



Sell More Homes by Becoming a Social (Media) Butterfly

**International Builder Show
Friday, January 23, 2009**



**Carol M. Flammer, MIRM, CSP, CAPS
President, Flammer Relations
Atlanta, Georgia**

Carol@FlammerPR.com
O: 770-383-3360 x20 | C: 404-626-1978
www.CarolFlammer.com
www.FlammerPR.com
www.mRELEVANCE.com

**Dina M. Gundersen, CMP, MIRM
Director of Marketing, Monte Hewett Homes
Atlanta, Georgia**

Dina.Gundersen@mhhomes.com
O: 404.459.6088 | C: 404-516-4166
www.MHHomes.com
www.CreativeThunderDesign.com

Monte Hewett Homes.
Building Homes For Life.
mhhomes.com

**Kathie McDaniel, Broker, MCSP, MIRM
Director of Marketing & Advertising,
Highland Homes
Lakeland, Florida**

k.mcdaniel@highlandhomes.org
O: 863-619-7103 x303 | C: 863-529-5628
www.HighlandHomes.org



Social Media Statistics

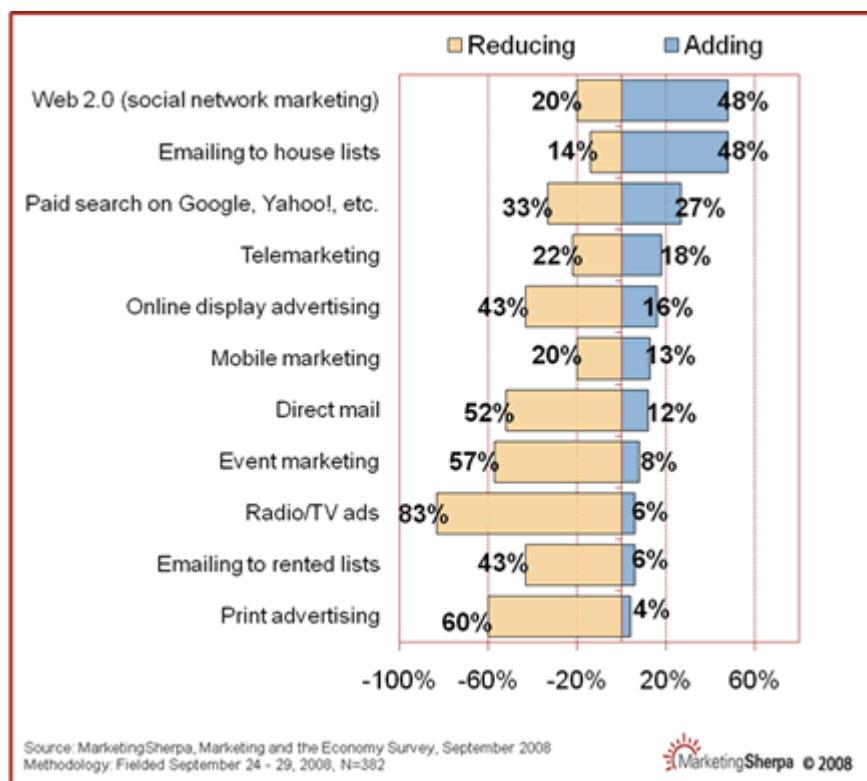
Research by Cone (<http://www.coneinc.com/content1182>) finds that 60% of Americans engage in social media. And of those, 93% believe that companies should be present in social media. Of huge importance, 85% think that the company should interact with their customers through social media.

A survey by the Society for New Communications Research interviewed more than 300 Internet users on the influence social media has on customer care.

While less than 33% believe that businesses take customers' opinions seriously...

- 59.1% use social media to "vent"
- 72.2% research companies' customer care online
- 74% decide based on others' shared experiences
- 81% believe online discussions provide consumers a greater voice

Marketing Sherpa demonstrates where advertisers plan to spend money during the downturn.



The biggest increases in spending will be seen in Web 2.0 (Social Network Marketing) with an overall 28% increase and Email marketing, with a stunning 34% increase.

copyright MarketingSherpa Inc.

An Entertainment Trends in America study by The NPD Group, Port Washington, N.Y. finds that social networking sites used by teenagers and young adults are also being adopted by baby boomers (age 44-61). The findings show that 41% of baby boomers have visited social networks, such as MySpace or Facebook, and 61% have been to sites with streaming or downloadable video. The study, which surveyed 11,600 consumers online, also found that over 57% of Web users overall have stopped at social networking sites in the past three months. Baby boomers stopped an average of eight times in that period.

A report by digital marketing agency Razorfish, shows that four out of 10 consumers have made a purchase because of advertising they saw on a social media site, and 76 percent welcome advertising on social networks.

Industry Buzz Words

Blog - Short for Web log, an online journal and powerful SEO tool.

Conversation media – Another term for social networking and social media sites. Speaks strongly to the social or conversational nature of social media.

Keywords – Word or phrase used to direct an Internet user or a search engine to a relevant Web page.

Online PR – Traditional press releases repositioned with key words and search engine optimization posted online often in a social media release format.

Organic Search – The process that search engines use to find Web sites.

Referral Site – A Web site that refers traffic to another site through links - paid or organic.

Relevance – A term that describes how pertinent, connected, or applicable something is to a given matter.

RSS – Really Simple Syndication, an easy way to distribute blog news via email and Internet sites.

SERP/Search Engine Results Page – A site's ranking in the organic search results when you Google a phrase like "top builder blogs."

Social Media - Internet tools that allow for interaction among users, including blogs, video, social bookmarking, social networking and more.

Social Media Marketing/SMM - the creation and distribution of content and messages throughout the Internet via social media (blogs, wikis, forums, photo galleries, video, micro blogs), social networking (Linked In, Facebook, My Space) and social bookmarking (DIGG, Delicious, etc.). SMM refers to pretty much everything you do to interact with others online, with the exception of your Web site.

Social Media Optimization/SMO - The process of optimizing a Web site through social media outlets in order for the Web site to appear or rank higher with search engines.

Social Networking - Building an online community of individuals who share common interests and activities. Facebook, LinkedIn, MySpace and Active Rain are all examples of social networking sites.

Social Bookmarking – A method for Internet users to store, organize and share their favorite Web sites by saving (bookmarking) them to sites such as Digg, Delicious and Newsvine.

Tags - Keywords attributed to blog posts to help search engines map them for relevant content.

Web 2.0 - The trend in the World Wide Web that has encouraged creativity, networking, interaction and collaboration among users. These concepts have resulted in social media, social networking and blogs.

Content provided by the Internet defined from A to Z, <http://www.mrelevance.com/faq/imm-glossary/>

Social Media Tool Box

What is a Blog?

Here's the technical answer:

A blog (short for “web log”) is a Web site, usually maintained by an individual, with regular entries of commentary, descriptions of events, or other material such as graphics or video. Entries are commonly displayed in reverse chronological order.

A Blog vs. a Corporate Web site:

A Corporate Web site:

- Includes traditional company information with tabs such as products, About Us, Contact Us, and an overview of all facets of the business
- Has links to other pages
- Is about the business – written in more formal language
- You describe your products & services & this only changes when your products or services change
- Is designed to provide an overview of entire organization activity
- Is designed to impress and build credibility

A Blog:

- Blogs are dynamic and are updated regularly - usually weekly
- Blogs can be interactive - people can leave their comments and participate with your blog
- Blogs rank highly with the search engines. Google can easily index blogs due to built-in SEO
 - Google loves blogs!
- Some provide commentary or news on a particular subject; others are personal online diaries
- Typically combine text, images and links to other blogs, web pages and other topic related media
- Generally readers can leave comments in an interactive format

What can a Blog do for me?

- Be a relaxed voice for your company
 - Engage more closely with your audience
- Relational Marketing – help build relationships with your buyers and homeowners
- Help manage your online reputation
- SEO – Search Engine Optimization
 - Google loves a Web site with fresh content
 - Just one part of a wider SEO strategy

You should start a blog...

- IF You can create one that has a unique message
- IF It will deliver value-driven posts and commentary on a regular basis
- IF You realize it is NOT a substitute for a marketing campaign and results come in the long term
- IF You are committed!

Before you “launch” a blog, you (and if applicable, your team) have to be committed to it.

- It takes time
- It takes research and a LOT of reading!
- It takes good content

- It takes a personal voice
- Are you listening to your online community?
 - Are you spending a minimum of two hours a day searching, reading Google alerts or using a monitoring tool like Radian6?
- Do you have something unique to say?
 - How will you differentiate yourself from other blogs and other companies?
 - This could be your people, the information you publish or other forms of thought leadership.
- Are you willing and able to say it?
 - Can you talk about your industry and are you willing to put it out there?
- Are you willing to be challenged and criticized?
 - This goes with the turf. You have to be able to facilitate conversation in a respectful manner to grow a community.
- Are you willing and able to dedicate the resources to succeed?
 - People always underestimate this one. A good rule for this to succeed is to have one person dedicated to the success of your strategy for a minimum of 4 hours per day (2 hours of which is listening and commenting). That is one half of a full time person's week. Have staffing plans in place as you grow and start realizing your success.

Involvement

- Who can you involve in your blog?
- Who “owns” it?
- Spread the “love”
- Content matter experts are already WITHIN your organization

Setting up a blog is simple. Three recommended sites:

- Blogger.com – Free
- WordPress.com – “Free” (with occasional ads)
- Typepad.com – Starts at \$4.95 a month (probably the best option if you are serious about growing your blog into a main feature of your online marketing and SM efforts.)

Taking it to the Next Level

- Make sure your goal and target audience are crystal clear
- Improve upon your blog’s appearance – use a professionally designed template or hire a designer
- Make sure your content is top notch
- Improve your blog’s SEO – hire an Internet marketing company that understands real estate SEO
- Promote your blog

Posting on a typical Word Press Blog

1) “Post” (story) Titles: Short, informative and catchy.

2) Post: Type your 350 word blog utilizing key words when possible. Keep your post conversational. Don’t post anything verbatim to the blog from another source, as this will create duplicate content online and could be a copyright infringement.

2a) Adding Links: Highlight the words you want to link and click the link icon on the tool bar (it looks like a linked chain to the right of the alignment icons).

3) Categories: Choose two to three relevant categories for your post.

4) Tags: Select three to four relevant tags for your post.

5) Photos: Place your cursor in the body of the paragraph for where you want the photo to appear. In the top right above the body of the post there is a toolbar that says "Add media" and then has four icons to the right of it. The first icon – a framed gray square - is what you will click to add a photo. This brings up a pop-up window. Click on "Choose files to upload" and locate your picture on your computer. Once the picture is uploaded, give the photo a relevant title. You can also give the photo a caption if you like, which will appear underneath the photo on the post. Then, align the photo at your discretion and click on "medium" size. And lastly, click on "insert into post."



FaceBook Account Set up

www.facebook.com

If you are planning to set up a “business page” for your company or for a particular community, you MUST set up a traditional FaceBook profile first. This is annoying, but as of the writing of these notes, ALL business pages MUST be associated with a PERSONAL PROFILE. So you will want to set up a profile for yourself that is STRICLY for business purposes.

Once you have set up a profile, go to the Help Center (<http://www.facebook.com/help.php>) and you can quickly review the main features within FB. Look under “Applications and Features” for the “Pages” link (<http://www.facebook.com/help.php?page=175>) This will explain the purpose of “business” page and how to set it up.

For some Homebuilder “page” examples, search for: Turnberry Homes, Heron Bay Golf & Country Club and Pulte Homes using the search box at the top right of your FB page.



Twitter Account Set Up

www.twitter.com

The account set up is easy. Just follow the steps. Choose a Twitter “username.” This cannot have spaces and should be SHORT. Others will have to type it and they don’t want to waste half of the 140 characters allowed for each message to type in your username! Your company name (likely an abbreviated version) is a good idea. You should put your ACTUAL name in for the “Name” as other users will really want to know who they are actually communicating with. For the “Bio” it is good practice to put your title at the company and a quick insight into what the company does. You have limited characters to do this. You can play around in the other tabs to customize your Twitter “Home” page. Use the “Help” feature to give you insight into the terminology you will see other people using.

Your “tweets” can only be 140 characters, so you will learn quickly to be brief and abbreviate.

A few quick tips:

1. You will often want to share Web site links with the “population” (i.e linking to an informative article you just posted to your blog!) but you don’t want to “waste” all the characters posting a lengthy URL, so bookmark a site called www.tinyurl.com this site will shorten ANY URL to a manageable size that you can then paste into your Tweet. Very cool.
2. A site you can use to quickly customize your Twitter background is www.twitbacks.com

Searching for other users you might want to “follow” can be daunting, so try www.justtweetit.com to help you narrow down by industry or the type of people you might find interesting. And it is a good idea to set up a profile here, so OTHERS can find YOU!

Folks in the industry to follow on twitter include @AtlantaPR @MonteHewett @BuilderOnline

Social Bookmarking

Social Bookmarking is a great way for Internet users to store, organize and share their favorite Web sites with friends and co-workers. It has also become a very useful tool for Internet marketing because of the ability to increase your ranking with search engines.

DIGG: <http://digg.com>

1. Click "Join Digg" in the top left hand corner
2. Fill out the form by creating a user name and password
3. Validate your account by going to the e-mail address you entered in step 2 and click the link
4. Click on "Add Friends" at the top in the blue bar
5. Click "Search for Friends"
6. Type in "Carol M. Flammer" and "Friend"
7. If you want to add the rest of the mRelevance team, click on Carol's profile and add the rest of her friends!
8. Now it's time to social bookmark!
 - a. You can add Web sites that we have added by clicking "digg it"
 - b. Or click on "Submit New" in the blue box at the top of the Web site. Then copy and paste the URL you want to bookmark
 - c. Try to do this once a week for best results, and get your office involved!

DELICIOUS: <http://del.icio.us>

1. Click on "register" in the top right corner
2. Create a user name and password (use the same one from digg so you can remember it!)
3. Install the buttons, by clicking "Install Extension Now"
4. Verify your account by going to your e-mail and clicking on the link
5. Time to start bookmarking!
 - a. Go to "post" at the top and copy and paste a URL (like you did for digg)
 - b. Or, anytime you are on a Web site you like (like Atlanta Real Estate Forum) click on the "post to del.icio.us" button in your browser (below where you type Web sites)



PR.com

www.pr.com

PR.com is an online forum to help promote your business. They have different levels of membership ranging from free to \$499/year. The free account enables you to post press releases and job opportunities, where the paid memberships give you the opportunity to create a full business profile and increase online visibility. To set up an account, visit the website and click the "Join Now" link in the top right corner. Choose the level of membership that best suits the needs of your business and follow the steps. You'll need to create a username and password and give your email address. They will then send a link to the email address for confirmation of the account. Once you click the confirmation link, you will be able to edit your business profile. Depending on the level of membership you have chosen, you may need to give specific details about your company including a brief history, testimonials, awards and more, or it could be as basic as a website URL, logo and contact information. You will also have to choose specific categories for your business. If utilizing the free membership, you are limited to only five industry categories.

Once your account is up and active, you should post your press releases for more exposure.

www.activerain.com

Active Rain is a very beneficial social networking site designed specifically for the real estate and home building industries. Joining Active Rain is very simple. Just click the “join” link in the upper right corner of the home page and follow the directions. It is important to know that your username will be part of the URL of your profile. For example, if your username is JohnDoe, then your profile URL is <http://activerain.com/johndoe>. They will send a confirmation email to the address you give. As soon as you click the link to confirm the account, you can begin updating your profile by giving a brief overview of who you are and what you specialize in. Once you are satisfied with your profile, start looking for “associates.” These are the people that you will be connected to through Active Rain; it is the same thing as “friends” on Facebook. You can also join the groups of other real estate professionals to help promote yourself/your company within specific niches of the real estate industry and Active Rain. Active Rain also gives you a personal blog, and you can send these blog posts to the members of your groups as well as other channels.

You Tube

www.youtube.com

To join YouTube, simply visit the Web site and click on the “Sign Up” link in the top right corner of the home page. Follow the steps and click “Create my Account.” It’s important to know that your username will be used for the URL of your profile. For Example, the username JohnDoe would result in a profile URL of <http://www.youtube.com/user/johndoe>.

Now you can begin uploading videos! Give each video a title and description as well as a few tags to help Google and visitors find the video with the relevant search terms. In addition to posting videos, you can subscribe to other YouTube user profiles and join various groups. You can also update your profile with more detailed information about yourself.



Flickr

www.flickr.com

Flickr (owned by Yahoo) is a site that organizes and stores photos and video. Its ease of use and high rank in Yahoo searches makes it a popular option for social media programs. Photos and video can be shared publicly through RSS feeds, email and posting to outside blogs, as well as by just posting them on the flickr site.

Flickr accounts are associated with Yahoo email accounts, so first you must create a Yahoo email account. Other set up options include creating a custom Flickr URL, a personal profile and a buddy icon. The site’s easy to follow tutorial will walk you through the steps of setting up your account.

Take Aways

Using Social Media for a Competitive Advantage

Social Media Optimization

- ROI can be measured in your Web site tracking report
- Increased Key words
- Increased Referring URLs

Reputation Management (When you Google your name, Do you like what you see?)

- Create credibility
- Interactive Platform to reach buyers and media
- Fix SERP results (Negative online publicity)

Getting Started

Where do you go from here? Here are our top five tips for getting started.

1. Blog – even if the blog is “just” your news page
2. Facebook – launch a personal profile and a corporate page
3. You Tube – post all of your virtual tours!
4. Online PR – repurpose your PR for online distribution
5. Email marketing – include social media in your email marketing strategy
6. Cross promotion, netweaving – link it all together