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Q+A

## Social Butterfly

Need an audience?  
Using Twitter and LinkedIn,  
Wendi Moore-Buysse  
will build one for  
your business.

>> INTERVIEWED BY  
AMANDA FRETHEIM GATES

■ Working from a coffee shop  
(or her dining room table)  
Wendi Moore-Buysse uses  
social media to help small  
businesses deliver their  
message.

**Once a professional speaker, Wendi Moore-Buyasse quit the business when she found out she had epilepsy.**

She moved to the other side of it and started booking speakers instead. When the economy took its hit a couple years ago, Moore-Buyasse's business went under. As she was deciding what to do next, she started playing with social media. She started a Twitter account [@WendiMooreAgency], started having conversations with people and within three months on Twitter, she had 7,500 followers. For those unfamiliar with Twitter, this is a pretty rare feat. People started approaching her asking if she could get them that many followers in such a short amount of time. Her hobby turned into a business called Build Your Audience, and now speakers, coaches, authors, event planners and small businesses use Moore-Buyasse to start Twitter accounts for them and create their desired following.

**Q. Give me an example of what you do for a small business if they come to you looking for social media help.**

**A.** Typically, they come to me because they know they need social media, but they don't have the time or they don't have the knowledge. I'll set up their accounts. I work with Twitter and LinkedIn. I'll set up their account and I'll go out and find their target market and set it up as a list. [On Twitter, users can create lists as a way to organize who they follow.] I'll start conversations with people or with leaders in their target market. Then as soon as people within those lists want to talk to my client, I'll send them the client's e-mail address and pass them over to the client. I'm constantly having several conversations with people at the same time and just continue sending them over to my client. It's really marketing, it's not sales. It's really building relationships and building an audience at the same time.

**So, at one time, you could be manning several different Twitter accounts, and we wouldn't know it's not someone from the company?**

Yes. If it's a company, it could be anyone within the company. In the bio, it might just say it's the marketing department for this person or this company.

**Do you eventually pass the responsibility back to the client?**

Yes. With some companies that's just the way it is. They say, we want you to set it up for us,

we want you to get it going and then we want you to train us in on it. It could be a six-month project. With LinkedIn, a lot of companies just want me to build a group for them.

**The hardest part about starting a Twitter account is figuring out whom to follow. Is that where your expertise comes in?**

Pretty much. It's figuring out who you need to be talking to and how you're going to do that—what programs they need to use and what tools they need to use. HootSuite is one of the big programs to use. I'll train them in on programs like that.

*"Social media has created a whole new way for speakers to get out there. They don't have to chase meeting planners as much anymore. Now they're being watched on social media by meeting planners or marketing people."*

**So, just two years ago when you were still booking speakers, you told us that to gain business speakers needed packets and they needed DVDs showing how well they can speak. Has that business changed?**

Big time. I still have a lot of speakers who come to me and they want to get hired by meeting planners to speak. But here's what I'm seeing: speakers' businesses now, because of social media, have taken off like crazy, and not just because they're able to speak but because they're able to sell their con-

tent through social media. [Through social media] they're able to build up coaching and consulting services and then once they get a large enough audience, they are picked up by different conferences or different meetings. It's created a whole new way for speakers to get out there. They don't have to chase meeting planners as much anymore. Now they're being watched [on social media] by meeting planners or marketing people.

For example, there's a gentleman who might have been a regular speaker in the past, but who now makes a ton of money off of this new system he has by selling his

information online to target markets. He has different levels of product that he sells, and then he also gets discovered to speak at conferences. That's a new way that speakers are making money.

**What happens if a client is reluctant or just doesn't get what you're trying to do for them?**

Some speakers go by the old-school tactics. [For one client] I told him, this is going to take at least six months for me to be able to build a profile for you, because you have a very



niche market. After two months he wrote a very nasty blog about how social media just doesn't work and we both called it quits. You have to give it some time. There are a lot of people who don't get it and don't want to get it. You got to go with the times or you're going to get left behind.

**Do you see that after they follow your lead and start to build a following that things just start to happen, or do they need to keep working at it? What do you tell them to do from there?**

I work on part of it, but they have to be involved. If they aren't involved in it, then nothing is really going to happen. It takes a lot of work. People do business with people they know and trust. I work on putting out what I call "value," by making the client, say a speaker, the expert. I take information from their blog and from their articles and I send out what I call "value tweets." For example, my company's value tweet is called "Build Your Audience," so for every value tweet that goes out on my account, it's a "Build Your Audience" tip. I do that for my clients and start talking to people within their list. But, my client also has to go out and talk to people as well. There has to be both of us out there otherwise it's going to take twice as long.

**So things may have change a bit. Instead of speakers seeking out meeting planners, perhaps meeting planners are finding speakers via social media. What should meeting planners know?**

It depends. One thing I'm hearing is that because social media is time consuming and complicated to learn, many professionals in the meetings and events industry don't always have the time to give to something like that. But, those who do have time and get on board, do find their speakers through social media like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogs. I'm hearing from a lot of speakers that meeting planners are finding them through their blog or through Twitter. I've had a lot of people find me through Twitter, asking me to speak or for interviews. One hundred percent of my business comes from social media or word of mouth.

**So, how do you think you got so many followers in such a short amount of time?**

I build those relationships. We would follow each other. It used to be that if someone would send out a "Friday Follow" [every Friday people tweet other Twitter accounts that they think people should follow, using the hashtag #FF], then I would follow those

people. And they would follow me back. A year and half ago when I first went on, that's what we were doing, we were following all those people. I was on Twitter a lot.

I also use LinkedIn. I love LinkedIn. I don't use Facebook for business. LinkedIn is more of the CEOs and executives and used more for research. Twitter is more for business owners. Facebook is more friends and family. Everybody has their own opinions on it, but I tell my clients it depends upon where your target market is, as to which one you should be using.

I think that as far as the meeting-planning world goes, social media should be used more often. I think that there are a lot of people within the meeting-planning world who are starting to see that. It makes it so much easier. Everybody's there. TweetChats are the No. 1 way to get your events noticed. I've had the most success with TweetChats. [TweetChats are prearranged conversations, often during a live event, where by using a predefined hashtag, attendees can follow a virtual conversation about that event. TweetChats may also happen at a specific time each week with attendees from all over the world attending virtually through Twitter.]

**How do you measure the success of TweetChats?**

Because I have so many followers, when I do a TweetChat, I get more people asking questions about it and going over to the company's Twitter account. Plus, I've had more of my clients get customers through my Twitter account. I'll do TweetChats under both my Twitter account and their account.

**You're busy!**

I'm on my computer some days from 8 a.m. to 2 a.m. and I love it. ☺

**contact info**

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