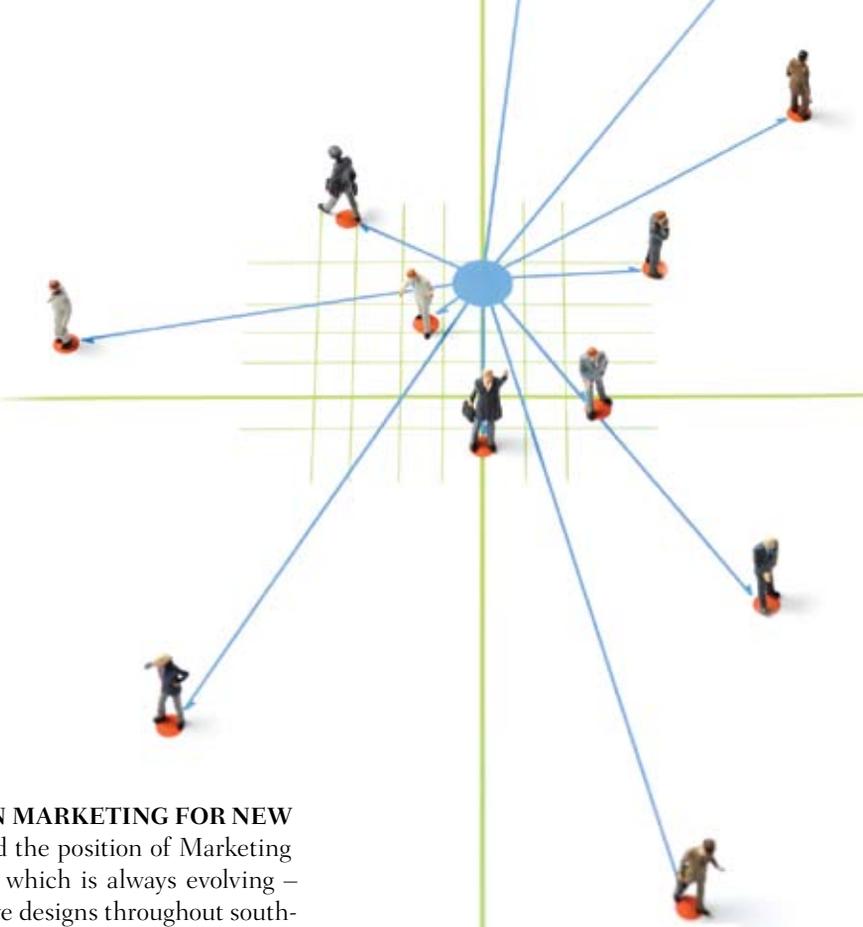


Embracing social media



I HAVE SPENT MOST OF MY CAREER IN MARKETING FOR NEW home builders and developers. Today, I hold the position of Marketing Director for Geranium Homes, a company which is always evolving – introducing new communities and innovative designs throughout southern Ontario. To be successful, firms must constantly evaluate their methods of communication to better serve their customers, and with traditional media avenues that has largely been a one-way opportunity. However, the new challenges presented to us by the advent of social media are vast. In recent years, we have had to learn how to most effectively utilize social media to not only generate results, as one would expect from any undertaking for which there is a budgetary allocation, but to also engage with our customers in a way that resonates for them.

In order to manage this process, Geranium has been working with Social Media expert, Linda Warren (website warrenpiece.ca and e-mail warrencamus@cogeco.ca). Warren is an experienced writer and educator, as well as social media strategist for BIG Advertising Agency, our ad agency for the past five years. She has kindly offered to share some of her knowledge about how to best embrace the social media world.

Warren instructs new clients to first understand that they are embarking on building relationships through two-way conversations. She stresses the importance of investing in research and planning. “It is imperative that your social media consultant understands your brand, the target demographic, and the influencers among this group, before they can recommend platforms to you,” she says.

Warren offers clients these tips when using social media:

01 Be transparent. Social media thrives on honesty. Be ready for feedback of all kinds and follow through on your commitment to your customers.

02 Be immediate. The social media world is impatient and expects an immediate response 24/7. Waiting too long makes you yesterday’s news.

03 Listen. Take the time to listen to what people are saying, and understand before you engage in communicating with them.

04 Go for quality communication rather than simply quantity. Find out where your clients are (research) and that’s where you need to be. Don’t spread yourself too thin.

05 Be patient. Success in social media takes time, so have reasonable expectations. Remember it is about engagement. And, have fun!

For individuals, the opportunity now exists to immediately learn more about the company you are planning to do business with. If, as in the case of a new home, you are making a large purchase, any additional information gleaned will help you to make a more informed decision.

That’s why it is important for businesses to remember that social media is two-way communication so stay fresh and find things of interest and importance to your followers. It doesn’t always have to be about your brand. Ask yourself, Why would people follow my page? What’s in it for them?

This is part of a series of articles on topics of interest to new-home buyers, authored by Sue Webb Smith, marketing director for Geranium Homes.