



# Launch 2012 Series

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## The Launch Series

We have set the theme for 2012 as Execution! So it is only appropriate to start the series off with a month dedicated to launches. Any initiative worthy of execution deserves a great launch.

We took the opportunity to look at great and less than successful launches as well as critical components for success through case studies. Differences in re-launches vs. launching anew were defined. Leadership was a strong component and taking a fearless approach with risk taking being a part of achieving great launches.

Mallie Dein took the pen to guide you through social media launches beginning with your participation, a key component of creating and maintaining your individual and your company's identity on the web. Her posts took you through LinkedIn, FaceBook, Blogs and Twitter.

As important as it is to have a strong launch, it is probably even more important to have those who will work with you on the launch and those who you touch see the value as it relates to them and that you do get their buy in. Buy in, WII FM and the success of the launch, often boil down to empowerment. People who are empowered achieve great things.

The series concluded with embracing your success and using your success as a part of your engine to power you, your company's objectives and your future launches forward faster.

We hope that you enjoyed the series and will find the compilation a helpful and thought provoking collection.

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## Launch 2012

I do not know about you but the past week, amidst all of the holiday activities, company and everything that goes with it, I thought about what I want in 2012 for my business, my clients, my family and myself. Thoughts ranged from growth to accomplishments, relationships, health to wealth and of course security and well-being. The range was a bit like “Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs,” touching on each level. Some were dreams, others - things that must be done and there were also the more than annualized thoughts on personal improvement.



All of these thoughts have the opportunity to be realized or remain trapped. None will occur without a launch. All need the framework of a plan, milestones to be accomplished, accountability and a goal worthy of achievement.

The launch button I must press causes a series of actions and interactions. A silent launch in which no one else knows what is to be accomplished has the least chance for success and almost no accountability. Silent launches are totally dependent on the person initiating the launch. No communication to others, successes and failures are private and often the pursuit of the goal ends almost as soon as it begins.

Boisterous and over ambitious launches that lack a framework for success are simply fireworks, often distractions that can be loaded with guilt, compromise and failure. Many of these, after the noise and the dust settle, fade to a silent oblivion barely remembered, as not much ever happened. The greatest impact is to the people directly impacted as collateral damage in terms of trust, respect and belief.

A great launch not only announces the objective in basic terms but also gives a promise of what is to be accomplished with a committed plan and accountability. The value of the objective can be seen even though the full impact may not yet be communicated or ever made public. Leadership is obvious from the start and accountability partners are chosen with specific tasks assigned. The series of communications that follow along the path to the objective are proactive and positional, energizing drive and allowing the aroma of success to permeate the air.

Great launches create an environment of opportunity, desire for success and additional launches by those touched, working on the project, or simply energized by the ambiance of initiative.

This month, our blog series will look at successful and unsuccessful launches and give tips and information that should be helpful in your own launches. We would love to hear about your objectives, launch activities and challenges.

2012 holds promise of greatness especially since no one wants a repeat of the last few years. We have the opportunity to start new initiatives and be something we have never been before, but it will require that we are willing to press the launch button.

## A Tale of Two Launches

Within the period of about a year, two companies decided to adopt a new brand. One company, the Eastern Company was converting from another major brand and the other, the Western Company was branding a long established family company for the first time. Both companies spent a long time carefully planning an exciting launch featuring their new brand relationship with all of the bells and whistles that came with the package. There were a number of similarities in the process for both companies but the results were very different.



The launch date in branding is a day in which the change becomes public and is an opportunity to celebrate, start new ventures, announce plans and in some cases announce a new acquisition occurring simultaneously. It is also the opportunity to take advantage of the change and generate PR, as well as create momentum that moves like a wave building strength as it moves to the crescendo of its destination, retreating to return again using the undercurrents created in the motion.

Both companies had been working for a couple of months building up to the date. Planning in secret, negotiating with companies to be acquired and announced on the date, ordering supplies and preparing for all questions and concerns. Each and every detail was examined to reduce breakage in the change.

The great launch event is the culmination of many smaller launches all occurring within a limited time frame. Internally, the managers and staff had to be told, some on an as needed basis, as they had tasks to prepare for the launch and others in a mini launch.

The Eastern Company was owned and run by partners who were tasked with different roles related to their skills and leadership ability. They have a clear vision of what they want to achieve and the ambition to get it done working through barriers as needed. They thrive on change and use change as a business driver.

The Western Company is very conservative and was founded by a person no longer active in the business. The founder, even though retired, is a strong personality, readily voicing opinions and protective positions to the heirs. The founder haunts the company with intimidation and enjoys leveraging wrath and a patriarchal position. The company is an S.O.B. company (son of a business owner) and has another S.O.B. named as the heir apparent.

The day of the event for both companies was spectacular. Excitement and energy was like an electrical current spreading and gaining energy in each person touched. Promises were made and greatness promised. Optimism and opportunity appeared to be an unlimited path in front of each company.

As the limelight of the event faded, the Eastern Company used the momentum and each person in leadership was changed and challenged to drive their component of the business. The Western Company treated it as an event that would soon be relegated to history, with little change actually occurring beyond the branding of marketing and collateral. The leadership in the Eastern Company changed to carry the new mantle forward and adopted the brand, changes and opportunities whereas the Western Company's leaders returned to their former selves with a new name badge.

The last chapters are yet to be written in this tale, but at this point it appears that the Eastern Company is enjoying a great ride with an engine continuously being fueled with change. Since the brand change, growth has been continuous in spite of the market. Each day is launched to meet opportunity. The Western Company will be challenged to have enough viability to survive to be passed to the named heir apparent. No matter what brand is on its sign, it is the same old company forever stunted in its growth and withering away for lack of passion and leadership.

Great launches spawn opportunity at many junctures but will never save a company afraid of change or led by the timid. The best of launches carry risk, but also benefits that can far outweigh the risk.

## Maximizing the Buzz

A great launch well publicized creates a “buzz” that generates even more impact than the actual launch. Yesterday, in [The Tale of Two Launches](#), we looked at the major factor of difference between two companies, the actions of leadership during and after the launch. The Eastern Company embraced and drove the power of the launch through their company while the Western Company treated it more as an event.



What is interesting is the maximizing of the buzz post launch and announcement. The Western Company, due to a slightly better use of Internet channels actually created more traffic staying number 1 in the first four pages of Google searches for about 10 days, but the Eastern Company had a more sustained and deeper reach which brought greater impact.

The Eastern Company knew their launch would bring a lot of media attention, so they leveraged it by creating sub launches that captured different attention and a plan of launches that would sequence following the initial launch, continuing the buzz well beyond the initial event and not limiting the information to the event. They created an atmosphere that seemed to be electrically charged.

### Western Company Strategy:

- Press Releases to major and minor local media sent at the crescendo of the event so that all company participants, vendors and others would have inquiries upon leaving the event.
- RSS feed of event information and newly launched brand. Included newly acquired companies in the release.
- Rebroadcast of the launch event via YouTube for not only those in the event, those that missed the event but also taking advantage of the search and distribution capabilities of YouTube.
- Links, information and releases on all company social media sites.
- Interviews with key players recorded and posted on site and fed to media.
- Press conference on site of the launch immediately following launch with lead in video of the crescendo and excited participants exiting the launch event.

### Eastern Company Strategy:

- Press Releases to major and minor local media sent at the crescendo of the event so that all company participants, vendors and others would have inquiries upon leaving the event.
- Text message sent at crescendo of the event to all company employees, affiliates, vendors and other parties from the event with links to company press releases.
- Links, information and releases on all company social media sites.
- Interviews with key players recorded and posted on site and fed to media.

- Press conference on site of the launch immediately following launch with lead in video of the crescendo and excited participants exiting the launch event.
- Built multiple websites for components of the launch and sub-launches.
- Scheduled sub launches and continued launch announcements and press releases for once every week or two over a year. These included updates, new tools, features, acquisitions and interviews with not only key people but managers, staff and the sales force as well as vendors and some competitors.
- Each person in the company was given access to all info links and encouraged to share via email, social media and in marketing.
- Each leader had a defined voice, target subject and posts related to launch and subsequent events posted to social media.
- A speaker's bureau was established in the company as a resource for media and associations.

While the strategy of the Western Company was good, once the rose faded so did the buzz. The Eastern Company made sure the roses were continuously blooming. The Eastern Company created a friendly PR environment that kept the buzz alive. Today, if you search for information on either of these two companies and their launches, you will have to be very specific to find much about the Western Company but the Eastern Company will be at the top of the search under a variety of terms and phrases.

## Re-Launch or Launch Anew

One of the companies I am working with is ready to move their company to the next stage of life. They intend to seize the opportunity to move forward with many new initiatives and changes. In essence their company will be a new company.



When they called, they said that they wanted to “re-launch” the company. I do not know what your first thoughts are when you hear that a company is re-launching. Whether it is a product, service, initiative or the company itself, a re-launch usually conveys an underlying message that something went wrong the first time and this is a “do-over”. Often the term gets used and excitement builds internally without thinking about the message that might actually be conveyed.

If you are working from components, ideas and strategies that have not significantly changed or if there was an initial problem, you probably are in a re-launch, but there is little reason to flag the challenges that come with the term.

Anything that is actually new deserves a true launch, free of baggage and perception. The announcements need to be proactive, energy driven and with vitality that demands attention and invites participation. It should create interest and demand, frequently resulting in an uptick in business rather than being just a media event or historical milestone. It is more than a casual word choice.

A launch is like a shiny penny that catches the sunlight and is easy to see, whereas a re-launch is more like an old or dirty penny that might blend in with the background. The shiny penny asks to be noticed, picked up and put to use and the old penny is often overlooked or discounted.

In our initial conversation, the client company immediately understood the value and difference that a launch anew can have for their company. Sure there are a number of aspects of the company that will be brought forward into the new company, but each of these, from locations and people through practices, branding and infrastructure, will be evaluated and aligned to the new company, not simply the old company competing with a new initiative.

Even though “old and revered” has proven staying power, it is often the new and exciting that finds and captures the greatest opportunity, especially in markets that have been suffering. Companies that learn how to use what they have built as tools and foundation components, keeping the newness on the exterior have the greatest opportunity. It takes leadership willing to take risks and not be anchored to the past. Charisma to carry the concepts and energy forward is required as well as an open mindedness that can really think out of the box. Perhaps most importantly, the leaders never stop dreaming.

A book written by James Belasco, “[Teaching the Elephant to Dance](#)” is still a favorite when addressing what leaders must do to create change in a company, the kind of change that deserves a new launch and causes momentum with bottom line results.

I am enjoying watching the excitement in the new company. It has the same company name, but with a tagline that defines who they are and conveys the newness. A new mission and vision has been adopted around a concept that is a rallying cry or declaration of winning. Almost every aspect of this company will look like a shiny new penny.

## Fearless

Company Apex has grown primarily through acquisition rather than organic growth. Over the years, each acquisition has brought change to the dynamics, culture and operations of the company. The initial vision and mission of the founding owner is no longer relevant to the company. A number of the governing documents are a patchwork quilt of documents and concepts from the acquired companies. At some points growth occurred so quickly that everything was done to make sure that the business momentum did not lose pace with the intention to go back and align everything to the company that was evolving.



The acquisitions were often fairly quiet fold-ins with little fanfare and, in many cases; people did not change much and continued in nearly the same role as they had prior to the acquisition. In many cases this was not a problem except that former owners still wanted to act and operate like an owner and allegiance was often local rather than to the company.

There is only so long that you can run a company that has grown in this manner without encountering points of failure, inefficiency or disconnected agendas.

Company Apex had realigned parts and pieces of the company over the years but decided that timing was critical to launch a unified, tightly organized company built to be a business machine. There were a number of factors that indicated the timing was right. Many internal changes had taken place in terms of people and changes required by the industry and or economics. Additionally, time itself brought changes in people including retirements and change in focus. The Internet forced out others who would not adapt to new requirements. The market place also drove the timing with abundant opportunities for more acquisitions. Perhaps most importantly, the industry was ready for an overhaul which would result in a new business model being born offering bountiful opportunity to the first adopters.

Everyone knew it was time for change...from those most invigorated by the opportunity to those who were fearful and covered from anything that promised change.

Company Apex had a fairly large and diverse management/leadership team, too large to really move in unison. The first thing that had to be done was to select a core team to drive change and seed the opportunity throughout the company. This core team did not look much like the former leadership team. They were youthful, energetic, tech savvy and fearless. The team assembled had little, if any, baggage and just enough maturity to be responsible. A team like this needs guidance but should not be harnessed. The executive leadership understood that their job was to set the destination and keep the train on the tracks, but also to get out of the way and let the team carry the mission forward.

These were all smart decisions for Company Apex, as the old guard would not be the leaders of the future. The culture and draw of the company had to be designed to attract those who would seize the opportunities and move forward. The old guard were not sent out to pasture, but charged with utilizing their strengths and talents, to nurture, encourage and mentor the new core team. In this new role, they would benefit far more from the fruits of success than in the old methods that had nearly exhausted not only ideas and the market, but they were each tired and so was their passion and drive.

Company Apex is already seeing the difference the new and exciting culture has created in attracting those that would not join them before. There is an infectious energy that no one can escape; even the curmudgeons are smiling all the way to the bank. The company decided that all of their launches would be far more successful if they launched a new culture from within first.

Outside observers still do not know what happened, which is just fine by Company Apex. They are happy to have the spectators and naysayers banking on their demise, for they know that as those companies sit by the side they are losing their business, most dynamic people and the doers to Company Apex.

Call it evolution, if you will, when change so substantial occurs that it changes the industry. Company Apex sees itself driving the evolutionary changes through constant revolution in a battle being against business status quo and suppression of anything different or new.

**Evolution belongs to history and revolution is where the new is born.**

If you are interested in reading a good book on transformational change, you may want to read "[Putting a New Spin on Groups: The Science of Chaos](#)" by Bud A. McClure.

## Participation

***People do business with people  
they know, like and trust.***



This phrase has long been a staple in business networking and business growth. What you might not know is that with the advent of social business and the ability to build strong business relationships without the confines of the physical meeting, there's been an addition or change to that phrase. It now goes a little something like this, "people do business with people they like who like them".

While it's not a big shift, and there's no change to the requirement that you be a likable and trustworthy individual, there is a large change in the way that you must show appreciation and "like" for the person with whom you are trying to conduct business. It's no longer enough for a prospect to know that you're a good fit for them. They also want to know how they're a good fit for you.

The best and most timely examples of this shift in mindset can be viewed without leaving your office. Do a keyword or hashtag search on Twitter. Notice something interesting? The accounts that have the most followers show equality in the number of follows and followers. Open a new browser window and log into Facebook. The brands with the largest numbers of fans or "likes" are generally the brands who like a variety of other brands, both within the same industry and reaching out to potential partner brands and gate openers. These well liked pages also evidence the most back and forth between fan and brand. Conversations rather than lonely links. Replies to comments and answers to questions.

Look over to LinkedIn for a minute and you'll note that while people who have been in a certain industry for years certainly have a lot of contacts, another group of well-connected individuals is emerging. It's the socially savvy group that takes part in the interactive and participatory LinkedIn group discussions. This group of people build solid connections with others in their field and their level of participation also helps their overall Google ranking and SEO if they are linking back to their site as they participate.

It's easy to believe that automating your social media with links back to your web site is the way to go. But that doesn't embrace the idea of social business and participatory marketing and engagement. That's simply deep linking. The real challenge isn't producing the content or finding the link, it's building the relationship and building that like and trust. The only way to do so is to dive in and participate.

- Comment
- Follow
- Connect
- Like

## Linkedin Lackadaisy

**lack·a·dai·si·cal** [lak-uh-dey-zi-kuhl]

*adjective*

1. Without interest, vigor, or determination; listless; lethargic: a lackadaisical attempt.
2. Lazy; indolent: a lackadaisical fellow.



Yesterday's post, [Participation is Paramount](#), discussed the importance of participation in an effective social media campaign. It did not, however, go into detail on how exactly to take part on the different platforms. As we continue to discuss social business participation over the next several days, we will target four key areas where participation can make all the difference: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Blogs. Yes, you can, and should, absolutely participate in other social media circles applicable to your business, ranging from YouTube to Pinterest. But, the four listed previously offer some of the most easily implemented and easy to maintain means to participate.

Are you a LinkedIn Lackadaisy? When did you last update your profile? Still sporting the greyscale default avatar? Or possibly that photo from your company web site that isn't necessarily a good representation of your look today?

There's a large contingent of LinkedIn users who use the platform (it is a social media platform, not a web site) as a placeholder for their online resume...and nothing else. That defeats the overall purpose of LinkedIn. Which is? Business networking and relationship building. I don't want to, and won't, build a relationship with your resume. I will, if intrigued by your profile and interested in the kinds of content you post and the types of conversations in which you take part, build a relationship with you.

You don't stand in a corner and act the wallflower when you attend a local networking or Business After Hours event, do you? Absolutely not! You mingle, engage in conversation, you speak AND you listen. Can you do the same with LinkedIn? Absolutely.

Think about your LinkedIn profile as equal parts resume, elevator pitch, community newsletter and sounding/idea board. Of course, you will want to list any accomplishments, awards and participation in groups of interest to your industry. But take it to the next level. Have a blog? Does that blog discuss topics of interest to your industry niche? Share your latest blog post and ask for feedback. Here you're using your profile and the LinkedIn feed as a sounding board. You're asking and because you're asking, people will assume you are willing to listen.

Next, share information about upcoming industry events, meetings, get togethers and more. Don't assume that everyone knows about these events. In fact, don't assume in general. Share a link to the event, and preface that link with why you plan to attend. Is there a great keynote speaker? Will there be a panel discussion? A give-away. Share not just the event, but the potential benefits of attending. In the way, you're using LinkedIn like a community (industry specific, rather than geographic) newsletter.

Link to articles and blog posts from other experts and enthusiasts in the industry. Sharing the wealth and spreading the word show that you're interested in listening and not just self-promotion, which can be an engagement and participation killer.

Comment on posts. Like posts. Ask questions based on posts. This takes little time and the effort will be rewarded with interaction, interaction leads to active participation.

We've talked about ways to use your own profile and your connection feed to participate and connect. But, how else can you use LinkedIn to participate, engage and connect? There are several options:

- Make introductions. Be a gate opener. Connection A is looking for guest bloggers. Connection B is a fantastic copywriter looking to increase business. Help them connect. Make the introduction.
- Take part in LinkedIn's expansive group network. LinkedIn allows you to search by name, company name and also by group. Interested in knowing more about real estate law? There's a group for that. Want to exchange blog comments? There are several groups that fulfill this need. From general topic to very targeted niche industry news, there are groups for just about everything. Don't see one that suits? Create your own. What's the point? People that effectively participate in groups share information, show they understand that listening and answering with targeted replies is appreciated and get their name/brand in front of a new audience and even bump up your SEO and search-ability. We'd call that a win/win/win/win!
- LinkedIn also provides an effective area for Q&A, called Answers. Do a quick search with one of your company's keywords and see if you can offer up an answer to a question. If you can, you've possibly gained a new connection who will be happy to share your expertise with the remainder of her circle of connections.

LinkedIn is much more than online storage for your digital resume. It is a business network with a robust following and immediate and timely opportunities for participation. When that participation shares and showcases your expertise it is well worth the hour or two a week it will take to take yourself from lackadaisy or luddite to one who appreciates and understands the laurels of LinkedIn.

## FaceBook Focus

- **More Than 800,000,000 Active Users**
- **More Than 50% of Same Active Users Log-in EVERY Day**
- **Average User is Connected to 80 Community and/or Business Pages, Groups and Events**
- **Average User Has 130 Friends**



Yes, those are Facebook statistics, from their own statistics page (which leads me to believe they are a little low). Current numbers suggest one in every seven people in the world are on Facebook.

Why did I list them? PARTICIPATION. I'll go on. If you're only going to take the time to work with one socially driven (Linkedin doesn't count, it's B2B driven) online networking platform, Facebook is the one to choose. Why? • Audience • Community • Users with a knowledge and savvy about how the platform best functions.

Google+ has been touted, and still might rise to a level of real competition with Facebook. It's not there yet. Twitter, while incredibly valuable when used correctly, still stymies a large percentage of the population. Facebook has the numbers, the ease of use (even though some people are still quite unhappy with the release of the timeline) and the atmosphere.

So, making the most of Facebook, participating and engaging can be valuable as a means of promoting your brand, your company ideals, your products and services, and even your company's value system. Let's continue by talking about how and why that is so.

We're going to use my personal Facebook stats to make some points. I have 631 friends. Some of you may be thinking, "that's nice, but what does it have to do with my business putting time and effort into a Facebook campaign?". I'm getting there. If I like a branded page, a business page, and proceed to like a post or comment on a post I like or post a comment, it has the potential to be seen by 631 friends. Of course, you won't hit every one of the 631 targets, as they won't all be online at the exact moment that I take part on your page. But, say you have 100 fans, each with around 600 friends - then what happens. On any given post you have the potential to be seen by 60,000 people.

You're correct, I did say potential. You won't be seen by every one of those friends. But, can you ignore those numbers?

It requires the initial like - of your page - and then the continued likes and comments to gain access to those numbers. How do you get that initial like and build an active and participatory audience? You can invite your friends and family, but that has varying levels of success. The best way is to like other pages and take part in their activities. Like the posts on that page. Comment on that page. The page owner and/or admins will click through to see where that comment came from. If you comment as your business page, they'll go right to that page. If you comment as your personal profile, we'll hope you have your business page linked from your wall profile.

What kinds of pages should you like? If you're a smaller business, say part of a large office park, it's a good idea to like the pages of the other businesses that share the business park. It builds a connection and a sense of belonging, and those other businesses will have more impetus to name you if they're asked for a recommendation for a product or service you offer.

If you're a larger business or company, working in a more targeted or niche business, a great page for you to like would be a distant competitor. Not a direct competitor. I use the term distant to mean a company outside of your target demographic. Liking this kind of page will keep you up to date on industry news and can also build a connection should a client of that company move or should they be asked about your services by someone they know living in your area.

I'll continue to discuss Facebook best practices in future posts, so don't worry if a specific question remains unanswered. The idea I want you to leave with after reading this post is simple and requires your time and effort. In order to build your Facebook page following you are going to have to participate. You'll have to post great content, answer questions, like fan comments, much as we discussed in our [Participation is Paramount](#), post.

You'll also have to participate and engage with other business pages. You can't buy a mailing list. You can't ask people you've never met to like your page, sight unseen. You have to give to get. Give them your like, take part in their engagement activities, and watch your own numbers start to rise.

## Blog Building

*...if I blog it, they will come...*

It's a nice idea, if we were living in the movies. But the reality is quite the opposite. The *unmarketed* blog long remains the *unremarked* blog. There are numerous means to market your blog, some costing more than others. But today we're going to discuss the means to get the word out with reciprocity and participation, rather than fee payment.



Blogging, just like any other form of social media marketing, requires you to engage your audience. It provides a platform for long-form communications, with the capability to embed photos, audio and video. Successful blogs, those that get both repeat readers and comments, must engage in much of the same activity as successful Facebook pages and Twitter feeds. Engagement, connection and participation are key.

Give to get, a phrase I use often, is especially applicable with blogs. Want more comments on your blog? Comment on the blogs of others. When doing so, use the name/URL feature where applicable, linking them to your blog with each comment left. Great comments create clicks. Continuing great comments create continuing and varied clicks. Blogs are very searchable, so a quick Google search with your topic choice and the word "blog" should find you a variety of options.

Want a more targeted group of blogs to work with. We hope you've decided to stop being a [Linkedin Lackadaisy](#), and will sign in to LinkedIn. Check your connections and see which blog. It's a great place to post up your own blog, if it is a business-based publication, and you can build your connections on LinkedIn while building comments on your blog.

There are also blog/comments exchanges and groups that you can join, or you can easily start one of your own. I belong to a group like this and the rules are simple. For every blog I post, I must comment on three other blogs. It's a great way to build your own blog readership, increase comments and even get some inspiration for future posts.

As with every other type of social media project, it's important to remember, it's a marathon not a sprint. There's no instant gratification, no promise of immediate subscriptions and comments. If your content is viable, timely and interesting and you practice the give to get principle, you'll see a trickle of comments turn into a flow.

## Tackling Twitter

***140 Characters? That's barely a sentence! Of course I can create, manage and maintain a successful presence on Twitter.***

Sounds easy, doesn't it? However, there's an awful lot more to building and maintaining a following on Twitter. To refer back to our [Blog Building](#) post from last week, it's not as easy as, if I tweet it...they will come.



Check out some robust and trending Twitter campaigns. You'll notice several similarities. We're going to detail each of those similarities here.

1. Well received, well followed Twitter feeds follow other Twitter feeds. Look at the follower and following numbers. Most of the time they're fairly similar, except in the case of extreme niche feeds. What does this mean? It means you have to follow to be followed.
2. Twitter is about sharing, it's called the retweet (RT), and while there are many best practices about the retweet - which we will discuss in a future series - it's simply Twitter's means of sharing. The more you share the content of others, the more likely they are to share your content. That share, that engagement, is the success in your campaign.
3. Short though the sentences may be, the successful Twitter user is having conversations. Twitter effectively makes social listening possible. You share a sentence, and you get one back as a reply. As a mention (you are mentioned when you see the @ sign, as in [@soltysinc](#)), as a retweet or as a direct message, you then get to take the next step in the conversation. The Twitter account that bombards a feed with post after post after post, 25 in a minute's time (or worse) is not having a conversation. They are shouting over the heads of their followers. The listen is key here.
4. Savvy Twitter managers use hashtags (#) to further a conversation, to share an idea with a group of interested individuals. They do not use a hashtag simply to get their message in front of more people. To do so is, in effect, spamming.
5. Sounds a bit time consuming, doesn't it. If you follow a large variety of feeds, how will you keep the conversations straight? Twitter's list function allows you to group the people you follow into lists that you create. Follow a lot of savvy SEO feeds? Create a Twitter list and follow their thoughts when you want to learn more about the latest trends. You can also follow the lists created by others, without having to follow each individual account.

We hope that this series, with its focus on social business and social media participation, has proved you with the impetus to take your social media campaigns to the next level. I'll continue to discuss social media and social business in future posts.

## WII FM

Launching any initiative requires both external and internal launches. Perhaps the most difficult launches are those made internally. It would seem that these would be the simplest, right? Surely these people who are a part of your company will want to embrace the new initiatives and will immediately see the benefit. For every reason that the internal launch should be the easiest, the same reasons make it tougher.



**Factor:** They know you and should know that you only want the best for all.

**Challenge:** They also know your track record and have a tendency to put emphasis on things that either did not work as planned or were more difficult to accomplish than originally advertised. Initiatives that were a success, unless brought to top of mind, are often forgotten.

**Factor:** They work for the company which is the source of their livelihood. Wouldn't they want something that has the potential for a positive impact?

**Challenge:** They usually do not want anything to disrupt what they are doing. Change is never seen as a convenience even if there is the promise of simpler, faster, more efficient and even financially rewarding. If the cost benefit is not obvious they can be your biggest roadblock by stalling.

**Factor:** It makes the company stronger, more progressive or more competitive.

**Challenge:** Company strength does not necessarily convert to personal strength, positional power or status. It is important to work on the ego factor here if you really want buy in.

**Factor:** Everything is in place and all lights are green. We have done all of the work, now we just need to make it happen.

**Challenge:** If they feel like it is being done to them rather than with them, there is a tendency to sit back and be a spectator rather than be actively involved. You cannot have a personal buy in if they have nothing to do with it.

**Factor:** You have great ideas and can spin those into initiatives that can make a difference.

**Challenge:** Being a thinker is far different than being a leader and innovator. If you readily come up with ways to create change but there is no engine, plan or buy-in to drive it, it will soon fade as another great idea.

It all boils down to several issues that are all related.

- Change: Unless people see change as making something better, especially as it relates to them, the status quo will always be more comfortable.
- Benefit: Global and personal benefits must be easy to see and be desirable. Without benefit, initiatives are often seen as mechanical.
- Status: Even though a person may say that status is not important, how your initiative reflects on the person, those they touch and your company will be important. Status drives desire to realize the benefit and suffer change. No one does something to be less than they have been before.

**The old radio station still plays WII FM – What's in it for me!**

## Creating Buy-in

You have a brilliant idea and you can't wait to share it with your team. You can already see the results and dream of the impact. You call the meeting of your captains, lieutenants, VP's, directors and/or managers with a stage set that you have something very exciting to share. You know that you need everyone on the team pulling in the same direction to realize success.



Everyone gathers and you launch into sharing your idea with enthusiasm, expecting it to ignite the others in the room. As you are finishing up, you look around the room for buy-in.

Grumpy Gus is sitting there with arms crossed and slouched down in the chair muttering under his breath to no one in particular; Nancy Naysayer has been lining up objections that she has been sitting on the edge of her chair waiting to voice; Peter Pennypincher is already calculating what this will cost, Whirligig Wendy is already thinking about all the work this will create; Simon Yes-man has been in full agreement nodding at everything you said - and not to be missed is the elephant in the room with their own agenda being set, usually counter to yours.

### **There is no buy-in.**

Creating buy-in for new ideas, concepts and initiatives may be one of the toughest jobs of a leader. Your sales skills on selling to your group go far beyond your presentation and require you to know the motivators, concerns and most of all the personality of your group. Yesterday, we talked about [WILFM](#) – **What's in it For Me**, which will be very important in creating buy-in. However, with a group such as the one described, who are positioned in leadership roles, you will probably find that status and accomplishment are often more important than individual rewards. They also do not want to be embarrassed or a party to failure.

The positioning we described above is just that, positioning. It will exist until there is a reason to leave that position behind. In creating buy in, we must create an alternative role that is desired, challenging and has its own spotlight if executed well. The role must have a title and a voice. Mutual respect, that can be earned and grown, must be given. The person must be challenged to be a leader and not a soldier or spectator. They must have something meaningful to do and accomplish.

It will be your job to transfer ownership for success and the fear of failure for at least their component part. All roles need to be seen as vital to the accomplishment of the mission. Your position and role actually grows as a reflection of the success of others.

Finally, you do need to create milestones, check points and opportunities for them to tell not only you, but others as well, of the success accomplished. A group like this is often driven by peer recognition of their efforts far more than what you can say or do as an individual. It is a strong form of accountability.

As buy-in is created and people see themselves in roles with responsibility that are important, the old characters fade away taking the negative energy with them and breathing life and energy into the internal and often external components of the launch.

## Empowerment

If you want your launch to be successful, you must empower people who are connected to the launch initiative in any way. Yes, it takes a bit of a leap of faith, there are risks and it is not always perfect. You have done it before and you have experienced it yourself. Empowerment is where we grow, do things we did not think we could do, where we overcome our fears, test ourselves and find out that we really do have what it takes. It is also what often brings the greatest attention, accolades and, most importantly, new opportunities.



While there are many stories, fables and faith teachings based on empowerment met and achieved, a simple example may be in your memories. Think back to either when you were a child yourself or when you were helping a child and took the training wheels off of their bicycle the first time. If you were the child, even if you did not stay up very long, you felt a thrill, an excitement and the freedom of doing something under your own power, control and dreams of what you would do with now that you were empowered.

If you were the person teaching the child, after the bit of a run and guidance of the bike, seeing the child take off, once you released the rider your guidance brought a sense of pride and knowledge that you had helped to launch a whole new world for that child. The newly empowered freedom did not take them out of your world but defined what you could do together on a new level.

In business, there is little more exciting than seeing people bloom and grow. Realization of empowered ability to reach for dreams, accomplish goals and be a part of your growth. Just like the child learning to ride the bike, your guidance and responsibilities do not end with the first point of empowerment. Actually, it is quite the opposite. Each person you work with or touch and empower through your initiatives looks to you as the leader to put out the next challenge, empower them again in a new way, open new horizons, and experience success through the challenge.

Launching an initiative and using empowerment as a tool, your own power and even control are actualized. You are opening the opportunity, challenging people to grow in their strengths and discover strengths they did not know they had. You still have the vision and power of alignment which is where you gain control, even though those empowered do not feel controlled because they are experiencing growth and the momentum that comes with the launch of an initiative.

The challenge comes in never capping your own dreams and empowering yourself as well as being empowered by others. A company begins to stagnate and in some cases begins a path to demise when the leadership stops dreaming, reaching and empowering. There are many examples that come to mind especially in the technology world where thought leaders and entrepreneurs such as the founders of Google, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon and a host of others were begun in a humble environment without money or other elements considered necessary for success. Each one of these had a vision, were able to empower others to see the vision, empower the use of talents and skills to beat the odds and often work not for what they earned that day but for the meeting of the challenge which always has a stronger, more meaningful reward.

Empowerment is also one of the strongest recruiting and retention tools in our arsenal. People who are driving toward a mission, have the ability to achieve and succeed more than they can as an individual and are a part of a culture of empowerment rarely leave and are not enticed easily.

When you consider a launch, empowering your people and taking off the training wheels, yes, you have to let go a bit. However if the path and the destination are yours and they know that they will ride together with you to new places, you have a relationship that is empowered and near limitless in what can be achieved.

## Embrace Success

How do you embrace success? Isn't it a point in time or the moment when the executed launch achieves its mission? If you are thinking that way, you will not be able to reap the many long term benefits that are available.



Embraced success extends empowerment, communicates and continues to drive the glow and momentum of the achievement. Look at the two companies profiled below.

Van Guard was the owner of a company seeking to redefine itself in the industry. Motivational speakers had been brought in, practices with wonderful statements adopted and stretch goals created for each department and person. The elements were there to kindle the fires of success throughout the company. People were empowered to perform and achieve, or so Van thought in his dreams.

His company was “Old School” with a hierarchy of mammoths whose movements were slow and deliberate with only one purpose – feeding themselves. Even, if it meant walking on everyone else to do it. Van thought that he was reaching into the organization, gaining buy – in and using talent by talking to and meeting with different people from time to time. However, communications only went back to the mammoths who really did not want anyone who worked under them finding a way out of the cave or to taste something new or different.

Several of the fires actually grew, creating bright spots in the company that could have been shared. The mammoths, afraid of fire, did not want it to spread and graciously accepted Van’s praise and reward but never shared it. Over time, the people tired of getting all excited, making things happen and then having their results smolder to nothing in the cave. The opportunity to embrace success was lost and the company is on the same path to ancient history as the mammoths that once roamed the earth.

Susie Shoestring had once been one of the people kept in the caves at Van’s company and, as a result of the mammoths squelching anything new, she found herself persona non grata with all of her ideas and passion to make a difference. She did not have much in the way of money but knew if she could energize, excite and empower people, nothing was really out of reach.

She had listened well to all of the gurus that had been brought in and adopted many of their practices. The slogans she chose were not empty and were validated at each point possible. Perhaps her greatest skill was in recognizing success, achievement and proactive actions in others. Her executive team was coached to find success, every day, in someone who worked for them. Communicate it, celebrate it (proportionate to the success), learn from it and teach others from it. Success was fully embraced and used to create greater and more significant successes.

It not only became a record of personal achievement it was incorporated into the history of the company. Success became a creed that gained so much momentum that it was impossible to be a part of the company without being touched by it. In fact, it became the great “secret” in the industry, with people wondering what they were drinking over there. The culture became so powerful that it drew others to it, in spite of compensation and benefit issues. The speculation grew that it would soon be recognized for what it was and die out. What the naysayers did not realize was that embraced success is such a powerful force that it regenerates itself because it is built on what drives people, communicated with passion and caring.

Everyone was looking at the company Susie was building with a traditional perspective, but she made sure that her company did not have the traditional baggage, she could not afford it.

Susie was able to take most of the talent out of the caves, not because she actively recruited them but because, everyone wants their place in the sun. She is growing greatly. Sure there are challenges, but each of these is met with the power of embraced success propelled forward as if riding a rocket leaving all those rooted to the past behind.

Today’s post concludes the launch series. It is appropriate that the last post is Embrace Success as tomorrow we begin the February series ***Loving and Business*** in which we will talk about how we love our business, relationships both powerful and toxic and showing the love.

## The Authors and the Company

The authors of the Strategic Initiatives series are Pat Soltys and Mallie Dein.



Pat Soltys has a long business and consulting history helping companies not only through tough times but more frequently in achieving their objectives. She understands the mechanics and structure of business as well as the challenges. Her writing aligns with a philosophy of content, communications and commerce. For more information see Pat's bio on our web site. <http://www.soltys-inc.com/psoltys.htm>. You may contact Pat directly at [psoltys@soltys-inc.com](mailto:psoltys@soltys-inc.com)



Mallie Dein shared some of her insight in social media in the posts "Pick and Mix Social Media Platforms" and "The Strategy of Engagement". As the Director of Online Initiatives for Soltys Inc., Mallie brings expertise in maximizing the impact of social media, websites and more to our clients. She is able to help from strategic concept through delivery including "ghost posting" for clients. Her consulting helps clients realize the elusive ROI of Social Media. For more information, see Mallie's bio on our website <http://www.soltys-inc.com/bios.htm>. You may also contact Mallie directly at [mdein@soltys-inc.com](mailto:mdein@soltys-inc.com).

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