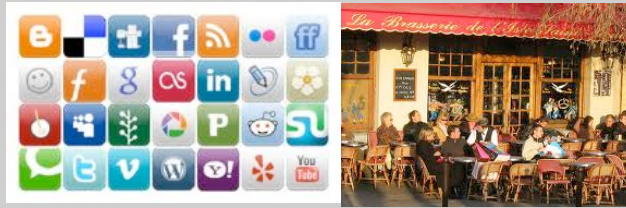


Global Public Square 2.0 Surviving the Social Media Storm



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Global Public Square 2.0

Surviving the Social Media Storm

Introduction

German sociologist and philosopher Jurgen Habermas defines the public sphere as the “arenas where meanings are articulated, distributed, and negotiated...” This presentation attempts to explore how meanings are articulated through virtual spaces where people don’t meet physically.

The advent of Internet and social media has opened new avenues for the articulation of meaning in ways that were not hitherto possible or foreseen by Habermas. Though fundamentally different, these new virtual spaces, nonetheless offer similar but intangible approaches to deliberation.

Unlike the old public spheres that were localised, the new spheres are globalised and have a new breed of players, negotiators and power brokers involved in the articulation of issues. 18th Century public spheres were predominantly centered around Europe ‘s cafes or coffee houses.

Though the real-world and the virtual-world are very different materially, the purpose, identity and issues deliberated, are often similar. Other similarities include the absence of mediators, ground rules (no ground rules), free speech, the inescapable influence of power-players with greater visibility.

In order to survive the tsunami storm of social media that often comes with hot button-issues, organisations must take steps to mitigate unplanned surges (storms) from the Global Public Sphere. If unchecked, such storms (activities) can undermine an organisation ‘s mission.

Thus, to reduce vulnerability in the face of events that attract public (mass) organisations must be able to monitor, capture and participate in web 2.0 activities as described below. This ensures that they are informed, capable and ready to act in the event of an undesirable attack or assault.

Part I Observe

1 Monitor

The first step is to be informed of what is happening within the public sphere. In other words, what are the issues and how do they relate to your business and its sustainability. You can do this by monitoring for emerging hot-button issues. Here is a simple truth, **if you fail to monitor, you'd fail to see the tsunami wave.**



Ideas:

- 1. Change.org.....
- 2. Crowdfunder
- 3. Movements.org

2 Capture

You also need to capture information that is relevant to your organisation 's activities. This enables you to have a repository for reference and observation of trends and complexity. Captured information also serves as the basis for reflection in the identification of emerging opportunities. **What is recorded is rewarded.**



Ideas:

- 1. Key influencers
- 2. Know the creators
- 3. Know the critics.....

3 Analyze

The main purpose of capturing information is to analyse and find out areas where you can you mitigate risk in time. If you operate a theme park that depends on use of animals and you observe that the public sphere is agitated about animal cruelty, you better have a plan before its too late. ***If you can't analyse, you can't visualize.***



Ideas:

1. Google Alert
2. Hot Button Issues
3. Google Analytics.....

Part II Participate

4 Share

By sharing your views, thoughts and insights, you shape or mould ongoing virtual conversations. Sharing earns legitimacy (voice) within a virtual space, sphere or community of participants. ***A legitimate voice before the mess is a credible voice during the mayhem.***



Ideas:

1. Social capital
2. Relationships
3. Insights

5 Collaborate

Collaboration is an effective avenue to build and sustain trust with fellow community members. With trust, comes social capital, which could translate into likes, shares, followers and friends. Such immaterial capital is critical goodwill, a buffer from any skirmishes. ***Participation often elicits reciprocation.***



Ideas:

- 1. Guest-blog
- 2. Co-Tweet
- 3. Wikipedia

Part III Harness

6 Learn

The virtual public sphere is littered with a myriad of voices. You can learn a lot by just watching how others rise and fall. By being plucked-in, you can learn from their shortcomings, thereby making yourself more agile, knowledgeable and wiser without paying the price. Thus, **knowledge is a gauge, not a wedge.**



Ideas:

- 1. Flashpoints
- 2. Response strategies
- 3. Response plan

7 Crowdsourcing

Crowdsourcing means reaching out to your groundswell to tap their minds and experiences. This enables you to craft new ideas to shape current issues in way that gives you some leverage. In the virtual world, you can tap into your tribe 's mind through the use of Web 2.0 tools that elicit their feedback and knowledge.



Ideas:

- 1. IdeaStorm
- 2. Ushahidi
- 3. Crisis commons

8 Adapt

To carve a distinct voice for yourself, you need to position your organisation as a thought-leader. By so doing, you empower and energise your followers and their own followers to have a more favorable view of your position. They 'd feel respected. With this, you can better **adapt your ground game to reflect your ground intelligence.**



Ideas:

1. Freebies
2. Sticky widgets
3. Apps and e-zines

9 Benchmark

Take stock of where you are today in terms of ideas, Web 2.0, know-how, resources, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities. How does your position stand up to your global growth? Based on where you are, you can begin to benchmark with those the early adopters who are excelling in this arena.



Ideas:

1. Google alert
2. TweetDeck
3. Klout

10 Plan

To ring-fence your organisation, you must come up with a plan that reflects your vision of tomorrow and your current resources. It takes careful planning and optimisation of resources to preempt a global public sphere disaster. In an increasingly volatile world, **only the agile and resilient will survive and thrive.**



Ideas:

- 1. Goals
- 2. Tools
- 3. Strategies

Conclusion

The global public sphere is evolving everyday. It is big and complicated. As globalisation increases, so does the public sphere. More people are informed and virtually connected. More voices, passionate voices, militant voices. Thus, online activism is here to stay. New civil society issues will find new champions. As natural resources deplete, new conflicts and issues will emerge. It is inevitable. Wiki leaks, Kony 2012, DellHell, and Shame Nike campaigns will continue to appear sporadically in our times.

For an organisation to survive and thrive, it must be informed about the workings of the public sphere. It must also build goodwill to self-immunize from the severity of unprecedented campaigns targeting or seeking to undermine its existence.

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About the Trainer and Facilitator - Gideon F. Mukwai, MA, CEM

Gideon is a certified emergency manager (CEM). Specialising in crisis prevention, emergency management and narrative communication, Gideon trains internationally in Asia, Middle East, Africa



and North America.

He has presented training programmes to over 15,500 executives from organisations such as Oracle, Siemens, Wyeth Pharmaceuticals, Dell Computers, Shell Eastern Petroleum, National University of Singapore, DBS

Bank, Gillette and many professional associations and institutions of learning.

In 2004, he founded XtraMile Solutions in Singapore as a dedicated training company for corporate and community organisations. A former Senior Officer and Instructor with the Singapore Civil Defence Force (SCDF), he was the first person from Asia to earn the CEM certification.

His proudest accomplishment is that he is a self-taught musical flute player, who cannot read a single musical note.