



## 4 Ways Event Planners are Using Social Media

Class Discussion  
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October 15, 2011

Middlesex County College

### Intro

My name is Karla Pollack and I have an Association Management Company in Trenton. We provide management and marketing services for associations and other non-profit organizations. Every non-profit has their Board retreats, Committee meetings and fundraisers so we find ourselves organizing events throughout the year. Social Media Marketing is a powerful addition to our clients' marketing communications plans.

So, what is Social Media Marketing and why bother with it?

**Social Media Marketing** – broadly defined: sharing in an online community. This can involve people sharing information and opinions on their blogs, photos, music, or details about your event!

Social Media (SM) allows for the creation and exchange of user-generated content. This form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid advertising. People generally pay more attention to an event if they hear someone they trust talking about it.

Whether or not event planning is your job or business, you're going to be involved with planning events of some sort – birthdays, retirement parties, reunions. SM helps make it easier to organize, promote and share.

**Quick poll** – how many of you are on FB, LI, Twitter, YouTube, Spotify (music sharing sites), Flickr (photo sites), and other SM sites?

There are literally hundreds of SM sites. The most popular for business at the moment: LI, FB, Twitter and YouTube.

We will create a demonstration event and then work through some of the ways SM is being used for event planning. By no means an exhaustive list, but we'll take a look at the following 4 ways Event Planners are using Social Media.

## I. Pre-Event Planning/Collaboration

## II. Promotion

## III. Location Based Apps

## IV. QR Codes & Microsoft Tags

1<sup>st</sup> step: select your user name to build a brand for you event and which sites to focus on.

The User name: event name or topic. This morning we'll suppose that all of us are on the MX County College Spring Fling Committee – this is a weekend long festival of live concerts, films and school sports events. Let's say "MCC Spring Fling" is available and we want to use that.

Which SM sites are relevant? Take a look at the audience for your event and focus on the most important.

- Are there any College sponsored blogs you can post items?
- Facebook.com/MCCSpringFling
- YouTube.com/MCCSpringFling
- UStream.tv/MCCSpringFling - Ustream has millions of people from around the world broadcasting live from their homes, school, work and major events. Broadcast or join the Crowds - the world is at your fingertips.
- Bambuser.com - Stream video live from your mobile to the web. Alert people when you go live; Shoot with almost no delay & chat with your viewers while broadcasting.
- RelevantSMSite.com/MCCSpringFling, etc.

[www.knowem.com](http://www.knowem.com) – great site for checking availability of user names and researching options.

Knowem was developed by our old website designer in Morristown. He retired his web design and hosting business and works exclusively on SM and Online Reputation Management (ORM). It's a good lesson for keeping an open mind to opportunities and careers in directions you can't imagine today.

OK, you have your user name and which sites you're going to use.

## I. Pre-Event Planning/Collaboration

You don't have to keep track of everyone's email addresses and all the back and forth communication and planning.

- Private FB & LI Groups – great for personal events
- Yammer.com – on a more enterprise level. It has none of the ads and other distractions that you find on Facebook. Yammer allows you to organize & archive by topic or project. You can schedule meetings, post documents, throw questions out there.

This is geared toward large intercompany collaboration. Or say you have a client you're doing a 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Gala. You can set up a joint Yammer event network between your Yammer network and the company's network. You can then have specific people organized into, silent auction committee, awards committee...

- DropBox.com – Allows you to “drag & drop” large files and invite others to access from any computer or mobile phone. For example, you could put all your sponsor logos and high rez photos in folder for the committee and brochure designer.
- Slideshare.net – organize all the speaker presentations & videos

## II. Promotion

These days, many people are beginning to understand the potential use of social media to create event buzz. Whether the occasion is large or small, it can be enhanced tremendously through SM.

With the popularity of social media, everything is different now. Social media allows planners and the organizations sponsoring the events the opportunity to have long-term interactions with the attendees well in advance.

Events have become much more exciting and part of that excitement is the anticipation or buzz that starts to build around the event long before it ever takes place.

- Facebook event pages
- LinkedIn
- Eventbrite.com – Eventbrite allows you to sell tickets, if that is something that you want to do
- Meetup.com
- Twitter – hashtags
- Committee and attendees spreading the word on their SM sites.

Very easy to go viral. How many friends do you on FB? Over 10? Over 100?

Keeping the numbers easy, let's say there are 10 committee members posting to their FB pages x 100 friends = 1,000 sets of eyes seeing something about your event.

We ask our staff even summer interns to create a LI profile. This helps our company spread our message and it's a great online resume for them. You can post status updates about events or other projects you're working on, similar to Twitter.

There are things you can do to leverage your SM promotion like using photos, videos and relevant links in the post instead of just text. It also increases the impact if it's of interest to one of your friends and they repost to their network. There was an old saying you tell 2 friends who tells 2 friends. This is taking it to the thousands.

### III. Location Based Apps

Widely used apps:

- Facebook Checkin
- Foursquare
- Gowalla
- Google

Create a "location" for your event or exhibit booth. Generate some buzz by inviting attendees to check in at your event.

Give your audience a reason to check in...and return to check in again. This can be to enter a contest, receive a gift, meet a celebrity, hear a speaker at a certain time, etc. Ideally, you want an attendee making enthusiastic comments about what they're experiencing at your event.

Another interesting aspect is the **Virtual Networking**. Attendees have a chance to network with each other without even having met. Once a person checks into an event location they can also view the other people who have also checked in there. It provides them an opportunity to network as well as generate activity for your event.

### IV. QR Codes & Microsoft Tags

We've all seen bar codes that retailers, magazines and other companies use for internal inventory and subscription tracking. QR Codes are the SM version – they are just a different format for presenting a web address.

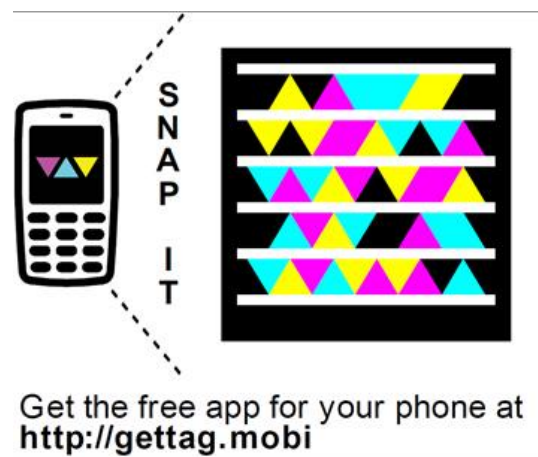
And because they are social, we want the public to scan them with their mobile phones, visit the site and SHARE them!

### What is a QR code?

A QR code is a square matrix code designed by the Japanese corporation Denso-Wave in 1994. QR is short for *Quick Response* as these codes were designed to be decoded rapidly. QR codes are easy to recognize as they always have a bordered square in three of the four corners.



**Microsoft Tags?** These are a different format of QR codes created by Microsoft.



Download a Scanning and code generating app to your phone. Most are free so it's fun to explore. I have these scanning Apps on my phone but ANY will work. Simply Google "QR codes" to find a website or mobile App:

- Optiscan (download from iTunes/ phone app store)
- BeeTagg (BeeTagg.com)
- RedLaser (<http://redlaser.com/qrcode/>)
- TagReader (reads Microsoft Tags <http://gettag.mobi>; <http://tag.microsoft.com>)

**So, how is a Tag different from QR codes? I found this one comparison:**

- For use in printed materials, Tag allows a **much smaller size** than other formats like QR codes—when you're designing marketing collateral or ads and every last bit of space has to count, this can be a big deal. And the size of Tags is the same regardless of the length of your URL or message.

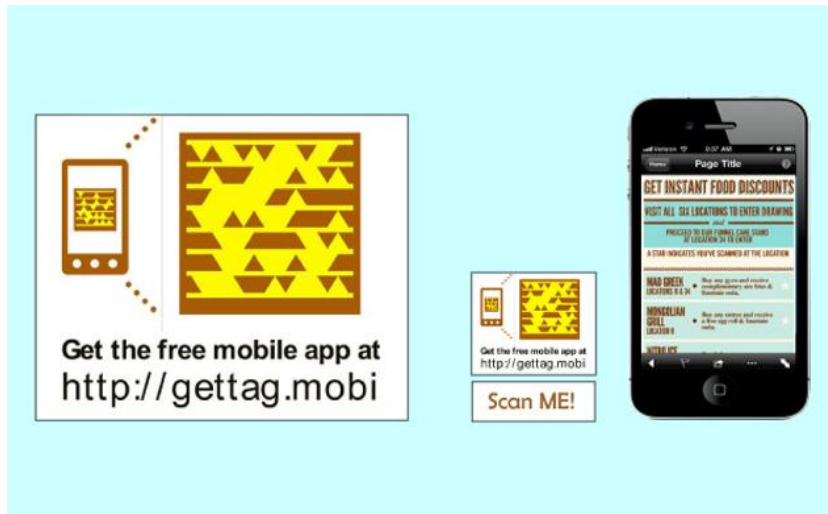
- With a traditional 2D code, you're locked into one look, unable to add much individual 'flavor' or brand identity. With Tag, the option to **make Custom Tags** lets you fully integrate your brand's personality into the Tag itself, creating colorful, visually exciting codes that don't distract from your message.
- QR codes carry with them a very wide and potentially confusing range and number of different code scanners, which don't necessarily all work consistently with all major phone operating systems. Tag gives you a single **reliable solution for mobile tagging across Windows Mobile, J2ME, iPhone, Blackberry and Android phones**.
- Many Smartphone cameras aren't always the most reliable or highest in quality, which can lead to frustration trying to get an accurate capture of a standard QR code that won't read right on your low-megapixel camera. The sophisticated technology powering Tag (called High Capacity Color Barcodes, or HCCBs) was designed specifically to **deal with the limitations of cameras on mobile phones**, delivering an accurate scan even with a blurred shot, low-quality lens, or lack of camera auto-focus.
- Finally, with most 2D barcodes, once you create and use them, accessing details like how many times they're scanned and who is scanning them can be difficult or impossible. Much like how you can manage online ad campaigns, Tag's **advanced analytics** let you know exactly how, when, and where your Tags are being used, and let you change the content behind them with the click of a button—giving you complete oversight and control.

Examples of using QR Codes:

**1. Event promotion – website address or video invitation**



QR code for Trenton Small Business Week



Tag from a Fair in Washington

## 2. Trade Show Name Badges:

Large trade shows used to rent clumsy devices that exhibitors could scan regular bar codes on name badges of attendees. Or they could take the time to have a prospect write down their contact info (hopefully legibly) if they ran out of business cards. Now the exhibitor can engage in conversation and if there is to be follow-up after the show they can simply scan the Tag with their phone to capture all the data collected during registration. Contact info, industry sector, etc. This maximizes everyone's time at a show.

## 3. Onsite activities, i.e., t-shirts, contests, Scavenger Hunt.

Each June, ARTWORKS takes over a warehouse in Trenton and stages a 24-hour art exhibition, live music, food & wine festival called Art All Night. This year, they had had a projector set up in 5 different areas where people could scan a QR code with a clue to find something. I saw a similar mobile scanning activity at a week-long event co-hosted by Lambertville, NJ and New Hope, PA.

For the 1<sup>st</sup> time this summer, more than ½ the mobile phones in this country are now smart phones so the possibilities of connecting with your audience through phones is only going to increase!

## Articles:

**MarketingSherpa's Top 5 Mobile Marketing Case Studies & How-tos**  
*Proven marketing strategies to take full advantage of mobile's growing influence*  
Free download at:

[http://www.hubspot.com/top-5-mobile-marketing-case-studies/?crcat=Search+Mobile~qr+codes&crsource=adwords&crkw=QR%20code&crcampaign=8084514649&utm\\_medium=cpc&utm\\_source=Google-PPC&utm\\_campaign=Search+Mobile&utm\\_content=qr+codes&utm\\_term=QR%20code](http://www.hubspot.com/top-5-mobile-marketing-case-studies/?crcat=Search+Mobile~qr+codes&crsource=adwords&crkw=QR%20code&crcampaign=8084514649&utm_medium=cpc&utm_source=Google-PPC&utm_campaign=Search+Mobile&utm_content=qr+codes&utm_term=QR%20code)

## Using Social Media to Create Buzz for Your Events

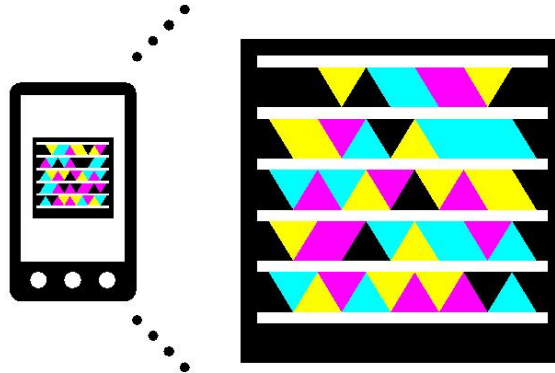
[http://www.compukol.com/blog/using-social-media-to-create-buzz-for-your-events/?utm\\_source=BlogGlue\\_network&utm\\_medium=BlogGlue\\_Plugin](http://www.compukol.com/blog/using-social-media-to-create-buzz-for-your-events/?utm_source=BlogGlue_network&utm_medium=BlogGlue_Plugin)

Valuable Mobile Apps for Your Social Media Campaign

[http://www.linkedin.com/news?viewArticle=&articleID=794103645&gid=2715112&type=member&item=72298078&articleURL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ecompukol%2Ecom%2Fblog%2Fvaluable-mobile-apps-for-your-social-media-campaign%2F&urlhash=PcLJ&goback=%2Egde\\_2715112\\_member\\_72298078](http://www.linkedin.com/news?viewArticle=&articleID=794103645&gid=2715112&type=member&item=72298078&articleURL=http%3A%2F%2Fwww%2Ecompukol%2Ecom%2Fblog%2Fvaluable-mobile-apps-for-your-social-media-campaign%2F&urlhash=PcLJ&goback=%2Egde_2715112_member_72298078)

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<http://newscenter.absnj.com/2011/10/using-social-media-for-events/>



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