



## **The Inside Social Media Podcast**

### **Episode 4:**

#### **Kevin Hauswirth, Director of Social Media for the city of Chicago**

**Rick:** Kevin, I'm so glad to have you on today. Welcome to the show.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Thank you so much for having me.

**Rick:** Absolutely. So, I've given a bit of an overview of the types of unique products that you're working on for the City of Chicago before we started talking here. Can you tell us in your own words what your role is for the Mayor's office?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Of course, and I think it's as all of us work on teams, I think it's important to acknowledge kind of holistically the approach that we took to ensure that digital tools are sort of at the core of how Mayor Emanuel want to reshape the way that city government worked here in Chicago.

So there's really three pieces to that that's very unique to cities and I think it's what enabled to work all of us to work really well.

In the communications shop, we've got me doing social media and part of the communications team and sharing the policies that the Mayor is talking about are communicated both in traditional means and new media ways and also making sure that we put tools in place so we can make sure we're not just talking at the public, but we can listen so that we have a very engaged approach to ensuring that the voice of the people of the City of Chicago, whether they're talking at a town hall meeting or a Facebook town hall meeting are part of this dialog and conversation.

But a really important part – two other important parts of that is – as part of the Mayor's policy team, he installed a Chief Technology Officer who's really an evangelist for ensuring that digital divide issues are addressed, looking at more ways that we can increase broadband access or wifi and work on this needy policy and infrastructural needs that's real technology.

And last, the third piece of that is the Chief Data Officer.

He's ensuring that all this data that the city is getting in or that businesses are getting (and we're getting it from all touch points like we never had before), he's making sure that we're using that data and analyzing that data to drive decision making.

But also taking city data that was previously only available through, you know, a bulky PDF, for example, ensuring that that data is open so that small businesses in the private sector and independent developers can use city data to build applications that help normal Chicagoans better interact with the city.

We can talk a little bit about that because that's really an emerging role of how small businesses are working with cities. So, it was really those three things that were important part of really ensuring the digital is at the center of how Mayor Emanuel is trying to reach the city of Chicago.

**Rick:** Yeah. That's really – let's expand on that so I mean obviously everything you just described, I mean Chicago has really become one of the most – I think one of the most digitally savvy cities, running all kinds of technology and social media programs that connect the Mayor's office with residents of the city. What do you think small businesses can learn from what you guys, from what the city of Chicago is doing and how you approach, you know, social media and that technology.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Sure. I think one thing to keep in mind is that we as a city government – when Mayor Emanuel took office, we could not go and hire agencies and increase our staff and have some sort of major investments. We really had to look at not expanding the org chart but making the org chart work smarter. So, we really had to look at the existing resource we had in personnel and figure out how we can re-tailor those to fit what the needs are of our audience or in their case, of a customer.

So, I sit over here as part of the press team. I'm really making sure that we're gathering conversation with the public and our – my social media strategies are really driven by what the people want. So when we first got into office, everyone – you know, we had more than 20 years of the previous Mayor Daley so everyone in Chicago is wondering what's the new guy is going to do. What's the new Mayor going to be working on?

So, we created a forum and that was our first day at the town hall where we crowd sourced questions from the public using a free online tool. People voted on the questions that were most important to them and then through a Facebook app we live streamed a conversation with the mayor where he took those top questions as well as questions in real time online and we had a conversation about what his vision is for the city and hearing feedback from people and that really was a response to the people wanting to know what was going to be going on with this new mayor and that's when we looked at how we can use these technologies to respond to what our customers wanted and in that case it was what is this city going to look like.

**Rick:** That's really cool. I mean that's a great point about you're using completely free and accessible tools that anybody can use, but using them in a creative way to engage, you know, your audience being the residents of Chicago and really listening to them which is the core of when it comes down to it social media that engagement with people not only you speaking to them but also listening to them and then reacting accordingly to what you're hearing from them and that's really really cool.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Exactly. I think sometimes we have to remember at the end of the day it's not about us. It's about them.

It's not about us as a brand or as a government, it's what do the people want from us and where is that relationship that we want to foster and from where I'm sitting, it's about how we can – how can we get information out better and how can we be engaged around the sort of conversations and tools that the people want.

And another great example of that, as I'm talking to you right now I'm looking at my window and we're in the middle of a snowstorm. We're expecting, you know, 6 to 10 inches of snow here in Chicago. We as Chicagoans know how important weather preparedness could be and if it's snowing in Chicago when you wake up in the morning and you look out your window, the first thing you say to yourself is where are the snow plows and what, how much we can re-plow.

Well, this is one of these things I talk about trying to find new ways to use resources you already have. Here at the city, we have GPS and all the snow plows. It's how the Department of Streets and Sanitation can manage their fleet.

**Rick:** Sure, okay.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** So, here's an asset that's a GPS and the truck that we already have. We made that open to the public, so now we're taking a public need to know that their city is working and literally know where those plows are so they can get around and we just open that up to the public. So, it took you know a small – it took very little resources because we just tapped into something we already had and opened it up to answer a public need.

And now in the social media space when someone is tweeting where are the plows, I don't see the plow out my window, we can simply respond by saying have you seen the plow tracker and most of their questions are answered when they're looking at a map with–

**Rick:** That's awesome.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** – you know 300 little truck icons, you know, just munching up snow like Pacman across the city.

**Rick:** That's really cool. What has been the response to that?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** So that was actually the day we announced we're doing it and then the day of the first storm were the two most highest traffic days ever to the city's website.

**Rick:** Wow.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Higher than the snowmageddon that actually happened the year before, so it was overwhelming and then we have – we created an online space where we put all of our snow resources and this is something that was really important because we can't expect our customers or our audience to get all the way to our website and then have to dig.

So, we took snow resources from the Department of Transportation and the Department of Family Services and Department of Health and put them all in one place. So we organize ourselves to better align with how our audience needs to interact with us but I think that's really important part of listening and responding to those needs that you're hearing on the ground.

**Rick:** Yeah, that's really cool. I'm picturing a little snowplows munching up snow on the screen. It's really cool. You know with so many different social media outlets Kevin it could be really overwhelming for small businesses and really anybody looking to use social media. How does the City of Chicago decide which outlet or outlets to be on and then in your mind how do you think small businesses can take that insight and model it?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Yes. So, one of the things that's really inspiring about small businesses is that in order to use social right, you know, this is not just a megaphone. This is a place that you're trying to engage with people.

The advantage that small businesses have is they know their customers. They know the space of their customers. They know why people purchase certain things or what kind of questions to anticipate because they're so already connected with the people that they interact with and that's really where the inspiration for how you interact at social media, where it should come from.

So, you know at the city for example, not only do we run social media for the Mayor's office but we're also consultants and advisors for other city departments. So for example, how someone might want to interact with the Chicago Public Library might be completely different than how someone is going to interact with the Mayor's office of People with Disabilities or the Health Department and in my conversation with all these agencies, it starts not with technology because it's not about the technology.

It's about engagement and it's about the people are saying. What is it that the public wants from you, not what you want – because all too often it's we want to communicate this or we want to tell people this, but that's not the question.

The question is how do people interact with you and what do they want from you and then we can start thinking through well, you know, that makes a lot of sense to do a Twitter chat for example around the flu.

So when the flu epidemic was hitting Chicago, we took one of the doctors in the Department of Public Health, put them on Twitter and let people ask questions about the flu and that made sense because it was tapping into questions people already had. Twitter

was a good space for doing that just to – because you can sort of have that real time interaction and that made a lot of sense for them.

So, I think it's really important that you start with really thinking through what that relationship is like and what you can offer people rather when they're in their store or when they're – you know, when they interact with you online.

The other piece I always say is that when you have an idea of how to do a thing on social media, you ask your customers. You ask your customers whether in your store or whether it's on Facebook, you know, is this something you would do? You know, would you participate in a photo – in an Instagram scavenger hunt with us or would you actually watch a live stream if I did it? And they'll give you feedback.

And you know a great example of that in the city is the CTA which runs all the trains and the buses in the city. They launch their first ever Twitter feed and the real question there – a lot of conversations about, you know, what is this feed? What purpose is it going to serve?

So the initial approach was you know, it's information about investments in the transit or it's really interesting historical pictures about what the trains look like in the 1950s and then they put out a survey, you know, a very simple survey online, it basically said what do you want from us? And the people said I want to know if my train's going to be late. I want to know what's going on with this bus.

And that was part of initial conversation, you're kind of thinking well they probably just – people don't want to just be bombarded by service updates then we asked the people and they said, oh no, no, we want to be bombarded with service updates. It's that what we really want to know and then we can look at how to sort of shift to adapt to that need, but it was as simple as asking them and the people who want to be engaged are going to tell you how to be better.

**Rick:** Yeah. I think that like – I think I mentioned before, I think that's what gets lost a lot of times when, you know, people are sort of new or intimidated by social media, they think that they have to just start – you used the megaphone example, you know, just sort of pounding out information and just telling people what they think they want to hear rather than, you know, really listening to their customers and to people and having it be a two-way conversation rather than just a one-way conversation.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Absolutely. And if you know – if you're – if you say that, you know, the number one thing I get when people call my business is they're asking me for advice. Well, that you could give advice from Twitter or if every time they're calling they're asking for something, I always show them, you know, any time someone asks me that, I give them a pamphlet.

Well, how can they look at that pamphlet that you already created and figure out how that turns into a tip a day on Twitter or how that pamphlet turns into a blog post now? And so

part of it is looking at if you're already creating things that respond to customer demand and helps you engage better, how can you take those physical things you've already made and find the social media legs for those and I think that – and it's basically repurposing, you know, that dead tree content and seeing how that same content can live on the internet and it's not always as complicated as it sounds.

**Rick:** Love that because then you can take the feedback from that and perpetuate it however you feel is necessary within–

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Exactly.

**Rick:** – the social media channels. I love that.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Exactly.

**Rick:** You mentioned before about the flu, you know, creating a resource around the flu operate, you know, do you guys use social media as sort of a crisis management tool for the city as well?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Yeah. And I think I would use the – crisis management almost made it sound like it only – we only turn it on at certain times.

It is a everyday feed. It is a critical part of how we communicate information in and out of the city. So you know – and all the mayor's press conferences are live streamed online. Today, he was over at Snow Command. They're going to press conference about what's your weather. That's streaming live online so you can watch it.

We're making sure that we're – you know, the way I can talk about it is you know, you are – we are communications people. We are people that are charged with engaging with the outside public and it's 2013. We need to know how to use the telephone. We need to know how to use email and Twitter and Facebook need to be part of that. So, it's almost just taking – it's taking the skills.

There are some people at the city when I got here with their manual that are amazingly good at their jobs and amazingly talented and engaging with folks and all it took was showing them how Twitter works or taking them through how Facebook works and within a few days they're saying oh, this is – I just had this conversation at a town hall meeting yesterday and now I'm having it on Twitter and when you got down to it, it wasn't about the technology.

You know, it's like taking someone that's really great at talking, that's talking face to face and showing them how to use the telephone and now showing them how to use email and now showing them how to use Twitter and they're basically doing what they're good at. They're just doing it in new channels. I think that's the crux of it and I think that's what's really important too is that, you know, I think sometimes we go technology, so we need to have the interns here\*.

But we wouldn't have the interns go to a trade show and speak on behalf of us until they were ready. We shouldn't let them to go speak on behalf of us on Twitter until they are ready you know and sometimes there's this reverse mentoring that have to happen. You know, the intern can help you become more comfortable with technology, but the more seasoned professionals have to then teach the intern a little bit about the business and how you engage with people and the sweet spot is somewhere there in the middle.

**Rick:** Yeah. That's such a great lesson for small business owners because you know, they – no one knows their business better than themselves and they know how to obviously talk on the phone and communicate in person with people but – and they may have obviously heard about Twitter, Facebook or Google+ or whatever, but maybe the learning curve doesn't have to be as big as they might think it is. Maybe just a little bit of like you mentioned fine tuning and kind of a little bit of a training on that and it's just a continuation of what they already know with the conversations that they have with their customers that they know best.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Absolutely. And I think the other thing for us to remember is that if you're struggling with trying to figure out social media, you are not alone. There are no gurus. There are no experts. We're all learning this as we go and it's evolving. I mean, you know, you figure out Facebook today and then Facebook changes something tomorrow or you figure out Instagram today and now it's something else tomorrow.

So, while the technologies will continually change, you know, at the core the engagement and the communications is in essence the same and you know, if you look right now you have elected officials having fireside chats. The fireside chats are just now on, you know, Google video or Google+ instead of through a radio, but at the core it's just a fireside chat and you're looking at the new way of sitting in front of the fireplace so to speak.

**Rick:** Yeah. I love that. I love it.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** The one other thing I think is very important and it's similar to the sort of that you're not alone here and one of the things I found when I came to the city is that you had some departments or some people that were – they were dabbling in social media or starting to use it, but they didn't know each other. So, they're sort of doing social solo which was somewhat interesting.

And I think if you read anything about social media, you start hearing buzzwords and best practices. Like it's all about sharing. It's about collaboration and it's about friending. So those are sort of best practices that have to happen once you're doing social media, but those are also the best practices in how you organize your operation around social media.

So, one of the things that had been extremely helpful here at the city is we found everyone that was managing a social account from libraries to parks to the budget office and we do a brown bag lunch every couple of months and we share case studies with each other and so it's part case studies, part checking out some new technology and part

group therapy and so if – you know, sometimes they'll say oh, does anyone had any good experience, you know, engaging with bloggers and maybe the Chicago Public School will say you know, we just did this thing.

We had bloggers meet with our superintendents or our principals and notice then you had this sharing that's happening and whether it's several agencies in a department or several small businesses that are all a part of a local chambers of commerce, you know, you create an email list. You get together for lunch every little while and you start showing best practices and I think those are the sort of things that are going to allow you to sustain this and not feel overly burdened like you're a one-person show—and sort of grow together.

**Rick:** Yeah. I love that. I love that. Do you guys measure – I mean, I'm sure that you do, but how do you measure your social media efforts?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Oh, it's like the million dollar question, right. Okay. So, here's the thing. You can count likes and you can count how many Twitter followers you have.

At the end of the day though, the ROI of social media is likely not measured in social media, so I think if you're going to measure, you know, for example you get a great story in your local paper. You get a great story on your – a big local blog. Those are – that's apples to apples to a certain extent, right?

It's using social media as a means of getting press, but what if you're on Twitter and someone tweets a question about your brand, about your company and you tweet back and answer and it took you three seconds, that's the same as a phone call, right?

That someone tweeting you and calling and saying hey, what time do you open or is that sale still going on and you respond. Now, that person may only have three followers on Twitter, but you answered their question. It didn't take very much effort on your part and it was basically the social media equivalent of answering the telephone when it was ringing.

But then you can start getting and you could start looking at how many people went to your website from your tweets, but I think we have to be very – we have to be very delicate about that because the analytics can be overwhelming and there are people whose job it is to understand and measure analytics.

So, I think it's important not to get overly bogged down in those sorts of things and also realize that you're growing and it's constantly going to evolve and you know, that person with 10 followers who tweeted a question, if that person comes in the store and buy something, you know, then the ROI of that has nothing to do with how many followers they had on Twitter.

And I think we need to be very delicate about – now that we actually “see the popularity of a person” that we don't let that totally derail us and I think at the end – I think if you



really figure out how social becomes as ubiquitous as the telephone or email, as it becomes part of your process then that somewhat become less daunting.

But I think we really need to look at what is the return you're trying to get in your business and in seeing what aligns with it as opposed to getting too bogged down in the numbers.

**Rick:** Yeah. I love that. And Kevin that actually leads me perfectly to my next question is because people, you know, people do tend to get hung up on those numbers when it comes to, you know, number of Facebook fans or Twitter followers or how many friends are in your circle on Google+ and so on.

What would say to a small business that maybe only has let's just call it a couple thousand fans or followers who's maybe looking at a competitor with, you know, 10 times as many fans or followers and that could be very intimidating for them and, you know, maybe they're not – they might feel like they're not doing something right. What would you say to a small business who's looking at their competitor like that?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Well, I think obviously competition makes us all stronger and I think we can always learn from kind of what we're seeing happening around us. I would also – there are many ways to get, you know, to get fans on Facebook and to get likes, some of it is totally organic, right like you're engaging, you're posting and you're investment is your time.

The guy down the street that might have a bazillion followers, he might be buying ads. You know, he might be buying likes so to speak which is fine. That's an advertising tool that Facebook offers, so I think your going to kind of look at what's best for you, what's best for them.

I'd also look at the quality of the engagement. You know, someone down the street could have a million followers and all they're basically doing is posting specials and press releases and if they're not getting a lot of engagement about that then your little loyal core of 100 – or your loyal core of 1,000 people are engaging with you, the question really becomes really for you is when you talk about the return on investment.

You know, what is the – how do you quantify engagement. How do you quantify a great conversation with a customer who comes into your store? And I think if we start looking at social in the same terms that we look as physical, it will help keep that to being less daunting.

**Rick:** Yeah, yeah. I love that. I love that. Now, small businesses obviously don't have the kind of marketing and social media budgets and resources that maybe we've been talking about today, so maybe that large cities and big brands do. So let's maybe bullet point this out. With that in mind, what are the top 3 tips that you give to a small business or online entrepreneur trying to grow their business using social media?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Sure. And it comes down by saying just for context, there's a difference between sort of looking at a political campaign that's got obvious resources and looking at a government entity the people that are managing these social media platforms of the city, that's just a part of their job. You know, they're the press secretary or they're a communications person that's now also doing social.

Here, it was just me for six – for probably six months. There's now a deputy, but we didn't increase the size of our communications team. We just said hey, if social is going to be important then we just staff accordingly, so there's one less press secretary and there's me. So, we kind of organized that.

So here the things that when it comes to actually now that you're engaging, I would say, you know, a lot of social media is about showing who you are and not telling what you do. I think sometimes we get into this trap of we're just shouting at people. We're shouting at our Facebook fans and we're saying why are we not getting any followers on Twitter. We've been putting out deals all week.

That will be the social media equivalent of standing out in front of your store with the bullhorn and a sandwich board and shouting at people. Now, if that works for your business then by all means replicate that strategy on Twitter, but you wouldn't do it on your store. You don't do it on social media.

The other piece is starting to think about start with what you're good at, you know, if you're the mechanic that everyone in the neighborhood calls when they need suggestions, well then let's replicate and you're willing to help. They must replicate that, you know, in social.

I remember growing up – remember the butterball turkey hotline? Where you could call the 1-800 number and get advice about your turkey? And butterball wasn't selling the turkey. If you already had a turkey in your house, but they are proving that they're helpful. They're the brand that's helpful that you go to when you need help and they're building relationship with you, so hopefully at some point down the road when you need a turkey you'll think of them.

So, I think it's part of that, you know, understanding that this is relationship building just like you would do with customers in your store. I would also think about why customers love you. The people that are coming back and the folks that are always coming back into your store, you know, what is it that keeps bringing them back in and maybe it is that you have deals and great sales then by all means, you know, use that leverage.

Is it they like the person that's sitting at the front door because they're friendly, well then replicate that. And one of the things that I advice – and I was working in higher end in teaching before I took this job, you know, one of the exercises we did was if your brand or your company was a person in your life, who would it be?

You know, would it be the wise grandmother who knows all the answers and is sort of like an advice columnist? Is it the super active PTA mom that knows everything that's going on in the community and they're almost like a community resource? Is it the buddy that you know, you kind of – you know, the car talk guys, you know? Is it the friend who kind of jabs you and you have a playful relationship with?

I think you sort of – and the beauty for small business owners is sometimes that's an easy question because it's the relationship oftentimes that the owners have with their customers, so you replicate that and you figure out how it is that your personality is going to find itself back online.

The last part and I don't know if I'm on three or four now, but it all – like any good engagement, it starts by listening. You don't walk into a cocktail party with a handful of business cards and just start shouting and telling everyone who you are and praying for business. You make your way around the room. You kind of see who's there. You figure out how you can position yourself. How can you be most useful to this conversation that you're about to participate in? And then you start building strategies around it.

So, I use the cocktail party analogy all the time when you're talking about social. Social media is one big cocktail party and I don't think you want to be the guy that's just running around and shouting about how great they are. It's about listening and figuring out how to position yourself and then figuring out what it is that those people in the room want from you and then figure out how you can deliver on that and it's about building those relationships just like in real life that at some point will lead to loyalty and lead to sales

And then, you know, you made comment about what if I only have – maybe I only have 1,000 followers on Facebook and the guy down the street has 10,000. Well, those 100,000 are existing customers who still love you. Those are the people who will spread the word. Those are your word of mouth people, right.

Those are the people that you send mail, that you send your newsletter to because they're your loyal customers. So sometimes those can be a very valuable people to have online those are people that are willing to participate in positive word of mouth around your brand or your service.

**Rick:** Yeah, I love that because when you just base – you just broken it all down to the basics of communicating and listening, just talking to people and not like you mentioned that the example of the cocktail party, you're not just going in there and throwing business cards and saying give me business here. You know you are taking it slowly and talking and having individual conversations and you just basically taking that same thing, that same approach online and having those conversations engaging. I love that.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Exactly. And then, you know, it's not – you know, it's not like you go to a networking cocktail party and then you come back and then your husband says to

you, you know, what was the ROI of that cocktail party? You know like what was the return on our investment by going at that cocktail party?

The answer is normally well, you know, I met some interesting people. You know, I met this blogger who might want to host a little event in our store and you know, I met some – it's usually I met some great people I'm going to follow up.

It's the same. You know, I'm starting an engagement with these people and then you're going to follow up and figure out what makes sense.

In that cocktail party you ended up meeting a blogger who's really interested in your space and wants to have a little, you know, coffee in your store. That was a great use of your time, so I think that we need to, you know, really make sure we're thinking about this and the sort of remembering that social media is just a channel for you to do what you're already good at and to engage in ways that is authentic for you and then hopefully it becomes – it just becomes a natural part of how you interact with your customers.

**Rick:** Yeah. I love that. I love that. We're talking about different, you know, measures of success. We talked about case studies and you've already given some examples now of the types of programs that you guys are doing, but can you give me another example of you know a really successful campaign that you've seen maybe that you guys have run there in the city or elsewhere and then why do you think it was successful?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Well, first of all, we talked about the plow tracker and we talked about the public health campaign and those were largely successful because it was tapping into things that people already wanted.

You know, I think another example is that – and we talked about open data and I don't want to get too in the weeds with this, but open data is basically taking government information, everything from the location of parks, the location of murals to business license data and all that sort of stuff and putting it online, so if you can use Excel, you can – you can see the entire city budget.

But if you're a web developer, you can now pull that information to make useful applications. So, one of the things that was really helpful is that there was a – there's some school board elections happening and then someone on Twitter said you know, it's really hard for me to figure out who's running and where the elections are and what seats are open – and that was actually data that the city had.

So, we put the data on the data pool. We put the data out there and a developer actually made an app that allow people to plug in where they live and plug in, you know, what school district they're in and it gave them information in a very visually appealing and easy to use way of finding out more about what was going on in the community rather than an Excel file the city would have put online.

And the guy who did this is just an independent developer. He's a web developer that saw that as a way of E-volunteerism. So, it was – you know, he – it was the online equivalent of helping grandma cross the street, right. It was just doing your civic duty and being helpful, but one of the talents he brought to the table was he knows how to build these applications and I think what you're seeing is that now if more and more cities release data in a way that's available online you're going to see more companies doing something with that as a public service.

So if we're a food company for example and we go and grab all, you know, we go and grab the public data around where the farmer's markets are going to be this summer and we put it on our website and now we're the website that everyone is going to find out about farmer's markets, you know.

And maybe they're buying our products, maybe they're not, but there's this idea of showing people who you are, you know, where your family produce supplier that wants to be helpful once he engaged with you and to show you how helpful we are, here is a very easy to use interactive map of where all the outdoor markets are going to be this summer.

And so I think you're seeing more and more of that as a new way that businesses can get involved in the civic space and help out. I think that's sort of – an evolution that we're definitely seeing here in Chicago as we released all this data.

**Rick:** Now, you guys are really on the cutting edge of what cities are – what's possible for large cities. I mean, are other large cities taking your lead in seeing what – seeing the success you guys are having there and other large cities – I'm in L.A. and I don't, you know, I don't see these types of resources. Are you seeing the other cities are taking your lead in this?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** You know there's a – there's probably a – there's a group of cities that are all sort of working on these and I think it starts with having a city leader who says that open data is the norm.

And that's helpful to start with. We're going to open this up. We're going to make it public. We're going to put out it there. We're going to be transparent about things. But there is this level of sharing that happens.

I mean we created this tool called Adopt a Sidewalk where you can click on the sidewalk and find out how is claim it, connect with friends and help keep it clean during winter when, you know, everyone is out shoveling.

The code that we use to write Adopt a Sidewalk originated in Boston where they had a program called Adopt a Hydrant and the idea was when it snowed, you dug out your fire hydrant.

So, if there's a fire the police department wouldn't have to go digging for a fire hydrant.

So, they built the code for Adopt a Fire Hydrant, we adopted that code and we're able to use it to build the basis of Adopt the Sidewalk and there is the sharing. We talk about we took all the information about where you could get a free flu shot and we put that out there, so instead of having to dig through a PDF and find where it is the flu, click in your neighborhood, an independent developer took that information and made a very simple interactive map.

Here is my address, you know, and here's – you know, here's what time I'm looking to go and then it shows you where all the flu shots were. Well, we took that code and sent it to Philadelphia and Boston and within like 48 hours Philadelphia used a code developed in Chicago with their public health data and were able to launch a flu map within a matter of a few days.

**Rick:** Wow, that's awesome.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** So, there is – the beauty of serving this government space is that we're all in the business of trying to help cities work better and we're sharing. And I think you're seeing this movement across the United States and across the world of more data being open and this collaboration with the public sector reaching the private sector and even cities working with each other.

**Rick:** Yeah. I love it because that's how information historically has been very – you mentioned like digging through a PDF, I mean the information is not exactly been easily found in the past, so I mean I love how you guys are making it so easy to go and find and access it and to be able to use it, you know, in your everyday life they can help you out. I love that.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Yeah. And the thinking is kind of a lot of this data is legally already “public,” right. You can write your city and you can get these documents, so it was public but it was bulky. So, we went from making it public to making it accessible by putting it in its open format. But now it's independent developers who are taking it from being accessible and making it useful.

So, they're taking all the, you know, the parks information, the school information and then making, you know, really innovative web applications for what to do with this. I mean one guy one of my favorite applications is that we publish the street sweeping schedules, so when the street sweeper is going to come by your house. He created a site called sweeparound.us, so sweeparound.us. You put in your email. You put in your address and the night before the street sweepers are going to come, they send you an email to tell you to move your car.

**Rick:** Oh, it's brilliant.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Right.

**Rick:** I want that.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Now, the joke is he also made a site called [wasmymcartowed.com](http://wasmymcartowed.com) in case you forgot to move your car. It just taps into the city's database of towed cars, so you could figure out where your car is and this is a neighbor building a tool because he felt the need for it and so did all his neighbors and he just took the initiative to build that. Just as simply, an independent company, a small business could have built an app just as simple. You know, local car dealership could have built was my car towed app or the sleep, you know, the sleep around us app just to provide a service to his neighbors who drive cars.

**Rick:** Yeah. I love that.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** So, I mean, I see the side of this, we rely on the private sector because we think that's where all the creativity and innovation is that's really going to build more robust use of applications and small businesses with sometimes minimal investment can be a part of that, you know, and we can be a part of that civic duty and participation and you know maybe even – it's the evolution of swag. Instead of buying Frisbees with your brand on it, why don't make an app to help figure out where to find the local Frisbee store.

**Rick:** Yeah. I love that. I love that. Kevin, last question here for you. What are some upcoming social media programs that you're really excited about that you guys are working on?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** So, the first plug I'll give you, [digital.cityofchicago.org](http://digital.cityofchicago.org) is where we're housing a lot what we're doing in social.

Well, we actually just launched something that we've never done before. We're using crowd funding to try to raise money for a midnight basketball league, so crowd funding – like we're using Indiegogo which is a platform.

So basically whether you want to give a dollar or whether you want to give \$10,000, you can contribute online for us to get for the Parks Foundation. They have the resource to create a new program which is Late Night Basketball Leagues so kids instead of hanging out or riding around, they're in a safe space and they're playing basketball and they're engaged with the Park district.

It was a program that, you know, a city might not necessarily have in their budget but there was a need for it. We launched it. We're seeing – I have to check it, but we've got tens of thousands of dollars in contributions and we're trying to get to about \$400,000+, so this is a campaign that we're actually in the middle of. I hope it will be successful because I have great faith in the generosity of Chicagoans to help their neighbors with this program. But I think it's an example of we're taking a risk. It's a city taking a risk. We might not reach our goal, right. That's a possibility. But if we don't innovate and we don't try and we don't, you know, tiptoe into this new space, you know, we'll never

know what's possible and frankly we, you know, I'm putting myself out there and my team is and we're trying a new way of allowing people to give who might want to participate, who may not have, you know, written a check but they'll give online and we're trying to create new ways for people to participate in their government.

And I think that willingness to take risk is something that's really important and you know, lots of small business owners that's something that they're born with. They have this entrepreneurial spirit of trying something new and taking risk. I think that pertains to digital space, too.

**Rick:** I love it. I love the innovation. Kevin, before I let you go, where can people find you? Where can people find the City of Chicago on social media?

**Kevin Hauswirth:** So @ChicagosMayor, Chicago is with an S is our Twitter handle, but go to [digital.cityofchicago.org](http://digital.cityofchicago.org) not only will you find a blog and all of our digital initiatives, you can find every single platform where a city agency is engaged in social media as well as all our online videos and there's actually an app store on there, so we're talking about some of these applications that developers have made using city data. We're housing a lot of them right there on [digital.cityofchicago.org](http://digital.cityofchicago.org) so you can poke around and see what sort of iPhone apps were developed in innovative ways using city data.

**Rick:** Awesome. Awesome. And I'll link what you just said – those links up in the show notes, so people can easily access them so.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Perfect.

**Rick:** Kevin, thank you so much for taking the time to be on today. This was awesome, some awesome information here and it's – I love the unique perspective here from, you know, talking with the big brands to seeing how you guys are using it from a large city perspective and how you're using social media to benefit the people of Chicago. I love it. So, thank you again Kevin. I really appreciate.

**Kevin Hauswirth:** Thank you much. Great talking to you.