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Newsday, Melville, N.Y., James Bernstein column

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By: Bernstein, James

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James Bernstein

July 15--Social media guru Dave Kerpen calls the company he started in 2007 Likeable Media, saying all businesses these days need to be "likeable."

And here's how Kerpen, 35, of Port Washington, defines likable: Not long ago he was in Las Vegas getting peeved waiting 45 minutes to check into a fancy hotel. He posted a complaint on Twitter and moments later received a tweet from a competing hotel. It did not offer him an immediate accommodation but tweeted: "Sorry you're having a bad experience Dave. Hope the rest of your time in Vegas goes well."

"Guess where I stayed the next time I was in Vegas?," Kerpen told about 100 marketing, public relations and advertising executives at a meeting Friday of the Fair Media Council in public relations and advertising executives at a meeting Friday of the Fair Media Council in Bethpage.

That, he said, is likability, which beats out the hard sell any day. Kerpen may be best-known for his 2006 wedding to Caroline Fisher in front of about 1,000 people at the Brooklyn Cyclones' KeySpan Park (now MCU Park) in a ceremony after a minor league baseball game ended.

Many of the fans remained after the last out, chewing on popcorn and hot dogs in the stands. Kerpen and Fisher could not afford the lavish wedding they wanted, so they got clients -- 1-800-Flowers.com of Carle Place and Entenmann's of Bay Shore among them -- to sponsor it. Kerpen and Fisher appeared in some videos for the companies.

That, too, Kerpen said, was companies being likable. His own Likeable Media, a social-media leveraging and word-of-mouth marketing firm, employs 45 and is based in Manhattan.

Being likable, Kerpen said, means listening to your customers and responding to their needs. With social media the great equalizer these days, consumers have more choices and a larger voice than ever. Businesses have little choice but to be likable.

John Doyle, director of technology and communications for Plainview-based Alure Home Improvements, listened carefully to Kerpen and agreed social media have changed the business landscape: "We believe the playing field has been leveled."

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