

WCPA FACEBOOK & LINKED IN ACTIVE!

The Western Canvas Products Association has gone social media! Visit www.facebook.com/TheWCPA and like us! Leave a post or comment!

You can also send me photos and video to post on the site as well.

Having a Facebook page is a great way to keep in touch with members, update everyone publicly about your company's success and attract potential clients.

Click on the icon below to go directly to WCPA's page on Facebook now.



If you have any suggestions on the way the page should look or would like to have something posted, please feel free to contact me.

Thank you!

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In 2004, an editorial by Galynn Nordstrom under the heading of "ForeThought" and titled "The brother of invention," evoked a lot of thought on my part.

Not just because of Galynn's profound observations, but mostly for the implications of those thoughts for industry in general and for our businesses in particular. Later that year, Galynn wrote another editorial that talked about what our industry can do to address the challenges of imports, particularly from low-cost sources such as China.

First, what resonated with me from the points Galynn raised was that while we romanticize about the latest and greatest new invention, what has really moved us forward in our businesses, our industry and, indeed, our economy, were those innovations that build one upon the other. How sometimes baby steps, create the "discovery" of new opportunities.

So what happens if that "light bulb" has shed light on one of those things which can result in mass produced products, thus rendering them to vulnerable challenges from overseas?

An answer to this vulnerability came in the position articulated by Dr. Eamon McKinney as described in Galynn's 2004 editorial: identify the relationships and identify the ways you add value to those relationships with the products and services you provide.

The way we do this is by first building upon our core competencies through uncompromised commitment to the quality of our products, and then follow up with a similar non-compromised

commitment to the service necessary to get those products on time to those who need them. With this expertise we ensure that those who need our products will never have cause to feel that our commitment to them is sacrificed by diminished service in providing those products, even for a "cheaper" approach.

The truth is that this process yields commitments to relationships with customers that become a part of our company's cultures and our relationships with our workers and our vendors as well: they see it in action, so they play their part in contributing to it.

What I am advocating, and what I think Dr. McKinney advocated, is that we take our ability to innovate, based on our expertise, and build a new and contemporary approach to manufacturing in our country, not just in our industry.

The real challenge to us, in large and small enterprises, lies in identifying how we can take advantage of opportunities by meeting customer requirements with our unique abilities and utilizing the resources of our expertise.

As to the challenges from the low price leaders, we are all aware of the old story that a relationship based just on price will last only as long as our price remains the lowest...Was this the challenge we set out to address as we got into our businesses? I think not for the majority of the innovative colleagues in our industry with whom I have had the honor to be associated during the past 34 years.

IFAI Photos Reflects 100 Year History

The Industrial Fabrics Association International is preparing for its 100th anniversary celebration.

Part of that preparation includes a montage of historical images from IFAI's history.

IFAI pulled pictures from industry events, old issues of the association's magazine, and archived photographs.

Newly elected IFAI President and CEO Mary Hennessy created a slide show presentation with these historical images.

Hennessy's presentation covers a wide variety of products and ties the fabrics industry into world events and trends in technological advancements.

Photos include an image of the original founding members of the IFAI; ads featuring prominent figures like Davey Crocket on fabric products such as a camping tent; a picture of a 1902 cover of Denver, Colorado-based The Brooks Tent and Awning Co. product catalog.

Brooks Tents merged with the Denver Tent & Awning Co. in 1939.

The company is still operating today as the Denver Tent Co.

To see the images go to:

<http://www.ifai.com/home/about/history/ifaihistoricalphotos>

Let's talk about social media. What is it? What are the benefits? Who really cares?

Social media is a powerful marketing & PR tool that can help your business grow organically.

Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, MySpace, Twitter and Blogs pretty much all fall under social media.

Let's take Facebook for an example of how your business can benefit. Facebook is a Web site where people sign up, connect with friends and keep in touch.

As a business, you can utilize Facebook to not only create a one stop spot for people to connect, it's also place where you can advertise for free!

You can post a comment on your Web site or share a post anytime, any day and whoever is connected with you will likely see it! Now if you want, you can even tailor your advertisements by purchasing ad spots on Facebook.

I wouldn't recommend doing that if you are a small/medium sized company like most WCPA members. But, as a small/medium sized business, you can take advantage of Facebook's reach and use it as an alternative to localized resources like the yellow pages.

When you advertise on Facebook or just have a page that people follow, you develop a network of people connected to you. That network is extended by proxy through the people that are connected to the folks that are connected to your page; it's almost like word-of-mouth advertising. How so? Well if I was following WCPA's Facebook page – which I do – and post a comment on my page about WCPA, it will show up in my friend's newsfeed. What's a

newsfeed you might be asking? Well a newsfeed is a page on Facebook that updates you on all you friend's activities, posts, comments, and whatnots. It's like having a Really Simple Syndicated (RSS) feed of your friends.

So what about the other benefits? You can promote your business by holding contests on your Facebook page. You can giveaway something and that will definitely get people interested in what you're about.

You can also link your Facebook page to your Web site and drive traffic to your company's site.

Now if you have a Facebook site, you can also link a Twitter account to it! What's Twitter? Well it's a site that lets you "tweet" a comment of 140 characters.

People that sign up to follow you to see what you have to say will get it. This is another way of doing some free advertising.

If you have a list of contacts, you can tell them you have a Twitter account, ask them to follow you and voila, you have a captive audience of people to advertise to without paying a single cent to do it!

So who uses social media? The age range varies. But what we do know is that there are 800 million active Facebook users while Twitter has 140 million users! Using social media is a great way to leverage your ability to market and spend little to no money, unless you want to invest and truly take advantage of social media...but that's a topic best left for another article....

So how do these social media

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WCPA on LinkedIn



The Western Canvas Products Association is not only on Facebook, we're also on Linked In!

Check out the link below and sign in to your LinkedIn account and join our group.

http://www.linkedin.com/groups/Western-Canvas-Products-Association-3687171?trk=myg_ugrp_ovr

You can keep up with your colleagues, start a discussion, post questions, and search for jobs.

Take a look and let us know if you have any suggestions for our Facebook or LinkedIn pages!



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outlets help your company in a public relations aspect?

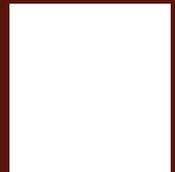
Social media outlets can help your company quickly build credibility and trust. How? Well if you are on Facebook or Twitter, you've automatically told people that you're not hiding anything, that you're out in public and want to be seen.

Once you start posting comments, sharing stories, posting photos, people will start to think of your company with some credibility. Let's face it, these days, if you're company doesn't have a Web site or an address that can be easily found, you don't have that much by way of

credibility. Would you buy from a business that didn't list itself in the phonebook, have a Web site, or contacts? I wouldn't...

You can use social media to maintain a positive reputation and even do some damage control when something goes wrong.

Another great place to help develop credibility is on LinkedIn. You can post your company's history, information and much more for people to connect with. WCPA has a LinkedIn account, check out the sidebar on this page for the link and connect with us today!



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