



GMC to host first twitter news conference

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National and local experts will lead an interactive discussion panel on using social media as a business tool today from noon to 1:30 p.m., at the University Club, 924 East Wells St., as part of an event hosted by the Greater Milwaukee Committee.

Brian Kalma, director of User Experience for Zappos will discuss the power of combining social media with great service to deliver industry-leading consumer experiences and profitability.

Zappos made Fortune's Top 100 employer list for the first time this year and has been featured in nearly every business/technology publications for their strategic use of social media, world class customer service and business innovation.

Steve Glynn, president of Spreenkler, a Milwaukee-based social media and creative services firm, will provide an overview on using social media outside or inside your organization to collect market knowledge and identify centers of expertise.

Allan Schoenberg, director of corporate communications of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and Tina Chang, CEO of SysLogic, will also share insight on the applications of social media.

Follow the meeting online via Twitter at <http://www.twitter.com/GMCMKE>. GMC staff will tweet live from the meeting and also host a twitter "news conference" immediately after the event. Followers may tweet their questions for guest speakers and GMC representatives will respond via Twitter.



Friday, May 8, 2009

Greater Milwaukee Committee to host Twitter news conference

The Greater Milwaukee Committee will host its first Twitter news conference on Monday as part of a program on the growing business use of social media.

At the event, Brian Kalma, director of user experience for Zappos, will discuss the power of combining social media with great service to deliver industry-leading consumer experiences and profitability. Steve Glynn, president of Spreenkler, a Milwaukee-based social media and creative services firm, will provide an overview on using social media outside or inside an organization to collect market knowledge and identify centers of expertise.

Allan Schoenberg, director of corporate communications of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange, and Tina Chang, CEO of SysLogic, will also share insights on the applications of social media.

GMC staff will host a Twitter “news conference” immediately after the event. Reporters will be able to send questions via Twitter for the speakers and GMC representatives, who will respond via Twitter.

Greater Milwaukee Committee leader employs social media

Posted: May. 26, 2009



Taylor

Julia Taylor, president of the Greater Milwaukee Committee, wants to raise awareness about the need to keep young talent in the region - and she's using social media to elevate the conversation.

In the digital era, Taylor believes it's critical that Milwaukee-area companies tap new communication channels such as Twitter and Facebook to reach young professionals.

Milwaukee is a city ripe with emerging young leaders who are operating outside the city's power structure, Taylor said. And more frequently, they are turning to social networking to move their ideas forward.

"I meet a ton of interesting young people who are engaged in issues like transit and water," she said. "They're getting their voices heard, but the public meeting place has changed. It's moved to a Twitter space. It's moved to a Facebook space."

Research shows that the under-35 set is communicating more via social networks than e-mail. If the conversation has shifted to social media, then the local business community must follow, Taylor said.

"Even if you're not going to have a Facebook page or a Twitter ID, you should know what other people are saying about you," she said. "You can choose to ignore the conversation, but the discussion goes on."

To make her point, Taylor recently held a Twitter press conference. The purpose was to promote the value of social networking as a business and marketing strategy to GMC member companies. That she would hold such an event isn't surprising. Taylor, whose Twitter name is @JHtaylor, has amassed 5,500 followers since joining the service last fall.

Twitter is the popular social networking and micro-blogging service that lets you get your message out instantly to a community of followers by simply answering the question, "What are you doing?" In 140 characters or less, you can post a response that becomes a tweet.

The press conference preceded the GMC's May 11 meeting. It covered social media and how companies and organizations can use it to improve their marketing and relate to customers, particularly the creative class.

The meeting was live-streamed online and viewed by 140 people across several states, the GMC said. It featured Brian Kalma, vice president of user experience and Web development at Zappos.com, the online shoe retailer. In addition, the GMC used its Twitter account to provide updates, field questions and provide information for the first-ever live streaming of its meeting

"We're not saying social media should be a replacement for other types of marketing, but with the economy the way it is, as a business, you've got to utilize every tool you've got," Taylor said.

That a traditional business association like the GMC is talking up social media helps debunk the perception that such organizations cater only to corporate CEOs and the city's power elite.

"An organization like the GMC may be well-known, but people wonder if they're a bit outdated," said Steve Glynn, president of Spreenkler, a Milwaukee social media and creative services firm. "Jumping on these media tools changes the way young people view these organizations. That's important as you're trying to establish your next generation of customers."

It's a conversation some hope will continue in Milwaukee, which experts say lags other cities in the digital revolution and in capturing the interests of the technology elite.

"The awareness (of social networking) has been around for a long time," said Cd Vann, founder and owner of Sohobiztube.com, which held a social networking seminar, "Naked Biz Growth," a day after the GMC's press conference. "We in Milwaukee are just opening our eyes to what other parts of the nation have been doing a lot longer."

While Taylor and the GMC are to be applauded for embracing social media, it's important that leaders not overlook the real issue of creating economic opportunity for young people who may not feel they have a stake in the community, said Robert Shuter, chairman of the Department of Communications Studies at Marquette University, whose expertise is in diversity and interpersonal communication.

"Twitter isn't going to substitute for changes in the economic infrastructure of our city that prevents the under-35 population from leaving," he said. "It's going to take multiple approaches."

Tannette Johnson-Elie writes about how small businesses and start-ups are using networking and business associations to tap the expertise needed to grow. She can be reached at (414) 223-5172 or by e-mail at telie@journal sentinel.com.



Zappos executive visits Milwaukee to talk social media

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Brian Kalma, director of user experience at Henderson, Nev.-based Zappos.com Inc., an online shoe retailer, recently visited Milwaukee to discuss social media and business issues.

Kalma spoke to Greater Milwaukee Committee members on Monday at their regular meeting.

"Social Media is a very quick way to see outcomes when you need it the most," said Julia Taylor, president of the GMC.

Throughout his presentation, Kalma talked about how Zappos is using social media within its business strategy, and why it's important for all companies to become a part of the social media conversation.

The GMC also experimented with a live streaming video and its first "Twitter- press conference," to coincide with the theme of the meeting.

"In terms of metrics, we had 132 people total stream the video for all or part of the meeting," said Eric Paulsen, GMC communications officer.

According to Paulsen not many people tweeted in questions to ask Kalma and the other panelists, but he did count a fair amount of traffic on Twitter related to the conference, its video stream or the discussion.

Kalma also keynoted New Berlin-based Soho Publishing LLC's first NakedBizGrowth, a full day social media conference and event, which featured local social media presenters with real life success stories, along with Kalma.

"To tell you the truth I was very nervous putting on this event, because it was the first we've done of its kind," said Cd Vann, owner of Soho Publishing. "To tell you the truth I was only expecting 25 to 30 people. You have to factor in how many people are going to take off of work for a whole day for an event they've never heard of before."

According to Vann, more than 60 people pre-registered for the event, and eight people attended as walk-ins. People who found out about the event via Twitter attended from as far away as Chicago and Des Moines, Iowa, she said.

Vann has already scheduled a tentative date in August to bring the conference to Chicago, and another date in September to bring the conference to Iowa.

"The feedback we received was tremendous. We are planning to bring the same conference to other areas using a combination of presenters from Milwaukee, as well as a few local ones," Vann said.

Kalma and the other presenters brought real life examples to the table, which is what made the event so successful, Vann said.

"Everybody out there calls themselves an expert in social media just because they are using those tools," Vann said. "With this conference I wanted to make sure everyone presenting had real life client examples, not just personal use stories."

BizTimes Milwaukee reporter, Alysha Schertz had a chance to chat with Kalma during a break at the event.