



Social Networking is the New PR

Inside this Issue:

- An Open Letter from the President *Lee O'Conner*
- Advertising, marketing and PR, and how social media affects them *Lisa Benson*
- Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name MHP *Elysa Rice*
- Multifamily Twitter chat: #AptChat *Joe Foster*
- Are You Ready to Network Socially? *Dave Turner*
- Just for fun: Ellipse Facebook & Other social stats

An Open Letter from the President

As with everything that happens at Ellipse Communications I LP (note the new name), there is a reason and a story on how I became the President. My phone is always nearby; feel free to give me a call for some interesting insight. Right now, I would like to express my gratitude to Lisa Benson for entrusting me with the responsibility to continue in taking her vision and guiding our company into the future.

The first stage in my new efforts will include the restructuring of our internal management team from a flat organization to one of hierarchical-based leadership. With 46 employees in three states, we realized we needed to place management roles and accurately distribute responsibility among the six different departments within the company. With our recent employee placements we included a process review necessary to engage four directors in each of the internal business verticals, Client Creative, Programming, Networks and now Client Services (inclusive of sales, support, training and marketing). We expect to complete this process by year's end, the result of which will enable our talented pool of employees to bring strong fiscal results for 2010, while continuing to bring prosperity and growth to both our clients and company, alike.

I presented my President's Vision to the employee base during our annual company meeting on November 11, 2009. These are my initial initiatives which we will complete over this current year end and first quarter of next year to support our growth. I promise to listen to our clients, and our employees as they bring ideas and solutions for all parties that work with Ellipse. I am excited to take on the challenges of running a growing, energetic and creative group of people, and working with our diverse client base. The future is exciting and Ellipse is here to be a part of the success.

President's Vision-

- Implement a culture of ownership, with each employee understanding and executing his/her desk with pride and professionalism.
- Enable open dialog cross-departmental collaboration meetings designed and structured for information, not just project updates.
- Review internal systems/processes for streamlined/reduced data entry, expense reduction along with the elimination of out date and non-producing systems; followed by a review of individual product successes and sales processes.
- Create accurate reporting programs for accountability deadlines within the production line, while reducing the quantities of memos delivered to the company at large.
- Like they say in baseball "touch 'em all," engage better client relationships, not just from the sales perspective, but for all aspects that touch our customers.
- Distribute and complete 360 reviews for all employees by the end of 2009



Advertising, marketing and PR, and how social media affects them.

Lisa Benson // CEO

Source – Dictionary.com

advertising –noun

1. the act or practice of calling public attention to one's product, service, need, etc., esp. by paid announcements in newspapers and magazines, over radio or television, on billboards, etc.: *to get more customers by advertising.*
2. paid announcements; advertisements.
3. the profession of planning, designing, and writing advertisements.

marketing –noun

1. the act of buying or selling in a market.
2. the total of activities involved in the transfer of goods from the producer or seller to the consumer or buyer, including advertising, shipping, storing, and selling.

public relations –noun

1. the actions of a corporation, store, government, individual, etc., in promoting goodwill between itself and the public, the community, employees, customers, etc.
2. the art, technique, or profession of promoting such goodwill.

Source - Wikipedia

Social media are media designed to be disseminated through social interaction, created using highly accessible and scalable publishing techniques. Social media supports the human need for social interaction, using Internet- and web-based technologies to transform broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogues (many to many). It supports the democratization of knowledge and information,

As our industry experiences the most difficult market conditions in just over twenty years, management members and marketing representatives are switching from traditional forms of advertising and marketing services for exclusively Internet-based social networking outlets. Obviously, cost cutting moved directly into the forefront and since social media systems are free, for many these decisions are easy. But, are these choices appropriate for our businesses at large? Frankly, social media and those related services are really generational public relations based services, and not designed for commerce. Please find the literal definitions of the three parallel vehicles above, noting social media's connections.

It is easy to delineate between advertising and marketing, but the similarities between public relations and social media is amazing. That is where the issue lies, industry-wide systematic changes in reducing our dedication to the communications vehicles. Public relations is not designed to conduct commerce transactions, but rather engage and enhance a presence within a specific community or exchange. And,

social media requires heavily engaged, repetitive and creative content updates. Someone at the organizational level must be in control of the following editorial schedule, and if convenient, that contact will need to be able to contribute creative solutions to each process. Find the following helpful:

Editorial Schedule

- Monthly – Resident Newsletters, Print Guides and local magazine ads
- Weekly – Website content, ILS content,
- Daily – Resident Portal, Facebook, Myspace, Craigslist
- Hourly – Twitter



Ellipse SYMPHONYSM



Apartment Toolbox[®]
content management for your leasing & management operation



SnapShotSM
real-time updates to your ILSs for hassle-free online marketing



Relate 24/7SM
your prospect follow-up & resident retention email marketing machine



Progressive Websites
your first impression and home base on the web



Resident Portal
powerful online amenity for your residents



Net Mystery ShopperSM
the training tool to measure your team's performance



Portfolio Reporting
your customized Monday Morning Report management tool



Ellipse Service AdvisorSM
customer relationship management tool for your service team

Enhance them with this



Ellipse UniversitySM
your online learning management and training system



Internet Telecom
Click to Chat and Click to Call - your contact center solution

6 Hour Edition: If you find any typos please note this was published in 6 hours. Special thanks to our printer for a 24 hour turn around delivery the Monday before Brainstorming!

Sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name.

Elysa Rice // Emerging Media Consultant // @TheEllipseCow

Social networking has long been part of civilization's landscape.

While it's taken various forms in recent times, we've all navigated to restaurants or other retail establishments where we've become familiar patrons, recognized and acknowledged by name as we walk in the door.

Humans, by nature, are social beings, hard wired for such connections, regardless of generational context.

Consider an American icon of this deeply-rooted characteristic in the long running TV series, "Cheers" (1982-1993). As the story line unfolds, Sam (Ted Danson) is purveyor and bartender of Cheers, a neighborhood bar in Boston. He is professionally and romantically entangled with his waitress, Diane (Shelley Long) to the chagrin of his other staff, Woody and Carla, and regular patrons, Cliff and Norm.

The script features a regular chorus whereby Norm enters hailing those in the bar, and, in turn, the entire bar chants, "Hi Norm."

We might learn much about social networking from this unassuming sitcom and its simple lesson: With the right game plan, anyone can be the cool guy whom everyone knows and wants to connect.

As the show's theme song affirms, "sometimes you want to go where everybody knows your name." For today's Gen Y demographic, the largest growing segment of apartment dwellers of our time, that often means Twitter or the next big social networking tool after Twitter, to connect with friends and hold electronic conversations on news, events and trends.

And with the pace of micro texting and cellular connections being what it is, such conversations can have the social dynamic of an atom smasher, or simply fizzle into oblivion. While each attention-seeking "tweet" vies for the recognition of followers with content

that is more witty, enlightened or candid than the rest, such chatter is often just noise. The winning hand in the game of Twitter is when a sender advances to the royal standing of "twitterati" and commands a following of thousands of users.

Pull up a stool

Week after week in the series, "Cheers," regulars Cliff and Norm held court at the end of the bar. Lesson number one: where you sit impacts your experience.

If you're new to the social media world, you may be the guy at the end of the bar who sits quietly, listening and learning from available conversations. Wherever you sit, whether in placement or crowd, your communication should always fit your company culture and customer expectations.

Know what you want before you stand at the bar

Few have the patience to wait behind someone vacillating on placing their order. In turn, users within the online community without a plan will also leave fellow participants tapping their fingers. Preset goals and expectations prior to engaging online will provide effective mapping, execution and tracking of campaign deliverables.



As well, the flexibility of social media allows the same tools to be used for multiple purposes. Mark Juleen, VP and director of marketing and training at J.C. Hart Company of Indianapolis, Ind., recently discussed his organization's social media presence: "When devising social media strategy for our properties, we discuss objectives, and then track for results." Juleen's most recent accomplishment: Moving from page 53 of Google's search result, to an impressive page one and two in key words, Indianapolis Apartments."

Such success is achieved by creating original content: each J.C. Hart Company community posts a blog entry at least weekly. Their blog posts become an extension of other social tools, including phone and email, and are used to engage with readers. Mark goes on to explain that being humble and courteous in online communications is also required to be successful, "Other people are a lot more important than you."

Don't be that guy

Dr. Frasier Crane, a show regular, understood that the social scene was not an appropriate place to pitch his psychiatric service. Nor is social media.

Etiquette for business-based social networking is about creating opportunities to attract new customers and engage conversations with residents.

Cambridge Management headquartered in San Diego, Calif., uses Twitter as a resident retention tool. Kayla Morris, VP and director of marketing explains, "It's not just about finding new residents, but nurturing relationships with current ones. We seek to provide added benefits by providing information about free things to do in the community, fun events, or restaurant specials." She goes on to say "We get a great response from the residents because they connect to us in a human way as opposed to seeing us as a faceless corporation or big, bad landlord."

Join the conversation

Carla, the waitress at Cheers, regularly eavesdropped on conversations around the bar, and chimed in when she deemed it appropriate for her famous one liners.

People are already talking about your brand online and your options are to join the conversation, or ignore it. Sites like Google Alerts and Twittrel (a twitter monitoring site) provide automated notifications when your company is mentioned in online conversations.

Eric Brown, owner of Urbane Apartments in City, State, suggests it's important to remember, „In social media, you don't get to control the message, but you do get to participate.“ He adds, „We've been marketing as a society for the past 50 years by shouting at people. I don't think that works anymore. If you don't have permission to communicate with them, they are not listening on any level.“

Know when it's time to go home

Remember your goals and set limitations on the resources you expend on social media.

Especially while still learning your way around, don't be the last guy left at the bar at 2:00 am on a Tuesday.

Most of all, have fun and be real. The show's laugh track was key to the its timing. The same is true for social media. It's a great extension to the fun your community is already enjoying, offline.

Share photos of your ice cream social or invite followers to a movie on the lawn via Twitter, an hour prior. Prospects and residents alike will value the opportunity for impromptu communications. Remember, online social messaging is only half the challenge for community recognition, as such campaigns are the virtual doorstep to your Website, telephone and leasing center. Morris explains, „People are no longer afraid to ask for things.“

Before they'd just leave if they weren't happy.

Now, there's an alternative channel to make requests and they can see we respond.“

As the „Cheers“ refrain song opines, „Making your way in the world today takes everything you've got. Taking a break from all your worries, sure would help a lot. Wouldn't you like to get away“

Better yet, just make your community communications more effective.

Take a tip from Brown on engagement who doesn't differentiate existing residents from prospects. „They may not want an apartment today,“ he says, „but they may in the future, or better yet, they may know someone who wants one now.“ Following this practice will make your community more available and slide more leases your way.



Reprinted with permission from *Multihousing Professional Magazine*, Jul. / Aug. issue.

Multifamily Twitter chat: #AptChat

Joe Foster // Client Services/Marketing // @Joe_Ellipse

Real-time communication—chat protocols like IRC—have been an integral part of advanced user interaction as long as there's been an internet. Even as social media has vastly expanded, the user base for chat has remained relatively static. All but the most chair-hardened have the inclination to sit at a desktop for the hours it takes for a stimulating conversation to unfold, since all participants in a chat need to be chatting, naturally, at the same time. Even fewer are cut from the geeky cloth that necessitates spending that chat time staring at gently scrolling (timestamped) COURIER NEW when even the driest web content contains some element of color and graphic.

Enter Twitter.

Like most Twitter-based revolutions, Twitter chatting owes its existence to the platform's irresistible malleability and inherent portability. It is ostensibly no different from a chat-room: Participating in real-time does require reading and contributing to the chat when the other users do. Designed to work from a mobile or desktop platform, Twitter dissolves the anchor of traditional chat. Unlike using a traditional web space, such as a forum or blog comment section on a Blackberry or iPhone, participating in a Twitter Chat on-the-go only requires a texting-capable phone. Following the chat requires searching for the relevant #hashtag (a homegrown twitter phenomenon that allows tweets to be categorized) on the Twitter homepage. Participating means putting the same hashtag in a tweet.

The Ellipse Marketing team has embraced this format with some zeal. Fridays at 4PM EST, anyone online can monitor, and anyone with a Twitter account can contribute to #aptchat. Initiated and moderated by Mike Whaling (@30lines) and Lisa Trosien (@LisaTrosien), #aptchat brings leasing agents, property management, multifamily marketers of every shape and size together to discuss the relevant issues of our week.

Twitter Chat Resources:

-<http://www.tweetgrid.com> and <http://www.tweetchat.com>: allow Tweepers to follow particular chat hashtags in a more familiar chatroom format

-<http://www.meryl.net/2009/05/06/list-of-twitter-chats/>: A Comprehensive list of professional Twitter Chats—(#aptchat is featured on the google spreadsheet with many other chats of interest.)



Are you ready to network socially?

Dave Turner // National Sales Manager // @Dave_Ellipse

Before you decide to jump on the social media bandwagon, our National Sales Manager, Dave Turner (who is often called around the office Captain America) provides the follow tips:

1) Do you have an independent community website? If not, do you have a community profile inside your corporate website? If so, who is reviewing and providing input into the content, branding, and messaging within the website platform?

Dave's Reasoning: We recommend branding your community through one or both of the website platforms. Social networking can build a virtual community but your community and its website should be the primary story teller about your community.

2) Is your website current, accurate and fresh with new content, updates, events of interest?

If the foundation of your brand is missing content, is out of date, or lacks relevant news/announcements, your team should not venture into hourly or daily updates to respective social networking sites.

3) Are you responding to your internet leads received from your website and your Internet Listing Services? Are those leads accurately tracked inside your respective Property Management Software?

If the answers above are no, then you are negatively impacting your Return on Investment throughout your marketing/advertising campaigns. You're losing potential residents and skewing your referral sources.

4) Can you list your current marketing and advertising providers and calculate your Cost Per Lead / Cost Per Lease?

If you don't know what's working for you, you should not venture into a new "dark forest of possibilities" with only a flash light. You should illuminate all sources around you with an intense spot light so you have a clear vision and understanding of your new path.

5) Once all of the above is analyzed and your team is on the same page, you are ready to consider social media and its many alternatives.



Once you arrive at this crossroad, you should ask the following questions:

What is my goal in joining a social network?

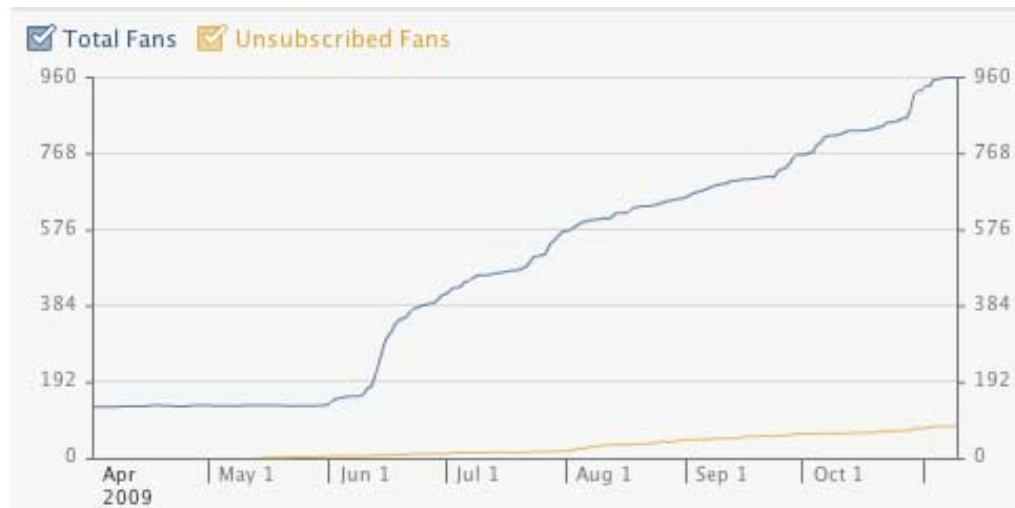
Who is my audience – future residents, current residents or both?

Who will be controlling the message, content, and ideas that spark excitement or interest in your community?

What if your social networking efforts are successful and demand more of your time? What if they're not successful and just "out there" to keep alive?

Ellipse provides insight and experience within the Multifamily Industry. We would welcome the opportunity to review, discuss and explore how your community can focus on its branding and message priorities in 2010 and beyond.

Just for fun: Ellipse Facebook stats



Other social stats

CEO Blog: 984 daily

Ellipse Tips Blog: 545 daily

Twitter: 784

Newsletter Subscribers: 1,196

Choose Your Corporate Website Administration

I want Ellipse SymphonySM!

Ellipse SymphonySM is the most advanced suite of technology tools available to the property management industry today. Designed to help you maximize your marketing, leasing, resident retention and managing opportunities successfully, Ellipse SymphonySM sets the standard for others to follow.

Apartment Toolbox[®] Gold

Our Apartment Toolbox[®] Gold provides pre-determined navigational centers for business applications under a hierarchy of administrative controls with password and function protection. This cost-effective solution is specifically developed for management organizations supporting a portfolio of 5,000 to 15,000 units.

Apartment Toolbox[®] Platinum

Large property management organizations supporting a portfolio of over 25,000 active units or higher will find this dynamic product impressive. Modular in design, this suite consists of a comprehensive set of services that provide timely, relevant property and communications data to all members within the company's hierarchy.

Choose Your Executive Tools

- Satisfaction Survey Center
- SuiteMateSM
- Occupancy Layout
- EllipseNetSM
- Ellipse Service AdvisorSM
- SnapShotSM
- Relate 24/7SM
- Net Mystery ShopperSM
- Portfolio Reporting



Fax This Form To:
972-479-9115
or Shop Online at
www.ellipseinc.com

*Many of the Ellipse products are on a subscription based service and remain the property or intellectual property of Ellipse Communications, Inc.

Choose Your Website Presence

Ellipse Communications, Inc. can work to create an integrated corporate and community Website marketing campaigns, encompassing advanced Website services for marketing efforts. Custom designs, graphics and Adobe Flash[®] technology elements will complete these sophisticated presences.

- Better Than CompetitiveSM Website
- Basic Website
- Enhanced Website
- Advanced Website
- Corporate Website
- Corporate Leasing Center Website
- Golf Trip Option

Don't know what you want? Let's talk about it on the course.

Choose Your Website Plug-ins

visit www.ellipseinc.com for a complete description of each item.

- Logo Design
- Marketing Support
- Floorplan Redraws
- Virtual Move-InsSM
- Calendar/Newsletter
- Bulletin Board
- Job Posting Board
- Resident Portal
- Meet the Staff Profiles
- Secured On-line Application
- Site Map
- Pick-A-Floor/Sitemap
- Tell-A-Friend Postcard
- "Flash" Introduction
- Virtual Guest CardSM
- Resident Links with Image Control
- Welcome Text Editor
- Resident Referral Center
- Photo Upload
- Resident Links Center
- Specials Coupon Control
- Click to Call
- Click to Chat

Tell Us About You

Company Name: _____
Contact Person: _____
Address: _____
City, State, Zip: _____ Phone Number: _____
Email Address: _____ Current Website: _____
Special Comments: _____

3 Ways to Expand Your Social Network

- (1) Facebook: Become a Fan, or befriend any new connections you've made.
- (2) Go to <http://www.twitter.com> and tweet about latest events, ideas and share fun facts. Follow (add to your network) people who provide valuable content.
- (3) Update your LinkedIn profile and add your new connections.

Stay Connected with Ellipse Communications, Inc.

We provide Multifamily industry news, apartment marketing tips and a good laugh on most days!



EllipseInc.com/CEOblog



EllipseInc.com/EllipseTips



Facebook.com/EllipseGroup



Twitter.com/TheEllipseCow

