

Online Communities – A marketers wildest dream and worse nightmare!

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**By Ralph Ritoch**

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Online Communities are all over the Internet and attract lots of visitors which make them ideal for marketing. People participating in these communities share information about whatever they want under various topics. Some of these discussions get very heated while others go by nearly un-noticed. Spammers have made their mark in these communities by making many of these forums unbearable to legitimate marketers. Informational posts that are commercial in nature are often "Flamed" as being advertisements, solicitations, or even spam. This can easily discourage a new marketer, and possibly even destroy their career. The online community at [www.eSpiritCommunications.Com](http://www.eSpiritCommunications.Com) is one exception. They have taken the "Flame" away by creating a online community for marketers, business owners, and consumers. The environment is friendly, and everyone posts and reads what they want in the forums. There are no "Bullies" running around because the rules allow advertising in appropriate categories.

The nightmare for marketers in online communities are the flammers. Flamers are the people who regularly post complaints, and start arguments in the community. Some of them are simply marketers with ads in the electronic signatures on their messages who go around flaming every commercial message. These people do it to get more attention for themselves and their business. Most online communities seem to condone this flaming, and go as far as banning anyone who posts an article which gets significant flaming. Flamers often become top posters in communities and are given "authoritative privileges" to change messages, and sometimes even ban "offenders" from the community. What makes the situation worse for marketers is most of these events are made public. Many moderators brag of their actions as the last post in a thread of messages and lock the topic so no one else can post to it. These message threads can remain online for years and leave permanent damage. Some of these threads show up on search engines for obscure search terms which don't get much attention, but enough to cause alarm. Few marketers would want to see an article they posted get flamed and the entire conversation in top listings on search engines. This is a marketing nightmare!

There is a fine line between "Advertising" and "Corporate news". This line is so small that any marketer in a forum is constantly on the edge of a public relations nightmare. The danger is that these discussions don't go away quickly. They are often archived, staying on the net for years and getting

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thousands of visitors. This permanent scar can seriously limit a marketers ability to spread important information with others in various industries. eSpirit Communications deals with this problem by providing a classifieds section of the community for pure advertisements. At [www.eSpiritCommunications.Com](http://www.eSpiritCommunications.Com) it is up to the marketer to decide if the information they're posting is an advertisement or news.

A marketers "Dream" is to reach their target audience. Forums have been attracting visitors for years, but these new communities offer a little bit more. They tend to be part of a larger service, have a more general "theme", and more features. eSpirit Communications is a communications and web development company which implemented an online community for businesses, advertisers, and the average consumer. The community has a wide range of topics covering many industries and a fast growing member base. Unlike search engine ranking which can take months to produce web site

traffic, these quality posts generate traffic within hours and in some cases, seconds. This is the "Marketers dream", an instant targeted audience for their marketing messages. This makes online communities an important marketing and information resource.

eSpirit Communications is revolutionizing online communities. As more people use their online community the amount of quality information is increasing. The consistent growth in the number of members in the community shows that information and advertisements can stand side-by-side without driving away visitors. As more online communities revise their terms of service to allow advertisements these communities should become much more valuable resources to both businesses and consumers.

### **Nightmares**

**By Dr. Barry Burns**

Nightmares are the type of dream everyone fears and wants to avoid. By their nature, these dreams are fearful, but often they need to be faced. The mind may be presenting them to us in such a dramatic manner because we have ignored a message for a prolonged period of time and it's resorting to more drastic means to get our attention.

The truth is, many nightmares are actually gifts that we should be thankful for because they are trying to help us.

Avoidance is the wrong response. The strong emotions evoked by these intense dreams are cries for help, and like a baby crying in the night for attention ... they will not be denied. The longer you ignore them, the louder they will get! Therefore ignoring nightmares is not only the wrong response, it's impractical in that it will make them worse.

Sometimes the subconscious mind will work with your nightmares to bring resolutions without you being consciously aware of the entire process. But when nightmares become recurring, then it's a sign that your conscious attention is being sought.

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It's more common to wake up in the middle of a nightmare than during a regular dream. It's also more common to remember a nightmare. This is, again, by design as a way of trying to get your attention.

The best way to get rid of a recurring nightmare is to deal with it - that is to deal with the issue it's presenting. It will take some courage, but here are some tips on how to do it:

- Rather than turning and shooting a monster or "bad guy" that is chasing you, it's better to turn and ask the aggressor how you can help it. Use such questions as "What is it you want to tell me," or "How can I help you help me?"
- Come up with solutions by asking other "cast members" in the dream what resolution they would like to see.
- Bring your Spiritual Guide into the dream and ask for his/her suggestions.

Nightmares may also be caused by trauma, psychiatric problems or drugs (both legal and illegal). In such cases the care of a health care professional should be sought immediately.

Dr. Barry Burns received his doctorate from the American Institute of Hypnotherapy. He studied Neuro-Linguistic Programming, Hypnosis and Dreams. Dr. Burns founded Wellspring Hypnotherapy, conducts seminars nationwide and is author of "Wide Awake," a book on dreams. For more on the meaning of dreams, visit:



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