

APRIL MEETING

Face It! Facebook Is Now Big Business

BY BECKY MAGINN

Does the word “Facebook” make you think of kids with too much time on their hands fooling around on the Internet, often ending up with troubles involving “overexposure”? Or destroying their own chances at landing a good job, before the interview can even take place?

Well, the users—and uses—of this social network have evolved significantly. Today, exposure on Facebook can be a very good thing, and dismissing this social utility as a mere pastime might just mean cheating yourself out of that dream job! Facebook has become a proven and popular networking tool among the business-savvy set. And if you want your Facebook presence to be known in this crowd, you should first make your presence felt at April’s IWOC presentation. Jay Rodriguez, an expert in social networking, will explain to us how to win Facebook fans, and then convert those fans into clients.

Jay will show us how to develop an effective Facebook Page, with just the right content to attract prospective customers and keep them coming back. This page will then draw traffic, i.e., leads and revenue, to your Web site.

Jay is the owner of JayRodChicago.com, a social media and business writing company. After 13 years in journalism—having worked for, among others, *Crain’s Chicago Business* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*—Jay decided to open his own business here in the city. During his career, Jay has edited video for CNN during the 1996 Democratic National Convention, hosted a radio program in Western Illinois, and received numerous journalism awards, including Best Integration of Print and Web Journalism. His business offers social networking, web design, Internet marketing, link building, ghost writing, public relations, and much more.

Jay is also chair of a relatively new IWOC committee, the Social Media Committee. In this capacity, one of the projects he is currently working on is building a Facebook Page for IWOC. In addition to telling us how to better market our own individual brands, he will speak briefly on the IWOC page and how it will increase awareness of us as an organization. Of course, this community page will benefit all IWOC members, bringing new browsers to our Web site, with its directory of writing talent.



I hope that many of you were at our September 2009 meeting to hear Barb Rozgonyi speak on social media, including LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook. (If you did miss it, or you just want to refresh your memory, a recap of her talk can be found in the October issue of Stet.) Jay’s presentation promises to be the perfect follow-up to Barb’s overview, delving into detail on this versatile—and free—marketing tool called Facebook so that you can put it to work for you.

Put your best Face forward and make 2010 a more prosperous year for your business!

The meeting will be held in Room 5008 at National-Louis University, 122 S. Michigan Avenue (across from the Art Institute) in Chicago. Networking with snacks and beverages begins at 5 p.m., followed by the business meeting and the program at 6 p.m. The meeting is free for all IWOC members. Nonmembers pay \$15. Plan to stay for a buy-your-own dinner at a nearby restaurant afterward, where we’ll continue our networking over dinner. ☛

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PRESIDENT'S COLUMN/ROGER RUEFF

It's a New Month



I will leave you to guess what day it is. But imagine my surprise this morning when I opened my Web browser and saw the headline: "Steele Apologizes for GOP Opposition to Health Care Reform." And that surprise turning to absolute shock when I opened the article and read:

"At a press conference in Washington, D.C. today, Republican National Committee chairman Michael Steele offered a public apology for his party's nearly universal opposition to the healthcare reform legislation passed by Congress and signed into law by President Obama last month. Said Steele: 'The problem is that most—I'm tempted to say all—GOP legislators are heavily financed by, and beholden to, large corporations that don't care all that much about the U.S. citizenry... or even about small businesses, for that matter, unless they grow big enough to be bought out, gobbled up, or sued for patent infringement. The insurance industry lobby, in particular, has hugely deep pockets, not to mention some very attractive lobbyists a lot of whom, frankly, are quick-witted and fun to play golf with. I will say this about my party: We can build a you-scratch-my-back network with the best of them. Between the diners and junkets and favors for family members, it can get really hard to keep your eyes on the prize of making health care affordable for all



Americans.' In a casual sit-down meeting with reporters after the press conference, Steele added: 'I mean, seriously—the public option? Who in their right mind would oppose that? Our party has long touted the virtues of competition—or, at least, we used to in my parents' generation, before we were pretty much taken over by crazies. And that's what the public option would do—give individual Americans a choice in their health care coverage. But sadly, we're not much about individuality, anymore, and certainly not about choice, which we privately refer to as the "C-word." If you ask me, we lost our way after Eisenhower. I mean, here's a former four-star general who oversaw European Allied operations in World War II—a genuine war hero—and he's warning the country about the dangers of a "military-industrial complex." Think about it... the sheer bravery of a statement like that! It's just frankly gone, now. We've lost our way... every last one of us morally and spiritually bankrupt. Maybe that's why we've pulled this mantle of religiosity around us—so we can pretend not to feel the emptiness that churns at our guts all the time. I don't know... I just don't know.'

When asked to comment on Steele's remarks, Sen. Joe Lieberman (I-Conn.) offered: 'Let's face it, he's right. I mean he hit the nail on its

friggin' head. You want proof? Look at that nonsense I pulled back in 2006 when I lost the Democratic primary to Ned Lamont. I could have accepted defeat gracefully and worked to help get my party's choice elected. Instead, I got all pissy and ran as a quote-unquote "independent." Right. And Bush Jr. is Jesus, himself. I'm sorry, but I've been sucking at the corporate teat too long to even pretend. I caucus with the Democrats, sure. After all, they're in power, and I lose my hard-earned committee positions if I don't. But I also go campaigning against my former party's presidential candidate and speaking at the GOP national convention. I mean, no sh*t—every time I see a clip of myself on TV and that "Independent" label after my name, I wanna throw up. It's like a big friggin' neon sign flashing, "Liar! Liar! Liar!" The truth is, I'm just this soulless automaton of the Right, now... "Religion-Money, Inc." they oughta call it, and it kills me. I can't sleep at night, thinking about my support of guys like Dick Cheney and his love of waterboarding. And the sick thing is, I can't stop. It's like a total addiction. The things I do and say on camera make me retch, and still I go crawling back for more. I oughta be wearing leather chaps and have some dominatrix spanking me with a paddle while I count and cry, 'Please, may I have another?' It's just disgusting.

Continued on page 4.

Out, Damn Block!

BY BETSY STORM

Those of us who earn a living putting words to paper accept that an occupational hazard is the occasional bout of writer's block. It's as predictable as deadlines, computer glitches, and leaking pens. Ibuprofen won't cure it, but recent IWOC guest speaker Robert M. Knight offered a roster of other prescriptions to send the curse packing.

In his presentation, "Professional Skills that Make Writer's Block Go Away: How a few simple rules of good writing can help you take you take your copy from the mundane to the magical," Knight mined expertise from his decades-long journalism career. A contributor to the *Christian Science Monitor*, the *Washington Post* and the *Chicago Tribune*, among other publications, Knight's new book, titled *Journalistic Writing: Building the Skills, Honing the Craft* (Marion Street Press), will be available on April 27.

Sounding Zen-like at the outset, Knight advised writers grappling with getting their thoughts down on paper to "Let it come to you." In other words, don't chase the story; rather, let it flow from you.

After all, he says, it is the writer's charge to serve as a conduit. It is his responsibility to convey ideas, facts and knowledge to readers — a straightforward and simple (but not simplistic, he emphasizes) assignment. When conjuring a vision of your reader, Knight recommends applying "The Mom Principle" (Chancellor &

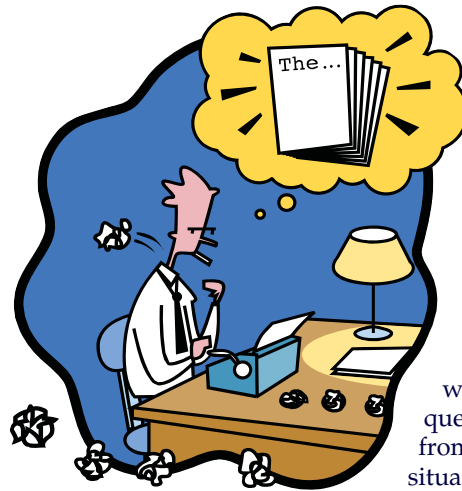
Mears): How would you share your news with her, what would she want to know, and how would she like to receive the information? As writers progress on this path, he says, one paragraph will naturally build on the other. (And with any luck, banish that block!)

Like so many journalists, Knight cited William Strunk Jr. and E.B. White's *The Elements of Style* as an extraordinary reference gem, nonpareil in its brevity and ability to keep writers on course. Two of his favorite guidelines are:

1. "Vigorous writing is concise... make every word tell."
2. Rule 22: "Move any element of a sentence around to give the sentence new life."

Writers need not wring their hands about developing their own style, Knight assures. Much like a glorious blossom, style blooms organically when tended. Top tips: Know your audience, write to it, avoid clichés, be specific, enliven copy with details, and use active voice. Don't tell the reader what to think; she'll draw her own conclusions. Remember, "show, don't tell."

Describing the English language as a "beautiful mongrel," Knight advised writers to explore it fully. For example, writers who weigh down a general audience with jargon appear to be sloppy thinkers. On the other hand, jargon is appropriate for readers who speak a particular language — say, a group of engineers who rely on trade journals for



it's proved successful in the past.

How should writer's block be conquered when it arises from an anxiety-inducing situation — such as a new (and sometimes difficult) client?

Knight advised writers to seek client involvement, buy-in, and collaboration from the client very early in the process.

What's the best way to unblock yourself when writing about a subject that, quite simply, bores you?

Act "as if" you find the topic interesting. "Anything viewed interestingly becomes interesting," Knight asserted.

The most significant counsel Knight delivered was: "Whatever else you do, don't bore the reader." 📖

industry-specific expertise.

At the close of Knight's remarks, IWOC members shared their personal experiences with writers' block, to which both Knight and IWOC colleagues responded, including:

Is it okay to write a story somewhat "out of order" in other words, crafting other sections first and then returning to the lead when the article is more fully developed?

Knight said he doesn't recommend this practice, but agreed that "whatever works" for an individual writer is fine — particular if

Writers Block: Wisdom from the Best

"You don't start out writing good stuff. You start out writing crap and thinking it's good stuff, and then gradually you get better at it. That's why I say one of the most valuable traits is persistence." — Octavia Butler

"People have writer's block not because they can't write, but because they despair of writing eloquently." — Anna Quindlen

"If I waited for perfection, I would never write a word." — Margaret Atwood

"Don't get it right, just get it written." — James Thurber

Resources to Banish the Block

Literary Education Online (Overcoming Writer's Block) <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/acadwrite/block.html>

Guide to Grammar and Writing (Overcoming Writer's Block") http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/composition/brainstorm_block.htm

From 43folders.com ("Hack Your Way Out of Writer's Block") <http://www.43folders.com/2004/11/18/hack-your-way-out-of-writers-block>

President's Column Continued from Page 2.

If I drank or used drugs or ran around on my wife, maybe I could fill this inner void with some meaningless thrills. But if I do that, my whole "moral compass" schtick comes crashing down, and there goes my career in the toilet. I'm stuck, see? I mean, majorly stuck!

Informed of Lieberman's comments, Steele said: 'I feel for Joe. I really do. He's one of our own, despite that whole "Independent" nonsense. But his case is not unique. We all feel that way. It's very sad. The truly good people in our party are jumping ship like it's on fire, and the nutcases are hopping on to fill the bunks before the sheets are even cold. Let's face it, Sarah Palin alone... there's a gal whose stilettos have punched a couple of gaping holes in the national party IQ. Every time I see her on TV, I think, "Good god, could she be any dumber?" And every time, she surprises me by outdoing herself and yanking us all down another notch on the smartness scale. But it's not just her... it's Michelle "off-her-meds" Bachman in Minnesota and Newt "Contract-on-America" Gingrich, who lives in an imaginary world where he's still relevant, and John "Gonna-take-my-legislative-toys-and-go-home" McCain. Most of my effort, these days, is just to keep myself from sticking my finger down my own throat.'

Not to be outdone, the Democratic National Committee chairman Tim Kaine issued a statement later in the day, titled 'We're No Angels, Either,' stating: 'The Republican party sucks, no doubt about it, but just to be clear, we suck, too. I mean it's not like they have exclusive rights to that trough. Our own party members stick their snouts in it all the time and come up snorting for more. And at least the Republicans have bravado—empty though it might be. Our party is absolutely spineless... well, not "absolutely" but pretty close. I suppose if you dug through the X-rays you could find a vertebra in there somewhere—if you had like a super-powerful microscope or something. It's pathetic. We should put our donkey logo in a tutu. And no, we don't hold the moral high ground, that's for sure. That stain on the blue dress is gonna take years to get out.'

Kaine's statement included a call for both houses of Congress to convene at the Lincoln Memorial on Easter Sunday to hold hands and sing 'Kumbayah.' 'It's like the perfect song for us,' he said at a lunch meeting with reporters after releasing the statement. 'Nobody knows what it means, so it's like this great metaphor for pretty much any bill that comes out of Congress.' But will it happen? 'Not a chance in hell,' admitted Kaine. 'The reality is that on Easter Sunday in this country today, every mother's Congressperson better have his or her ass in a church pew... that is, if they don't want to be painted as a pagan or Muslim extremist. Screw baseball; the national pastime in this land is demonization.'

I scrolled down. More headlines, more surprises.

"Israelis, Palestinians to Share Homeland: 'Let's celebrate with a kegger!'" says PM"

"Al-Qaeda Disavows Terrorism: 'Please forgive us, we're just a mess!' Pleads Repentant Spokesman"

"Ahmadinejad Retracts Holocaust Denial: 'The Jews went through hell!'" says Iranian Leader"

And perhaps most unbelievable of all... "Bulls Poised for Playoff Run."

Yessir, it's a new month, all right. The first day of one, anyway. 🍀

Calendar

April 13

IWOC Monthly Meeting. Speaker Jay Rodriguez will tell us how we can use a Facebook "business" page to attract clients. Plus he'll talk about the about-to-be-launched IWOC business page that will help us all. The meeting will be held at National-Louis University, Room 5008, 122 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago. Program 6 p.m. Networking 5 p.m. Nonmembers, \$15; IWOC members free. Buy-your-own dinner follows. Nonmembers welcome. For more information, call 847/855-6670 or visit www.iwoc.org.

The monthly food and networking get-togethers listed below meet at the same time and place each month unless otherwise noted, but call ahead in case of cancellation. The groups welcome nonmembers. If there's no group in your area, why not start one? Contact webmaster@iwoc.org.

April 27 (4th Tuesday)

IWOOP Monthly Lunch. Join near-west suburbanites for a noon lunch at Poor Phil's, 139 S. Marion St., Oak Park. For more info, call Barb Dillard at 312/642-3065. Check before you come. This lunch is monthly only if there are enough people who can attend. Note: The lunch is now on the 4th Tuesday, not the 4th Thursday as it has been in the past.

May 6 (1st Thursday)

IWORP Monthly Breakfast. Join the Rogers Park IWOC contingent for breakfast at 9 AM at the A&T Grill, 7036 N. Clark St., Chicago. For more info, call Esther Manewith at 773/274-6215.

It's Happening on the Web!

Check Out Writers' Line

Browse Resources

See What's Doing in Coming Events

WWW.IWOC.ORG