



FINANCIAL STANDARD  
**SMILEYS**  
**Q&A**

2013 SOCIAL  
MEDIA INFLUENCE,  
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# Marshall Brentnall

Director, Evalesco Financial Services

Entrant in last year's Smileys talks to *Financial Standard* about how social media has helped his firm to communicate better with his clients and engage new prospects.

## Tell me why you decided to enter the Smileys.

One of the main drivers behind our entering the Smileys last year is the principles behind the awards itself, namely that it's an award that's designed to reward and acknowledge those firms that have embraced innovation, leadership and technology. We are constantly looking for new ways to create efficiencies in our business, increase engagement and to deliver uplifting service to our clients – and that's what the Smileys is all about.

## Has your social media strategy/presence changed over the past year?

There are three aspects that have changed in our business, and they involve our strategy, staff and management.

**Strategy:** This has altered somewhat as we have now identified one niche that we wish to focus on (instead of a broad brush approach) and also intend to promote the growing team of Evalesco advisers in our business, and without doubt digital is one way to do this.

**Staff:** Our team are all quite invested in our Facebook page, all regularly comment and like and propose posts, however we now realise we need to have all team members on board with as many channels as possible. This includes LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest and YouTube and will also require tailored strategy for each adviser

in our team as well as staff member as it can only be more effective if we have 12 people investing in this space. It has been our experience that the best way to get the most out of your staff is to educate, support and most importantly empower them to make decisions and take action – more often than not a positive empowered staff member lurks within each micromanaged team member and they are just waiting to get out!

**Management:** The main alteration of our ongoing strategy in this space is that over the course of the last several months we formally engaged The Social Adviser team to provide us with ongoing assistance with our marketing and digital strategy.

## How has social media impacted your business?

Social and digital media has allowed our firm to better communicate with our clients as well as engage and educate prospects, peers and suppliers about the Evalesco brand and what we stand for. Reputation is everything in the advice market, and we consider that SM is a vital cog in our communications process as it has really allowed us to leverage our brand. One of the benefits of this (and it was not expected or anticipated) is that advisers are now wanting to join us and harness this same energy and process.

This last point is something that I am par-

ticularly proud of, as by growing the number of advisers in the Evalesco family it will allow us to ensure that better quality advice is being provided to more Australians.

## What are your latest discoveries on social media? Any new favourite things?

The greatest discovery is the benefit of investing in your staff, and seeing their enthusiasm and passion for these channels when they can see you are supporting and investing in them. Other discoveries would have to be the awesome advisers mentioned above, and also the range of sites like Fiverr.com where we can use global skills to ensure we deliver even better strategies and outcomes for our practice and clients.

## What do you think the future of social media will look like?

I think you will find we will seek to be known in one of a few niches, and really look to build marketing and communications strategies that empowers our staff and advisers to be all that they can be – it sounds a little cliché but it's the truth. If we can enrich the lives of those in the Evalesco family, then I believe we as principals will benefit through minimal if any staff turnover (as that's the case now) and a steadily growing group of clients that love working with the best in the business. **FS**