is what links you to others. Facebook and LinkedIn etc. are publishing sites.

Twitter: What's a hashtag?

The hashtag is a grouping mechanism that is essentially the pound sign and used in relation to Twitter. The hashtag is followed by text with no spaces. If you click on a hashtag in Twitter, it will show you all the tweets that have used the tag. This mechanism helps people connect on the same subject. Anyone can create a hashtag. Businesses frequently use a hashtag on Twitter when promoting a new product or service.

LinkedIn: Follow, like, endorse, connect or all of the above?

Sometimes it's hard to keep straight which action words are associated with which site. Let me clarify the right terms for LinkedIn. A LinkedIn "connection" is similar to a Facebook "friend." You can "follow" a business but you "connect" with individuals. When you scroll through your news feed you can "like" or "comment" on posts from a business or an individual. A new feature is endorsing. If you scroll down on your profile you may notice that people have endorsed you for particular skills. This is a good thing! It gives you more credibility based on the noted skill and on who the endorsee is.

Web Design: Responsive you say?

The newest trend in web design is called responsive design. When a website is responsive it will format a site based on the device you are viewing it on. It's all the same content, just condensed to fit your device. To tell if you're looking at a responsive design or not pull the right hand corner of the frame to make it larger and smaller. If your content on the site gets chopped off then it is not responsive. If the content shifts to fit the larger or smaller frame, it's responsive. This design provides a better user experience and extends the time a user spends on the site.

Web: SEO

SEO means "search engine optimization" and refers to the process of heightening web traffic to a site from search engines like Google. It is associated with organic search traffic, not paid.

Social Media Fun Fact: Google has spent more on acquisitions (YouTube, Picasa, Android etc) than its top five competitors combined. Competitors include: Apple, Microsoft, Facebook, Amazon and Yahoo. That's \$17 billion vs. a total of \$13 billion. (Source: Bloomberg).

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