

13 Killer Questions to ask a 'Social Media Expert'

There is no doubt that social media can help promote your business. However, almost daily more and more so-called experts are popping up and merrily exploiting those seeking help with these exciting new channels.

Whether by design or ignorance, these so called experts can damage your business and use up your hard earned resources! But how can you know whether the company offering to help you is being honest about its expertise?

Morgan PR is a long established public relations and social media consultancy and recently we have started to find businesses that have blundered on social media courtesy of so-called experts who have given them poor advice through ignorance. We thought it would help to craft these 13 Killer Questions to ask a Social Media Expert? Hopefully it will help you discover you've picked a winner! Of course, it is possible you might uncover a charlatan too!

Why 13 questions? Because it will be unlucky for the fake expert when you ask them!

1. Do they blog? When did they start?

[The Morgan PR blog](#) started way back in 2006 and has been posting normally three or four times a week. Nigel Morgan actually wrote a personal travel blog back in 2001-02, before they were commonly called blogs! A blog is the cornerstone of any decent social media strategy and an expert will not only preach this, they will practice it too! Also check what their blog actually says! Also does it attract the comments which show it is well read and valued?

2. How do they promote themselves through social media?

Does your potential social media expert walk the talk? Where's the proof? The simple truth is that any social media expert will be able to point to a rich tapestry of different social media tools that help them promote themselves – and can give you the links to check them out online yourself. They should all be up to date too.

3. When did they join Twitter?

This is a great question as it sorts the early adopters from those with newfound expertise. Founder of Morgan PR, Nigel Morgan, joined [Twitter](#) in 2007, little more than a year after it emerged in America and long before the boom came in late 2009. Many of those offering advice have only joined recently because they recognised the opportunity to make money from those seeking advice. [You can check when someone joined Twitter on this handy website.](#)

4. How many followers do they have on Twitter?

Real social media experts are abundant and share information and advice through the same social media they use. On Twitter 90% of the content is created by just 10% of the users, which means most people are using it to find information and help with social media especially. So an abundant expert will attract a strong following. At the start of May 2010 [@Nigel Morgan had over 7,000 followers on Twitter](#). Just by visiting someone's Twitter profile you can check how many followers they have, what they have to say and how many times they have been added to Twitter Lists.

5. How many Twitter Lists are they on?

[Twitter Lists](#) can be created by anyone on Twitter and most often are used to identify their favourite followers and best sources of information. The more popular someone is the more times they will be listed. [@Nigel Morgan has been listed almost 200 times](#) and has also created many lists to help others find useful people on Twitter. A talented social media expert would do the same!

6. Should I try to get as many followers as possible on Twitter?

This is a 'that depends' question. Often a large following is useful, but while it works for expert practitioners, social media and otherwise, it might be that your business would benefit from a concentrated local following, or perhaps one that was industry specific. There are many ways to achieve this, but knowing that it is an option should be something a social media expert will tell you!

7. Is it true not many over 50s are using Facebook?

Actually it is false – latest figures show 2.3 million users of [Facebook](#) in the UK are over 50 and this is the fastest growing sector, and one with disposable income! Should you be targeting this demographic then clearly Facebook could help! Clever journalist trick there – if you ask a so-called expert if something is true and they don't know the answer, they're likely to agree to appear intelligent! How best to use Facebook really does depend on your business, but understanding who is using the platform is a good indication of expertise.

8. Should I connect with people I don't really know on LinkedIn? Do you?

No! Never link with strangers on [LinkedIn](#)! It is all about relationships with people you know and trust. We have blogged extensively about Stranger Danger on LinkedIn and how this can impact on your reputation. This approach, which is contrary to the [LIONS on LinkedIn](#) is well known, but not always practiced – so even if your potential expert warns against linking with strangers, do ask if they do. Another great example of walking the social media talk.

9. Can social media help you get found on Google?

A simple 'yes' will not suffice. Do they know how? From the importance of blogging to create that fresh content on your website that search engines adore, through to how your tweets or posts on Facebook can get you found directly through Google. What is the legacy of this? And is it all good news? For example, long forgotten tweets that you might regret can still be found unless deleted.

10. I don't have to worry about customer comments if I'm not on Foursquare?

This is a clever question of two halves! Firstly do they even know what [Foursquare](#) is? It allows customers to tell everyone when there are at your business – and crucially what they think! This is especially important to retail businesses for obvious reasons. They can do this regardless of whether you are on Foursquare or not! So potentially, depending on your business, you need to be there to defend your reputation and encourage positive comments! An expert will know this! [You can read more about Foursquare on our blog if you need to know more.](#)

11. Are there tools that allow you to post the same message across different social media?

Indeed there are and this basic knowledge of tools like [Hootsuite](#) and [Ping.fm](#) should be a given for someone offering social media advice... However, such blanket posting is likely to damage your reputation as different audiences expect different language ([read more on our blog](#)). A true social media expert will help tailor your messages effectively.

12. Can you give me an example of a successful social media campaign you've worked on?

Any reputable social media expert should be able to point you towards successful campaigns and preferably case studies. [Check out Morgan PR's case studies here](#). Also they should be able to name clients they are working with that you can easily check the performance of online. If they cannot give you good evidence of successful campaigns... it probably means they have none.

13. Which social media experts inspire them?

Nice questions to finish with as true abundant experts will merrily chat to you about other practitioners they like and have learned from – and you never stop learning either. Do they know who [Seth Godin](#) is? [David Meerman Scott](#)? [Chris Brogan](#)? [Darren Prowse](#)? [Jeff Jarvis](#)? [Chris Anderson](#)? All abundant expert practitioners and public speakers (incidentally, many social media experts are also public speakers – Nigel Morgan can often be found talking about social media!). Also, do they read [Mashable](#)? It is a great website with lots of information about social media and even if they read it, they might not want you to know about it!

We hope these questions help you find the right social media expert – of course, you can always [ask Morgan PR](#) if you would like help