

# **Brand, Branding, and Marketing for the Protection Services Professional**

**How to develop,  
market and manage your  
brand effectively**

**By Lawrence Snow**

## Table of Contents

About the Author.....	2
Chapter One <i>Determine Your Brand</i> .....	3
Chapter Two <i>Develop Your Digital Platform</i> .....	5
Chapter Three <i>Designing Your Website</i> .....	7
Chapter Four <i>Getting Out of Your Comfort Zone</i> .....	9
Chapter Five <i>What Is Social Media</i> .....	11
Chapter Six <i>Social Media: Where to Start?</i> .....	13
Chapter Seven <i>Social Media Marketing</i> .....	17
Chapter Eight <i>Managing It All</i> .....	19
Chapter Nine <i>Final Takeaways</i> .....	21
Final Thoughts .....	22
References.....	23

## About the Author

With a strong background and in-depth expertise, Larry Snow helps protective services companies leverage social media to effectively market their brand, services, and products to the right markets.

His experience includes eight years with a major financial institution as a Web developer and intranet manager, where he was responsible for Web development, programming, website design, brand awareness, and logo development.

In 2008, he founded his own Web design company – SJC Web Design LLC. Over the last five years, the company has designed and developed websites and created and managed social media strategies and campaigns for several protection services companies. Today, he is responsible for two of the most successful companies in the security business.

Larry has conducted seminars at major security conferences, and has spoken at executive protection training programs. He has written many articles covering all aspects of the protection business and social media.

Larry's perspectives on the importance of effective social-media use can be seen, heard, and read on various websites, trade journals, and social media networks.

Larry holds an associate's degree in criminal justice from Northeastern University and graduated, *magna cum laude* with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from John Jay College.

# Chapter One

## *Determine Your Brand*

What comes to mind when I mention Nike, McDonald's, or Google? Each brand is unique and, when you think of them, that unique brand probably elicits some type of feeling, an identity that you can relate to. On some level, you connect with the brand.

So what's your brand – and how can you identify and articulate it? Basically, your brand is your DNA, your core. When it comes to establishing your brand, you should ask an important question: Why do I do what I do? What makes you, you? What are your values and beliefs? What's your personality? What makes you tick?

To help you answer these questions, I recommend sitting in a quiet place for a few hours and reading the poem "The Man in the Glass" by Peter Dale Wimbrow Sr. As the title implies, you might get all the accolades from your peers but unless you are honest with yourself, you will be left with heartache. Figure out what makes you, you.

Now this probably won't be an easy task, but all of these pieces - what makes you tick, your personality, etc. - are absolutely imperative to defining or determining your brand.

Once you have determined your brand, you will have to hone it so that you can effectively communicate it to peers, colleagues, recruiters, managers, customers, clients, visitors, and other stakeholders. The reason is quite simple: No one knows who you are and what you are all about – until you succinctly tell them directly and indirectly.

Craft a simple phrase that tells who you are, what you do, and who you do it for. This phrase or few sentences is sometimes called an "elevator pitch." It means you could literally make your pitch in the time it takes to ride an elevator. Practice your elevator pitch. You have to be ready at moment's notice to effectively and efficiently communicate what you are all about.

For example, my pitch is "I help protection services companies leverage social media to effectively market their products and services on various media platforms."

If you don't define what your brand is, others will define it for you. If you don't establish your brand perceptions, they will be inaccurate. Customers and clients will draw their own conclusions. Think about the impact to your business if you don't control your own brand!



**To-Do:** Start crafting your brand and the one or two sentences that describe who you are, what you do, and who you do it for.

## ***Branding***

Branding is the activity you perform to get your brand into the marketplace. Branding is everything you do to let people know about your brand. It's your promise to the market.

You must be able to communicate the differentiating attributes of your brand. You are just one person among thousands of specialists in the executive protection industry trying to make a name for yourself. If you type in "executive protection," into Google, you will see about 1.2 million references in the Google search results. That probably translates into tens of thousands of companies offering executive protection in some fashion, whether it's training or service. How will you stand out?

## Chapter Two

### *Develop Your Digital Platform*

As you develop your personal brand, you also need to start developing your *digital platform*-your website. A website is shaped by – and, in some ways, is an extension of – your personal brand. A substantial amount of effort must go into developing your website. Why a website and not a social media network like Facebook? On your website, you have more control over the message and content. It is the vehicle with which you share your personal brand. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, could all be gone tomorrow - but your website will endure. Your website is one of the most important things you can have to market your brand.

Another reason to have a website as your digital platform is that clients won't trust you if they can't find any information on you. A website allows you to communicate information in a controlled way from your point of view and it will build trust.

You need high-quality content on your website. That means more than just “who, what when, and where.” You need to tell site visitors *why*. *Why* should clients choose you over competitors? *Why* are you the best company for the job? *Why* are your services and products better than someone else's? These are basic questions that customers and clients expect answers to.

Your website is your hub. Everything comes out of your controlled website and goes to the spokes - which are your social media channels. When I talk about websites, I don't mean brochure-ware. You need some type of dynamic content that's focused on your clients.

It's not at all about you, it's about providing value.

Guy Kawasaki, a former evangelist at Apple, shared at a recent webinar that there are three forms of value: information, analysis, and assistance.

Information is defined as what just happened. It's the important things you should know about. Analysis explains the information. Assistance explains how your company can help clients avoid dangerous situations. These types of value should be unique to you and your brand and should have a positive influence.

Examples of value might be: industry news; how you solved a problem; your perspectives on a particular product or service; a safety checklist; or a how-to on a new product or service.

Don't hide behind your brand. Stand out as a real human being who has faced – and overcome – challenges. Some of you reading this will think that you are not a writer. You don't have to be Ernest Hemingway - just give it a try. A typical article on the Web is roughly 500-800 words. It doesn't have to be perfect – grammar-checkers and spell-checkers will help you out. Write from your heart, from your gut. Share a life lesson or a real story and you'll see how easy it is. Now for those who hyperventilate at the mere thought of writing, try talking into a microphone or creating a video or photography. All of them can provide unique, useful, and valuable information to visitors and potential clients.



**To-Do:** Start writing down content ideas for how you can provide value to your site visitors. Don't think “pros and cons” just yet. Simply brainstorm ideas.

## Chapter Three

### *Design Your Website*

You have roughly three to five seconds to make a good first impression on visitors coming to your website. That might seem like a short amount of time, but it's plenty of time for people to gain a few glimpses of your website and determine whether your site has something they are interested in.

Colors and design are important factors in determining whether your site visitor will stay or go. Here are a few things to ask as you look at your website:

- Is your navigation clearly marked? Is your content easily available?
- Do you have actionable words and buttons that your visitors can act upon (ex. "Buy my eBook," "Sign up here for updates," "Enter your email address to receive our newsletter")?
- Is your design clean and uncluttered? (Whitespace is a good thing.)

For an idea on what NOT to do in designing your website, visit [www.webpagesthatsuck.com](http://www.webpagesthatsuck.com)

Colors on your site affect a visitor's psychology. Different colors elicit different feelings. So take some care in selecting the right color. The chart below (1) shows the primary colors and the feelings and emotions that are most often associated with that color.

Blue	Calming, Masculine; High quality; Competence, Corporate
Green	Money, Earth, Envy, Safety, Health, Fertility, Growth
Red	Power, Excitement, Energy, Love
Orange	Warmth, Sun, Fun, Tropical
Yellow	Youth, Sunshine, Happiness
White	Purity, Cleanliness, Freshness, Good, Sincerity
Black	Evil, Something to hide, Fear, Grief
Purple	Royalty, Power, Authority



## ***Domain Name***

Sometimes, choosing the right domain name gets overlooked. These days, it's increasingly harder to find a dot-com domain that says who you are and what you do - but it's essential to put in the time to find that domain that is as descriptive and as short as possible. For example, let's say you're a celebrity protection specialist. Wouldn't you like to have [celebrityprotection.com](http://celebrityprotection.com)? Obviously that might be taken, but maybe you could have [epspecialist.com](http://epspecialist.com) or some type of variation.

Use the search function on various domain registrars/Web hosting companies like BlueHost or Register.com to find the right domain name for you and your business. Personally I prefer BlueHost, because it gives me variations on a domain name if it is already taken.

I highly recommend purchasing and registering a website domain name in your personal name in addition to your business name. Your name is part of your personal brand.

## ***Mobile Friendly***

There are more than 1 billion mobile Internet users<sup>2</sup>, roughly 16 percent of the population, and one of the big issues I see right now with the EP and security websites is that they're not mobile-friendly. Having a website that looks great on a desktop or laptop is good - but what happens when you look at the website on a mobile device like an iPhone or iPad? It should conform to the size of the viewing window. Too often, however, the visitor or potential client will have to do a lot of pinching and zooming to navigate your website. Some will stick around and try to get information from your website. Others, however, will get frustrated and leave.



**To-Do:** Test your website on a mobile device. Unfortunately, if it isn't mobile-friendly, there aren't any quick fixes. I suggest hiring a developer to turn your website into a responsive, mobile-friendly website for you. If you have WordPress as your content management system on your website and you still need to pinch and zoom your way around, check out the Plugins area in the admin settings and search for "mobile-ready," "mobile-friendly," etc.

## Chapter Four

### *Get Out of Your Comfort Zone*

In addition to creating valuable, unique content for your own website, make sure you provide equally valuable and unique content for other reputable industry destinations, sites, and blogs. Contact the resource owner or content editor and ask if you could contribute an article, video, podcast, etc. In many cases, they'll be glad to accept free content.

#### ***Benefits***

Sharing your knowledge to a wider audience gets your name in front of the right people. Be sure to add a picture of you, a short bio, and a link back to your website. Over time, you can become an authority in eyes of your target audience. Sharing your content in these other locations and resources opens up business opportunities and build relationships.

#### ***Speaking Engagements***

Take every opportunity to speak at a conference, community group, or even a church luncheon. I had the chance to speak at the Protective Security Conference and it was fantastic. The presentation enabled me to network, connect with people in the industry, give my elevator pitch to like-minded individuals - who I am, what I do, and who I do it for -and obtain solid business leads.

OK, you're probably thinking I make public speaking sound so easy right?

Look it's one of my biggest fears – and I'm sure it is for you, too. But if you do it often enough, public speaking *does* become easier. The first time I gave a speech, I was a senior in high school and I had to speak about what I'd learned over the preceding four years. I was a nervous wreck, worried sick about for weeks. I even bribed other students so I could go last – postponing until I couldn't say no anymore. But I got through it. During college, I had to take a course in public speaking and give presentations in business management and criminal justice classes. It wasn't so bad, and I started to get the hang of it. When I got to the corporate world, I had to speak someone else's words in the corporate language. I had to say the right thing, watch my timing, keep it short, etc. All of those outside pressures put me right back to high school - I choked, I froze, I

shook like a leaf and it showed .But when I started my business, I made it a goal to share my expertise as much as possible. Every opportunity that has come my way to speak in front of audiences - large or small - I've taken and I highly recommend you do as well. Save a couple of those nickels you've got earmarked for physical training skills and invest in a professional speech class.

Here's a strategy that has worked for me: The more passionate and knowledgeable you are on a particular subject, the easier it is to communicate - whether the audience is 10 or 1,000.

Communication is also conversation - connections with other people in your network. Your friends, your coworkers, recruiters – all of those people are in your network and those conversations are great ways to market your brand. During all of these activities, always be aware of your actions and behavior, because everything you do is being seen within that community, whether it's on social media, blogging, writing articles, or person conversations.



**To-Do:** Look on ASIS and other industry websites and magazines for opportunities to speak. ASIS puts out numerous emails asking for speakers. Plan to attend several local events and at least one industry conference.

## Chapter Five

### *What Is Social Media?*

My working definition of social media is plain and simple: It's a tool that allows communication among two or more people on networks like Facebook or Twitter. These networks are made up of friends, peers, colleagues, customers, and potential clients and go by various names such as Facebook, Twitter, FourSquare, and LinkedIn. Each is unique and useful to varying degrees for professionals in executive protection and security businesses.

### *Why Social Media is Important*

People are spending an increasingly large amount of time on these channels. To give you some perspective on the time factor here are eye-opening statistics:

- People spend 700 billion minutes a month on Facebook
- 28 million Twitter users "tweet" daily
- People watching 4 billion videos daily

Don't take these numbers lightly. You and your business must be having conversations on these channels. If you are not, you are missing out on a huge share of potential clients and customers.

Social media is different from traditional forms of print media because you don't directly push your products and services. Instead, you engage with customers and prospects by sharing expertise, knowledge, and experience and establishing yourself as a subject-matter expert. As a result, people become more willing to use your products and services and trust other businesses you recommend.

Another way to think of social media is word-of-mouth marketing on steroids. Think of social media as customer cultivation. With social media, you listen to customers' needs and make sure you create viable solutions.

Like your website, you should think of social media as an extension of your brand. In other words, you are branding yourself and your company through social media networks. Social

media, when used effectively, shows your credibility to current and potential clients and employers and defines your business and brand.

For example, suppose you have just graduated from an elite training facility and are looking for employment. The first thing a recruiter, job interviewer, or business owner does when they see your résumé is look for information about you on the Internet. Recruiters get as much information as possible. They look at Facebook pages and if there are compromising pictures, or inappropriate status updates about your work, friends, or family, it just won't matter how great your résumé is.

On the other hand, if you are carefully and effectively cultivating your personal and professional brand on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, chances are your résumé will move up to the top of the list.

Simply put, social media is important because it allows you to manage your brand, communicate directly with customers and clients, establish yourself as an expert, and put yourself ahead of your competition.



**To-Do:** Review your social media profiles from the perspective of a recruiter or HR manager. Take a look at your posts, pictures, and videos. Are they hurting your brand?

## **Chapter Six**

### ***Social Media: Where to Start?***

The most complicated question for businesses is to figure out where to start. Here are some key steps to get you going in the right direction.

#### ***Define Your Audience***

Before you sign up for Twitter or start a Facebook Fan page, you need to define your audience. Who should my business talk to? Are they clients, customers, colleagues, and other businesses? What social media venue is better for my business? These are not simple questions. Your answers will be the start of your social media foundation or strategy.

#### ***How to Find Your Audience in Social Media***

How do you get a pulse of the people? Use simple research tools and listen. Start with Google alerts. Set up an alert for specific keywords or phrases related to EP and security (or any related service or product you provide). Once a day you will receive an email informing you of what is being talked about related to those keywords and phrases. Use the same approach with Twitter search (<http://www.search.twitter.com>). What is being talked about? What is your competition doing and saying in social media venues? Create a Twitter account and search for your competition and start following them. How often do they tweet? What do they tweet about? Are their followers increasing or decreasing?

#### ***Plan a Strategy***

Consider social media like a marathon, not a sprint. You must train, strategize, know the route and competition, improve on your weaknesses, and put a plan together.

Starting a Twitter account, a Facebook group, or Fan page for your business just for the sake of saying “you are using social media” is not the way to go. A social media strategy should be integrated with your business and marketing plans. Identify your goals for your social media strategy. Ask yourself this very important question: What do you want out of social media?

Sales leads, customer service, awareness for your brand, or to just the ability to share information? To be successful in social media channels takes time and energy, so starting haphazardly without any strategy in place only creates wasted effort and frustration.

### ***Online Integration***

Once you have your audience defined and your strategy planned, it's time to start integrating your online business presence with social media. First, let your website visitors know you are on social media platforms such as Twitter and Facebook. The best way to do that is to place social media buttons or icons on your website. The buttons should have a prominent position on your home page and link to the corresponding social media venue. Facebook also lets you incorporate a button on your home page so that visitors can "Like" your Facebook Fan page. You can also integrate tweets and Facebook posts directly into your Web pages. I suggest you integrate your business in the following social media venues:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- LinkedIn

### ***The Benefits of Social Media***

The benefits of social media are similar to the benefits of your website. Social media increases your brand awareness and business exposure.

Share with your audience the facts: who you are, what you do, who you do it for, and what makes you different from any other executive protection or security company. However, with social media, this conversation is now part of your brand and image. Your images, videos and responses to criticism or praise are all part of your brand.

Social media can increase your networking opportunities. Word-of-mouth marketing and networking with peers, colleagues, potential clients, and customers can take place through social media. Just a few people posting comments to your business Facebook Fan page can have a viral effect and travel globally within seconds. Of course, these comments could be positive or negative.

If you get criticized, don't delete or ignore those negative comments. Respond quickly and in the same venue where the comments were made.

The goal with social media is to develop a community of followers who become your marketers, your networkers, your brand evangelists, and even your friends.

Social media takes some time, thought, and effort - but the benefits are exponential.

### ***Branding Social Media Profiles***

When it comes to branding on social media, it's essential to focus on your profile. Almost every social media channel gives you the opportunity to add biographical information - who you are, what you do, and who you do it for. Of course, this can be a bit challenging (especially on Twitter, which gives you only 140 characters for your bio). However, you'd be amazed by how much you can squeeze in 140 characters. Put a good amount of attention to it.

Use a headshot of yourself in social media profiles. Recent study by LinkedIn found that most people immediately zero in on the photo you post - the content secondary.



**To-do:** Go to Kinko's or CVS Pharmacy, wear a good suit, and get a simple passport photo. Use that photo as your profile image.

Some people use avatars (like a caricature of you). I don't recommend that, because people would rather see the "real you." Some people use logos. Big businesses use logos, because people can relate to the brand when they see the logo. If you're just starting out, I don't recommend using a logo.

And, like your website and stationery, you need *consistent* design colors and backgrounds. You can control the background on Twitter and YouTube (but not as much on Facebook and not at all on LinkedIn). Recently, Facebook changed the personal profile page into a timeline, providing you with a huge space to put a large image at the top. Be creative. Think of ways to use that space.

### ***Connecting With People***



The simplest way to connect with someone on social media is to ask or answer questions. Start off simply – even as basic as “How’s the weather?” You might see someone talking about a vehicle or weapon and you can comment on that because you're knowledgeable in that area.

You have to get over the fact that you’re likely talking to someone you don't know. Once you share that connection - they're into guns, you're into guns; they’re into bodyguard, you're into bodyguard; they need a bodyguard, you are a bodyguard – chances are, you will connect on some way, at some level.

That's when you start sharing information that is valuable and important to your fans and followers, to potential clients, and to your network. Remember: We're talking about that value, right? You put more into this than you get out of it. So, you share more value than you get in return. Focus on your strategies and goals during all of this. And lastly, I recommend you actually market your services.



**To-Do:** Create a Twitter account (if you haven’t ready) and start finding and connecting with like-minded individuals.

## Chapter Seven

### *Social Media Marketing*

Most of what we've covered so far has focused on marketing your personal brand through various platforms – website, speaking engagements, guest blogging, writing articles for industry magazines, and social media networks. By now, you might be a bit curious about how you actually market your services through social media.

Simply following the guidelines in this e-book, you are indirectly marketing your services and products. Marketing on social media is somewhat similar. With effective social-media marketing, there is no real “direct sell.” Too often, social-media rookies do what I call "Billboard Marketing." They approach it with “Hey, You: Buy My Stuff,” hoping that either someone buys the product or that you stand out as a self-proclaimed leader or expert. Unfortunately that just makes you look desperate.

If you need to market a product, you need to first find the right market using the search tools mentioned earlier (Twitter search and Google alerts). Your next move is to share with your market why your product is better than the one they currently use. Do that through blog posts, articles, testimonials, and user-related data. Also share why it's important to use your product. For instance, it will save lives, speed up your process, or automate a manual process. You should also show how to use the product. I recommend live or recorded demonstrations, free trials for the first 10 people who register, or 30-day free trials.

To put it simply, tell me a story about the product - don't just “sell” to me. If you think about it, you are building a brand for your product. It is all about providing value to your customer and client. Here's another example I see a lot of on Twitter:

*Hey you: Buy this microphone from Amazon(insert link)*

A better way to market your product:

*Recording Audio On A Tight Budget? Check out my recommendations (insert link).*

The link doesn't go directly to Amazon. Instead, it goes to a blog post with recommendations on products, links to those products, and a podcast that explains how the products work and *why* it is important to have good audio in your podcasts.

Yes, it requires more time and energy to create a blog post and a podcast. But how likely is that visitor to return for more advice, get recommendations, or buy one of your products?

## Chapter Eight

### *Managing It All*

OK, so you have your goals and expectations. You have established your brand on all the leading social media networks. You have defined your audience. You are interacting with people. And you are effectively marketing your products and services. You're getting comments. You're getting "Likes," retweets, and mentions.

The next stage? Managing all of those connections and interactions – and that can be overwhelming at times. Fortunately, others have seen that this could be a problem too and have created great social-media tools to manage your brand, one of which is called HootSuite.

HootSuite (available at <http://www.hootsuite.com>) is available in free for-pay versions. I recommend the paid version(it's very affordable- about\$4-5 a month). HootSuite is great because it provides a nice dashboard interface. On one page, you can view different "panes" for your Twitter feed, Facebook feed, YouTube, LinkedIn, etc. It also lets you schedule your Tweets, which is very helpful, so you're not tweeting throughout the day.

Another great service to use to schedule your tweets, your Facebook posts, and your LinkedIn updates is Buffer App (<http://www.bufferapp.com>). It's available in free and paid versions. I highly recommend to get the free version when you're just starting out. Graduate to the paid version later (roughly \$10-18/month). BufferApp lets you schedule everything upfront for the day. However, I recommend that whenever someone shares what you have posted, mentions you, or comments on something you do, follow up with them personally. Don't ignore them. Otherwise you are wasting your time using social media. So use BufferApp *carefully* and follow up personally.

Another great website is "If This Then That,"(<http://www.ifttt.com>). As the name implies, if you, for example, publish a blog post on your WordPress website, you could create a "recipe"after it is public. IFTTT could then repost your post to Tumblr and Posterous. What would have been two manual tasks is now automatic.So check out "If This, Then That." It is totally free.

### *Monitoring Your Brand*

A good way to monitor your brand is Google Alerts (<http://google.com/alerts>). It's a free service. You enter search phrases or keywords, things like your company name, your personal name, key phrases related to your brand, or competitors. Google Alerts sends you an email (with links) whenever it finds information that matches your keywords.

I've already mentioned Twitter search, but again, it's a great way to monitor your brand. Go to [search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com), enter your keywords and phrases into Twitter search, and look at the results. One of the great things about Twitter search is that it's real time. You can see exactly what's going on, right now.

A relatively new product (it's \$20/month) combines HootSuite and Google Alerts into one interface. It's called Mention. It is a stand-alone application for desktop, laptop, and mobile devices.

### ***Be Everywhere***

If your brand is everywhere, you have a better chance of getting noticed and rising above the noise. Establish your brand on as many social media channels/networks as possible for two reasons: You gain maximum exposure and you control your brand. Sure, you might find yourself spending more time on Facebook or Twitter vs. Google + or Pinterest. That's fine, as long as you spend time engaging and achieving your goals. Continue to listen and monitor your brand on those channels. Don't just ignore them.



**To Do:** Create an account in at least one management tool and one monitoring tool. I highly recommend Mention and HootSuite. If you are on a tight budget, try Google Alerts and Twitter search.

## Chapter Nine

### *Final Takeaways*

Here are some takeaways that I think are very important from this e-book. Your brand is everything. Just as your history speaks volumes, so does your brand. Remember, social media is just one tool to market your brand.

Develop a plan to achieve your goals. Be consistent with your brand and message. Remember to provide answers to the “why” questions. Don't pretend to be somebody you're not as you determine your brand in the marketplace. Don't forget that gut check: Count to 10 before you post, tweet, write, or speak. Ask yourself, “If I share this, will it hurt or help my brand?” Find positive influencers in your niche: people who you admire in business, people who have the history and are willing to help you succeed. Read books! I can't emphasize that enough. Read books to understand finance, branding, and marketing. Social media is about *telling* your story, not *selling* it. Remember to provide value and give your time, energy, and knowledge freely. Send a clear signal to stand out from the noise. Social media is not about the number of followers or likes. Finally, social media allows you to engage and build a community.

### ***Recommended Reading***

Here are a few books I recommend:

- *The Brand Called You* by Peter Montoya and Tim Vandehey
- *Tribes* by Seth Godin
- *Content Rules* by CC Chapman and Ann Handley
- *The Zen of Social Media Marketing* by Shama Kabani

## Final Thoughts

I hope this e-book has been helpful and that you've gotten something out of it. My goal is to help protective services companies succeed in establishing and strengthening their brands on social media platforms. I am here as your guide to make that happen.

If you have any questions on this e-book, social media marketing, Web design, or brand management, please feel free to contact at me via email at [lawrence.snow@gmail.com](mailto:lawrence.snow@gmail.com) or you can call me at 781-369-5185, or you can visit my website: <http://larrysnow.me>.

You can also connect with me on various social media platforms. I'd love to keep the conversation going.

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/lawrenceasnow>

Google + (Plus): <http://bit.ly/larryongplus>

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