

“SOCIAL MEDIA ISN'T A FAD THAT WILL FADE AWAY ANY TIME SOON. IT IS FAST BECOMING AN INTEGRAL WAY TO CONNECT FROM AN INTERGENERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE, ESPECIALLY AS EMPLOYERS PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE.”



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# THE PERFORMERS

✕ CANADA'S INFLUENTIAL THOUGHT LEADERS ✕

## ***How can benefits professionals leverage social media?***

Social media isn't a fad that will fade away any time soon. It is fast becoming an integral way to connect from an intergenerational perspective, especially as employers prepare for the future. Think about the fact that, by 2020, almost 40 percent of the workforce will be considered part of the digital generation also known as Generation Y. Social media is an inexpensive way to answer frequently asked questions and increase plan member engagement for benefits, pension and wellness initiatives. It can also be used as an important component of a benefits communication strategy to increase re-enrollment and encourage plan members to become smart healthcare consumers.

## ***What critical success factors have been in place to help you get where you are today?***

They involve my belief in mentorship, community, authenticity and feedback. Having a mentor at various key stages of my career has helped me navigate the uncertain terrain that comes with new roles or challenging projects. Today, being a mentor and offering encouragement and perspective is a way I show gratitude for those who have helped me ensure my ladder is placed up against the right wall.

Building community and fostering relationships have also been inspirational and have opened doors that I never imagined would be available to me. Success is not achieved in isolation; there are many people who graciously offer their support and insights, and I'm deeply grateful to all of them. Success comes from authentic experiences: being real for people and providing relevant and transparent exchanges builds trust,

community and engagement. Finally, my practice of regularly and actively seeking feedback from trusted contacts has served me well, even when I've fretted over the potential response. Feedback acts like a mirror to help me see myself through another's perspective. It's liquid gold!

## ***What trends do you see evolving in the marketplace and how are you staying on top of them?***

I've placed an increased focus on planning for a digital-friendly workforce, where video and social media tell stories that engage and connect people. With six billion people using mobile technology and one billion using smartphones, there is a compelling need for mobile-friendly websites and marketing plans that resonate with mobile users. The Internet creates a global community, so harnessing its influence remains a strong part of my approach.

## ***What are some tips for benefits professionals who want to use social networking but don't know where to start?***

Tweets, blogs and websites work best when they're interconnected and part of an overall brand or communication plan. A tweet has double the impact when it links to a blog that provides key information about a frequently asked benefits question. When a blog is part of a website that holds valuable benefits resources, the overall ability to influence and educate followers is multiplied exponentially. By using social networking sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and blogs, you can gain traction, followers and circles of influence. For maximum effectiveness, the information you provide should be relevant, timely and updated regularly.

## TO THE POINT.



### **WHO'S YOUR MENTOR?**

*For marketing, Guy Kawasaki, former Apple Inc. evangelist.  
For professional development, my friend and mentor Michael Wilson, CEO of the International Foundation of Employee Benefit Plans.*



### **WHAT ARE YOU READING?**

*The 4-Hour Workweek by Timothy Ferriss and an autographed copy of Makers: The New Industrial Revolution by Chris Anderson.*



### **WHAT'S PLAYING IN YOUR CAR OR ON YOUR IPOD?**

*From M83 to Mozart, music makes my soul smile.*



### **WHAT TRAIT DO YOU VALUE MOST IN A COLLEAGUE?**

*I value the trait of authenticity above all. Excellence and innovation can be fostered when colleagues operate from a place of authenticity.*