

Economic Development 101

Everything I Really Need to Know about Social Media I Learned in Kindergarten

In our work with communities social media is always a point of discussion. Most communities believe social media is going to be complicated, confusing and take far too much time. This belief can keep communities from engaging in social media.

When we were young we were taught how to behave and socialize with other kids. In fact, many of our lessons came when we entered kindergarten. With apologies, and a little “borrowing” from Robert Fulghum, most of what you learned in kindergarten is what you need to do for social media.

Share – social media is all about sharing. Share your community, your knowledge, your expertise, give the reason why investment, business and people should be there. For your businesses get them to share information about their products and services, share the reasons why they are the company to do business with.

Play fair and don't hit people – in other words don't talk badly about others. Social media gives you the opportunity to play up your strengths and to tell your story. It's not about posting unkind remarks about competitors.

Say you're sorry when you hurt somebody – if, for some reason, you didn't play fair, take responsibility and make it right.

Live a balanced life – social media should not be a 24/7 operation. Find out what works for you, what resources you have and balance out the rest.

Learn some and think some – social media presents the opportunity to learn from others like no other media. Interact, get involved and open up discussions. Find out what people are saying about you, your community and your businesses.

Draw and paint and sing and dance – social media offers many methods – try a couple or a lot. How can your community benefit from Twitter and YouTube? Combine LinkedIn, Facebook and Ning. Post photos on Flickr and start a blog.

Be aware of wonder – social media is still in its infancy and most of us have no idea what the future holds. That's exciting and offers a world of wonder still to explore.

Finally, as Robert Fulghum says, “warm cookies and cold milk are good for you”.

