

Beginners Guide To Social Marketing

1. Cost

The number one benefit of social media marketing is the lower cost of entry, when compared to more traditional marketing techniques. Essentially, you are building on the back of your own network of contacts and clients, using that social network to further your campaign.

The tools most associated with social media (Twitter, Facebook, MySpace etc) are, for the most part, free. However, social media marketing is still marketing. You will still need the more traditional spread of tools to measure and analyze your activities.

2. Manage

Simplicity is relative to the abilities of the individual, but social media can be surprisingly simple to manage and maintain. The truly great thing about social media is that it allows you to enter the fray with as large or as small a commitment as you feel is appropriate to you. For the **SME**, here are a few examples of things you can do with social media:

- Support — use websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Ecademy for ad hoc CRM (Customer Relationship Management);
- Publicize — social media allows people to share things of interest with everyone, increasing the visibility of your business and yourself;
- Integrate — add social media into your broader marketing efforts;
- Control — detect and then prevent “leaks” (disclosures) as well as inadvertent privacy violations;
- Enhance — manage your company’s brand and reputation, either proactively as a function of marketing, or reactively as a preventative measure against bad publicity.

So remember the SPICE of social media: Support, Publicize, Integrate, Control and Enhance.

The really great thing about social media is that it has the potential to offer **businesses** a whole new world of opportunities that are affordable, measurable and on an international scale.

3. Reputation

Potential reputation disasters lurk around every corner in any industry. Now more than ever, those office dalliances and glib remarks can be amplified to a deafening and world-echoing level, all thanks to Facebook and Twitter, to name but a few. However, there are ways to keep hold of your reputation on the web and avoid potential digital disasters:

1. Start with training — show employees what damage thoughtless comments on a social network can cause to them, their colleagues and the company.
2. Guidelines — detail the things you expect them not to post about, and the things they can post about.
3. Useful examples — use the example of a guy called Kevin Colvin (a bank intern who's indiscretions caused him great personal embarrassment and eventually cost him his job) to demonstrate the personal impact, his photo appeared in major newspapers around the world, potentially damaging his future career prospects.
4. Refresher training — follow up the training with procedures and guidelines to ensure everyone has the same understanding. The policies should detail the consequences of ignoring them, which could be potentially career-ending.

4. Flexibility

Because social media bestrides so many different disciplines and activities, the sheer number of things you can do promote yourself, your company, a product or service is amazing.

While you can't expect to compete with Microsoft, you can replicate some of their successes on a smaller scale, just by watching what they do:

- Inject an element of fun, fear or controversy into campaigns;
- Offer something unique that you either know or suspect people will find interesting;
- If you're aiming at a younger audience, find out where your audience is and target them on their terms and in their language;
- Viral marketing can be videos like the Cadburys advert with the gorilla playing the drums, which did pretty well on YouTube;
- Also, things like "linkbait" are controversial or wildly unbelievable stories that are so compelling,

news websites want to link to your story, which can massively raise your profile;

- A list of something, such as: “Top 10 worst football moments” which people love because they’re instant and often funny;

- And lastly, give something away for free! Often, this is in the form of shrewd advice, or insider information.

5. Community

Fundamental to any social media strategy is building a community. What you don't want to do is to have to go out there and re-build an audience each and every time you start a new campaign. With social media, you can hang onto some of those people and build your own community, one that ideally intersects others around the world.

Key to maintaining and building that community is a blog for your **business**, and here's some of the benefits:

- Higher search engine rankings — generally speaking, a regular stream of new articles is considered appealing by the search engines, who will pay more attention to your blog or website, ranking you more highly accordingly. The more pages you write, the more there is to be found. However, it’s an exercise in quality not quantity!

- Gaining trust — by writing informative and authoritative articles, over time you’ll build confidence, trust, respect and a sense of “expert status” around your **business**.

- A sense of community — you’re engaging with your customers in a conversational style that’s difficult to replicate by other means. And by allowing people to comment on your articles, you’re encouraging those people to participate, giving them a reason to return. In simple terms, a blog is a great opportunity for you and your staff to quickly share ideas, and maybe also get some feedback from your customers.

- Better communications — a blog is essentially a publishing platform, where you control the content of your articles, and also when those articles get published.

- Cost effective — in terms of communications, blogging is very low cost but has the potential for a high ROI (Return On Investment).

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mentality, writing style, and adeptness at making complex technology issues approachable and accessible.

*Wayne provides consultancy services to a diverse selection of regional, national, and multinational **businesses** from a wide range of industries looking to make the most of their Web presence – particularly those in need of specialized Web applications for **business-to-business** and business-to-consumer services. To his clients, Wayne is considered more of a **business** partner than a supplier. He has earned several qualifications, including an honours degree in industrial design, product design, and electronic media.*

As a business owner especially in the current climate - you'll know how important it is for your business to have a strong online presence.

It's vital you understand the importance of getting your website listed within the search engines when relevant keywords are typed in. After all, most users do not look past page 1 so, if you aren't there you are not harnessing the potential of the web for your company.

Of course it takes a fair bit of effort and understanding in order to achieve desired results and to master SEO.

Let our experts guide you through the basics and help you kick start your SEO journey at [Hit Me! An Introduction To Internet Marketing](#) - Government Grant Available