

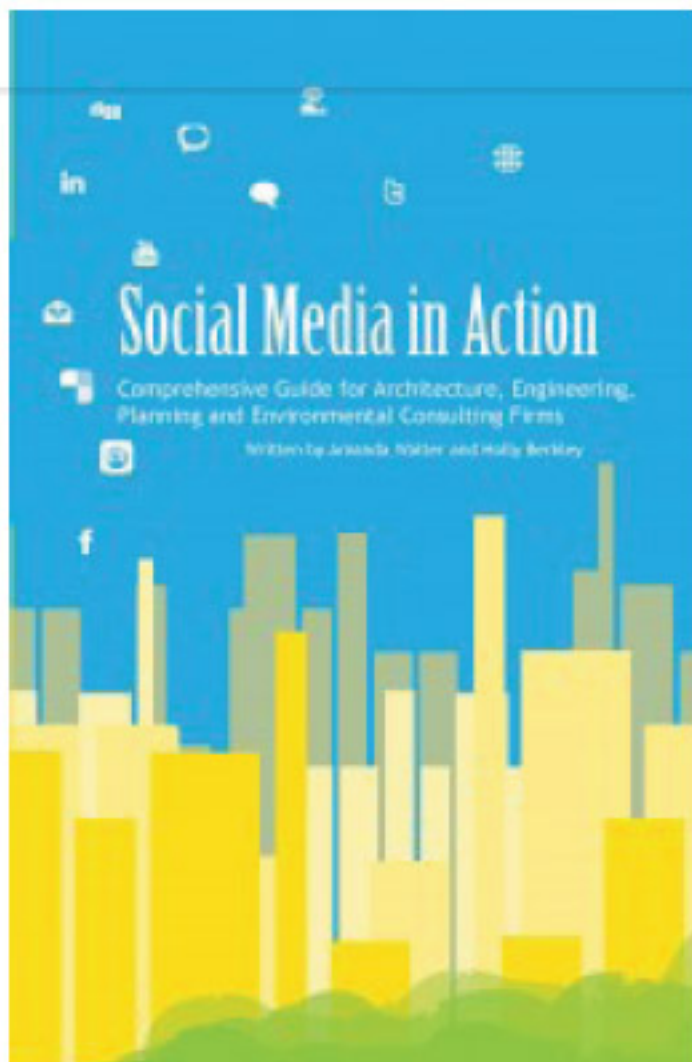
BOOK REVIEW: Social Media in Action: A Comprehensive Guide for Architecture, Engineering, Planning, and Environmental Firms

by Rich Burns



A current mandate for any professional service firm is to distinguish themselves through the quality of their thought leadership. Being an expert is crucial to avoiding commoditization.

With this in mind, I was particularly struck by Chapter 5 of *Social Media in Action: A Comprehensive Guide for Architecture, Engineering, Planning, and Environmental Firms*. While the litany of books on social media is exhaustive (over 250,000 and counting on Amazon) the value of this work is its singular focus on the creative professions.



Social Media in Action offers an easy way to correlate what most lay people think they know about social media with immediately useful insight on what to do and how to do it. It is a succinct but powerful presentation of

information that has absolute relevance to every professional practice. In only eight chapters and a useful glossary, authors **Amanda Walter** and **Holly Berkley** present a straightforward assessment of the core benefits and challenges of social media, coupled with plenty of practical tips and resources.

Most professional firms struggle with the basic premise of why use social media at all, let alone how this communications tsunami can benefit their practice. Personally, I'm constantly seeking examples of the ROI from social media to prove it really helps get work.

The authors offer up a treasure trove of ROI proof in their numerous case studies, each a compelling presentation of the challenges, objective, strategy, implementation, lessons learned and results from social media programs conducted by prominent professional firms. Especially useful are the resources provided for each case study – links to where one can learn much more about the programs.

The chapter titles tell you all you need to know about the wealth of guidance that one will find in this book.

Chapter 1. Focus on End Results – Getting started, management buy-in and making social media a part of a firm's strategic communications program.

Chapter 2. Finding Your Target Audience – Building your following, the importance of quality messaging, social media etiquette and options.

Chapter 3. Amplifying Your Communications Efforts – Attracting attention, tricks and strategies for social media, search engine optimization, and more!

Chapter 4. Engaging Your Most Valuable Asset – Making your staff a critical component of your social media program.

Chapter 5. Expert Positioning – Explaining the ways to capitalize on your knowledge base to position people and firms as thought leaders, along with a useful index of content ideas and tips for on-line behavior (this was my favorite chapter).

Chapter 6. Building and Nurturing Communities – Creating your own following of like-minded individuals to realize your program objectives.

Chapter 7. Evaluation Strategies – Social media measurement tools and methodologies for monitoring how well your program is working.

Chapter 8. The Future of Social Media – The book concludes by exploring the evolving role of social media for professional service firms. As useful as knowing the future might be, truth be known, *Social Media in Action* is more valuable in helping with the catching up most professionals need to do before we embark on the future of this dynamic revolution in communications. ●

Social Media in Action: A Comprehensive Guide for Architecture, Engineering, Planning, and Environmental Firms.

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