



Contents page

Part 1

- A - Applying Social Media Practices - How to integrate social media into your business
- B - Building brand authority. How social media can help you be an authority in your niche
- C - Customer support. How to use social media to help your clients
- D - Doing it right, Tips on how to use social media to boost sales.
- E - Engage! Most effective practices to interact with clients on SM
- F - Failing? Biggest mistakes you can make in SM as a brand
- G - Google+. Best optimisation practices
- H - How to Pick the Best Social Networks For Your Business
- I - Inbound Marketing
- J - Jumping from one social media network to the next can be fun but be careful
- K - Klout is about, time to measure your efforts
- L - LinkedIn
- M - Micro blogging

Applying Social Media Practices

How to integrate social media into your business

Any business, regardless of its domain of activity, has to adapt to change. Nowadays, this means shifting to online because that's where customers are spending most of their time.

Social media has become vital for business owners, especially when they're running important marketing campaigns. It's an incredibly powerful tool for business promotion. No matter the size of a business, it's important to know how to take advantage of this mass based communication - called Social Media - that brings so many benefits. To help you start and integrate social media into your business, here are a few simple steps that you can follow.

Start with research

Almost every campaign can be promoted through social media, but first you need to take the time to learn some of the things about the social media tools available and see which ones you would most benefit from. Aside from Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn – which are the most popular – you can also look for groups where people usually interact. Find those groups where people would be interested in the products or services that you offer. Read what people are writing, observe and then get in to the conversation.

Consider your approach

The way you approach people is extremely important. No one likes aggressive sales agents that only talk about their product in a desperate attempt to make a sale. On the web, people can easily ignore your message if they realise you're only trying to sell a product. Therefore, you should mainly focus on engaging with people and building relationships. Once you've managed to gain their trust, it will be easier to mention your products.

Give them “something”

If you want people to “Like” your Fan page or “Follow” you on Twitter, give them a reason to do so. Most web users won’t stick around unless you give them something: an irresistible offer, a discount, a free e-book, a limited offer. They need to know what’s in it for them once they hit the “Like” button on your Facebook page. Find out what would make a great offer and give it to them.

Get them to spread the word

Word-of-mouth advertising works amazingly well on social media. If your product is innovative, clients will want to tell their family and friends about it and they have all the tools to do so very easily. On the other hand, you have to be careful about what your product promises because if clients discover it’s worthless, they will ensure everybody knows about it.

Social media for marketing campaigns

Once you’ve gathered a satisfactory fan base, you can start putting together and running marketing campaigns. Make them creative enough so that your fans and followers want to share it right away. At the same time, take advantage of the attention and interact with them as much as possible.

Include your employees

Social media is even more powerful when the employees of your company take part in your efforts. Encourage them to participate so that the public feels privileged to be part of such a great and united community group. However, take them through an online etiquette training first to ensure no one says something that could harm your company’s image.

Social media is an incredible tool to promote your business if you’re willing and patient enough to learn its ways. Take a look at what other companies do and see what would work for you.

Buying fans and followers?

Think again if you want to build a business

What's the point? Sure, you can buy bulk fans and followers but that's all there is. You will pride yourself with the enormous number of accounts (!) following your streamline but how many of them will ever read a line you write. What are the odds that any of them will reply to one of your posts, share it with their friends, talk about your business or buy one of your products? Close to zero.

You can invest a lot of your time into writing unique content and then sharing it on your social media accounts. But then you might be disappointed to discover your paid fans or followers have no interest in what you've spent hours working on. Genius!

If you're paying money for a person, you know that that person is not really interested in your business. They will NEVER visit your website, recommend you to their friends or try your services. They are just there because you paid them to be.

Connect with people that are interested

Try to find those people who are genuinely interested in what you have to offer and treasure the ones who already prove that they care. Make the effort to connect to as many people as you possibly can and ensure that they're keeping an eye on you. Share original content, ask people questions, listen to them and then talk. When you buy people, you only get to talk because no one is actually listening.

How to find them

Finding people that are interested in your brand is easy if you are able to create a unique experience that they can't find anywhere else. Consider running contests to show appreciation to the ones that are already your fans. They will spread the word and other users will want to be part of your community.

A contest is a perfect approach to building exposure and getting people to talk about you. However, make sure the contest is targeted because if you offer a free iPhone in exchange for a Like, you might find that you're home alone once the contest is over. Instead, offer them an experience that they want to be part of.

If you start your social media journey by buying people, you will get no results and end up wondering what's the big fuss. On the other hand, you can attract those interested people by:

- Publishing original content
- Running contents that require them to get involved other than clicking a Like button
- Interact with them on different topics
- Ask questions
- Get to know them online
- Organise events to meet them offline

All you have to do is get them to want to be your fans or followers. When you're building a brand with a playful and interesting personality, people will definitely want to at least stop by and say hello. Now that the ball is in your court, engage them and get the conversation going.

Customer service on Social Media.

Using social media to help your clients

Is there anybody out there?

Today, in such a competitive landscape, being customer-driven is what can really differentiate a company from others of its kind.

A company's reputation can rise thanks to excellent customer service, but it can also be destroyed if no one's there to listen and help. The voices of the customers are more powerful and influential than ever and their comments can spread virally in a matter of minutes.

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn make it so easy for customers to get in touch with companies. It's easier than ever. The difference is that, thanks to these mass communication tools, now it's the customers who decide where, how and when they want to interact with the companies. And when they decide to do so, you'd better be there to listen.

There are companies that constantly engage with their customers to gain insights on how they can improve their products and services. And then, there are companies that only use social media exclusively to push products. There are companies that provide quality support fast. And there are companies that only reply to good feedback and don't know how to react when negative comments are coming their way.

The purpose of this article is to help you understand how you can use social media not to replace your current customer support department, but to complement it and increase your customer satisfaction.

Go where your customers are

Find out where your customers are and what they are saying about you. A simple way to do so is to Google your company's name and then go through the results. You might find them talking about you on blogs, forums, on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and so on. Join the conversation and try to help those clients who are having difficulties using your products.

Don't pretend you are not working for a company just to make a good comment about it because they might figure it out and it will only make matters worse. Your goal is to find out why the client is unhappy and provide him with a solution. In the end, you might be able to turn that bad experience into a good one and even save the customer relationship. You might also get some positive reviews after that, which will help your company's reputation.

What online tools to use to provide support to clients

Here are just a few online tools that you can use to get in touch with your customers and provide support:

- Forums
- Blogs
- RSS feeds
- Email newsletters
- YouTube
- Twitter
- Wiki
- Facebook

How to measure the success of your efforts

You are investing time and money into this, so make sure you also evaluate the results of your efforts. Are the number of calls to the customer support department decreasing? Are you getting a lot more positive feedback? Are the number of complaints decreasing? Are clients' enquiries being handled faster?

You can also send an online survey to your customers through Twitter or Facebook and ask them if they're happy with the support they receive or what else you can do to improve it. They'll appreciate being listened to.

Make use of these amazing tools to listen to your clients and help them every time they're asking for your support. Being there for your customers will prove you are a reliable, trustworthy and dedicated company that respects its clients. You can start today with a simple question: "How can we help you today?"

Dealing with negative comments

Turning criticism to a positive

Every company, big or small, is dealing with negative online reviews or posts from customers.

It's impossible to make every customer happy. However, it's about how you manage to turn those negative comments in to opportunities. If you run scared, you will not only lose that client, but also those potential clients that have read the negative review about your company.

The power of social media makes a company more vulnerable than ever. If a user writes a negative comment on the web – whether it is on Twitter, Facebook or on a forum – it influences other people that read it and it hurts your reputation. So, how can you deal with negative feedback and, at the same time, create an opportunity out of it?

Don't wait too long

You know what they say – news travels fast, and tweets even faster. With tens of tweets being shared per minute, it's important to address right away any negative comment that comes your way. The more you wait, the more the number of people who get to see the comment increases. A lack of response from your part might as well be considered indifference and it can really damage your reputation. If you respond quickly, it will show people that you are listening and that you care about your clients. If you also manage to solve the client's problem, it will prove your dedication and you will gain respect from your clients.

Apologise but don't overdo it

Reply publicly, then handle it privately

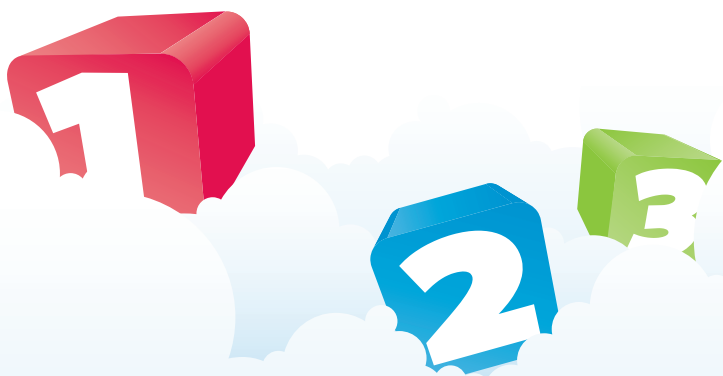
If the client has written a public negative comment, you should reply publicly as a first step, and then communicate in private. If you go directly to private messaging, other people won't know that you're trying to solve the problem. Reply with a tweet/ comment to their post and then send a private message asking for details on the issue they're having.

Encourage feedback and show your appreciation

Look at negative feedback as an opportunity to improve your products or services and make them better. Your clients should know what you welcome any type of feedback, negative or positive, and that they're being heard. Tell them that you appreciate their suggestions and that you will consider implementing them so that they can enjoy an even better product or service. And don't leave it at that - forward those suggestions to the product team and see if and how they can implement it.

Is it worth it?

When dealing with a negative comment, take a moment to find out who that person is. Is he constantly writing bad things with no real value on his wall in an attempt to get reactions? Maybe he's just an attention-seeker. In this case, you can write a tactful reply without the need to follow up.



Ecommerce on Facebook

Developing a strategy that sells goods, services and brand

How to generate revenue from Facebook.

Facebook is the world's largest social network. Today brands are investing more and more money on this platform in order to attract new clients and generate revenue.

Nowadays, the success of a company is no longer measured by the numbers of fans it has on Facebook, but by the number of people from that database that are generating revenue. However, social networks should not be used to sell, but to influence the intent to buy.

There are a lot of e-commerce tools available on Facebook that companies can use to facilitate the purchase of products and services and create a one of a kind shopping experience for its customers. Facebook can be a powerful sales vehicle for those who know how to take advantage of its features.

Listen

The first step to creating social revenue is to listen to your customers. Monitor constantly what they're saying about your company and don't hesitate to interact with them when you feel it's necessary. Social media plays an important role in purchase decision making these days and that's because people search for information on products and services on forums and social networks. Users trust reviews of your products written by other people and are more likely to buy it if the reviews are positive. Today, word-of-mouth is more influential than ever.

Create a one of a kind user experience

You managed to get users to visit your page and become fans. But they can very easily unlike your page, so how can you get them to stick around? As a business, you can take advantage of the various APIs available on Facebook that can help you create a unique ecommerce experience for your fans.

Some of the most important are Share, Like and Reviews (fans can comment on your products or services and then forward it to their friends; this can lead to more product views and can ultimately generate sales). The great thing about Facebook – and social media in general – is that your message can reach your members and then it can also reach the friends of your members, through friend suggestions. The impact is more powerful and the opportunities endless.

Guarantee an easy purchasing process

No matter if clients are purchasing directly from your website or from Facebook, they need to be reassured that the purchasing process is simple, secure and can be completed within minutes. However, Facebook provides some extra features that support “online window shopping” and these allow a client to purchase a product directly from the company’s Facebook page, without even having to visit its website. Companies can also integrate a payment system on Facebook for clients to use when paying for a product.

Measure results

Companies can use Facebook Insights – the platform’s internal tracking system – to track results. You can also get insights on your fans – such as age, location, etc, which can help when preparing marketing campaigns for Facebook. This tool can complement the web tracking systems you might already be using, such as Google Analytics.

Run social campaigns

Aside from these, you can also run various social campaigns on Facebook to generate revenue. For example, you can run contests with prizes in order to promote your products and also share posts with the promotions and special offers that you have in your store, such as “deal of the day”.

Consumers are spending more and more of their time online, especially on Facebook, so it’s important for companies to focus on clever ways to market products and encourage people to purchase.

Failing?

Biggest mistakes you can make in social media

Most every company out there is trying to use social media to build an online reputation and promote its business. But what happens when these companies don't make an effort or, on the other hand, they try too hard?

In a world where it only takes a few seconds and 140 characters for news to spread worldwide, errors are unacceptable and dangerous. They say mistakes are only human but nowadays any mistake might cost you your business.

If you have a business and are using social media tools to promote it online, here are the biggest mistakes that can take you off the map.

Mistake number 1: Selling instead of sharing

There are a lot of companies that treat web users as followers and fans forgetting that these are actually real human beings. Using Twitter or Facebook only to push products will never manage to convince people to buy them, especially if every comment posted is about a product. People need to have a two-way conversation so if all you do is talk about your products and shout special offers and deals and "we do that", "we love that", "we, we, we", you might as well close your accounts because this is not interaction, it's a monologue. If you're making the effort to invest time and money into social media, then start by listening to your customers. See what they're interested in, ask questions, and start a conversation. If you want to share something, share stories, share knowledge and things that are valuable to your customers.

Mistake number 2: Build relationships, not a client's database

Every business should invest time into planning and coming up with a powerful social media strategy. If you don't set any goals, it's just a waste of time. Start by setting an objective out of being different from your competitors. Focus on your company's "social" personality and work on making it unique. Don't just update your Facebook status or tweet/ retweet meaningless, but connect with your fans/ followers. Address them all and you'll be just like your competitors, address them individually and they will respond. Social media is about building relationships, not a client's database.

Mistake number three: Retweeting endlessly

This is one of the most common mistakes that is usually a result of lack of time. Check your streamline and if more than 50% of what you shared are retweets or links, than you are not making an effort. If you are boring and your posts are just a collection of other people's tweets, don't expect people to talk about you. Invest 10-15 minutes of your time every 3-4 couple of hours to talk to your customers. Reply on a post instead of retweeting it, share an opinion, and give people the chance to see you have a voice.

Mistake number four: Expecting for immediate results

There are a lot of companies that believe social media can turn their business into a gold mine over night. Bad news! Social media is just a concept and it's about building a relationship with your customers, only this time through a popular tool that can reach millions. At the end of the day, it's still marketing and you have to provoke people to talk about you. It's not the number of fans or followers that counts, but the number of people that are talking about you and your product.

Generate media coverage

Spreading your word via social media

A lot of journalists and popular bloggers use Twitter to find subjects for articles. Twitter even published a “Twitter for Newsrooms”, a guide dedicated to reporters and bloggers that includes resources and tips on how to use Twitter to find stories and sources easier and faster.

Online marketers can also use Twitter to their benefit to build relationships with media people and ultimately get media coverage. Twitter is an easy way to present the company and promote its products and services. First thing you need to do is find those popular journalists and bloggers that are influencers in your industry, start following them and build relationships.

Follow influencers

There are quite a few great tools that you can use to find influencers on Twitter. You can try Muack Rack, where you can search for journalists based on publication or topic. Then there's also JournalistTweet, a free website where you can search for journalists depending on industry.

Build relationships

Now that you've found the influencers in your industry, start interacting with them on Twitter. Be friendly and open, but don't overdo it because you don't want to look desperate. Tweet a reply to an article they've wrote or ask for their opinion on a subject you know they're covering.

Scan for opportunities

Monitor their tweets because it might sometimes happen that they ask for tips on stories they're writing about. If the subject fits your business, that's your chance right there! You might also be surprised to find that an influent blogger mentioned your company or one of your products. This is when you need to reply and thank him for the mention. You can also contact him through private messaging to give him more information on your company and maybe ask if he would be willing to blog about your company or your products.

Be helpful

Journalists and bloggers are usually very active on Twitter. You'll see them tweeting all day long. When they're covering a subject you might also find them asking for certain resources to help them in their research. For them, time is of the essence so don't hesitate to step in and share your input or useful resources. They'll appreciate it and might as well keep you in mind.

Tweet about special offers and discounts

Twitter is a great tool to market your products and services. If you're running a campaign where you offer great discounts, use Twitter to let people know. If the offer is very attractive, you can also get in touch with bloggers and ask them to write an article about it.

Share interesting news and resources

If your company is organising free webinars to train web users on a certain subject, write an article on your company blog about it and then share the link on Twitter. If you have a great customer success story, don't let it go to waste. Write about it! If it makes a great story, be sure bloggers will cover it.

Be patient

Building relationships with bloggers and journalists takes time. They're busy people but if you interact with them constantly and not just try to convince them to write about you, you might get an article out of it sooner than you think.

How To Pick The Best

Selecting social networks for your business

Businesses are investing more and more time and money into promotion, lead generation and alternate customer service on social networks. However, before putting a budget aside for social media, ensure that you're choosing the right networks for your business. There's no point in building a pretty house with a white fence if you're building it in the wrong neighborhood.

Social media is great and it works, but only if you're using the right channels for your business. If you're setting up countless accounts on all sorts of social networks without doing your homework first, you're just wasting time. Find out where your customers are and only then you should consider joining the crowd.

What are you looking for?

Can Flickr drive traffic to your site? Is Twitter good for SEO? Is it worth setting up a YouTube account? Find out what's the unique selling point of each of these major social networks and then make your decision. Also, take the time to figure out what you want to get out of it. You might want to improve your customer communication, increase your brand exposure or get more traffic to your site.

Which one to choose

Before you join a social network, whether it's Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, ask yourself why you're joining it and how will it help you business. What are the benefits of having a Twitter account? Are you joining because most brands are doing so, or do you really believe it will help you get what you need? If you can't figure out how that social network can help you, just say "pass" and find move on to the next one.

How much are you willing to invest?

Building a presence on social networks takes time and time is money. Figure out first how much time and money you're willing to invest in to maintaining a Facebook or a Twitter page. Is it an hour a day? Two hours a week? Fifteen minutes a month? If you're not dedicated, you won't be successful and it will only be a waste of your time. These are social channels and by definition you need to be social and interact with web users to build relationships and brand awareness.

Don't be just "another account"

You can't create an account and just leave it at that and expect your brand to become famous. You have to work for it! If you set up a Twitter or a Facebook account, then you need to update is constantly, interact with people, share useful resources and respond to other users' posts. On any social networks, you're expected to do something. Otherwise, you're just "another account" that no one is going to want to follow because it's no fun.

Inbound Marketing

Increasing the impact of your content

Traditionally marketing has employed outbound marketing tactics such as cold calling, advertising, emails and direct mailing. These methods have become increasingly less effective as people are getting much better at blocking them using simple things like caller ID or spam filters. Out bound marketing is when you go outwards and attempt to find customers.

Now a new breed of marketing is becoming increasingly popular, it's called inbound marketing and it helps your customers find you. This means that potential customers who are looking for your product or service find you instead of you needing to find them. Inbound marketing has only recently been possible due to the popularity of search engines such as Google , social media sites and blogs. Now if people want to find a product or service their instinct is to Google what they need, inbound marketing takes advantage of this and helps those people find what they are looking for.

Inbound marketing can be broken into 3 different categories...

Content

Content includes Blogs, videos, white papers and eBooks. The content includes information that will attract customers to your site. Content is the real substance of any inbound marketing campaign as it gives your products and services credibility.

SEO

SEO or Search Engine Optimisation is how you improve the visibility of your web site in search engines. SEO is based on knowledge of how the search engines work and relates that to what people are searching for to make your site easier to find. The main purpose of SEO is to achieve the best possible ranking in search engine results. It stands to reason that if your site is at the top of the list potential customers are more likely to click it, if you are 99th on the list it's less likely they will click.

Social media

Social media channels are an important aspect of inbound marketing as they increase the impact of the content. The more followers and positive comments the more credibility your products and services will have. Social media shows that your marketing is not an empty gesture, it shows real people who can reinforce the message that your products and services are reliable and worth using.

There are many benefits of inbound marketing over outbound marketing, the main being that you are not pushing your product at potential customers in a hostile way. With inbound marketing customers come to you, instead of you finding them so it is much easier to convert potential customers into sales as you are targeting only those that are already interested. Inbound marketing is much more passive and makes your potential customers feel at ease as they think it was their idea.

Another big benefit of inbound marketing is it is very cost effective. As you are targeting the right people you can do more for much less. With outbound marketing you may call 1000 people to try and sell your product but of that 1000 you might only get 2 or 3 that are interested but you have paid for the 1000 calls. Inbound marketing is very low cost if not free and every single potential customer that you attract will have a much better chance of converting.

If you wish to improve your inbound marketing strategy these can simply be achieved by improving your rankings in Google to get more traffic, by building and promoting a blog for your business and by growing and nurturing a community on the most popular social media sites.

Inbound marketing is a constant process that requires constant attention through social media but the results can be very rewarding as not only will you receive new customers but you will also increase awareness and the profile of your brand.

What inbound marketing have you been using?

Jumping

It may be fun jumping from one SM network to the next but be careful

Some people believe it is a good idea to have an active presence on as many social media networks as possible. They believe the more networks you are part of the more people you can reach out to. This is technically true as this does increase the number of potential followers but in practise this can be harmful to your social media efforts.

In an ideal world for each social media network you would have a team of people working to maintain your presence, interacting with your followers and working to get new ones. However in reality you will be very lucky to have more than a couple of employees dedicated to the task of maintaining your social media presences. So the more networks you manage the more work for your employees and the more difficult it becomes to focus on any one network. Spread your resources too thin and you will not be able to maintain an effective presence on any of your networks.

Do not make things too complicated for yourself, keep it simple. Instead of connecting to all social networks and jumping from one to the other choose a small number and focus your efforts. It is much better to have 2 good social media network presences than having 20 okay presences.

To succeed in the big world of social media it is important to have some direction and to have some form of strategy so you know who you are targeting and what you want to achieve. But any strategy is meaningless if you do not put in the time necessary to achieve your goals.

The key to achieving your goals is focus, if you have too many networks to maintain you will be unable to give your followers the attention they deserve. By choosing a small number of networks you are able to focus your efforts and build an effective presence. It is important not to over extend yourself, there is nothing worse than appearing unprofessional and delaying an important response just because you were working on another network.

Social media is used by your customers to contact you if they are having trouble or to complain about your service. Such contacts need to be dealt with as soon as possible and cannot sit there and wait for you to finish your work on another network. Time is of the essence and the way you deal with such issues reflects directly on you as a company. Acting in a speedy manner can turn a bad situation around or can stop a bad situation getting even worse. Your customers need your social media presence to be interactive and they expect a quick response. Think of your social media profile like a phone, if that phone rings you had better be ready to answer it because the longer it rings the more customers you will lose.

So in essence the important thing to remember is to give your social media activities the attention they deserve. Have a clear strategy and focus on only the networks that are beneficial to you. Jumping between networks is ok but only if you have the resources to ensure the quality of your social media activities does not suffer.

How many social media networks is too many?

Klout

Klout is about... Time to measure your efforts

In this time of social media madness wouldn't it be great to have some way of measuring your influence across the different social media networks? Well that exactly what Klout was created for.

Klout analyses your social media activity on Facebook or Twitter and assigns a number between 1 and 100 to indicate the strength of your social influence. Klout uses over 35 variables to measure True Reach, Amplification Probability and Network Score. But what does this really mean?

True Reach

True Reach is the size of your active audience and is based on the number of your followers and friends who react to your messages.

Amplification Probability

Amplification is the probability that one of your messages will cause an action such as retweets, likes, @messages

Network Score

Network score shows how influential your audience is and it directly correlates to clicks, comments and retweets.

The Final Klout Score

After taking all factors into account the final Klout score represents the impact of your social media activities and how successfully you are engaging your audience.

Tools such as Klout are being used more and more to measure social activities and are seen as a good indicator to show your success within the social media platform. So much so that many companies are starting to request a minimum Klout score when hiring an agency.



But how accurate is Klout and is it really a good indication to your true social media activities? Well this is where many experts are divided. It is true that Klout does give an accurate representation of your social media activities and allows a comparison with other companies to see how you stack up.

So why do many people believe Klout to be flawed in its approach? The main issue that people have with Klout and other social media measuring tools is the actual way it evaluates your social activities. It is true that the variables used can give a good indication of your activities but Klout can also effectively be tricked by users using forms of automation and other methods to satisfy the Klout variables.

This effectively removes the social element and really misses the point of a social network. If you are hiring an agency based on their Klout score you would hope that it indicated they knew what they were doing. You would hope they were able to interact within a social environment build relationships and be socially active. But this is sadly not the case, the Klout score shows they are active within the social networks but does not show enough detail of the actual interactions.

At this moment in time Klout is a great indicator of social influence and should be used as a guide for measuring your social activities but only as a guide. It is dangerous for businesses to rely on externally created numbers and Klout is not yet refined enough to be able to offer any real leverage.

That being said Klout is the best tool out there to measure your social media activities and actually have something to show your boss for all that time you spend on Facebook. It may have its flaws but it will only get better with time. The people behind Klout are slowly improving the way it evaluates your activities and the accuracy will get much much better very soon.

Do you think Klout shows an accurate representation of your social influence?

LinkedIn

Are you LinkedIn?

LinkedIn is one of the most popular social networks but it is often overlooked as it is seen as a recruitment tool or somewhere to show off your CV. But LinkedIn is so much more than that, it can be a very powerful B2B communication tool and can be one of the most powerful ways to promote your brand or business.

But how do you promote your brand using LinkedIn? Here are a few ways to boast your presence and utilise the full potential of LinkedIn for your brand...

Search engines

Your LinkedIn profile is indexed by search engines; this makes all the details of your profile searchable. Be sure to fill out all your profile information, your website and contact details, the services you provide and include a company logo. The more information you provide the better as it will widen the search terms used by the search engines and enable you to be found more easily.

LinkedIn groups

It is important to find and join groups that are not only related to your industry but groups that are also of interest to your target market. Groups can be a great way of meeting people and getting your name out there. Think about joining the kind of groups where you could find potential clients discussing their problems.

Questions and Answers

It is always beneficial to participate in question and answer sessions. Use your knowledge and expertise to get involved and answer questions posted. This will raise your profile and show you are not only there to help but you also know what you are talking about. This gives your brand a more human quality and makes you more approachable.

Recommendations

One of the best methods of building your brand with LinkedIn is by getting and giving recommendations. Getting endorsements from your peers and leaders in the industry can add instant credibility to your brand as can recommendations from your customers. Once your brand's profile has been boasted you can also move on to giving your own recommendations which in turn will elevate your own status and broaden your reach.

Keep updated

There is nothing worse than leaving old information on your profile, it makes you look unprofessional and makes it seem like you hardly ever use LinkedIn. Always keep your profile up-to-date, make sure all information is current and remove any links or content that is no-longer relevant. It is important to maintain an active presence.

Employee profiles

Many people use LinkedIn to find a new job and you do not want to give the impression that your employees are looking to move on. Your employees' profiles should not say "I'm looking for a new job" but instead should say "I love my job and i'm good at it". Your employees profiles should be written to address the needs of your clients and should show that they are there to help.

No hard selling

It may come as no surprise that people are more receptive when they are treated like human beings instead of being pushed into buying your products. Sometimes you will get a sale but most of the time you will just scare them away. Don't go for the hard sell instead get involved in discussions and offer your help and opinions. Make sure your brand has a reputation for getting involved and you can sell your products but let that come secondary.

If you follow all these steps you will be one step closer to boasting your brands status and reputation using LinkedIn. The thing to remember is that social media networking takes time and effort; it is an ongoing process and the more you put in the more you get out.

How do you promote your website using LinkedIn?

Microblogging

More than just small blogging...

As you might already know, a blog is a type of website where the author posts articles and content including text and images on a particular topic. Blogs are like an online diary with new content being posted regularly and allow readers to leave comments and share their point of view. The act of posting an article on a blog is called blogging.

But what is microblogging? Well as the name suggests it is blogging but on a smaller scale. Instead of posting an entire article posts usually consist of much less information such as a single line of text. Usually this will be status updates or just a quick sentence to say what's going on.

Two of most recognisable uses of microblogging can be seen with Twitter and Facebook. Twitter allows text posts of up to 140 characters in length and does not support video or photo use, it's a pure microblogging social network site. Facebook on the other hand has much more functionality than twitter and supports both images and video.

Facebook and Twitter allow users to post how they feel, what they are doing and where they have been and basically broadcast their life in small increments. That is exactly what microblogging is all about, quick and to the point updates. Microblogging makes you condense all your information into a few small sentences so your posts are quick and to the point making them infinitely easier to read.

Microblogging using social media sites like Facebook and Twitter can be a highly effective tool for boasting your brand identity. Here are a few tips to help you boast your brand using microblogging...

The personal touch

It is important to engage your followers, give it a personal touch and actively engage. Make your followers feel there is a real person behind the account. This will make them more likely to interact with you. Do not use automation, using bots may get your message out there but people are more receptive to a real person.

Give a heads up

There are times when your site may be down due to scheduled maintenance; this is unavoidable but it is good practise to keep your customers aware of such maintenance. Use microblogging to let them know before its happening so they can be prepared. It looks much more professional to show you have any outages under control rather than have them come face to face with services being down.

No hard selling

Social media services when used in business are primarily a place to connect, learn, and listen to your audience. Be there for you audience don't push your products at them, use your knowledge and skills to offer impartial advice and expand awareness. Your audience will me far more receptive if they are sure you are not just trying to sell them something.

Determine your goals

Before you dive into microblogging take some time and step back, determine what you hope to achieve and formulate a basic strategy. Microblogging can be used for customer support, sell products, to share company information and to build relationships. It is important to think about what you want to achieve before spending your time and resources on it. Choose your direction and you will be able to clearly focus your efforts.

Microblogging can be very beneficial to boast your brands reputation and identity. If used correctly it can be one of the most powerful tools in your company's arsenal but it is important to remember you only get out what you put in. Invest your time in microblogging and you will find the results can be rewarding.

But what do you think? Has microblogging been beneficial to your business, or is it a waste of your time and resources?

That's all for now, but stay tuned for part II

So that's the A-M of Social Media... N-Z will be coming soon, but that's probably enough to be getting on with.

You've already learnt about application of social media, building your brand, the customer support possibilities social media offers and how to put it all into practice. In the next thrilling instalment you will learn how social media can work best for you.

The aim of this guide is to show you that social media is not just about gathering friends on Facebook and followers on Twitter, it is about promoting yourself, your brand or your business to a wider audience and engaging with the people you reach.

Still to come in part II... No-one is listening - time to review the social media strategy, Sharing is key to success and Zebras amongst horses....

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