5 Potential Negative Effects
of Your Social Media Obsession

Blogs. Twitter profiles. Facebook fan pages. These are just a few of the sources of our growing social media obsession. Every day, more and more businesses are jumping on the social media bandwagon with high hopes of engaging consumers and getting more sales.

And while I'm certainly a proponent of socializing your brand, there is a dark side to this obsession, and it can have some nasty effects.

1. **Turning customers off with your personal beliefs** - In an attempt to show customers your human side, you run the risk of alienating or offending them with your opinions and beliefs. This is especially true if you decide to discuss politics or religion. A simple Tweet talking about your support for a certain candidate or a policy can upset some of your customers and cause them to boycott your business. That's why I recommend staying away from sensitive issues whenever possible.

2. **Overlooking the importance of print** - Sure, the number of people who get their information from blogs and social networks is constantly increasing. However, that doesn't mean you should write off the print media altogether. Coverage in a major newspaper or magazine can still provide some great results for your company, so be careful not to get overly obsessed with the novelty of social media.

3. **Decreasing your productivity** - One of the biggest dangers of social media is that it can quickly transform from a powerful marketing tool into a huge time waster. You need to make sure you outline social media goals and a plan for how you're going to reach them. Once you have a plan in place, make sure all of your social media activities are in line with this plan so you don't end up wasting hours doing nothing.

4. **Worsening your customer service** - Ideally, social media can improve your customer service. JetBlue, H&R Block, and Comcast are just a few examples of companies who've been successful using Twitter for light customer service tasks. However, if your business plans to do the same, you need to be careful. Make sure your employees are well-trained on how to provide customer service through Twitter, and be sure they understand how to not cross the line of being too informal (a huge danger with social media).

5. **Burning yourself out too early** - If I've seen it once, I've seen it a thousand times. A key decision maker at a company hears about this "hot social media thing", and decides his company needs to start blogging and Tweeting. They blindly jump in with no plan, and blog and Tweet furiously for a few weeks. Of course, they don't get any results because:

1) They don't have a plan

2) They don't really know much about social media marketing. As a result, they get burnt out, proclaiming social media to be an overhyped waste of time. The reality is they never gave themselves a chance for it to work.