

## To Tweet or Not To Tweet? (That is not the question...)

Social media continues to nag at folks that market in the built environment. We have heard tons about the “big three”: Linked In, Facebook and Twitter. Many get an anxious feeling each time they are asked to “connect” or “like” or “follow” someone because they are not sure exactly what to think about social media or what to do about it. Plus, it’s “free,” right, so how can we pass “free” by?

Social media is a valid marketing tool that should be considered as part of all available tools in your marketing strategy. But it is NOT free; you will need to invest time into making these effective if you decide to integrate them into your communications plan.

“Should I invest in social media?” is not the first question you should be asking, though. Your thought process should be more along the following lines:

- How am I trying to grow my firm?
- What strategies am I implementing to achieve this growth?
- What clients or prospects am I trying to communicate with?
- What communication tools do *they* use?

By answering these questions, you can decide if and how social media tools fit into your overall marketing strategy.

I heard the “big three” once described this way, “Linked In is like a business meeting, Facebook is the cocktail party, and Twitter is the water cooler conversation.” In my mind, Linked In is no longer an option in business to business environments. Even if you use it passively, and only connect to people you know, it is a powerful virtual rolodex to help you stay connected to folks who are important to you. It also is a great tool to use to get warm referrals. Your marketing department should be involved in creating an official firm profile that reflects your key messaging, and be editing your employees’ personal profiles to maintain consistency and quality. Google searches pay a lot of attention to Linked In Profiles – if this is your first impression, make it a good one!