



# Technology

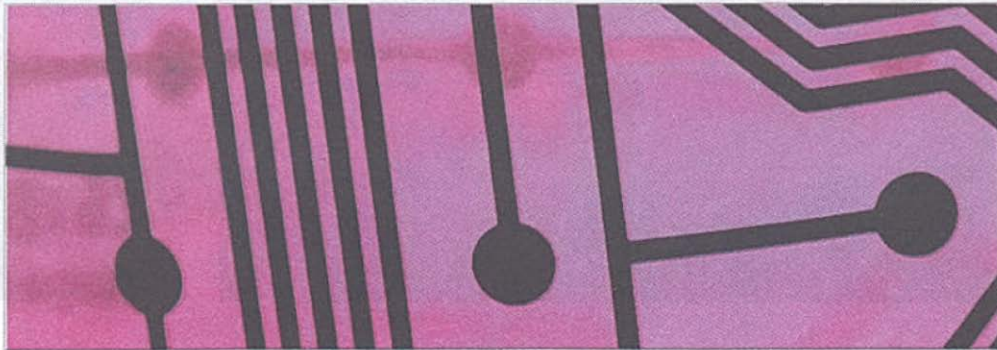
by Tobi Fairley

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***Social Media. What is it? Where did it come from? And what does it have to do with me?***

Well I asked myself all these questions just a few months ago. And now... Social Media is part of my identity. I am no longer just a mom or an interior designer. I am now a mom, interior designer and blogger. I no longer just design award-winning interiors, I give talks on "Branding Yourself Using New Media" and "How Social Media Can Change Your Business". Not too long ago, I didn't consider myself very "Tech-savvy", now I am teaching people 15 years younger than me how to use Twitter effectively. A year ago I thought I was too old for Facebook, now I have 1200 Facebook friends and I am even speaking about how you just can't afford NOT to be on it!

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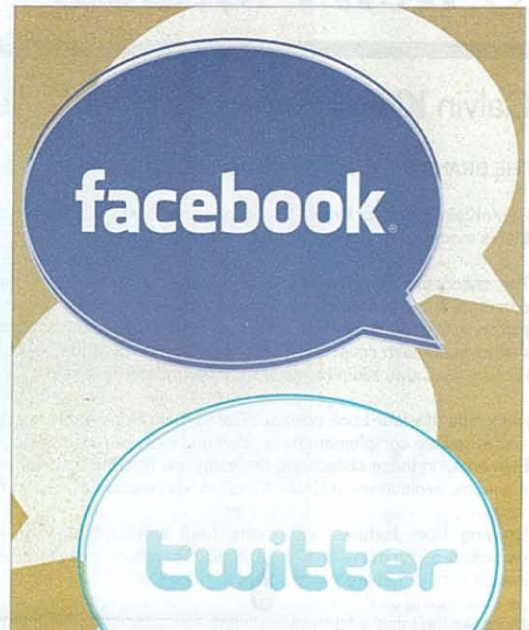
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Why the change? Well it started with a whim to write a blog. Sure, just something I would do in my spare time. I like to write, yes? And I can include some pretty photos that might inspire someone, of course! And it would be fun to have a creative outlet where I was my own client and it didn't really matter what others thought of my musings. Right? Yeah Right!

Well that little side project of mine, it quickly developed a life of its own! And my "it doesn't matter what other people think attitude" suddenly changed when I found out senior editors of major national design magazines were interested in what I was saying and the parties I was throwing and the spaces I was designing!

Next, I realized that not only could I keep in touch with those magazines, other designers, design bloggers and industry professionals through the blog...now I could be their friend on Facebook. Did you hear me? I said "Their friend". Now I don't know about you but friendship to me is a two way street! Friendship means that they can ask favors of me and I can ask the same of them! Like, "Hey Mrs. Magazine Editor...have you checked out my design portfolio lately and wouldn't you love to publish all my work?"

Then I found other designers that were blogging and on Facebook. Many of them from across the country are now my "friends" on Facebook and in real life! And not only are we friends, we share ideas and inspirations and when I am in their towns, even a bottle of wine!



Then came Twitter! I thought what the heck is Twitter? How do I tweet, or twit or whatever you do on it? And why on Earth would I want to limit myself to just 140 characters. I mean I am the girl who has perfected being able to go long periods of time without even taking a breath and I am supposed to put my most important thoughts down in just 140 characters or less. Are you kidding me?

Well I may be a lot of things but a procrastinator I am not, so I gave it a whirl. And within one month, I had built more designer friendships and a business relationship that has led to my co-creation of a wallpaper collection. I started having these fun and inspirational conversations with people from all over the world 140 characters at a time! I never knew being a woman of so few words could be so powerful!

So here I am a year later! Here I am in all my social media glory! And what do I have to show for it?

I have a business that is thriving in this economy, a celebrity brand that is growing like wild fire, armloads of new friends around the world including designers, celebrities, industry professionals and just your average Joes. I have a wall décor, a wallpaper collection and a rug collection in the works. Oh and there are the speaking engagements booked for the next 6-9 months and 5000 plus regular readers of my blog each week, many of whom visit my design portfolio while they are there! I have friends, real friends, on Twitter that I can't wait to wake up and "tweet" with every single day! I have so many more benefits, I can't even name them all!

And the amazing part of this whole story...all of these successes, every single one of them, I link back to my little "hobby", my blog! That "hobby" changed my life and my business forever and the change is definitely for the better! It changed the way I look at everything...business, the world, life! I see the details in a whole new way on every trip and at every meal and in every experience! Social Media has added value for me in ways too numerous to count and it has added fulfillment because I know I have added value to a countless number of people's lives!

So to answer my own question in a nutshell, Why Social Media? Well all I can say is Why Not? Give it a try, I promise you won't be disappointed!

