

# B2B Social Media Marketing Workbook

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## What Is Social Media?

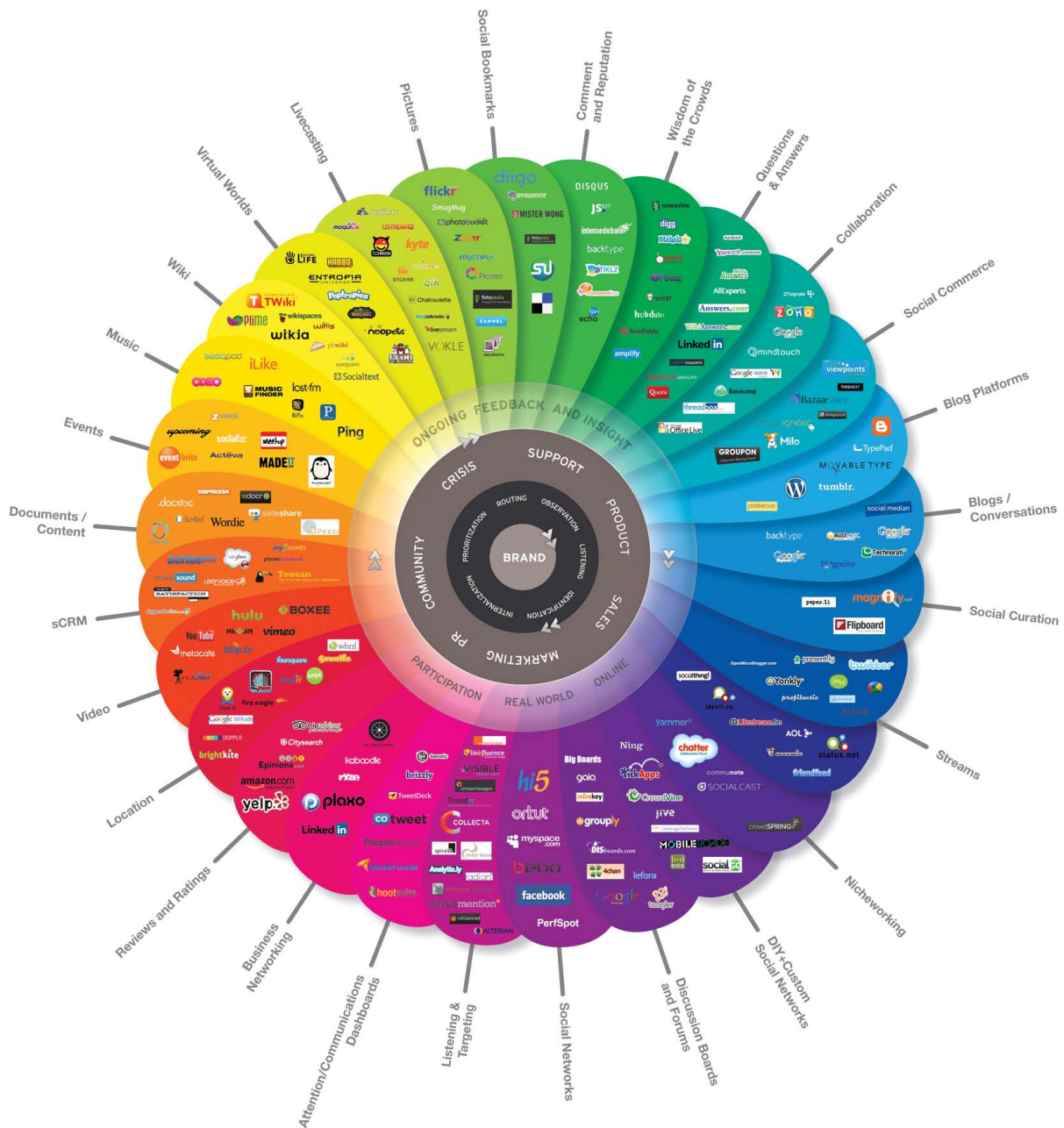
“Social media” is the collective phrase for a relatively new form of online media. A form in which interested parties participate, are open, enjoy conversation and have a sense of community and connectedness.

In contrast to traditional media which is broadcast and is ‘one way’, social media is conversational and is two way.

Basic forms of social media can include social networks, blogs, wikis, podcasts, video sharing, forums, micro blogging and other content communities.

The mainstream social networks like Facebook and Twitter have captured the attention of the world in their scale and levels of participation. This has in turn created a whole new industry which endeavours to leverage the power of these and other forms of social media for commercial purposes.

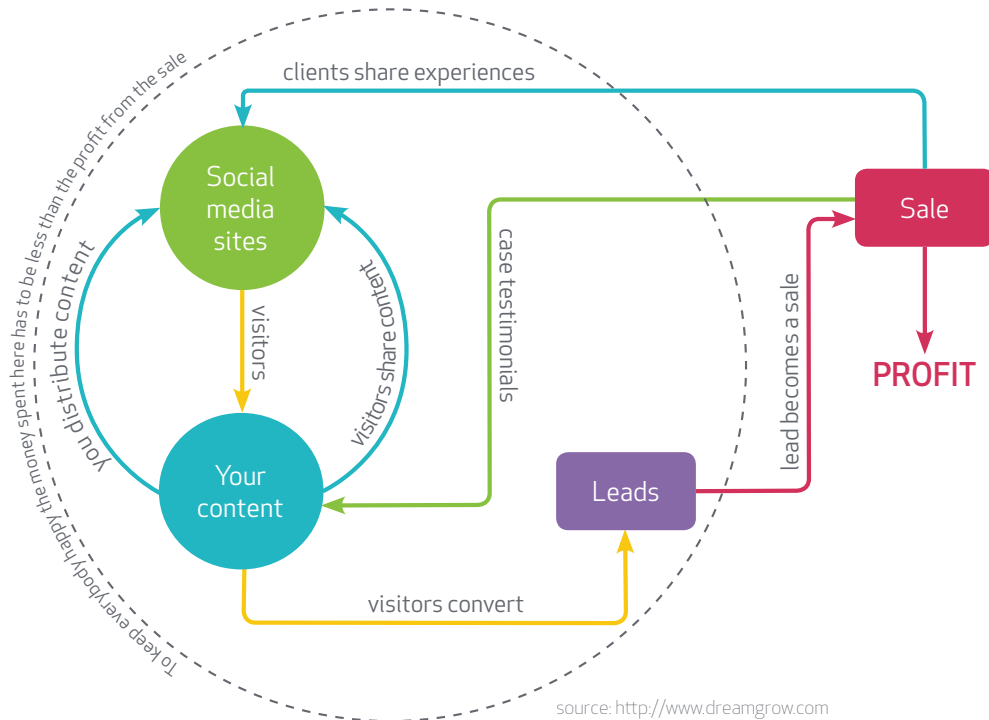
In a business-to-business (B2B) environment social media is rapidly being adopted to help buyers make informed purchasing decisions and connect with the relevant communities to increase their knowledge and plan ahead for their businesses. This presents opportunities to the savvy B2B marketers who correctly engage with their audience.



## Why Should You Bother?

*"It is difficult, indeed dangerous, to underestimate the huge changes this revolution will bring or the power of developing technologies to build and destroy not just companies but whole countries"* – Rupert Murdoch.

*"Social computing is not a fad. Nor is it something that will pass you or your company by. Gradually, social computing will impact almost every role, at every kind of company, in all parts of the world"* – Forrester Research.



## How To Use Social Media

Like it or not social media and social networks are here to stay. Why? It is inherently natural!

- People have been involved with communities, clubs and networks for hundreds of year's offline. Like-minded individuals enjoy sharing knowledge, ideas and product insights.
- Social media is the natural evolution of that sense of community, knowledge sharing and recommendation taken to the online world.
- As a B2B marketer you already know the power of word of mouth or recommendation to help spread the marketing and sales message.
- Online social media marketing lets you be part of the word of mouth process – at scale – to highly targeted groups of individuals, already interested in, or using your product or service.
- If approached correctly this is near utopia for the socially-savvy company.
- Of course things will change and evolve and mature. New networks will spring up, some others will die off. The technology and the medium of social media is growing at an incredibly fast pace.
- Starting your social media efforts now will reap rewards going forward and enable you to be flexible to changes in social media platforms and new technology opportunities as this industry grows and matures.

## Groundwork

Social media requires a reboot of your marketing and strategy. You need to think more SOCIAL than MARKETING. Social media campaigns that are obviously marketing messages are usually doomed to failure especially in a B2B arena.

Your goal when embarking on a social media campaign is to develop an audience of loyal followers that consume your information, hints and tips and help you become an authority in your niche. From this authority comes trust and from the trust will come new business, new leads and new contacts.

The first thing to remember is - do not obsess about the technology or the platforms. Don't get ahead of yourself and think we must get on Twitter or Facebook or LinkedIn, just because everyone else is. Successful social media marketing is 80% strategy and 20% technology. The platform is important, but making sure you focus your efforts on the correct platform is more important.

Many companies think of social media as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. This is a HUGE mistake.

Many thousands of niche social networks exist and don't forget the more obvious side of social media – blogging. By implementing a blog on your website you are enabling social participation on your website – this is a form of social media.

Also think about platforms such as Ning which hosts millions of niche social networks. As an example, visit this social network for Kreg Woodworking Jig Owners (<http://kregjig.ning.com/>). This counts 28,445 members as of 07/04/2011!

By tapping into these less obvious and more niche social environments that are appropriate to your business, your audience is arguably more focused on your message. Furthermore, your message is more relevant, stands less chance of getting lost in the crowd and hence your business stands a greater chance of creating meaningful, long term engagement with potential customers.

Don't dismiss large social networks like Facebook or LinkedIn but don't automatically assume these larger platforms will give you the best return on investment for your social media efforts.

Choosing the platform for your social media activity is a phase two task. Many companies create social profiles that focus on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter without any research to see if they are appropriate for their audience. Check to see if indeed any of your 'target' audience uses them is the most important and critical first step.

Once this has been completed, it is very easy to get carried away and start posting hundreds of posts on all of the social network platforms. The majority of these posts will be superficial in nature and create little value for your audience. It is better to focus on quality and producing content that really helps your audience. Research what questions they are asking. Can you answer those questions in a meaningful non-biased way? If so produce some quality content on your own website that answers these questions and then promote that content subtly via your social media channels.

Think about the power of a community that is actively seeking your products, solutions or services. That community is asking questions that you can answer. Each person in that community is an active participant. They in turn provide recommendations to others. Think of the power of the word of mouth and your company being there at the right time. We all know that trusted recommendations are the most potent, powerful marketing mechanism of them all.

It is also critical to ensure your brand is represented in the best way and that your audience sees your brand exactly how you wish it to be represented. This requires - strategy, policy consistency and commitment to the social media channel. Half-hearted attempts at social media will not work.

Many companies approach social media participation with the mind-set of using minimal resource and minimal effort. The very essence of social = participation. It will require time, effort, planning and commitment over the LONG TERM.

Having said that, don't over analyse, or overdo, or over think social media – it is PART of the marketing mix.

Don't be siloed in your approach to social media – 'it's all about me' type content, blog posts, videos, twitter posts, etc. – will not work. Social media is about 'giving back'. It is a two-way street involving giving away knowledge and expertise for FREE. This is a hard concept to grasp for many marketers and business owners who usually charge by the hour for their expertise. The new social marketing is about trust, knowledge, helpfulness and giving back to the community – this effort is rewarded in terms of a loyal audience, which then leads into customers.

Remember, there are very few social media marketers that REALLY know and have implemented successful social media initiatives CONSISTENTLY. By that, we mean campaigns that generate a positive return on investment time and time again. So don't necessarily follow best practices laid down by self-appointed social media gurus - try your own thing, test and follow the results.

It goes without saying that social media marketing will need 'buy in' from across your organisation. It is a marketing programme that requires consistent effort, resource and participation over the long term. Ensure you have the executive support you need for this long term commitment.

### State of the Nation

- B2B social media marketing is still a relatively young industry in terms of spending:
- Spend 2009 – US\$11 million
- Predicted spend 2014 – US\$54 million
- Although there are many 'experts' who profess to be social media marketing gurus, two thirds of B2B marketers have NOT used any form of social media or PR to date.
- Social media is becoming increasingly important for brand and reputation building as well as monitoring. Today's consumers now have a quick, simple, non-confrontational and wide reaching platform to voice concerns and complaints. *"Your brand isn't what you say; it's what people say it is"* – David Carlick – Co Founder – Doubleclick.

## Goals

B2B social media marketing can be focused in many different ways – lead generation, customer service, brand awareness, developing Web traffic, increasing sales revenue, improving search rankings, etc. It is important to be clear on your goal for social media as the content, voice, persona, approach and platforms you will use will be highly reliant on your goals.

- Ensure you are specific – double Website traffic (from x to y), increase new leads by 30%, increase adoption rate of online training by 22%, etc. Without specific goals it will be impossible to measure progress and outcomes. Click here (<http://www.gartner.com/technology/media-products/reprints/oracle/article134/article134.html>) to see how Oracle used social media to help achieve a very specific goal.
- How are you going to track success? This is VITAL. What tools have you in place, what criteria will you be measuring and who is going to measure it?
- A common mistake is to judge success by the number of Twitter followers or Facebook friends, etc. This is the very worst kind of measurement to use. The best is one which is aligned with your company goals (e.g. increase revenue, generate new leads, increase adoption rate for a particular initiative, etc.).
- It could be your goal is brand awareness – how do you measure and track that? There are tools available for this today.

It could be your goal is to increase leads by 30% - how do you measure and track that back to social media? Again there are tools and ways to setup analytics and conversion tracking to give you this data.

- The key point is to make sure the goals are defined and that monitoring is in place before you start.

Define your goals and this will drive your focus areas:

- Do you want social media to drive visitors back to your website (i.e. your website becomes the hub of all activity)?
- Do you want to solely focus on interaction on Facebook ecommerce?
- Do you want to create your own social community and use other social media connections to increase visits/ uptake to that community?

After your initial testing you will be in a position to assess the value of your efforts.

- Ensure you assess the pros and cons of each outlet based on the type of enquiries you receive. You will find that some social media platforms are more valuable and bring in more focus leads than others. Do not assume anything, but test everything! It maybe your product or service offering performs very well on a specific platform or with specific user groups.
- Once you have started to test the different platforms, you will get a feel for the type of opportunities each platform generates. This will help you prioritise your efforts based on the value of these opportunities to your business.

## Fundamentals - Your Hub

Make sure you have your hub ready. Your hub is the area where you will ultimately engage your social media audience. For most companies this is (and usually should be) your website.

You will need to ensure your hub is already doing the best job it can do in terms of converting visitors and queries into buyers. This conversion process is THE MOST CRUCIAL ASPECT OF ONLINE MARKETING and one that is overlooked 99.9999% of the time. Without a website that is highly optimised for conversion, ANY online marketing effort, spend and time is completely wasted.

Ensure you are already actively driving traffic from search engines (via Pay Per Click and Search Engine Optimisation), email and other promotional activities. Ensure that traffic is converting into actual buyers, leads and enquiries. Ensure that your web team are active, routinely testing new layouts, subtle design changes, headlines and website copy to optimise the website for conversion.

Think about a jump from 1% of visitors enquiring about your product to 2% - that is potentially double revenue, double profits with very little incremental marketing cost.

Get the hub right first. If you have not, simply STOP. Postpone social media until you have mechanisms in place to continuously improve your web offering.

For most companies that are active in their online efforts this will almost certainly be in place but if not make sure you have tracking and measurement tools implemented and ready (i.e. Google Analytics).

### To prepare yourself for the journey ahead, think:

- What is your goal?
- Who and where are the customers?
- What will speak to your audience?
- What resources do you have?
- What is the competition doing?

## The Process

With the above fundamentals in place you are ready to start the process:

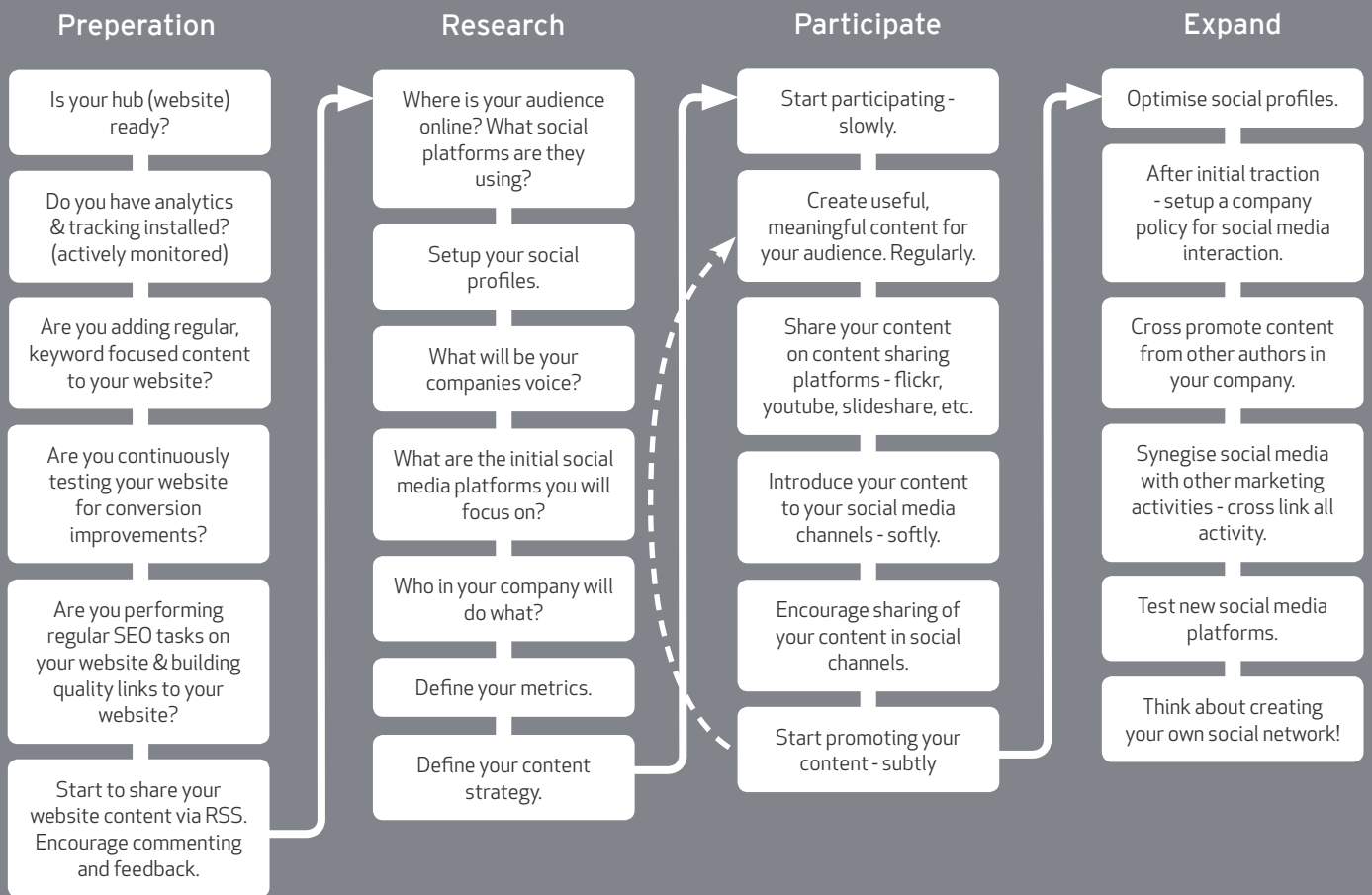
1. Continuously ensure your website is a growing entity, not an out-dated dinosaur that has not had attention since 2007. Ensure you have keyword targeted content on your website which is added to regularly (at least weekly), via new pages, blogging, etc.
2. Produce your web pages with key usability elements in mind and consistently test new layouts, call to action, etc.
3. Perform Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) tasks (either in house or with an outsourced provider) to optimise your web pages for natural/organic results in the search engines for your targeted keywords. Your social media initiatives will help your SEO efforts longer term and your SEO efforts will help your social media efforts longer term.
4. Start to share your website content via blogging. Blogging should be the natural first step into the social media marketing world.
5. Syndicate your blog content via RSS feeds and encourage commenting and participation on your blog.
6. Define your content strategy – what, who, goals – all social media is content-based. Can you add value in other ways? Are there common themes? Brainstorm content ideas – start a list that is consistently added to each day/ each week. Open this list up to your entire organisation.
7. Define your metrics.
8. Research where your customers are and those you want to influence. What platforms are they using online – large social network (Facebook/ Twitter), niche social networks, forums, video sharing sites, sub groups of large social networks. Spend time researching these channels – this may take a few days of effort but remember it is critical to put yourself in the frame of mind of the buyer of your services. Your buyers think and act differently to you – you are a marketer not a buyer. Your buyers participate in different spaces.
9. Devote your initial time and effort to these specific channels.
10. Setup your social profiles – secure your brand on key social networking sites and other more niche outlets. We advocate securing your brand on all key social media platforms regardless of if you plan to be active in those channels. It is important to secure your brand name on all channels, but DO NOT try to actively cover all social outlets at any one time.
11. Customise your profiles. After early participation start to customise your presence on the key platforms you are targeting. Your logo, background, company signature message, etc.
12. Think about how your company wants social media to work for them. What type of voice do you want your social media interactions to have?
  - a. Is it one voice or many?
  - b. An engineer creating a video on your YouTube Channel about one of your products is going to have a very different voice than one of your new business team.
  - c. If you have multiple voices or multiple participants, allow for creativity but ensure that your message, style, brand and company profile is consistent.
13. Define who in your company will do what and when. It is important to get this working correctly from the start. Without clear guidelines for engagement your message will become confused. Confirm your engagement framework to all involved.
14. Ensure that each team member is clear on what and what not to do. Be clear on who responds to complaints, moans and groans. If a major fire breaks out who will react?
15. If there is more than one social media contributor in your company ensure each contribution is cross-promoted and has the relevant focus.
16. Setup social media monitoring – you cannot control conversations about your brand, but you can help shape it. Be responsive to issues.
17. Spend time looking, watching and gently starting to participate in the platforms you have on your priority list. Go gently to start. Do NOT promote anything.
18. Gently test other social media platforms – (after first researching).
19. If a platform does not work for you then gently ease out. Invest time elsewhere where you can see a return. Keep repeating this process regularly and consistently.
20. Create useful content – NOT sales pitches. Optimise your content to fill a vacuum with details your customers seek in order to make informed purchasing decisions. Take a look at what Indium - a solder manufacturer based in the USA have done. They have fourteen or so bloggers in their organisation routinely generating new content about the solder industry, products and helpful information about their products. If a solder manufacturer can do it, 99.99% of other companies can do it. (<http://www.indium.com/blogs/>). Since Indium started blogging lead generation has surged by 600%.
21. Link out to other social content (not produced by you or your company) that will be useful for your audience – social media is about sharing.
22. Ensure your social footprint is everywhere you go – email signatures, forum signatures, business cards, etc.
23. Start mixing up the content – blog, video, webcasts, online training, whitepaper, case studies, new tools, etc. Ensure your content is shared and available on social content sharing websites: e.g. Flickr (images), YouTube (video), Vimeo (video), Slideshare (Presentations), etc.

### And remember:

1. Your keep-in-mind principle – ‘how does this [content] benefit my audience’ – i.e. NOT ‘how does this benefit my company’.
2. Comment and become part of a community first.
3. Keep things brief and simple.
4. Provide your opinion – not just regurgitated facts.
5. Be honest and open.
6. Gently start to integrate great content from your blog/ website into your posts and link back to posts that provide good information or help your audience answer their questions.
7. Consistency is the absolute key.
8. Be responsive.
9. Be prepared to let go of a little bit of control.
10. Be regular in introducing new content helpful to your audience.
11. Be aware that you will not get instant results – this is a long term effort.
12. Be community-minded – it is SOCIAL media.

- 24. Encourage sharing of your content by your audience via your chosen channels for social media.
- 25. Make sure there is synergy between other marketing initiatives and social media and make sure you take every cross link opportunity – PR, online marketing, corporate website, email newsletters.
- 26. Think about creating your own niche social media network. Does your company excel in a particular area or field? Can you add value? Is there enough participation in your existing social media channels to develop your own niche social network?
- 27. Think outside the box. How can you leverage social media in other ways that are not mainstream e.g. we know of a few companies who now provide customer support via Twitter – this may or may not be for you but those companies thought outside the box. Social media is a new medium, be creative.

## Making Social Network Work For Your Company



## Team Resources

Social media will require resources. You will need to decide who is going to be involved:

- A main 'Social Media Manager'?
- A group?
- People from different departments?
- Who is going to coordinate efforts?

Your goals and your voice will help you decide what resources are needed. Define how involved each person will be and set them some guidelines – social media makes it very easy for eight hours of non-productive work to pass by. Think about limiting engagement. Also make sure time allocated to social media is free and focused.

Take time to agree within your team the ground rules - some ideas:

- How will social media be integrated into the company's core strategy?
- To be really successful within social media the strategy needs to be engrained with all key workers, with every angle covered. If someone in accounts has a compelling news item or social content idea, how will this get to the people responsible for the social media activity?
- A team using one branded account? Personal accounts?
- How much time will be spent on social media?
- If a serious issue occurs, what is the proper protocol and who needs to become involved?

## Social Media Within Your Overall Marketing Plan

While social media is a rapidly growing phenomenon and presents a great marketing opportunity if executed correctly, it should be noted that social media marketing should only form one part of your overall marketing plan.

Yes, social media requires its own focus, but it becomes more powerful when your social profiles are 'embedded' in your regular marketing efforts.

- Make sure you provide links to your social profiles (in addition to your website) on every communication that leaves your company:
- Routine correspondence
- Business cards
- Flyers/ promotional brochures
- Emails
- Think about integrating social media into more 'outside the box' areas:
- Music on hold
- Invoices
- Remittance advice notices
- Use social media to drive product launches
- Embed links to your social profiles on your website.
- Promote new socially-focused content via email. In addition to your regular email newsletters.
- Ensure your sales team are educated on social media and promote your offering at every opportunity.
- If you have the budget for radio and TV advertising DO NOT focus your audience to your social profiles – focus them on your website. The website will in turn focus them to your social media activity.

Above all it is important that the entire company understands the overall marketing message and the importance of social media within that message.

Make every employee an ambassador for marketing by encouraging promotion and use of social media, within your guidelines.

## Social Media Implementation Plan

Task	Duration	Responsibility Level	Notes
Secure brand where possible on highlighted social media sites (see appendix).	2-3 days	Junior	Ensure profiles are complete and contain urls of website and key data.
Define metrics for social media success.	1 day	Management with external consultant (if appropriate)	
Define social media foundations.	Half day	Management	
Create social media engagement rules for your company - who, what, how.	Half day	Management	
Define customers - who, what, demographics etc.	1-2 days	All team	
Research customers online communities - specific/hobby related & general larger communities like Facebook.	3-4 days	All team or external consultant	
Watch, listen, observe communities highlighted above.	1 week	Social media implementer (the person/people with responsibility for actual implementation/networking on behalf of your business)	
Start engagement.	1-2 hours a day initially (for a period of 2 weeks)	Social media implementer	The initial engagements should be more of a learning & extension of the watching process - try to learn from feedback & initial engagements went.
Generate new compelling content.	Twice a week	Everyone	This forms the foundation for your social media campaign.
Ramp up engagement.	1 hour a day - more routine engagement - for a period of 2-3 months	Social media implementer	The process of engaging in the communities should be becoming more routine - scheduled into a day.
Assess initial results.	1 day prep - 1 day assessment	Social media implementer/ Management	Prepare overview of results based on metrics & produce report.
Agree new priorities following assessment.	1-2 hours	Management/ Social media implementer	
Continue routine engagement.	30 mins - 1 hour per day	Social media implementer	
Assess on-going results.	Every 90 days	Management/ Social media implementer	

## Top Tips For Popular Social Media Platforms

### Twitter

- Build Twitter (and all other forms of social media interaction) into your daily schedule. Consistency is the key.
- Your tweets should provide useful information to your followers. They should be based on the needs and preferences of your target customers. Understand what they crave, and feed it to them. Engulf yourself in your industry news. Share anything that may be interesting, topical or fun for your audience.
- Mix it up. Share news, tips or advice and some authentic company news. Keep it like a real conversation. Mixed & Natural.
- Thank and respond to everyone who mentions or retweets you. Nurture relationships. Comment on your connections' blogs, retweet those who retweet you. Never attack others - leave the fights to others.
- Link to content that solves problems – these tweets have the highest click through rate.
- Learn from others. Follow other top marketers in your space or related industries.
- Forget the numbers. Your follower volume is meaningless. The focus is on targeted groups with interest in your message.
- Tailor your profile. Give a clear description of what you and your company do.
- Follow your competition and look at who they follow and who is following them. This will save you time building a targeted follower list.
- Sprinkle hash tags into your tweets. This makes your messages easier to find. It also makes them more scannable. This leads into more followers and prospects.
- Limit self-promotion. Most of your tweets should be about information relevant to your industry and followers, not yourself. The more you reference your own company the fewer followers you will gain.
- Ask questions. Everyone likes to share their expert opinion on social media these days. Questions are a proven way to establish rapport with your followers.

### Facebook

- Become an industry resource. Build your Facebook presence into something special that provides useful information, guidance and comment on your industry.
- Create two-way conversations. Search current questions or concerns your target audience is facing. Create content that participates or helps solve the questions.
- Get your fans to provide input and feedback. This could be your products or services or new ideas or more specific feedback about a particular issue or aspect of your business.
- Connect a Community. Let your fans come together. Oracle has created a great page letting their Facebook fans comment on relevant topics.
- Highlight product and service success stories on the page and let followers see the value provided to similar companies.
- Address negative comments politely, in a caring, helpful fashion and get the issues resolved.
- Build Relationships. B2B marketers face longer sales cycles and therefore relationships are key. Spend time and effort developing those relationships online and offline.
- Use Facebook to cross promote your other social media and online efforts – share case studies, white papers, video, blog content etc.
- Connect your blog feed to Facebook so your wall is auto updated with your blog content.
- Make your content shareable – make it interesting, topical and fun and it will be shared.

### LinkedIn

- Complete your profile. In full.
- Customise the “websites” listing in your profile - make it stand out and link to different sections or different sites if you have them.
- Make and ask for recommendations.
- Ask to connect with any prospects that you meet.
- Join groups and answer questions related to your expertise.
- Install applications to help you add to your profile and cross promote your other social media efforts. E.g.
- Wordpress/ Blog Link will post updated blog content to your LinkedIn profile.
- Utilising a tool like Slideshare you can embed up to three presentations in your profile.
- Include your LinkedIn url in your email signature.
- Start a group - By creating a group for your brand, this helps you get your message and profile promoted outside of your network. You can start discussions, share news, post jobs and create subgroups.
- Update and Engage Frequently – Like Twitter & Facebook this is the key to any social media presence. The more activity and interaction, the better the results.
- Use the LinkedIn Question and Answer function – join in on answering others' questions and ask questions of your own.
- Promote Your LinkedIn - Include a link to your profile on your website and blog, in email signatures and business cards.

## Tools

Social media can be time consuming. When starting out we encourage all companies and participants to do things manually. Get to know the processes, the platforms and the systems.

When you are comfortable with these, start to think about tools that will help you with your workflow.

There are new social media management tools cropping up almost daily. Here is a list of tools we have worked with and have knowledge of. Do some research and keep your eye on the marketplace - you may find others that are more relevant.

- Tweetscan – scan twitter for specific topics and see all related Twitter posts - <http://tweetscan.com>
- Tweetdeck – Manage multiple Twitter accounts from one interface. - <http://www.tweetdeck.com/>
- Radian 6 – A complete platform to listen, monitor and engage with your customers across the social web. <http://www.radian6.com/>
- Hootsuite – a social media management platform, dashboard and monitoring tool. <http://hootsuite.com>
- TwitterFeed - <http://twitterfeed.com/> - syndicate your blog to multiple social media platforms like Twitter & Facebook etc.
- Ning – develop your own niche social network.
- Knowem – secure your brand on over 500 social media outlets and content sharing platforms. <http://knowem.com/>
- Likester – understand what's popular and trending on Facebook and other platforms - <http://www.likester.com>

## Reference Material & Case Studies

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nXQdy-22TXM> – interesting B2B SM video.
- <http://wiki.beingpeterkim.com/> - A wiki of social media examples
- <http://www.slideshare.net/Miikka/b2b-social-media-palette> - brilliant slide deck explaining a great approach to platforms.
- <http://socialmediab2b.com> – Good B2B Social Media blog.
- <http://www.chrisbrogan.com/b2b-social-media-resources/> -

More Social Media resources

- <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/cisco-social-media-product-launch/>
- <http://www.gartner.com/technology/media-products/reprints/oracle/article134/article134.html>
- <http://www.copyblogger.com/ultimate-twitter/> - Good resource collection on Twitter marketing.