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Social Media in Plain English

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Introduction

The consumer world today is rapidly changing. Long gone is the era of passive consumerism, these days consumers want to have their say on every product and service they invest in. And with the cutthroat competition, companies are actively seeking ways to gain more leverage through innovation. With the birth of a whole new universe of social media, businesses play an entirely different ballgame.

Is Your Business Social Enough?

Today, social media platforms have invaded and taken over public consciousness. It has become a big part of day to day routines and an indispensable communication tool for people to connect and stay in touch. Consumers have used social media presence as one of the integral basis of a company's legitimacy, reliability and viability. Businesses today are judged based on their Facebook or LinkedIn profiles, and consumers expect companies to respond to the concerns and queries they have tweeted within the day or within the hour.

Suffice it to say, social media has managed to steal the thunder away from traditional marketing methods. Modern marketing strategies today have a mix of social media tactics as its integral component for reaching business goals.

Discover the Social 5-Pack

Highly competitive companies have taken the aggressive path and actively pursued the "Social 5-Pack," made up of: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube. This is in line with the aim to engage their target market and existing client base to fill the top of the sales funnel as well as understand the prevailing consumer preferences and behaviors to ensure brand loyalty.

However, signing up and maintaining multiple accounts on all social networking sites is not as easy as it seems. Jumping right in without any in-depth understanding of the social media process can be potentially detrimental for a company, which can lead to exposing its online presence at serious risk and leading it towards an unproductive direction.

Take the Reins of Your Online Presence

Given the power of social media, it is critically important for businesses to work through their strategies and develop processes to lead to scalability, efficiency, and successful social engagement. This eBook provides you all the necessary information to understand the full potential of social media, as well as how your business can harness its latent power so you can make smarter decisions on how your organization can effectively incorporate it into your company's marketing and communications mix.

If you want to drive your business forward, you need to make sure it stays social, current and relevant in consumers' consciousness. Discover how social media can become your most effective and influential marketing workhorse. This eBook will equip you with all the important information on how to get started and how you can use social media to your full advantage and rake its long-term rewards.



Chapter 1: Understanding the Value of Social Media Buzz and What It Can Do For Your Business

These days, social media is the buzz word in marketing and a global trend that has gotten everyone of every age engrossed in one, two and possibly even several social media sites. Everyone is on it, in one form or another. But what is it exactly?

Social Media Explained in Plain English

The term social media has been carelessly tossed around and used too often in online marketing. But what is it really about? In essence, social media incorporates the use of online technologies and methods that allow people to share personal opinions, content as well as swap insights and perspectives with the rest of the world.

Social media content can take different shapes and forms:

- ◆ Text – often used to write or put across personal opinions or posts
- ◆ Images – photos are used to display anything of interest
- ◆ Audio – podcasts can be created to other users to download
- ◆ Video – video content can be shared to engage, entertain or educate

Among the most popular social media sites at the moment include:

- ◆ Social Networking: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Google+
- ◆ Wikis: Wikipedia
- ◆ Video Sharing: YouTube
- ◆ Photo Sharing: Instagram, Pinterest, Flickr
- ◆ News Aggregation: Digg, Reddit
- ◆ Online Gaming: World of Warcraft

The New Approach to Branding and Communication – Moving Beyond Marketing

Social media has paved the way to a more powerful communication channel for companies to publish their marketing messages – all without the exorbitant cost. While we all know social networks is generally used by businesses to engage their target market and study consumer preferences and behaviors, the truth is, it has other equally powerful features that you can incorporate into your marketing strategy, with highly rewarding payoff at that.

Here are other areas in your business that you can apply social media to drive success:

- ◆ **Customer Service** – One ideal example of this is Best Buy. With their Twelpforce, employees are empowered to provide prompt assistance on issues and queries. The ability to respond and react quickly is very critical in today’s market, especially in influencing and changing perceptions. Even if a concern has not been resolved immediately, customers will feel their issues were acknowledged and given attention in a timely manner.
- ◆ **Internal Communications and Collaboration** – Small and large organizations can largely benefit from social media, in terms of file sharing, collaborative editing and knowledge sharing.
- ◆ **Recruitment and Retention** – A lot of employees today decide if they want to be a part of an organization or not based on information derived from social networks. It can also present a powerful tool in sourcing social channels that exists through professional networks.

Understanding the Social Media Ecosystem

To effectively use social media to your full advantage, it is important to take time and learn how the ecosystem works and the emerging habits of the “social consumers.” Consider each social networking site as a town and the ecosystem basically pertains to the infrastructure of that town.

Your knowledge of the ecosystem will provide you a virtual map to navigate your way around the streets and how to find the path towards connecting with your target market. According to the latest study conducted by Chadwick Martin Bailey, consumers who are both Twitter followers and Facebook fans of a certain brand will not only recommend it

products or services but also buy from those brands. In the same study, consumers reveal that brands that do not engage in social media are perceived as “out of touch” and outdated.

So the main idea here is to focus your social media efforts on the power users who command influence within their social networks. However, it is also important to note that connecting with medium and light users will also help your business earn social proof and trust.

Converting Leads to Sales: The ROI of Social Media

Like any business endeavor, you naturally want to have a fair idea on the return of your investment in social media and not simply jump right in just because it’s the popular thing. The ROI cycle of social media can be separated into 3 stages.

Stage 1: The Launch

At this stage, 100% of your focus is on setting up accounts on the 5 Social Packs: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn and YouTube. While there are a number of other popular social networking sites, the 5 are considered to be the critically important ones. You simply can’t afford not to have presence on all 5 platforms.

The Launch stage is more of executional with the primary goal of getting started. Here are the details of this stage:

Approach: Executional
Objectives: Social Media Presence
Focus: Short-Term
Results: Negligible

At this point, you won’t be able to expect any significant impact or derive results.

Stage 2: Management

At this stage, about 60% of your company’s efforts will be focused on developing the 5 social media sites. About 10% of the focus is directed towards the creative and brand offer and 20% on setting up quantitative metrics like inbound links, traffic, Facebook “likes,” etc. The remaining 10% will be focused on qualitative metrics such as survey results, pools and studying brand sentiment.

Approach: Tactical
Objectives: Customer Engagement
Focus: Mid-Term
Results: Increase in Traffic

Stage 3: Optimization

During the Optimization stage, 25% of the focus is on gaining more leverage on all 5 social media platforms, and 30% will be distributed to creative and brand offer development, as well as the quantitative and qualitative metrics. The other 25% of the focus will be directed to improving the conversion rate and the optimization of campaigns. The remaining 20% will be used to measure success of the campaign which will be the basis of your ROI.

Approach: Strategic
Objectives: Social Media ROI
Focus: Long-Term
Results: Increase in Revenue

Despite what many social experts claim that ROI of social media cannot be measured, there is actually a way to measure it. This process will require a better understanding of your customer lifetime value (CLV) or the average revenue generated by a customer during their entire engagement period with your products and services. This figure will be used to compare the results that have been generated on your campaign in social media.

For example:

If a typical customer spends about \$10 every month on a particular product and has been a loyal patron of a certain brand for about 3 years, this equates to the average customer lifetime value of \$360.00.

Most companies are willing to spend about 10% of their CLV for the acquisition of new customers. This means, they are willing to spend \$36 to acquire a new customer who is expected to spend \$360 all throughout her engagement with the brand.



So if your social media efforts will cost you \$36,000 for one full year, and your campaign will be able to generate 1,000 new customers every year, then you definitely have a clear winner in your hands.

Chapter 2: Developing a Winning Social Media Marketing Plan

First, here is a quick glimpse on some revealing social media statistics:

- ◆ **Facebook** – According to ExactTarget, the primary reason why people “LIKE” a Facebook page is to establish a sales relationship with a specific brand, through the following: to receive promotions and coupons (40%), derive instant updates on upcoming sales (30%), and to show support for certain brands or companies (30%)
- ◆ **Twitter** – According to Edison Research, 40% of the total time people are on Twitter are spent on learning about certain products and services or reading/getting feedback from what others have to say about them as well as share personal opinions and experiences.

Social Media is all About Building Relationships

As more and more companies and brands readily include their product offers in the social media experience, a growing number of consumers have grown increasingly comfortable with the idea of social commerce.

Given the promising potential of social media, it is important to have a flexible marketing strategy in place that can grow and adjust with the ever changing trend. By taking time to develop processes from both the corporate and the individual standpoint, you will be able to sustain healthy social engagement activities over time. You can do this by building communities and relationships by listening, responding and creating value.

7 Essential Steps for Creating a Successful Social Media Strategy

According to the Social Media Marketing Report for 2010, an estimated 67% of marketers have actively increased and strengthened their social media channels. As more and more companies work on integrating social media into their corporate marketing and communication plans, there is a growing emphasis for creating a winning social media strategy. Without any semblance of a plan or strategy, your presence might as well be nonexistent or muted.

But how do you exactly develop a strategy to best cater to the unique behavior and characteristics of your niche? Here is a 7-step guide to make sure you hit the ground running on your social media campaign:

First, An Important Prerequisite

If you are working for a big company or organization, before you start formulating your social media strategy, it is absolutely critical for the stakeholders of the business to believe in the potential of social media and that the primary goal is not just to simply sell products and services.

Your company should not launch a social media campaign to join the bandwagon and in response to the fact that everyone else is doing it. Social media is not a temporary marketing gimmick or project with an expiry date, but a long-term commitment with invaluable benefits. It is important for organizations to recognize that constant testing and experimentation are required every so often to study the effectiveness.

Now that we have that covered, here the 7 critically important steps to guide you through developing your very own social media strategy:

- 1. Define Your Goals and Objectives.** Determine what are your specific social media objectives and goals and how they complement and support the overall goals of the company.
- 2. Research, Research and More Research.** Don't make the mistake of simply jumping the in with a sea of competition and discerning consumers without having any clue. Research is very important as basis for execution. This will include the action plan for the 5 major social media platforms. Take time to check out what's out there, scope the competition and understand your target audience.
- 3. Prepare a Database of Contacts and Content.** If you go about your social media campaign correctly, social relationships will start to develop naturally. Start establishing connections by following conversations relevant to your branding. Make

a list that will identify the key influencers and power users that play important role in your industry.

4. **Join Conversations to Start Developing and Forging Relationships.** Start answering questions relevant to your industry, give your opinion and join a community. This will not only help you start your network, it will also help you build your reputation as an industry expert and a thought leader.
5. **Strengthen Your Social Media Relationships.** Don't just hide behind an avatar or brand, make your presence known by attending events that encourage face-to-face interactions. This includes offline events that are relevant to your industry.
6. **Take Time to Measure Results.** You have already established your goals and objectives, right? It is equally important to measure your success. Among the most common goals include:
 - ◆ Enhance brand presence across social media platforms
 - ◆ Increase traffic to company website
 - ◆ Increase positive consumer sentiment and perception towards brand
 - ◆ Develop relationships for potential partnership opportunities in the future
7. **Analyze, Adjust and Improve.** Once you have measured your success and progress towards your goal, you need to analyze and identify key areas that need improvement, adapt to changing trends and improve your overall social media campaign. Remember, it is not always a straight road ahead, so you need to constantly evaluate and adjust.

The Golden Rules of Social Media

Social media is very complex and a constantly evolving medium. It's no wonder why many businesses struggle to figure it out and keep up. While a number have enjoyed quantifiable success, there are also many who failed, and the rest have still yet to figure out their social media strategy.

Failure is often brought about by overlooking the importance of understanding the concept of social media. The very basic question as to "why people engage in it?" as well as "what are the unwritten rules governing it?" While it is true that social media gives businesses free exposure, many organizations fail to carefully plan the message they want to convey, as they would have normally done for any expensive ad campaign.

Consider this: In the joint study conducted by Facebook and Nielsen back in 2010, the report revealed that the following benchmarks are used on social media for enterprise: brand awareness, ad recall and purchase intent. It is not surprising to note that in the study, it was

found out that social media has been able to generate significantly far better results than traditional marketing approaches and campaigns.

Much like dating, any organization needs to woo, nurture and meet the needs of their network. To help you out, below are the following rules that apply to any type of social media user, whether individual, business or non-profit. If you seriously want to harness a powerful platform to propel your business, acquire new clients, increase sales as well as enhance brand awareness, here are the golden rules you should abide by and respect:

Social media is all about building relationships, not business transactions. Any attempt to overtly sell a certain product or service can easily damage your online presence. Consumers no longer have to think of excuses and come up with a polite “no” to a persuasive sales person, all they have to do is to click the “unfollow” button. Don’t make the blunder of using an autoresponder to thank individuals who decided to follow you on Twitter.

Organizations must assign a dedicated social media expert. Don’t make the mistake of assigning anyone to handle your social media campaign. The person must be qualified and work independently as a social media evangelist and report directly to top executives.

Organizations should focus on cultivating engagement and not on figures. The number of followers, likes and the size of network should not be considered as a performance indicator. There is greater value in maintaining a smaller network with regular interactions and active engagements.

Define your target audience and identify specific area of expertise. Don’t try to cater everyone by being all things to all people. If you are truly keen to reaching power users, key decision makers and influencers, your content should be designed around your market.

Content still reigns supreme in social media. As stated, social media is not a place to publish your award-winning sales pitches. Posts should be clear and concise, not emotional or impulsive. It should be carefully constructed and always politically correct. Twitter posts in particular should be free from any gimmicks or hidden strings attached but instead provide information, free resources and best practices.

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Updates should be frequent and consist. Social media campaigns are long-term and ongoing efforts, and work as an integral part of the company's online presence. It is not an 8 to 5 weekday job. It is generally best for posts and updates are published daily, no more than 7 to 9 times.

Social media platforms should be manifested. All social media streams and accounts should be lined to all pages of the website, include all the "like," "follow" and "tweet" buttons.

Social media profiles MUST be impeccable. Profiles are the first and most viewed page in social media platforms. But all too often, it is the most ignored aspect. All elements, including background, images and messages should be consistent with the corporate image and brand.

Chapter 3: Set up and Manage a Facebook Page That Works

Facebook is perhaps the most famous global phenomenon that continues to grow exponentially since its launch. Originally designed for college students, we don't need statistics to prove that Facebook has moved leaps and bounds beyond its original use. Over time, it is recognized as an extremely powerful networking medium for businesses.

What Is It?

Facebook is a type of social networking service launched way back in February 2004, and is privately owned and operated by Facebook, Inc. Recent reports as of February 2012, Facebook has reached an astonishing 845 million active users. To use its services, users need to register and create profiles, exchange messages, post statuses, upload photos, chat with friends and so much more. From a simple social medium it has evolved into a widely popular professional networking site.

Why Use It?

- ◆ **Great Exposure.** With millions of users, Facebook offers unrivalled potential for exposure. When used strategically and consistently, Facebook can contribute to the significant increase in your company's online presence and visibility. Post comments, provide insights, advice and tips to earn respect and credibility in your network, and ultimately gain leverage.
- ◆ **Improve Google Rank.** With Facebook's "Pages" application, you can create a professional profile for products, services and business. Within these pages, you are provided with the option to include links to your website and "like" buttons. This helps drive traffic towards your website and generate more interest.
- ◆ **Powerful Marketing Platform for Free.** Facebook use, as you already know is absolutely free of charge. It allows you to reach out to hundreds, even thousands of

people with a host of user-friendly applications and tools you can use to market products and services.

- ◆ **Targeted AD Space.** For a reasonable fee, you can also create ads and target them to reach specific gender, location and age group, as well as track its performance.
- ◆ **Provide Regular Updates.** Facebook offers you a convenient way to update your network on new products, promotions, and general information about your company to stay fresh and relevant in the minds of your market.
- ◆ **Facilitate Online Discussions to Gain Valuable Inputs.** Use newsgroups and networks as a venue to discuss, and respond to comments and inquiries. It can also be a great source of constructive feedback to help you enhance your products or services.
- ◆ **Stay Connected and Nurture Relationships.** Provide useful information to your fans and network on a regular basis. This includes helpful how-to videos and other relevant content which your market may enjoy.
- ◆ **Enhance Customer Service.** Consumers these days prefer real-time response to queries and concerns. The Facebook page for your business offers a convenient and accessible option for your market to reach you.

Setting Up

Creating a Facebook Page (also known as Brand Page) can provide you a powerful tool to interact with your market on a different level that traditional media will not be able to provide. By helping your customers gain a close connection with your corporate brand, you can turn them into loyal patrons and unpaid brand ambassadors.

To get started, follow the simple steps:

1. If you don't have an existing account, sign up for one. If you already have one, log in and click "Pages" button located on the left-hand side of the screen.
2. Select what type of Facebook page you want to create, such as Brand, Company, Institution and Organization.
3. Fill in all the specific information.
4. Agree to the detailed Facebook Pages Terms.
5. Enter all the relevant information required. Once you have indicated the specific category of your business, you can start customizing your page. Facebook walks you through the entire customization process by providing you a list of pending things you should complete to get started.
6. Upload a company image or logo, which you can also include website, tagline, and Twitter page, along with other social media pages you maintain.
7. Save your settings.

Configuring and Optimizing

- ◆ **Add content.** Include key information such as website links, location, business hours, and photos/products/menus so people will have a general idea what your business is all about. Focus on providing brief but engaging information under Info tab. Think SEO and use keywords since each tab can be indexed by search engines.

Power Tip: If you will key in your website URL starting with <http://> in the info box right under the profile picture, Facebook will automatically turn it into a clickable link. This will allow you to conveniently refer visitors to your website, twitter account or company blog.

- ◆ **Claim your place.** Connect your Facebook Page to your physical store location people can find you as well as check in.
- ◆ **Invite your customers.** Invite current customers to like your page. You can send out newsletters, advertise in your website, post links, or promote in-store through flyers, etc.

Power Tip: The efficient way to set up your Facebook Page and add existing clients is to create a separate Gmail account for your Facebook account. Import the email addresses of your clients there. When you create your Facebook Page, the system will automatically find your clients from your address book and suggest them as your friends.

- ◆ **Add the “LIKE” button in your website.** To effectively promote your Facebook page, add the like button in your website and blogs so people can engage with your Page as well as share it with their own network.

Engage Your Customers

- ◆ **Interact and join conversations.** Maximize visibility and presence by posting regular updates on your wall about your business. You can also provide exclusive offers that will generate interest and comments and drive active engagement.
- ◆ **Build deeper relationships.** Use this opportunity to get to know your loyal client base or “fans” and go out of your way to make them feel at home by responding to comments in a timely manner.

- ◆ **Gain valuable insights.** Learn and study how your audience interact and make the necessary adjustments to increase and encouragement more engagement.

Promote Your Business

- ◆ **Create Ads.** Make use of Facebook Ads to promote your business and get the word out based on your targeted criteria like location, interest, age group, etc.
- ◆ **Run Sponsored Stories.** Set up Sponsored Stories, so you can encourage friends/fans to spread the good word about your business to their network. Remember, word of mouth marketing is twice as effective when it comes to driving results compared to traditional advertising.

Stand Out from the Crowd

- ◆ **Get a vanity URL.** Instead of the unappealing “3267783386?ref=sg&ajaxpe=1&_a=7” URL, customize it into something for professional, like <http://facebook.com/mybusiness.name>. To be able to do this, you need to have at least 25 fans.
- ◆ **Customize landing page.** To stand out, you need to have an attractive and striking landing page, which can significantly help visitors become fans of your page.

Power Tip: If you don't have access to web design skills, you can purchase a Facebook template from templates stores.

More Tips on Promoting Your Facebook Page

1. Using your social media Manager:

- ◆ Actively add people that can potentially become customers or those who related to your specific line of business.
- ◆ Use the Search function to discover relevant or related pages, events, people, groups and even messages. This can also be used to keep track of any brand mentions as well as provide timely feedback.
- ◆ Communicate. It's an interactive page, so make sure to answer back.

Power Tip: When you are composing a post or message, put an @ sign and type in your business page so you can mention it. You can even use this as a signature for your regular updates.

2. Cheat a little.

Ask employees and fellow staff members to post comments and “likes” on your status updates in order to boost rankings. Status updates that has 5 or more comments and “likes” can show up in the Top News section. This will also help make your Facebook wall more alive and inspire fans to participate in conversations and be more active.

3. Fill your Page with media content

- ◆ Encourage fans to post photos of how they use your products and/or services
- ◆ Upload photos of your products and/or services, including your team and office so fans can easily relate to you.
- ◆ Upload photos of events you hosted and tag your fans
- ◆ Post videos that features any of your team members talks
- ◆ Use video to respond and entertain your fans
- ◆ Show your products and/or services in action

5. Treat your fans.

It is important to reward your fans with special or exclusive offers every now and then. You can reward loyalty by offering discounts limited only to Facebook fans.

6. Keep your fans updated.

Direct messages are very powerful, but make sure not to abuse it. Before you send messages to your fans, think twice. Your updates should be valuable and a welcome news since your goal is to inform and engage and not irritate.

7. Ask your fans for help.

Seek help from your fans in building your community using “Suggest to Friends” and “Share” tools.

8. Build partnerships with other Facebook pages.

Each page on Facebook feature a function called "Add to my Page's Favorites" button. Any "favourited" page will have their logo displayed in the “Favorite Pages” featured on your Facebook page.

9. Use applications.

There are some really useful apps on Facebook that you can readily use to promote your company or brand. You can conduct polls, quizzes, and games where people can play against each other and outrank. There are even apps for giveaways and sweepstakes – something most consumers love to participate in.

10. Spy!

Yes, you also need to keep an eye on your competitors, most especially those that are highly successful in their own campaigns. Check out what they are doing every now and then and study their strategies. If you choose to copy, make sure you offer the better version.

Chapter 4: Tweet Your Way to Online Prominence

Twitter's simple question: "What are you doing?" has certainly generated a lot of response since its launch. From teenagers, to professionals, celebrities, politicians, corporate bigwigs – you name it, everyone is on Twitter. With the quick and frequent exchange of ideas, opinions, answers, Twitter has created a whole new universe for people from different social backgrounds, status and interest to stay connected through a more open line of communication.

Understanding the Twitter Phenomenon

What is Twitter? This is another popular social networking and micro blogging service that allows its users to send and read text-based posts or "tweets" of up to 140 characters. Twitter was created by Jack Dorsey back in March 2006 and was officially launched in July of the same year. Since then, the service has gained worldwide popularity and currently has 300 million users, generating more than 300 million tweets as well as handling more than 1.6 billion search queries every single day. Twitter has been described as the "SMS of Internet."



Twitter offers a combination of different forms of communication – text, photos, music, videos – evolving from everyday life experiences to interesting contents, newsworthy events and crisis. Conversations can revolve on hot topics using hashtags and users can post and view updates, follow other users as well as send public replies or private messages to

connect and communicate with other users. Over the years, the Twitter ecosystem has grown dramatically, enabling users to search for people, news or subjects.

Why Use it?

- ◆ **Connect with your customers.** This is the primary reason why you should make use of twitter for your business. Twitter has become so much a part of everyone's daily routine, it's the perfect venue to connect, interact, and study your target marker. **Branding.** In Twitter, you don't have to be in the league of Nike, Dell or Starbucks to brand and generate interest. In fact, it presents the best platform for small businesses and startups to reach their target niche.
- ◆ **Customer feedback.** If any customer is dissatisfied with a certain product or service, he/she will no doubt tweet about it. In this sense, Twitter is a reliable resource to derive feedbacks and opinions, as well as study consumer behaviors and preferences.
- ◆ **Marketing.** With its wide reach, you can use Twitter to market products and/or services to a wider market and the best part is, it's free.
- ◆ **News.** Twitter is the best and fastest way to publish latest updates about your company – without the need to compose long, elaborate content.
- ◆ **Marketing schemes and promotions.** If you have existing promos and exclusive deals, let your network know about it. Everyone loves a good deal. In fact, a lot of companies have conducted contests and promos exclusively for their Twitter followers to engage their market.
- ◆ **Twitter is viral.** Once you have managed to gain a degree of popularity, you will discover how viral it can be. This can become a strategic edge for your marketing campaigns.
- ◆ **Spy on the competition.** You don't just gain insights on customers and target market, you can also read and study what the competition is doing, what are their weaknesses based on complaints and work on positioning yourself to provide a better alternative.
- ◆ **Increase sales.** Yes, Twitter can significantly help in increasing sales. According to a report published by Mashable, Dell has raked in a whopping \$6.5 in sales through Twitter.
- ◆ **Brand loyalty.** In any business, you want to aim for long-term use of your products and/or services instead of one-time purchases. By engaging your clients and providing prompt value-added service, you will be able to retain customers and enjoy loyal patronage.
- ◆ **Networker's paradise.** Connect with industry leaders, the movers and shakers and influential personalities relevant to the industry you operate in. If you have attended

networking events in the past and have enjoyed decent results for your company, just imagine what Twitter can do for you.

- ◆ **Generate website traffic.** When done perfectly, Twitter can be a great and effective tool to generate more interest and attract targeted market to visit your website or blog which can translate to sales leads, and ultimately convert to sales.
- ◆ **Thought Leadership.** Twitter is a perfect venue to showcase your skills and expertise and provide sound advice, opinions and help resolve problems to gain more credibility as a thought leader.

How to Build and Attract Followers

As you might have already guessed, Twitter has become an indispensable social media tool to drive your business forward. It is not your typical fly by night trend that will eventually disappear into oblivion. Since its launch, it is this in its upswing. To be able to take full advantage of the full potential of Twitter, you need to carefully plan out your strategies.

Getting Started

1. **Conduct an initial search.** Create your Twitter account and use the Twitter search to check out the buzz about your name or brand, your direct competitors and other relevant words that relate to your company, products and/or services.
2. **Add a photo.** It's unappealing to interact with anyone without any photo. If you have established decent brand recognition, you can use your logo, or if you are a startup or a small organization, it is generally best to use a personal photo.
3. **Start joining conversations and talk to people about their interest.** This will convey a more personalized appeal that shows the human side behind a brand, product or service. (@wholefoods is does this quite well)
4. **Generate interest.** Post interesting things that relate to your industry, and not just about your company, products or services. This can include latest news, policies, and developments, among others.
5. **Entertain to engage.** Share interesting and fascinating links that will entertain and spur interest.
6. **Use a proactive approach.** When handling complaints, don't get stuck on the vicious cycle of apologizing. Instead be helpful and offer immediate resolution, tips and guidelines. (@jetblue is does this quite well by providing travel tips and advisories)
7. **Say no to blatant marketing.** Don't make the mistake of overselling your products and/or services. Others will either tune you out or hit the "unfollow" button.
8. **Become more human.** Promote interesting outside of work stories of your employees and major stakeholders. (@TheHomeDepot does this quite well)

9. **Introduce personalities.** Add in a few personalities to work along with the brand, such as RichardAtDELL, MaxeneAtDELL, etc.
10. **Really communicate.** Take time to also talk about non-business topics too.

What to Tweet About

- ◆ Instead of answering Twitter's question, "What are you doing?" you can choose to answer the question, "What has caught your attention?"
- ◆ Aside from a business Twitter account, have other Twitter users in your company. People can quit, take vacations, etc.
- ◆ When promoting a particular blog post, don't just dump the link. You can either ask a question or explain what's coming up next.
- ◆ Ask questions and encourage your followers to share their opinions.
- ◆ Follow interesting and popular people. If you come across users who tweet interesting things, check out who he/she follows and follow them as well.
- ◆ Tweet about other people instead of simply focusing on you, your company, your brands or products. Twitter is not for selling and it has a more intrinsic impact on your business. Work on giving a face or personality behind a brand to engage your followers.
- ◆ When you happen to talk about your company, products or services, make sure it's useful. You can deliver it in a form, of advice, pictures, blog posts that offer insightful content.
- ◆ Don't flood timelines and tweet too much. It may easily annoy followers. As a general rule of the thumb, tweet at least 8 times in a day and no more than 15 times.

More Practical Tips

- ◆ You don't have to read every single tweet.
- ◆ You don't have to reply to every single @ tweet that has been directed to you.
- ◆ Choose direct messaging options if exchanges with other people do not have value to other Twitter followers.
- ◆ Regularly check out Twitter search function to find out if there are people talking about you, your brand, company, products and services.
- ◆ One great way to build community in Twitter is to respond to tweets as well as retweet other user's posts.

Power Tips

- ◆ Post some good, intelligent tweets before following anyone.
- ◆ Complete your profile information.
- ◆ Add Twitter feed to other social media profiles and blogs.
- ◆ Reply to people who are following you, and most especially to those who don't.

Creating your Twitter account is just the start of your journey. To get the best results, Twitter, along with other social media platform should be an ongoing thing.

Chapter 5: Build Your Network with LinkedIn

Most people use LinkedIn in order to “link to someone” to form a partnership, make a sale, or get a job. Given its continuing success, it works quite well to that many professions from rank and file, to consultants, CEO and business magnates maintain an account, representing 130 different industries across the globe. However, to date, LinkedIn still remains an underutilized tool as many of its users have not fully explored its full potential and maximize its benefits.

What is LinkedIn?

LinkedIn was launched back in 2003 and since then it has become the world's largest and most popular professional networking site. An estimated 1 million new members join this social media platform every week. People generally connect on LinkedIn with people that they personally or professionally know. However, unlike Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn is perceived to be more business focused.

LinkedIn presents a great venue for its users to make or establish second or third-degree introductions and connections, which can be useful when trying to grow a business or when looking for a job, recruiting talent or seeking other employment opportunities.

To date, LinkedIn maintains over 85 million members across more than 200 countries, which includes top executives from almost every Fortune 500 companies.

Why Use It?

- ◆ **Increase visibility.** By establishing connections, you also increase your exposure and visibility. Whether you offer a product or service or both, your profile may be made available to people interested in doing business with, forging partnerships or hiring services.
- ◆ **Improve network.** Connect with people from past acquaintances, people from your school, past companies, affiliations, and those who share your passions and interests.
- ◆ **Improve Google PageRank.** LinkedIn allows its users to publish and make their profile information available for search engines to index. LinkedIn profiles rank high in Google, so it's a great and effective way to influence other people's perception when they search for you.
- ◆ **Enhance search engine results.** Aside from your personal profile, you can promote your company website and blog to search engines through your LinkedIn account through the pre-selected categories such as "My Website" and "My Company."
- ◆ **Scope out the competition, partners and customers.** LinkedIn is one perfect way to keep tabs on your competition as well as partners and customers.
- ◆ **Highlight recommendations and reviews.** LinkedIn is more like a living, breathing resume of professionals that comes complete with recommendations from people you have worked with and worked for in the past. This presents a wonderful opportunity to secure business reviews as well as the specific products and services you offer.

Getting Started on LinkedIn

Some people associate LinkedIn as a go-to platform for people seeking employment. It is certainly more than that. It is a great way to build portfolio and reputation, as well as connect with like-minded individuals to promote your brand, products or services. To get started, here are some basic guidelines:

1. Enter your basic information.
2. Select "Join Now" after which you will be redirected to a second screen where you enter your personal information including professional status, company, job title, location, including pertinent information such as websites and other social media accounts.
3. Select "Create My profile." You will then be given an opportunity to search for people you already know based on your email contacts.

Customizing Your Account

When it comes to ensuring the effectiveness of your LinkedIn Page, relevance is key to establishing and maintaining strong connections. You will want to take time to customize your LinkedIn profile for a number of reasons. Social media accounts for business should be created in line with the business purpose in mind.

When creating your profile, you want to attract a particular audience. If you will check out the profiles of CFOs and compare it with community managers, you will immediately recognize the difference. So when customizing your LinkedIn profile, make sure to keep your target audience in mind.

Here are the areas you need to customize:

- ◆ **Summary.** This section should showcase your skills, assets and expertise in three to five short paragraphs. Create content that will grab attention and generate interest on the exceptional highlights of your professional career. Highlight achievements and specialties using concise words. You can use bullet points to make it more readable and drive more emphasis.

- ◆ **Professional Headline.** This appears similar to the description you have indicated in your “Current Position” unless you change it. This one appears below your name.

- ◆ **Add a Photo.** If you have other social networking accounts, you probably don’t accept connections with people who don’t display their profile photos, right? The same applies with LinkedIn accounts. Make sure to choose a close up headshot photo that best represents you professionally. Remember, you are your own brand, so make sure your photo demonstrates that. If you are an executive, a photo with a shirt and a cap somehow doesn’t add up.

- ◆ **Experience/Work History.** Since LinkedIn is a professional networking site, make sure to highlight your best work experiences. This is an opportunity to showcase your successes. While you are not limited with the number of words you can use, make sure to keep it concise so you won’t lose the attention of your audience. To guide you, here are some of the important elements you should include:
 1. List of completed projects
 2. Highlights of your position’s successes
 3. Describe your strengths
 4. List down all your accomplishments and not your responsibilities

5. If possible, include monetary benefits of your expertise and efforts, especially if you are in marketing, sales or business development
- ◆ **Recommendations.** Allow others rave about your character and capabilities with recommendations or through endorsements. You have the ability to approve and manage your recommendations so be sure to only approve the positive feedbacks. If you don't have any endorsements, you can ask someone, like a colleague, happy client or past employer.
 - ◆ **Skills.** What is it that you do that's different? Your personal skills are those that make your marketable.
 - ◆ **Certifications, Licenses and Accreditations.** Make sure to take time and fill this section as this can help validate your capabilities and expertise.
 - ◆ **Publications.** If you have written works that has been published, include a brief description and a URL.

How to Get the Most Out of Your LinkedIn Connections

After you have established your network, it's time to make sure your connections work for you. Here are some helpful tips:

1. **Ask and answer questions.** While you are signed up, you will be able to see a list of questions posted by anyone in your own extended network. Participate in these exchanges to build your reputation and gain more trust. It is also a good idea to ask questions.
2. **Recommend your colleagues.** In LinkedIn, recommendations work as a primary form of currency. Make recommendations for people you have had good experiences with. They will naturally return the favor.
3. **Learn more about your network.** Study the people within your network by reading their profiles. This can be a great basis for discussion and a foundation to build relationships on.

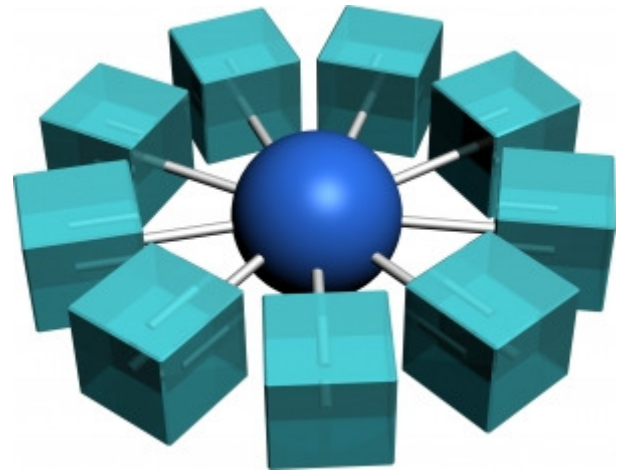
Chapter 6: Expanding Your Circle with Google +

Before its launch, there have been a lot of talks generated by Google+, mostly because it is from Google itself, the kind in search engine. Since then it has become an integral part of many social media campaigns.

What is Google+?

Google+ is a social layer or network launched by Google back in July 2011 for limited testing. Users are able to configure and create circles to categorize people they are connected with into different groups, as a way of reproducing their real-life relationships.

Google+ has a number of cutting edge features, which include Hangouts, which is a multi-person video chat. Users can start a Hangout with any of existing Circles. Another great feature is Sparks, which basically enables a user to locate specific items of interest based on web-based topics.



Several months after it's launched, Google+ was able to amass 40 million registered users, which is almost one third that of LinkedIn's 135 million members. Despite its growth, it is far from surpassing Facebook, but the figures are certainly not to be ignored.

Why Use It?

- ◆ **Free SEO Boost.** Businesses can use search referrals for conversions. Google+ is built to influence search for people who have included a certain business in their Circle. This offers a great opportunity to get free promotion from people who like and use the product to people who share similar interests.

- ◆ **Host Hangouts.** The powerful chat function presents a great opportunity for businesses in engaging their customers and thought leaders in a more personal way. In addition, companies that operate from multiple locations can conveniently collaborate and share information and files such as spreadsheets and documents.
- ◆ **Expand Distribution of Content.** Google+ is a great platform to expand the publication of content distribution. It can be a great way tool to hosts contest and giveaways along with other promotions.
- ◆ **Connect with Tech-Savvy Audience.** People who are in Google+ are the “early adopters” of new technologies, a criterion which presents an ideal target market for many businesses.
- ◆ **Segment Your Audience.** One great advantage of Google+ is the option to share content with specific audiences through Circles. This makes it easier for businesses to segment their market and share content to certain followers.
- ◆ **Expand Your Network.** Be able to gather data and research on relevant contacts like potential clients and influential personalities in the industry.

Getting Started

1. **Optimize Your Page.** As stated, one of the most powerful features of Google+ is the Google search function so if you will want to make sure your page can be easily found in both regular search engine and internal search. Perform the following:
 - ◆ **Verify page with Google.** Unlike Twitter that requires a unique handle, there can be a number of pages that may have similar name as yours. Google has provided a way to verify the page to be the “official” page for a specific brand, which will be given top priority in search rankings.
 - ◆ **Add a subtitle.** Google+ allows you to place a tag line or subtitle under your brand name, with only the first 10 words visible in the header section and 21 characters are shown in pop-ups when users mouser over your page. So make sure to keep this in mind when creating your subtitle.
 - ◆ **Write a compelling introduction.** This is the prime spot on your page so make sure to use SEO-rich keywords that can be easily indexed at the same time you also need to make sure it conveys the image and message you have in mind to your audience.
2. **Upgrade the Visual Appeal of Your Page.** Make the right first impression every time people come to visit your page. You need to grab their attention and interest enough to prompt them to click and add you to their Circles.

Social Media in Plain English

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- ◆ Maximize the creative use of Scrapbook photos
 - ◆ Take advantage of rich-text editor
3. **Post with Quality Content.** Before you even have your first follower, you need to have at least 3 to 4 posts since this can help enhance first real impression. Perform the following for your posts:
- ◆ Use formatting options to create posts that will look like blog posts.
 - ◆ Use videos and photos.
4. **Start Attracting Followers.** Now that you have optimized your page, you can now open your Google business page for business. Hit the ground running by performing the following:
- ◆ Promote your page using other social media channels
 - ◆ Promote your Google page on your website
 - ◆ Post content on a regular basis
 - ◆ Follow back anyone who Circle you
 - ◆ Create VIP circles and engagers
 - ◆ Regularly monitor your comments and streams

Your Google+ profile will influence the way people will perceive your brand so make sure you give it as much attention as with the other social media platforms you maintain.

Chapter 7: Captivate Your Audience with YouTube

While YouTube is widely popular as a form of entertainment, don't make the mistake of overlooking its significant benefits. It is more than just posting music videos, memorable moments and embarrassing events, as it is originally made popular.



More and more businesses and professionals have recognized YouTube as a powerful platform to launch themselves into stardom. While your business may not gain the same global popularity and overnight success of Justin Beiber, your business will be able to generate a good amount of interest. How? You can use videos to show off your expertise and share knowledge as well as market your products and connect with prospects, customers and colleagues.

What is YouTube?

YouTube is a web-based service that allows its users to post video files and share it with the rest of the world. Founded by the authors behind equally successful Paypal, the very first public version was released in November 2005. Since then, its popularity steadily grew and by the first quarter of 2006, it hosted 65,000 video files. By 2007, YouTube was recognized as the website with the highest amount of traffic that any other site on the web. In October of 2006, it was acquired by Google in the tune of \$1.6 billion. This is considered a very viable deal since YouTube's advertising returns is reported to rake in \$ 200 million every year. At this time, YouTube is enjoying millions of visits from all other the world daily.

Why Use It?

YouTube offers a cost-effective marketing platform for businesses. It is to date the cheapest form of advertising channel. Companies from various industries are using web videos as part of their marketing content to reach out to current as well as potential customers. It is now used as a way to build relationships with client base and reap its lucrative benefits as an indirect marketing strategy.

You can use YouTube with the three main goals:

- ◆ Inform
- ◆ Educate
- ◆ Entertain

Here are some ideas on how you can gain better leverage using YouTube:

Thought Leadership and Expertise

- ◆ Upload video recordings of corporate presentations to demonstrate industry authority and enhance credibility.
- ◆ Share slideshows for marketing and advertising purposes
- ◆ Conduct interviews with your own experts
- ◆ Convert podcasts into videos
- ◆ Engage with the online community of YouTube by uploading recorded video responses on specific topics relevant to your business or industry
- ◆ Record corporate meetings to share to stakeholders
- ◆ Provide presentation on upcoming products and features

Marketing and Advertising

- ◆ Put together a video that best showcase and explains your product or service
- ◆ Promote your brand using previous events
- ◆ Introduce some of the people working behind your brand to enhance authenticity
- ◆ Promote your products and services
- ◆ Post links of your videos to other social media platforms
- ◆ Run a contest
- ◆ Add call-to-action overlays to drive traffic to your corporate website
- ◆ Display company information including name, website URL, email address and phone number

Customer Service

- ◆ Create how-to videos to educate costumers on the use of your products and services
- ◆ Answers frequently asked questions using videos
- ◆ Post solutions to common service or product problems
- ◆ Embed video files to your site and blog

How to Maximize YouTube for Tour Business

1. **Good content.** To ensure effectiveness and impact, you want to convey important and accurate information in the most engaging manner so other people will also want to share it to their network
2. **Plan ahead.** Make sure you have a clear idea and vision of what you want to achieve in making the video and what you want to derive from it.
3. **Avoid blatant marketing.** Resist the urge to simply put up your commercial and leave it to do its magic. Keep in mind that people don't visit YouTube to watch commercials, so you need to use a more subtle approach and soft sell by providing information in an entertaining and engaging way.
4. **Ensure high quality production.** Your videos reflect your company so make sure it's of good quality.
5. **Keep it short.** Audiences on YouTube generally have short attention span, so make sure to keep it no less that 2 to 3 minutes. If you have larger topics, cut it into segments.

Optimizing Your YouTube Videos

- ◆ Display links of your video in all your social media platforms include your main site, and blog, Facebook and Google+ page, tweet it and include them in your LinkedIn profiles.
- ◆ Focus on SEO by optimizing text descriptions with keywords and backlinks to your corporate website.
- ◆ Consider buying ads on YouTube if you have the budget. You can purchase specific videos so your video will be among the first results when users will perform a search using that keyword.

A lot of celebrities and companies have successfully generated global interest and fame by using YouTube as their launching pad. Gain strategic edge over your competition in a more creative and engaging way.

Conclusion

There is no longer a question on the power of social media in driving all types of businesses forward. No matter what type of industry you operate in, you will find that you can reap many benefits. With the full understanding of each social media and complete guidelines on how to use them to your advantage, it is now up to you on how you can maximize its benefits for your business.

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