

BRONWYN MAULDIN: My PowerPoint that I've got up there is—it's actually online, on Google Docs if any of you have ever used Google Docs. It's a fabulous resource for you and potentially for your organization. I gave it a bit.ly address so you can go to [http, you know, whatever, bit.ly/ctaa2010](http://bit.ly/ctaa2010). That's the address for this. I'll also embed it in my blog so you're—and the good folks here will have a copy of it. So it's all available any way you want to get it because that's what this crazy social media world is all about, as I'm going to talk about.

This is an interesting panel. I mean, we kind of—all of us on this panel have a different take and a different history with technology, which is kind of reflective of what's going on out there in technology. What's right for you? How much is right? Well, you'd probably get a different answer from each of us and what's right for you is what's right for you, is what meets your needs. Technology is only a tool. Don't get, you know, excited by the flashy, you know, gizmos and gadgets and what not. Figure out what you need and then try out these technology tools and see which ones work for you.

My background is in workforce development and I know workforce development. I know social media. I did take the Blue Line here from almost Union Station downtown L.A., so I happen to be a huge fan of public transit and transportation and community transportation.

But I wanted to start my talk by talking a little bit about three workforce trends that are going on out there in the world that you're probably very well aware of, but they have some interesting parallels with what's going on in social media right now. And the first one is about the way that the work world has become dispersed and fragmented. I know someone earlier this morning talked a little bit about that, that the workplace is even becoming work dispersed and fragmented. More people are working part-time jobs. They're working multiple part-time jobs. They're working strange hours. The contingent workforce is growing by leaps and bounds. You know, folks who are working contract jobs or temporary jobs, consulting, running their own businesses, working from home, working out in the field. All of that—and figuring out, for those of you who are working in transportation and mobility, figuring out how to get people from the places they are coming from to the places they need to go is just becoming incredibly complicated. You know that better than I do.

Second trend that's going on in the workforce world is, of course, the aging of the workforce. That's something I think we are all very aware of, aging. And also the increasing diversity of the workforce, so that the transportation needs are becoming much more complex. You know, the ability of folks to get on and off buses and off of vans and other vehicles may be different from what it was 20 years ago. So that aging workforce really matters and it's something I'm guessing that you have all been responding to as well.

Another trend that we are sadly far too aware of, and I bet even in your own agencies you've seen this, is the rise in unemployment. And the numbers of people who don't just need transportation to work, but they need transportation to job interviews and to job fairs and to the networking events where they're going to meet the people who might give them a job. Those numbers, I don't care how much anybody tells me the recession is over, it sure doesn't feel like it's over. And it's certainly not over for my friends and colleagues who are still struggling and looking for work. And all of that has a very real impact on, you know, how transit's being used. I know that there was some statistics earlier today about how the use of public transit has gone up as the—in response to some of the economic downturn.

This—these three trends have some really interesting parallels in social media. First up, we've got the dispersal and fragmentation of information. Where people get their information is all over the

map now. You know, back in the day, you got your news from the newspaper, television news, maybe the radio. Now people are getting their news from—well, there's some folks who still watch the ABC evening news, but others are watching CNN, others are watching Fox News. There's other people watching MSNBC. We've got folks who are getting their news from online sources. Some are following their Twitter feed. Some are getting it on Facebook. So, you know, it's just—it's all over the map. And the challenge is how do you communicate to this person who's on Facebook and this person who's on Twitter and that person at the back of the room who's, you know, still watching ABC news, or Jon Stewart maybe to get their news? So that dispersal and fragmentation that's happening in the work world, it's also happening in social media.

We also have, I won't use the word aging, but I will say kind of a maturation of social media. A lot of these tools that, back when they started, were kind of fun, they were things for like kids to get together and hang out. I mean, I remember when I first got on Facebook. It was because, you know, some old friends from high school finally tracked me down and convinced me to get on there. But it was all about connecting. It was personal. It was having fun. Today, Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, these are all legitimate, professional tools that people are using to communicate with each other for professional purposes, both externally and internally within their own companies. You know, Wikipedia, you know, what a crazy idea that a website that anybody could change would be considered a legitimate source of information. And guess what? It is. And that's that kind of maturation of social media that we're seeing.

The final thing that I want to talk about is kind of—I don't have a nice parallel for unemployment, but it does seem that in—since the economic downturn that we do see people who are looking, trying to find ways to make their lives a little bit easier. And a lot of them are looking online to do that. Where can I get the exact information I need right now? What's going to make my life easier? Can I get it on my phone? Do I really have to go back to my computer and fire it up to get that same information? People are looking to connect with friends. You know, I know that there are folks in the room here tweeting, as I have been all day. So people are looking to get information faster, share information, connect with friends and colleagues, to be able to connect with the workplace even when we're at a conference. All those sorts of things are happening every day.

Mobility, that's what you guys are all about. You have figured out ways, and you're constantly figuring out ways, to do a better job of getting people from one place to another. Well, the reality is that information has become mobile too. And that's kind of I think the challenge in figuring out how to use social media to make the information that you've got and that you need to get to people as mobile as you've helped to make people be mobile.

You've got to get information from people who are coming from a—if they are—some are on their computer. Some are using the phone still. You know, don't discount the value of the phone and e-mail and paper communications because there are some folks who are still out there using those. Some people are on Facebook. Some people are on Twitter. It's that mobility of information. You're good at mobility for people. I bet you're going to be just as good at mobility for information. And that's kind of the name of the game here.

I did a quick list as I was kind of thinking about this and getting ready for today, thinking about what kinds of information would I think that folks who are working in transportation might need to either get—give or get from the public. And I kind of came up with a list of six things. You might be able to think up more.

One is evergreen content. That's the stuff—the information you have you need to get to the public. It doesn't change very much or very often. You know, it's routes and schedules and call this number to get a ride and all of those sorts of things, you know, that stuff that kind of stays the same, doesn't change too often.

There's also time sensitive information that you need to share. You know, detours, delays, you know, some of the ridesharing stuff that we've been seeing. That's like as instantaneous or as fast as you can get it out there or get people access to it as you can. There's that kind of information.

I'm guessing that, as painful as it can be, you do want to get feedback from your passengers and from your riders. And there are many, many, many more ways to get that nowadays. And in fact, if you're not on social media talking about yourself, trust me, your passengers are. You might want to know what they're saying about you.

There's also the communication that takes place internally among your staff. You know, all of the stuff that it takes to get your work done. There are all sorts of fantastic tools. You know, you may have an—need an internal blog for your company so that you all can talk to each other. Or you may use a wiki internally. Google Docs, I'm working with a company right now and they use Google Docs a lot to share documents across—even within the same building, but certainly across multiple places.

There's also how tos and guides, a little more detailed information of like, you know, how to ride the bus, how to use the bike rack on the bus, how to—and more and more you've got opportunities with social media to make that information not just available in text, but also to make it available via video. I tell you, people will watch a 30 minute video when they won't read a paragraph of text. Use that. And it's easy to produce that sort of stuff.

And then, finally, I mentioned earlier if you're—that there are folks out there, they're talking about you and your services that you provide. So there's content out there that you might want to grab and use. And I'll show you an example in a minute of somebody who I think is doing really well. And this is kind of a whole new phenomenon of archiving and curating. You think of the museum word, curating content, and basically pulling what other people are saying and using that as part of your communication tools as well.

Did I see there's a whole bunch of Facebook pages in the room for various agencies? I know—can I see hands again? Facebook? Yeah. Facebook, if you're not, okay. I'm mad as heck at Facebook right now about the whole privacy thing. Seriously. If you're not, Google it. But nonetheless, Facebook is a great—if you want to go and put your information where a lot of people are hanging out, put it on Facebook.

I'll click through just in case anyone in the room has not seen—I mean, you can create a public page. It's not connected to your personal Facebook account. You can invite people to comment or you can choose not to. People can like you on Facebook and that always feels wonderful, especially for a public agency to know that anybody likes them.

So Facebook is kind of an easy tool. It's free and a great way to connect with people where they are. And I just have a couple of examples here that you could click through.

Twitter. Anybody here using Twitter for—to share information with passengers? Twitter's great. If you've not used Twitter before, I highly recommend that you give it a try because I didn't get it in the abstract when people kept telling me how great it was until I actually used it. And more and more public agencies are using it to simply share information. And you can share it in real time and look, hey, the

Bronx-bound six is finally resuming its station stops. Wouldn't you be—if you were standing there on the --waiting for the bus, if you could see that information on your phone, wouldn't that make you happy to know, oh, the reason I've been standing here for 15 minutes waiting for the bus or the train is because it's delayed? Thank you for letting me know. I can at least make some plans and I—that kind of communication is incredibly valuable. So there are lots of folks who are using Twitter.

Then there are the folks who are—this is the unofficial Twitter feed for folks who follow the Chicago Transit Authority. As I said, you might not be twittering to people, but people are twittering about you and complaining about, you know, whatever didn't go wrong, or maybe they're saying nice things about you behind your back. Wouldn't you like to know that?

And this is what I wanted to show you about curating. This is Metro, the local transit agency here in Los Angeles. This is their blog, "The Source." And they do something that they call Twitter Tuesday. They go and look themselves up on Twitter and find out what people are saying about them and they post that information on the blog with links back to the Twitter feeds of the people who are talking about them. Now, how I learned about this was that a colleague of mine, her tweet got picked up and she was complaining about them. And let me tell you how thrilled she was that they posted her complaint and, you know, she's like, "Oh, hurray for Metro!" Like, so it's kind of weird. It's like she was complaining, but she appreciated the fact that Metro's paying attention and that they were willing to openly admit that there was—they weren't trying to hide this information.

If you scroll down, you'll take a look and see that they start off with some happy things. People were happy about some things that Metro did, so, you know, you can always put that. They've got—that's a photo somebody took from their camera, posted on Twitter, and they've pulled that in to show that. Then we've got the complaints. You know, some criticisms. You know, in order for this feed to be useful, you need real time updates like today's temporary shutdown of the Gold Line with alternatives. So, you know, this actually helpful information, too, if you're thinking—if you want to find out what do passengers want, find out what they're tweeting about.

So—and they've also got—they're answering some of the questions and responding to some of the complaints. And this my favorite part of this little post. This is actually a photo of county sheriffs drinking coffee on the train and someone points out that, yeah, for the rest of us, that would be a \$250 fine. [audience laughing]. And look, Metro's willing to post that. I think that's, you know, a smart way of using the information that's available, curating that. It shows the world that you are a human center, that you understand that mobility and the services that you provide are about people. And these are the people that it's about, so.

Also, FYI, at least one of the authors on this blog is actually a former LA Times reporter. There's a lot of those folks available these days to come work for you. It's sad to say, but you might look around at folks from your local newspapers and see if you got any staff that might be available to you.

The other thing I wanted to show you was on YouTube. Like I said, people will watch a video where they won't read text. You can put a lot of information and pack it into a very small package. It's very short, YouTube. It's free to upload videos. They don't have to be very long. They don't have to be all that slick, either.

This is a professionally produced video on how to load your bike on the bus rack. And I mean, it's pretty straightforward. There's a couple of cuts in here where they cut back and forth. You can see that's probably maybe professionally done. But I mean, you could basically shoot this video with a little

Flip video camera. You wouldn't need much more than that to provide this basic information of how to load your bike on the bus.

And while that runs, I'm going to show you . . . "It's that easy." In fact, it's that easy to produce your own video of how to load a bike on a bus. That other one that was, you know, produced by the transit authority, this is just some guy on the side of the road who put his camera down on the street, you can see, and he's going to show us in just a moment how to load your bike on the bus rack. And it's basically the same information. And this is just kind of a homegrown thing. Just think if you were to find that information that someone else had posted about your transit authority. You can take that video that somebody else did and put it on your own website. They've put it there and made it available for you to use.

So—which is—what I'm trying to get at is that this stuff, it's out there, it's easy to use, it's very low cost. Why not? A couple of principles that I think are important to understand, you know, these technology tools, they are that. They're just tools. Whatever is going to work for you is the thing that is going to help you get your job done. So you start with figuring out what is it I need to do? You can look at these social media principles to help you figure out whether these social—types of social media tools are the right ones for you to use. If you were looking to dialog, you know, to get information back and forth with your writers and users and customers and clients, social media is great for that. If you want to use more multimedia content, social media tools are going to help you to do that. You can get PowerPoints out there and podcasts and video and all of that stuff and get that embedded in your website for fairly low—fairly easily and a low cost. The ease of use and the low cost of getting it means you don't have any excuses for not trying this stuff out if you haven't already. It means—the great thing about those things is you don't have to hire high end techies to figure out how to make it work and you can focus on the content, which is what you do know, and you don't have to focus so much time and energy on the technology. So that—it really allows you to use these tools as the experts in the content matter that you are.

The communication in social media is kind of this weird hybrid that I think we're more and more getting used to. You know when we finally learned how to write e-mails that didn't begin with, "Dear Sir or Madam," and realized that we could do it in a conversational style. Communication on social media, it's very interpersonal in its style, but it takes place in the public, so it's kind of a weird place and sometimes it can be a little uncomfortable to figure out what the right balance is. And with time I think you can get used to that and get comfortable with it and use it to your best advantage.

And it's also you're kind of in this hybrid place. If you think about the information and the—your website as being . . . it's sort of like a library in that you're giving people really useful information, but it's also sort of like the mall, where people are going to hang out and have a little bit of fun, connect with other people. You know, maybe go get a ride, you know, do the ridesharing thing. But it's kind of a hybrid in between those two.

The final thing I want to talk about, if you're thinking about mobility and you're thinking about where people are, people are standing on the street corner with a computer in their hands. That's where they want to get the information from you is where they are when they are waiting for the bus, when they are trying to figure out how to get from point A to point B and a lot of them have a computer in their hands. Right now, the latest statistics are that cell phone penetration, about 87% of Americans have cell phones and they're expecting it's going to be close to 100% in the next couple of years. Right

now only 17% of Americans have smart phones, but that's up from 7% 2 years ago. That's huge growth and it's huge growth during the Great Recession. As the economy starts to turn around and costs start to go down for smart phones, there are going to be more and more people standing on the street corner with a computer, trying to get information and figuring out about how they can get to where they need to be. So whatever you can do to make their lives easier, to make that information as mobile as you're making the people, that's I think an important part of where you're going to make that connection in getting more people on using your services and helping them to help you figure out how to serve them better.