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[How to Damage Your Brand and Kill Your Business without Trying](#)

Posted by: [Dr. K](#) in [Social Media Strategy](#) , [Social Media](#) , [Connection](#) , [Branding](#) on May 26, 2009



Auto-DMs. They're driving people on Twitter over the edge. I've had so many people ask me why would any rational human being, when after first meeting someone on Twitter, spam them with auto-responses when they would never act that way in person. And although I've tackled that question in my [Unleashed](#) blog ([Spamming the Twitterverse](#)), I'll offer a brief summary here because it's important to the gist of that blog.

Communicating via computer - even when it's social media - removes our physical presence. For many people, the absence of an in-person connection relaxes or removes our usual social strictures. When you mix in the current economy, bad business advice, and the hype from media and sales programs (Overnight Millionaire - Make Money While You Sleep!), the boundaries are removed even more, especially for people who are feeling financially desperate. And when you add tactics that promise huge numbers of followers quickly and with no effort by using auto-responders and number generators to social media, along with the belief that there's an opportunity to make money with them, perfectly nice people turn into perfectly not-so-nice jerks.

While the question of "Why are people behaving like this?" was interesting enough to me, the psychotherapist side of my brain piped up with what I thought was an equally, if not more, compelling question: Why are we not just getting annoyed, but becoming over-the-edge upset about it? Is the passion and the anger of the "spammies" out of proportion? After all, aren't our mail boxes filled with junk mail? Aren't our dinners interrupted by telemarketers? Isn't this the same thing?

In a word: no.

You've heard me talk about how important "connection" is. And nothing highlights the importance of connecting and the affects it has on your branding and business more than this issue.

As much as we like or don't like what comes into our mailbox, we don't have a connection to the mailbox. Even though the phone is inside our house and may interrupt our dinner, we don't have and aren't trying to make a connection with the telemarketer. But social media is based on connection. And if you want to know how important that connection is, just try insulting it, abusing it, offending it, or ignoring it altogether.

And that's what's going on. That's what auto-DMs do. And that's what's causing the angry frenzy.

These auto-DMs are being seen as in-your-face, rude, and at the same time rendering you invisible.

Many of us have heard the "twitter being compared to a cocktail party" analogy. But add auto-DMs and you add another layer to the story. Here goes:

Imagine being at a cocktail party and someone walks up to you, stretches out their hand and says, "I've been trying to meet you. It's so nice to have the pleasure of finally doing so." You smile back and say, "It's nice to meet you, too." And without warning, the other person quickly walks away and is immediately replaced by his robot that shoves a sales flyer in your face.

No one would accept that behavior. But that's exactly what you're doing if you're using auto-DMs inappropriately.

You can take pains at building your branding and taking it into every aspect of business including your social media pages. But that one auto-DM you send, is going to snap that point of connection and unravel all of your efforts. Your brand is going to be damaged.

And the potential clients you were looking for? I'm listening to the outpouring: We don't like. Please stop it. And if that's the way you do business, please go away.

Points of connection have to be nurtured in order to grow. Don't kill them when they're seedlings.

Learn more about my Power Connecting with Social Media Workshop beginning June 25th!

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