

How social media can help you win accounting clients

There's no question that social media is a great networking and recruitment tool. But how can busy accountants use it to market their firm and win clients?

Almost 20 per cent of Australia's top 100 accounting firms don't use social media at all, according to the BRW¹ Top 100 Accounting Firms 2013. Most of those who do, use it selectively and "don't really engage" with followers.

This lack of engagement is the key reason many accountants aren't getting the results they would like from social media, says Peter Chaly, Managing Director of SmartINK, a boutique marketing agency that runs the Marketing for Accountants brand.

"The businesses typically had no engagement strategy and no understanding of how to use the pages. People don't want to log-in to Facebook just to see that every post from your business is promotional. We are bombarded with advertising messages from every corner these days and people turn off from that type of activity on social media very quickly.

"You need to take a step back and remember that these are 'social' networks. They provide huge opportunity to interact with clients and potential clients in a way that's hard to achieve without face-to-face contact."

"A small firm just won't have the resources to devote to a wide range of social media. Having said that, every accountant should at least have a LinkedIn profile. And now that it is also being used as a search engine, it's important to optimise your LinkedIn profile for search.

YouTube is another option that many accountants overlook², says Chaly. "It offers an incredibly powerful way to connect with people. For example, you can upload a quick five-minute video with presentation slides, and then embed it on the firm's website and share it through Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and elsewhere."

"You don't need a big budget to be successful on social media. Used strategically, it can be an extremely powerful client acquisition tool. In fact, smaller firms can often gain an advantage over larger firms simply by being more agile and responsive, and presenting more of a 'human' face to the world."

Adapted from *thomsonreuters.com.au* July 28, 2014

1. BRW: Business Review Weekly
2. Overlook: neglect