

I'm not a stalker but...

 By [Lindsay Grubb](#)

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How often do you take a close look at who you're following on your social media platforms?

Do you simply follow everyone who follows you (whether or not they have any value to add) or perhaps you're sitting with the same group of ex-lovers/friends, ex-bosses/colleagues, who you tracked down years ago, when social media became the popular way to "stalk /live vicariously through people from your past.

I tend to undertake a purge every few months, particularly when I get bored with what's happening in my Twitter stream - which usually kick-starts the process across my other chosen social media platforms.

I'm now getting ruthless about whom I follow, taking my time to assess whether you should make the final cut. If you catch my eye, I'll check you out. I'll spend some time running through your tweets and questioning your stats. I might even follow you for a few days to see what you're up to, what your likes and dislikes are, who you're talking to, what makes you tick.

Sounds a little creepy when put that way, but the truth is, when you choose to be social, it opens you up to the voyeur in all of us.

Making the final cut

What you're putting out there gives us a window into your world and helps us form ideas and opinions about you. These might form differently if we were meeting with you in person, but when all we've got to go on is our potential "victims" last 10 tweets or likes or shares, it is this "first impression" that lasts.

So, I'm thinking if you're constantly discussing how much alcohol you've consumed that day, or how to bypass road blocks, or how you hate the world and your life sucks, etc, and in between you're pushing your clients and what you're doing for them, you're probably not the best influencer for me and I'm likely to unfollow you as quickly as I followed you.

Show me that you're an independent thinker - who has a warped, twisted sense of humour, who will take a stand on things that matter and who, in general, knows what you're talking about - then I'm pretty sure you'll make the final cut.

The great purge

The other week I left more than 20 groups on LinkedIn, unfollowed half my Twitter stream (which, frankly, wasn't that big to start with), and didn't touch any of my family and friends on Facebook (I'm just not that brave - yet - but that's not to say my

trigger finger wasn't itching, mind you.)

Why did I do this? Quite simply, because I was bored, bored, bored and to me boredom is a fate worse than death.

The reason I follow a person, a brand or the company who own them is that they have something to offer my brain's voracious appetite.

I'm here to learn

There are a number of people I follow who share really interesting things on a daily basis and it's not just "industry" news. I'm an equal-opportunity news and information junkie, so if it's thought provoking, fascinating, beautiful, humorous or just plain bizarre, I'm a stalker - whoopsie - *follower* for life.

When I follow industry-representing tweeters, I look at whom they're following to see if they can lead me to other great sharers. I want to learn more about my chosen profession and look to those who are in prominent, seemingly important roles with wonderful-sounding job titles for inspiration and guidance. I want to grow and improve my skills and, for starters, I want to leach off your knowledge and expertise.

I'm often surprised at who is being followed. While there are a number of marketing-and advertising-industry social mavens who are walking the talk, satisfying my craving for interesting and useful information, there are many more who are simply phoning it in or worse, professing to be social media experts in some shape or form, but haven't tweeted or shared anything in many months, sometimes years.

Surprising Twitter stats

I'm always surprised to see the Twitter stats - XXX joined in April 2009 - 150 tweets to date - 200 followers - last tweet January 2010. Hmmm, you're not looking good to make the cut now, are you?

What are these stats telling me - you couldn't stick it out? You're not the social media maven you're claiming to be? You might sell the need for social media to your clients but don't rate it enough to use it yourself?

Maybe, in all honesty, you're just too busy doing real work to keep up on social media (this is always my excuse when I fall behind or disappear for a few days, but it's never months.)

On LinkedIn -it's the same people posting across all the groups I *used* to follow and it's mostly the same article and it's mostly BS. I'm not sure if this is a particularly South African group-related issue as we appear to be a little behind on social media uptake, or if it's a world-wide phenomenon - would love your take on this.

Become an industry dealer

Do you think I'm expecting too much or is your online world becoming repetitive and boring like mine? Are you tired of hearing from the same old "expert" voices that have programmed the repeat dial of their old stock to high frequency?

I'm in need of a high-quality fix and I'm sure I'm not alone. I'm looking for insightful, interesting, highly recommended people to stalk and would love to hear who makes your final cut and why.

PS: here's my disclaimer before you shoot me down: I don't profess to be a social media goddess; I'm just curious and looking for new inspiration. I have a small number of engaged followers on Twitter who actually talk back to me on occasion when I ask a question or reply to one of theirs. People laugh at me for my small group of friends on Facebook, but I know them and talk to them in person or on the phone at least once every two weeks and I've even met more than a few of my many contacts on LinkedIn!

ABOUT LINDSAY GRUBB

I am a Johannesburg-based freelance writer and editor with a talent for crafting well-researched, strategically aligned, and professionally written communications and searching out and telling interesting brand stories that create interest in and loyalty to brands. I have worked with local and international clients for the past 20 years.

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