

Life on the Social Grid

External social networking sites and your organization's unique community

You recognize the importance of providing enhanced value for your members, and you are ready to create a private online community for your organization. But what about external social networking sites? Do you ever feel like you're beating your head against a (Facebook) wall?

Carving out your niche on the social grid is not about numbers. It's about value. Don't get sucked into making it a them or me argument. Your membership site delivers more value (and safety) than those others – and it's easy for your members to recognize this. Don't worry about how to get them off other sites. Concentrate on drawing them to yours. Those sites aren't your competition for anything more than your members' time.

Efficiency

The "My Networks" feature within YourMembership.com is a great tool for your members to manage their outside profiles. Plus their contacts can see what sites they belong to as well.

Now instead of searching Facebook to see if a peer has an account, your members can look her up on your site and see what networks she has listed on her profile. No more scrolling through countless pages of "Carrie Millers" on Facebook only to find out she doesn't have a profile there after all.

Professionalism

Your site gives your members a place to house their professional profile. Leave the party pics on their other social networking sites. Keeping professional and personal lives separate is a good career move, and you can rely on your organization's private community to enhance its brand and support its overall mission, vision and principles.

Safety

The Internet can be a haven for all sorts of unsavory characters, but your members can rest assured that they are connecting with other members who really are who they say they are. Recently, singer Kanye West lambasted Twitter because "they allowed" someone pretending to be him to amass several thousand followers. There is no protection from (non-financial, non-defamatory) identity-theft when it comes to those larger sites. Your organization can elect to approve each member so there is less chance and less opportunity for these imposters to appear.

Remember you're not asking your members to give up those valuable, insightful features (quizzes like "what kind of fruit are you?") of those public sites, you're just asking them to log into yours to stay abreast of news, information, career happenings, job openings, relevant events and networking opportunities.

Plus, if need be, you can always post your own invaluable quiz to your site. After all, it is hugely important to know the difference between apples and oranges.

INDUSTRY
TRENDS