

# P The Power of

WHY does your business  
need Social Media  
Marketing and HOW can  
your business use it?

*This report was prepared by  
Marilyn K. Dayton  
Marketing Biz Professionals*

*Resources were:*

*..Rebecca Lieb, Altimeter Group*

*..Dennis Yu, BlitzLocal.com*

*..Marketo.com*

*..Hubspot.com*

*..SocialMediaExaminer.com*

*October, 2016*

# Social Media

## The Buying Process Has Changed

Prospects are now relying on social media to research and educate themselves before actually engaging with your company. But it is not enough to merely post on your Facebook and Twitter pages, instead you have to work social into every aspect of your marketing and create more peer-to-peer sharing opportunities. The more your audience wants to engage with your content, the more likely it is that they will want to share and ultimately convert to customers.

Forget what everyone else is doing. Choose the social marketing tactics that are right for you. Then get out there and engage – always in the spirit of experimentation. Not everything you try in social marketing will be right for your company, but stick with it and you'll develop a powerful new source of revenue that costs a lot less than traditional media. And remember social is more than just a channel or tactic; it is a strategy that should be present in every aspect of your marketing.

**The social marketing landscape can feel unstructured. That's why it pays to have a social marketing policy to guide the actions of everyone in your organization that will participate in social media. It's also essential to monitor what's being said and provide guidelines on how to respond appropriately (without making your employees feel like they're being censored).**

Here are some suggestions:

- Define what social marketing means for your company. Determine and call out what social networks you will be participating in. Use your social marketing policy to define what the term means for your entire organization so there's no confusion as to when the social media guidelines apply and when they don't.
- Set up a basic set of ground rules. Consider some basic tenets that you'd like your company to follow when it comes to participation. Don't assume that your employees know how to participate – make sure that your guide is clear, concise, and easy to find. You can even include social training during the employee on-boarding process.
- Decide how your organization will want to engage as a social marketing participant and contributor. Will your company's social media conversations come from a single person or will everyone in your company participate? Will social marketing be used as a customer service function, marketing tool or for product marketing research? Be as explicit as possible, and consider all the possible ways that people could go wrong, without being overly dramatic. Remember, your policy is an opportunity to get your company excited about contributing to social media sites.
- Stress the importance of confidentiality. Encourage your company's contributors to remember the importance of confidential information, and to manage their social marketing contributions just as they would conversations taking place in public.

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### A day in the life:

#### Posts

- Twitter
  - 1 post per hour from
  - 4 influencer re-tweets
- Facebook
  - 3-5 posts per day
- Google+
  - 3-5 posts per day
- LinkedIn
  - 2 posts per day
- Pinterest
  - 4-5 pins per week

#### Monitor

- Check Twitter, Facebook, and G+ for mentions or anything that needs a response
- Respond to comments, customer issues, questions etc
- Monitor throughout the day

#### Promote and engage

- Think of creative ways to promote content, events, and engage fans using pictures, infographics, stats, memes, questions
- Track success of promotions using Marketo Marketing Software

#### Influencer outreach

- Read influencer posts on Twitter and other blog feeds and comment

#### Blog

- Create blog posts
- HTML edit blog posts so they are formatted and ready to be published

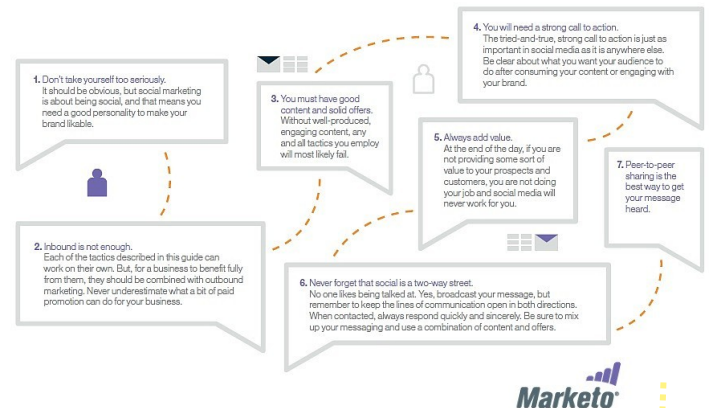


**73% of consumers prefer to get their information about an organization in articles rather than advertisements. That means it's more important than ever to include custom content in your overall marketing mix. Generating compelling searchable content that people want to consume can help drive traffic to your website, attract and retain a dedicated following, and greatly increase brand awareness. In order to produce quality content you're going to need a good source of raw material to continually draw upon.**

Here are some tips to keep it fresh:

### Follow industry experts

A great way to get ideas on what content you should be creating is to follow experts and influencers on Twitter. Use relevant hashtags for search and create lists on your top influencers. By tracking these tweets, you can determine what people are talking about and create content around those themes. Also, you can curate content on sites like Flipboard, so you can aggregate both news and social content.



### LinkedIn Today

LinkedIn Today makes it easy to stay up to date with the most popular news, blogs, and articles relevant to your business. Think of it as your interactive real-time morning paper. What shows up in your feed is generated directly from the network you're connected to, bringing you the most relevant news about the industries and topics based on the industries and sources you find most valuable. Checking in to LinkedIn Today can spark a wealth of content ideas based around trends and hot topics relevant to your industry.

### Test and evaluate

Of course every target audience is different. When you are sharing your content on your social channels, you will want to test, test, test! What is your audience sharing? What are they experiencing as authentic? Try to mix in posts with fun marketing memes that you have created. The fun pieces encourage your audience to share, builds trust, and ultimately helps you develop brand loyalty. As you continue to further hone in on your social strategy, you will get into a rhythm of what content resonates for your audience.

We believe there are 3 parts to social sharing:

1. Give people a reason to share
2. Always ask for the right to share at the right time
3. Make your shares measurable

One of the best ways to engage your audience is by providing them with a compelling reason to share your message across social networks in a way that is natural and seamless. Word-of-mouth marketing and peer recommendations are an extremely powerful way to increase brand visibility, as people will believe their network of peers vs. a brand driven campaign. If your target audience's friends and colleagues are talking about your product or service, you are more likely to gain their trust in a much more meaningful way than by running an ad campaign.

**A recent Nielsen Survey showed that only 33% of buyers believe what a brand has to say about itself.**

Because people view any brand-to-buyer communication as an advertisement, your customers are less likely to take your word for it. **In contrast, the same study showed that 92% believe what their peers have to say about a brand. That is what you should be focusing on.**

### Here are our top 5 motivators that make people share:

1. Reputation
2. Access to something exclusive
3. Co-creation
4. Competition and winning
5. Altruism

### Here are some additional statistics to consider taken from a recent New York Times study on social sharing:

- 75% say sharing helps them better understand and “process” news they’re interested in
- 85% say the responses they get from posting to a social media site provide more thought
- 94% consider how helpful a link would be to another user before posting it
- 68% share as an advertisement for themselves, to give others a better sense of who they are
- 73% say it helps them find people with common interests

Be sure to keep in mind these motivators and stats as you start developing social aspects to all of your campaigns. Once you have created a campaign that you believe is worth sharing, here are some additional ways to incentivize sharing within your campaigns:

- **Refer-a-Friend:** This sort of campaign is generally centered around a compelling offer. You promote your offer via email marketing and social networks, and then you create special offers for both the “referrers” and the “referees”. If you are utilizing a sharing platform, you can expect to gather metrics such as biggest influencers.
- **Social Sweepstakes:** Create a contest and get your entrants to spread the word on your behalf. Through the sweepstakes entry you gain important user data like who is sharing and where they are sharing most.
- **Polls and Voting:** Everyone has an opinion and they are usually happy to share. Take a look at the power of Yelp!

Creating a campaign that engages your audience and compels them to share their opinions is a great way to build relationships and get valuable information about your target audience’s likes and dislikes.

- **Flash Deals:** This is a concept similar to a Groupon. Many social sharing applications offer functionality for you to create your own time-sensitive deal.

Use this to create a fun and viral campaign that will increase brand awareness and increase new customers with sharing. Keep in mind the following when creating your Flash Deal:

- Offer time period
- Maximum number of deals sold
- Allow users to track deal’s progress
- Publish your offer on all social networks and your website

You can create campaigns like this yourself, or you can do so through a social application such as Marketo Social Marketing. The beauty of using an application to assist you in creating these sharing campaigns is that you not only have a streamlined way to deploy each campaign, but you can also harness powerful metrics that will help you continuously test and innovate.



## Social Media Channels and Tactics for Every B2B Marketer

This is meat of your social marketing plan. The types of social media tools we'll cover include:

- Channels
  - Social Networks
    - Facebook
    - Twitter
    - LinkedIn
    - Google+
  - YouTube
  - Presentation and Document Sharing
  - Photo and Image Sharing
  - Q&A Sites
  - Influence tracking sites
- Tactics
  - Blogging
  - Commenting
  - Bookmarking
  - Podcasting

There are many different venues to get the word out there about your company. These channels are where you will post your contact and promote peer-to-peer sharing. This is not an exhaustive list, but we have mentioned some of the major social channels you should consider.

### Social Networks

This is the bread and butter of your social marketing strategy. You will be spending a lot of time on the four major social marketing sites: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Google+. But remember that it is not enough to merely post on these sites, the key is to engage and build relationships through influence marketing.

## FACEBOOK:

### FACEBOOK — 72% OF ADULT INTERNET USERS/62% OF ENTIRE ADULT POPULATION

Fully 72% of online American adults use Facebook, a proportion unchanged from September 2014. Usage continues to be especially popular among online women, 77% of whom are users. In addition, 82% of online adults ages 18 to 29 use Facebook, along with 79% of those ages 30 to 49, 64% of those ages 50 to 64 and 48% of those 65 and older.



### Downsides & Limitations

It's not all about you, hard to believe Of course it's extremely important and necessary to share your products, offers, services, etc., BUT you also need to prove that you are an expert in your field. People aren't going to automatically trust you. You need to build that trust, and doing things like sharing valuable content, news articles, and information on the latest and greatest technology that's going on in your industry will prove that your fan base can trust what you say.

### How to use Facebook for Marketing

Facebook is definitely the easiest and most user friendly of them all. Build your fan base, share your page with friends and family, post your Facebook link anywhere you can, and give incentives for people to like your page. Maybe you're giving out a \$20 gift card once you reach 1,000 fans. People love challenges and we find that techniques like this work well.

Share valuable content and interact. Do not forget to INTERACT! This is very important. People love to see that there is a real person behind your brand. If you don't show your face, people wonder if it's really you or not. And for all you busy CEO's out there, it doesn't have to be you posting either. Hire someone to do the job. Make sure you keep that Facebook page active, interesting, and never stop engaging!!

**There are more than 800 million people using Facebook every day. This platform offers more than just a way to stay connected to friends and family; it is an essential tool in the B2B marketing toolbox. Facebook allows your business to be available to people on a trusted, popular platform, where prospects can see “real” people (their friends, family or colleagues) interacting with you and your brand. This sets the stage for you to build stronger, more immediate relationships with them.**

But, businesses need to strike that critical balance of offering content that is relevant and adds value, with content that just plain entertains. Ask two questions before every Facebook interaction we plan:

1. Does this help our brand's likeability?
2. Is this interesting,

Posting for the sake of posting can actually hurt your chances of being seen. The second you post something that is not engaging or relevant, EdgeRank, Facebook's proprietary algorithm to organize your newsfeed, will stop amplifying your posts and placing them in your fans newsfeeds (more on that below). Facebook Pages can help your company build awareness, share enthusiasm, create loyalty, strengthen inbound marketing, and promote peer-to-peer sharing. First, let's break down the elements of a Facebook page – and how you can take advantage of them.

#### **Facebook's new timeline: what you need to know**

Facebook began rolling out its new timeline format in September 2011. Here's how it better serves B2B companies:

- The “scrapbook” style lets you prominently display key snapshots of your business' brand, marketing focus, and gives you the ability to tell a story and to highlight your company's milestones.
- Interactions, comments on Fan pages, and “Likes” about your company appear in a user's news feed. “Likes” will also appear in a box at the top of their page, keeping you prominently top of mind.
- The ticker shows a live stream of friends' activities and conveniently lets users “Like” a page without leaving their own newsfeed. In other words, Facebook users can easily see when their friends are interacting with or commenting about your brand and they can do the same.
- The timeline offers more branding and lead-capture options. The large cover image presents plenty of room for your branding and marketing images, so you can capture the eye of a potential customer and get them on your page. You can also pin images to the top of your page and highlight certain images to enlarge them.

The content you create and share is your “make-or-break” component on Facebook. To get the most out of your Facebook page and presence, your posts' appearing on your fans' newsfeeds is essential. This is where EdgeRank becomes important. EdgeRank is Facebook's algorithm that personalizes users' newsfeeds and inserts posts it thinks will interest them. In very simplified terms, if users (or their friends) are interacting with your company/brand on a fairly frequent basis, you show up; if not, you get dropped.

“How do you increase our interaction and sharing?” To boost interaction, businesses need to post more often and engage their consumers in a two-way dialogue. More than 70% of interactions occur during the first hour after a post is made.



Keep your interactions up by posting more often and by being online and available right after you post. In other words, don't post and go to bed. And keep in mind that a post posed as a "question" tends to drive more interaction than one written as a statement.

### Facebook Groups

The Group feature is useful for demonstrating your company's passion for a topic, and gathers like-minded people to share ideas. The best part is that the more people join your group, the more it gets promoted to their friends and networks, increasing the group's popularity and growth. Creating a Facebook Group is a great way for businesses to create awareness, increase inbound links and foster loyalty.

### Facebook Lists

Facebook launched this feature in response to Google+'s circles, so it functions in a very similar way. You can subscribe to and organize lists for different topics or influencers you want to follow. As an example, you might have a list for social media influencers and another list for competitors. Through lists you can easily view and post to select groups or a company, which makes it easier for you to monitor and engage.

### Facebook Promoted Posts

Promoted posts show up in the newsfeed of all your fans and are visible to their friends as well. It becomes a sponsored story that is seen by more people than a regular post, so be sure that when you do choose to promote a post, it is strong, current, and compelling. It is pretty safe to say that businesses will never be able to compete with posts that are strictly entertainment-based or for social purposes only. But by using this promoted post feature, you can call attention to posts that you believe will generate the most impact.

Facebook suggests using Promoted Posts for any of the following to get you more exposure:

- Unique, vibrant, and interesting photos and videos
- Offers (still in beta)
- Exclusive events or news
- Questions

**We found the magic formula for promoted posts to be this: Clever messaging with a fun visual, all tied back to a strong offer or piece of content.**

### Facebook Ads

If you do use Facebook ads, they need to appeal to your audience, think outside the box. Use eye catching pictures and compelling language. Remember: you're competing for attention in a noisy environment.

### Facebook Apps

Before the timeline changes took place, you could capture "Likes" via your welcome page by gating your content and encouraging users to "Like" your page for access to this exclusive content. This has gone away with timeline. Now Facebook gives you the option to feature up to twelve apps. Four of these apps are shown by default, with the remaining apps under the fold and only visible by clicking and expanding the tab on the right. Although you cannot move the photo app as the default, you can control which other three apps show above the fold. It's important to optimize these three and rotate them frequently with fresh offers. Allowing you to change the apps appearing above the fold is one of the most interactive and engaging portions of the timeline and your best chance to showcase a call to action or offer that will convert. Take this into consideration when selecting the display images of your apps. Consider the image a small advertisement rather than an image.



## TWITTER:

**TWITTER — 23% OF ALL INTERNET USERS/20% OF ENTIRE ADULT POPULATION**

Some 23% of all online adults use Twitter, a proportion that is identical to the 23% of online adults who did so in September 2014. Internet users living in urban areas are more likely than their suburban or rural counterparts to use Twitter. Three-in-ten online urban residents use the site, compared with 21% of suburbanites and 15% of those living in rural areas. Twitter is more popular among younger adults — 30% of online adults under 50 use Twitter, compared with 11% of online adults ages 50 and older.

### **Downsides & Limitations**

Twitter has been at the top of the micro blogging platforms since 2006 and generates 175 million tweets daily. While it's a great way to share quick thoughts and generate traffic to your website and offers, there are also limitations that come with it. Building relationships with followers is nearly impossible to do. People follow you because they like what you have to say; they don't always care about your business as a whole. BUT, there's ways around that.

Choose what you tweet wisely and follow people that have an interest in you and your business. You need to focus on finding followers who you know will really benefit from your products/services or even people who will share your content.

### **How to use Twitter for Marketing**

Twitter (like basically all of these social media marketing tools) is great for directing people to your website to generate leads. But you need to have content that is enticing enough for people to stop and read yours. People are normally scrolling through quickly and only clicking the ones that stand out the most. Make sure when you're constructing your tweets, each one has tags for searching purposes and a link that is directing your viewers where you want them to go. Whether it's to your contact page, or a coupon you're offering, make Twitter useful by getting people to your website.

**In 2007, Twitter began as what many considered to be a flash-in-the-pan social media outlet, but as of 2012, Twitter had over 500 million registered users and is one of the 10 most popular sites on the Internet – anything but a passing phase. Companies that lack a strategic, lead-generating plan of attack for their Twitter accounts are losing out on access to a huge potential customer base and the opportunity to showcase themselves as social savvy, relevant businesses. Being followed on Twitter is an incredibly strong signal of online affinity for your business. These self-selected prospects are indicating an active interest in your brand and are asking to hear more from you.**

Think of Twitter as the water cooler for B2B marketers: It's a vibrant community where businesses can prospect leads and congregate as thought leaders to discuss relevant industry topics. B2B marketers are always striving to provide good content in an easily digestible and timely format. On Twitter, it is easy to quickly compose Tweets and messages aimed at those interested in your company or product.

You will also want to make sure that your Twitter handle is short, as you only have 140 characters to complete your post. Having a short Twitter handle will help your followers when they re-tweet you.





## Twitter following

Becoming someone's follower on Twitter accomplishes four goals:

- You identify Twitter accounts that will be relevant and interesting to you, your organization and your industry.
- You let people know that you're on Twitter, and encourage them to follow you back.
- You associate yourself with a specific group of industry experts and thought leaders, and demonstrate your interest in the space.
- Twitter is a great platform for engagement, so once you follow someone on Twitter you can work on starting a conversation.

## Tips for following

- Find people to follow by importing your contact databases using tools that Twitter provides. Then, broaden this action by following those that your followers are following – where relevant. Be sure to also follow people that your competitors are following.
- Do a search for experts in the field who are tweeting. You can find people to follow on sites like Wefollow.com or Twibes.com.
- If possible, try to make sure to follow back relevant people and companies that are following you. You don't want to upset prospects, customers or partners by not following them!
- Twitter provides easy search functionality so that you can find people that are talking about your company and your industry. Spend some time trying out different searches and hashtags that are relevant to your business. Once you find the people who are contributing most to the conversation, start following them.
- Create lists. By creating a list you can easily segment people who you are following. As an example you can create a list for hot prospects, customers, and one for competitors.



## Tools to manage Twitter followers

With so many people to follow, sometimes it is tough to keep track. Plus, as you follow more people, you notice the number of irrelevant Tweets start adding up. There are many tools out there that can help you get rid of people who aren't following you, reciprocate follows, cleanup inactives, and follow new people based on similar interests.

Here are 5 tools that can easily help you manage your Twitter followers:

1. tweepi.com
2. friendorfollow.com
3. untweeps.com
4. refollow.com
5. foller.me

## Twitter 101 : Getting started

- Always use a URL shortener like Bit.ly. They are also often built into other tools such as Hootsuite and Tweetdeck. You only have 140 characters, so make it count!
- The symbol # on Twitter is known as a hashtag. These tags are used to affiliate a tweet with a certain topic and can be useful for tracking social marketing campaigns and connecting with customers. You can develop your own hashtags to try and promote a viral following for a specific topic or campaign.
- Avoid the temptation to use tools that send automatic direct messages. These types of messages are often construed as spam and may cause people to "unfollow" you.
- You can also engage Twitter followers and influencers by including an @ mention in your tweets. You can do this when you post content you think will resonate with an influencer. An easy format to follow is tweeting with a link to relevant content and then including the @ mention at the end of the tweet.

- Use Twitter lists to segment users by interest or group together brand advocates and your favorite twitter users. Keep in mind that when you add a user to a public list they are notified and the list is open and searchable to all users. A private list, which may be used for competitors, is only visible to you.
- Use Twitter during events and to promote things like contests. A great way to engage your Twitter followers is to create a contest that asks followers to contribute in some way.
- You want your Twitter feed to be a mix of Tweets you've created, as well as replies and retweets.

### Influencer marketing on Twitter

Twitter is a fantastic platform to learn who your influencers are. Because Twitter is designed for quick exchanges of information and shares, you can start to keep track of who is re-tweeting your content and engaging in conversations. Remember to reach out to your top sharers to create relationships. They may be interested in doing a guest blog or allowing you to do a guest blog on their site. The more you engage directly with your top influencers, the more they will continue to promote your content.

### What to tweet

To some, this may sound backwards or surprising, but do not use Twitter to only promote your company. Sure, calling out your company's new ebook or webcast is an important part of your tweeting. But if you never contribute to the conversations taking place, if you never offer something personal or fun or funny, you are missing the prime opportunity unique to Twitter. Twitter is about building relationships; it is about reciprocity. Engage and be engaged. Be a part of the flow of information. Don't be a broken record repeatedly rattling off the company's tagline. It's in your best interests to pay attention to what your customers and prospective customers are tweeting about and to respond accordingly.

Remember, your content should create value and ultimately, be helpful to your network. In B2B marketing, re-tweeting material that will be helpful to your network is good, but writing your own informational material is even better. If your network (specifically, customers and prospective buyers) benefit from something you tweet

about, they will remember you and your business. Here is that word of caution mentioned earlier: As with anything, a little self promotion is good for business but if your entire tweet history is only about you and your company, you've got it wrong. Keep in mind the 4-1-1 rule: The 4-

1-1 rule for Twitter was popularized by Tipping-point Labs and Joe Pulizzi, founder of Junta42 and the Content Marketing Institute. For every one self-serving Tweet, you should re-tweet one relevant Tweet and most importantly share four pieces of relevant content written by others.

What's great about this approach is that it lets you engage in the conversation, build awareness, and keep in touch with your followers without coming across as pushy or too "me" focused. As you plan out the cadence of updates you'll send, try scheduling four educational or entertaining Tweets mixed with one "soft promotion" (e.g. attend an event) and one "hard promotion" (e.g. download a free trial or apply for an account).



## LINKEDIN:

### **LINKEDIN — 25% OF ADULT INTERNET USERS/22% OF ENTIRE ADULT POPULATION**

A quarter of online adults use LinkedIn, a proportion that is unchanged from the 28% of online adults who did so in September 2014. As was true in previous surveys of LinkedIn usage, the platform is especially popular among working-age adults as well as college graduates and those with relatively high household incomes. LinkedIn is the only major social media platform for which usage rates are higher among 30- to 49-year-olds than among 18- to 29-year-olds. Fully 46% of online adults who have graduated from college are LinkedIn users, compared with just 9% of online adults with a high school diploma or less. The site continues to be popular among the employed – 32% are LinkedIn users, compared with 14% of online adults who are not employed.

### **Downsides & Limitations**

There is a lot less conversation happening on a LinkedIn page than there is on other social media marketing profiles. One way around this is to join groups or communities where you can ask questions and engage in conversations.

### **How to use LinkedIn for Marketing**

Stream all your social media profiles to this one page. Everything from Twitter, Facebook and your blog can stream right to LinkedIn, making it the home of where all your social media will live. It doesn't get much easier than that.

**As a leading social networking site for professionals, LinkedIn is perfect for B2B organizations, as the focus is on education, work history, companies and professional interests. Build out your company LinkedIn Profile.**

Companies can build a profile on LinkedIn that showcases products, employee networks, blog posts, upcoming events, and status updates. Much like Twitter or Facebook, users on LinkedIn can follow your profile to learn more about your company. You can also post jobs on LinkedIn, making it a great venue for recruiting top candidates.

### **Here are some tips to get started on creating your LinkedIn page:**

- Give a voice to your products: The new Products Page allows you to assign members of your organization to different product offerings so prospects know exactly who to get in touch with. This is a great way to start conversations between top prospects and product managers, sales, and support staff within your organization.

- Recommendations: After you create your Products and Services Page, you can begin using recommendations.

This gives current customers or employees a forum to recommend your products and services to others.

- Videos: You can now post videos directly to LinkedIn on your Products and Services Page. Place them next to product descriptions to get the most value and visibility.

- Offers: The Products and Services Page now has a Promo box. This is a great place to include contests, promotions, and discounts. Use this area to drive additional traffic to your website.

### **LinkedIn and SEO**

LinkedIn is fantastic for SEO and having properly optimized pages, both company and employee can boost SEO and organic visibility.



### **Optimize your page by using the following quick tips:**

- Include a professional headshot
- Include keywords in job position title
- Link to company blog under “Websites”
- Add Twitter handle
- Claim unique URL and then drop it into email signatures
- Write a summary in the first person and think of it as a “greatest hits collection”. Include keywords and add a bit of your own personality
- Under “Specialties”, include a line list all skills one on top of the other to make your profile easy to read
- Make sure to add plenty of skills in the “Skills” section
- Move recommendations closer to the top

### **LinkedIn Advertising**

Like Facebook Ads and Promoted Tweets, LinkedIn advertising can get your message across to the right audience. LinkedIn ads work like PPC, and because LinkedIn holds valuable demographic information, this may be a great platform for you to reach your target audience. When you set up a LinkedIn profile, you put in information such as title, role, company, work experience etc, and LinkedIn can use that information to help very specifically target advertising.

- Create ads that work for your target audience: When you develop an ad on LinkedIn you will be asked to select your demographics based on role, title, industry, geography, and a variety of other criteria. Remember to think about your keywords when working in each demographic. An ad geared towards a practitioner will be different than an ad geared towards an executive level prospect.
- Think about your call to action: As with your ad copy, you want to make sure that your call to action is appropriate to your target audience. If it is a piece of content think about whether your target audience will resonate with that content. Additionally, make sure that you are utilizing one call to action per ad so that you give your prospect clear direction.

### **Other important LinkedIn tips**

- Try to get recommendations from others that include positive comments about your company. These comments contribute to social validation about your organization when people view your page. Do this for both personal profiles and for your company profile, as it allows for reviews as well.
- Pay attention to the network updates you receive from LinkedIn, as they share important updates about your connections and can hold the key to new business opportunities for you and your company.
- Use LinkedIn Answers to ask thoughtprovoking questions or become an “expert” by providing valuable answers and demonstrating thought leadership. LinkedIn Answers are a great way for you to showcase your interests, expertise and problem-solving capabilities to entire networks of people, which can indirectly drive interest in your company and new business
- Promote events on LinkedIn. The events section of LinkedIn allows event organizers to post events and encourages those attending to RSVP for the event. This promotes additional visibility and encourages sharing.

### **LinkedIn Key Metrics**

- Followers
- Referring Traffic
- References
- Group Members
- Discussions Created



## GOOGLE PLUS:

### Downsides & Limitations

Word on the street is that small business owners are getting worried that their website won't be of use if everyone can visit their Google+ page and get everything they need to know. Well, we can't really argue this point, because you never know what the future holds on the internet.

Google+ also lacks some privacy. Unlike most social media marketing platforms, there's no "request" button for Google+. You basically just add the page to your circles and you have access to their feed at all times. Although you have a business and you are posting information for everyone to see, I think we all still like to have a sense of security.

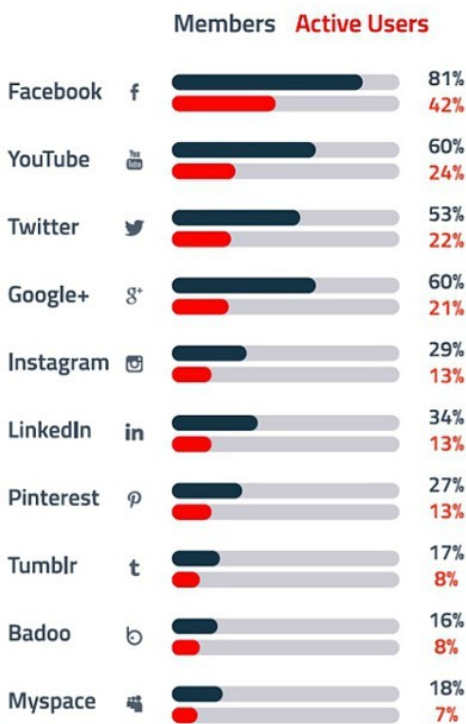


**Google+ is quickly becoming a key part of any business' social media strategy. Boasting 150 million active users and 250 million total users as of June 2012 this social network is going to grow very quickly as Google is making a Google+ account mandatory for all Gmail users. Google+ is also playing a major role in SEO by making it easier for marketers to show up in search results.**

### About Page

An essential but often overlooked first step, the about page is a fantastic opportunity to give a quick overview of what your business is all about. You can also link back to specific pages and services from this page directing potential customers to the most important pages on your website. It's important to have a balance of marketing savvy copy that's also SEO friendly.

#### GOOGLE+ VS. OTHER NETWORKS



source: 2015 Google+ Profile from GlobalWebIndex.com

Make sure to include information that searchers will want to know about your company. Take advantage of the fact that Google+ allows you to use bullets in your description, which makes it simple to create an easy-to-read list of your products and services. You can also include links to specific pages and a contact form. Test and track different variations to see what works best for your business.

### Google Events

Google recently announced the Events feature which allows G+ users to send out customized invitations to anyone regardless of whether or not they are G+ users. It syncs beautifully with Google Calendar and shows up automatically when a user confirms for an event. In addition to sending out invites to webinars, work functions, parties, etc., Google Events can also send out invites for Google Hangouts. This could be the catalyst that gets your business on board to start using Hangouts or increase the awareness and attendance of the ones you are already hosting.

The "Party Mode" feature of Events allows everyone in attendance to instantly upload pictures to the same album using the Google+ mobile app, creating a living, real-time photo journal of a specific time and place. You can then show the photos off in chronological order as a slideshow all within Google+.



## Circles

This functionality allows a marketer to segment their followers. Unlike other social networks, through Circles, marketers can develop personas and communicate highly segmented messaging to each audience. This allows you to have a more authentic dialogue with your key prospects.

## Hangouts

Use Google+ Hangouts for video conferencing. Again, the beauty here is that it is highly integrated with other Google applications. So, if you use Google apps for your business, Hangouts can be a quick and easy way to connect teams and get some face time with a prospect.

## Claim your ownership of content

Google is aggressively using SEO benefits to entice webmasters and bloggers to engage with Google+. Google Authorship is how Google authenticates and will increasingly begin to “trust” you as a quality source of content. Setting up Google Authorship is simple and straightforward. You identify yourself to Google through your Google+ profile and then link back to it from your content and vice versa. Google authorship is the easiest way to take advantage of the SEO benefits of Google+. Doing so will allow the author’s picture to show up next to his blog posts in Google search results, causing higher rankings and click through rates.

## The business benefits for setting up Google Authorship

- Increases awareness of your overall Google+ profile page
- Adds a human element to your content and increases trustworthiness
- Helps your content stand out from the crowded search page results
- Improves your chances of showing up in more personalized search results
- Protects the original post’s ranking position as higher than a post that has scraped or syndicated the original content
- Studies have shown that Google Authorship increases click-through-rates

## Google+ Key Metrics

- Circle Adds/ Followers
- Mentions





## YOUTUBE:

### Downsides & Limitations

I would say one of the only downfalls of using YouTube for your business is that you can't exactly target your audience as well as you can on other social media marketing tools. Getting people to watch your channel and subscribe is one thing, but maybe not everyone watching will be interested in every video. Yes, it's up to them to pick through and see which ones are interesting to them, but it also raises the chance of people getting bored. Just keep uploading fresh videos and your subscribers will love you.

**Video is now an essential part of any successful social marketing and lead generation strategy. Not convinced? According to Forbes, three-quarters of executives surveyed said they watch work-related videos on business-related websites at least weekly; more than half watch work-related videos on**

**YouTube at least weekly.**



When optimizing this channel for lead gen the first step is to create videos that both entertain and educate. Your goals should be based on increasing awareness, demonstrating products, sharing knowledge, and humanizing the company. The next step is to optimize these videos with targeted keywords giving them a much better chance of reaching page one in Google search.

### Optimize your channel

Your channel description should include a keyword rich description since this section represents the meta data that is searched by Google. Each section of your profile is a chance to add in your business' most important keywords.

### Optimize individual videos

Your video description should be 2 or 3 sentences that include targeted keywords. It's also a best practice to include a shortened link with a call to action driving traffic to your website or a landing page with a specific offer.

The tagging feature is the way that YouTube determines the relevance of your asset and groups similar videos together. 5-7 tags are optimal and will ensure your video is associated with other videos that use the same tags so they can appear as a "related video" when users are viewing other videos.

### Encourage comments

When a video receives higher ratings and more comments, YouTube sees these as indications of higher quality, more relevant videos. Your goal should be to generate as many 'thumbs up' ratings and comments as you can for SEO purposes. Commenting on other popular videos in your niche is another way to generate more comments and ratings. It's also a great opportunity to present yourself as an expert by making a comment that actually gets liked by the viewers.

### Increase awareness for your company

Many of your prospects are probably already registered users of these video sites. Make online videos part of your marketing asset strategy – you'll have a presence on sites that your prospects are already visiting, while looking like a thought leader in your industry.

### Generate new leads

Use videos to promote lead generation by putting links to offers for additional content like whitepapers or webinars at the bottom or end of the video.

### **Publish online videos on your website and landing pages**

With sites such as YouTube, you can easily host videos on your landing pages and websites by using the links and embed code that YouTube provides.

### **Get into video viral marketing**

Video sites provide you with the links to let you share with others or include the videos on your own site. Determine which videos would be useful to prospects and include these links in your emails, blog posts, and other outbound communications. Remember, always be thinking about making your content more shareable.

### **Increase social shares through video**

Video content is a great asset to promote social sharing. Integrate videos in your social campaigns to further increase engagement, as videos often have high share rates compared to other types of assets. Promotional and sales-focused videos are acceptable and useful. Unlike whitepapers, online videos can be product oriented and promotional, such as:

- Product demos
- Customer testimonials
- Speaking engagements
- Holiday video cards
- Vblog (video blog) entries
- User generated content
- Company culture videos

You can also separate this content out by using channels and by customizing those channels with your company logo and branding.

### **YouTube Key Metrics**

- Referrals
- Views of videos
- Pages ranking on key terms
- Subscribers
- Shares



## PRESENTATION & DOCUMENT SHARING RESOURCES

While many B2B marketers may be hesitant to release their content for free, social media sites require a shift in mind-set. B2B prospects are already educating themselves about your company's offerings long before they get in touch with you – so it makes sense to take advantage of this and start nurturing them right away via sites such as SlideShare and Scribd. Plus, the more places your content is displayed, the more SEO you have and the more chances you are giving your audience to share.

Audit the content on your corporate website and upload key pieces to the right sites. Think of these sites as an extension of the “Resources” or “Downloads” section on your company website, with the added benefit of even greater exposure. Upload and share content that addresses your buyer personas and start to track which sites are most popular with each persona. You can then refine which topics and content work best on different sites.

Types of content you share should include infographics, slide decks, and webinar slides. Make sure that all of your presentations are optimized for SEO.

### SLIDESHARE:

We found that putting in place the following elements to promote and build awareness around any SlideShare presentation can give you a much better chance of garnering plenty of views and shares.

#### Keys to a successful SlideShare launch

1. Make it a part of something bigger.
2. Base your presentation on a topic in which you are an expert.
3. Take it on the road. Present your SlideShare deck at company meeting, user groups, meetups, and conferences.
4. Use both paid and earned media in your promotion strategy.
5. Work with a partner who understands your goals.

#### Presentation and Document Sharing Key Metrics

- Referrals from presentation/ document sharing sites
- Views on presentation/document sharing sites
- Pages ranking on key terms from presentation/document sharing sites
- Subscribers to company profile or pages



### PINTEREST & INSTAGRAM:

**PINTEREST — 31% OF ADULT INTERNET USERS/26% OF ENTIRE ADULT POPULATION**

Some 31% of online adults use Pinterest, a proportion that is unchanged from the 28% of online adults who did so in September 2014. Women continue to dominate Pinterest – 44% of online women use the site, compared with 16% of online men. Those under the age of 50 are also more likely to be Pinterest users – 37% do so, compared with 22% of those ages 50 and older.

#### Photo and Image Sharing

The ease at which you can share photos and images with others is a huge boon for B2B companies. It lets you record and increase the visibility of company events, industry conferences, user groups and more. Prospects and customers love visual content, so make sure you are consistently using images in your marketing mix. Why are photos king?

Here are our top reasons why you should use photos and images as part of your marketing campaigns.

- Appeals to emotions: Visual content appeals to the viewer's emotions in a way that text is unable to. Thanks to the simplicity of photo and image sharing applications, text is an afterthought.
- Creates intimacy: Photos help open the personal side of your company. Now customers and prospects can relate to your brand message via photos.
- Engages: Photo and image sharing applications provide the perfect opportunity for your business to engage customers in a fun way through contests and other image-centric campaigns.

## PINTEREST

### Downsides & Limitations

Although Pinterest is great for showing your business culture and personality, it creates the feeling of a catalog rather than having a social experience. Yes, you can get a lot of re-pins, but do they really care about your business or just the nice picture you posted? While most of the top aspiring Pinterest users are young girls with a dream wedding and style board, it's hard to tell what your followers are looking for. This is why you need to be smart in what you are pinning, link all images back to your website and make sure you're posting content that people will truly want to share.

Pinterest is virtual scrapbook or pinboard that allows users to share and organize visual imagery. A user can pin anything from around the web and other users can re-pin their images. Users organize their Pinterest pages by categorizing content on boards.

For businesses, Pinterest can be a way to curate visual content like infographics, videos, company culture, and even blog posts. Pinterest can help promote creativity, but always make sure that your content is relevant to your audience. Pinterest pages can also be used for a landing page for an email campaign, event, or presentation. The boards provide a unique way of organizing content to be visually appealing to your prospect. Make sure you are including a good content mix in your Pinterest boards. Followers will want to see a combination of business and culture content. Just make sure all of your content is visually appealing and interesting

### Advertising and infographics rule the B2B marketing pins

Today, B2B marketers can get tons of great examples of award winning infographics and advertising campaigns on Pinterest. When pinning, pin the most visually interesting aspect of what you are sharing, like a special banner, slide, or cover page to get the most engagement and to make your brand look like it belongs.

### It's a great opportunity for additional promotion of B2B campaigns

The pinning of handbags and skirts, directly or through fans, is a great way for retailers to socially market their goods, but companies that sell \$20k consulting packages or \$400k aircraft engines still don't have Pinterest in their marketing plans. Should they? If they care about or spend money on any of the following, then the answer is definitely "yes".

- **SEO:** While there are many theories about how the big search engines score social media linking, connecting Pinterest can certainly help your efforts.
- **Content:** Do you have some interesting content that has done well on other social channels? Why not pin it? Just as the Facebook audience is different from the Twitter audience, Pinterest allows you to appeal to a more visually focused crowd that may not be spending their slow hours on Facebook or Twitter.

The Pinterest logo, featuring the word "Pinterest" in a red, cursive script font.

- **Design:** Are you a design forward company? Or do you typically develop design-forward campaigns? Pinterest is all about the visual, so leverage the fact that graphic designers are one of the most prolific groups of pinners, get your creative team to pin their work to inspire and be inspired!

- **Marketing:** Just as designers pin and re-pin designs that inspire them, marketers pin and re-pin campaigns that inspire them. Start a company board to show your peers the beauty of your marketing and build your reputation among prospects and possible job candidates as a top tier marketing company. Next, start a board with pins of others' marketing campaigns that inspire you.

#### **Get followed: SEO is important**

Pinterest's search is mainly how people find you and your pins, and it is all about keywords. For example, a picture of a fish with no description will not be found in a search for "fish". However, simply adding a description (adjectives help!) will immediately get eyes on your pin. Load up relevant, popular keywords in the description of your pins and boards and you are guaranteed to get more views/ likes/follows.

#### **Fresh content creates the most waves**

Just like any other social media platform, Pinterest rewards those that bring fresh content. So while it's very easy to fill a board with re-pins, ultimately the fastest way to increase your followership is by pinning new and interesting items.

## **Instagram:**

#### **INSTAGRAM — 28% OF ADULT INTERNET USERS/24% OF ENTIRE ADULT POPULATION**

Some 28% of online adults use Instagram, a proportion that is unchanged from the 26% of online adults who did so in September 2014. Instagram continues to be popular with non-whites and young adults: 55% of online adults ages 18 to 29 use Instagram, as do 47% of African Americans and 38% of Hispanics. Additionally, online women continue to be more likely than online men to be Instagram users (31% vs. 24%).

**Instagram is a photo sharing app that can have some relevance to the B2B market, especially with Facebook's recent acquisition of the application. Having more than 27 million users, Instagram has a very active user base. Use Instagram for capturing event and office culture photos. You can also leverage the application to run contests and scavenger hunts.**

#### **The 4 stages of Instagram for B2B**

**1. Curate:** Before you begin snapping photos and engaging viewers, it's up to you to create a plan to help you

curate fans of your company. Ask questions like:

- What does my target audience want to see?
- How can I get them to engage with my photos?
- What will get them talking about my company?

At its core, the curate stage is about determining what will make your fans engage with your brand in a positive manner and creating a plan of execution.



Instagram



**2. Snap:** The time has come to start snapping photos! Consider the following objectives as you create your visual content:

- Make it exclusive: Post images that can only be seen on Instagram.
- Make it visually engaging: Instagram users are savvy, creative, and know a lackluster photo when they see one. Don't post a photo unless it has aesthetic appeal.
- Make it personal: Post photos of your employees at work to give viewers and potential customers' personal insight into the inner workings of your company. Viewers want to feel like they are part of something, and this inside glimpse works wonders.

**3. Hashtag:** The Instagram hashtag is a powerful feature to engage your viewers. Hashtags act as keywords providing a way for people to find photos through a simple search. Hashtags are especially useful as you seek to establish your brand as an industry leader and get more followers. Implement hashtags that are unique to your brand and industry, as well as hashtags that are popular keywords. And remember to use hashtags on all of your posts.

**4. Engage:** Engagement with potential customers and sharing are the primary reasons to utilize a platform such as Instagram. Luckily, there are a variety of ways for B2B companies to do this:

- Events: Post photos of events you host for your current and potential clients
- Geolocation: Use the geolocation feature to provide yet another point of engagement with your viewers
- Gamification: Hold a contest for your audience. Have viewers submit photos, provide captions, or solve a puzzle about your photos.

#### **Photo and Image Sharing Key Metrics**

- Referrals from photo sharing sites
- Views of photos on social sites
- Subscribers to your photo profile or pages
- Page rankings on key terms from photo sharing sites
- Repins and pinterest board follows

## **BLOGGING:**

Now that you have an idea of what channels you want to start engaging your target audience on, let's take some time to talk about various tactics you can utilize both on these channels and in conjunction with your daily social media activities.

### **Blogging 101**

Blogs play a key role in educating prospects for lead generation and nurturing. Many of your most qualified leads – whether you've identified them or not – are readers of your blog. Your blog can be one of the most powerful marketing assets if you stick to the topics your prospects and customers will find most compelling and avoid the hard sell. A blog adds a human touch, especially when a blog has several contributors and it also lets you focus on your prospect's agenda instead of yours. It can be a great idea to try and get participation from leaders in your organization. Not only will this diversify your content, but it will also bring more visibility to your key thought leaders. Additionally, a blog is great to make sure you keep up with your content marketing mix, as the format is more conducive to quick, easily digestible posts.





Blogs boost your organic search engine by adding pages to your site and encouraging inbound links. Blogs give you a greater chance of showing up in the right search engine results. They also give other sites a reason to link to you, increasing the number of inbound links and boosting your search engine rankings.

**Here are some examples of blogging techniques:**

- Establish a corporate blogging strategy that includes overall goals and success metrics.
- Identify and recruit blog contributors in your organization.
- Blog with your keywords in mind
- Link to your blog from other pages on your corporate website.
- Respond to blog comments within 24 hours and make sure all of your bloggers are aware of and abide by this rule.
- Remember your content mix – include content that is diverse and speaks to all places in the buying cycle.
- Encourage your readers to participate by including calls to action at the end of each blog.
- Do not censor comments since you want to spark authentic conversations that engage your readers.

**5 Tips to write a killer blog post**

- 1. Make a list:** One of the simplest B2B blog post concepts can be the most effective: list posts. Think “25 Must-Read Email Marketing Resources,” “15 Influential Leaders in Search Engine Optimization” or “30 Can’t Miss Social Media Conferences.” List posts are effective because they are easily scanned. Plus, readers know exactly what they’re getting simply by viewing the headline – influencing many to share the content with their social networks even before clicking through themselves. List posts can also effectively attract inbound links. For example, with the “15 Influential Leaders in Search Engine Optimization” post, thought leaders profiled are likely to link back to the post from their own blog or corporate website.
- 2. Write the unexpected:** Tips and checklists are popular blog formats, but to create a post that truly stands out, write a reverse tips or checklist post. For example, instead of “10 Ways to Improve Deliverability on Your Next Email Campaign,” try writing “Top 10 Ways to Get Flagged as Spam.” When it all boils down, both posts offer similar takeaways: how to ensure your emails reach subscribers’ inboxes. The reverse post concept may be even more successful at attracting readers and inbound links, thanks to the “shock” value.
- 3. Play off current events:** Relating B2B blog content back to current events can help make posts relevant, timely and interesting. For example, an event planning software company could leverage a news item about the Summer Olympics on its blog. A post could discuss the planning element of the large-scale event, and tie in the company’s business offerings.
- 4. Leverage someone else’s thoughts:** Thought leader interviews make great content for B2B blogs. Leveraging the insight and opinions of respected industry leaders not only provides interesting, relevant content for readers; it can also position your B2B organization as a thought leader.
- 5. Use stats, poll results, or other research:** Research-driven posts – whether based on an in-depth research report or a less formal reader poll – are another killer element for B2B blogs. B2B organizations can leverage their own research, or that of other groups. The benefits of research-driven posts are two-fold: First, byte-sized statistical information is simple and quick to read. Secondly, it’s easily sharable via social networks.



A key thing to keep in mind is ensuring that your blog content is always relevant to your audience. Make sure you are focusing on pain points and that your posts are always relatable. Additionally, if you can tie in something emotional that will really strike a chord with your prospect, he or she will continue to come back for more insight.

## **Blog commenting**

Blog commenting is underrated – few companies recognize that engaging and commenting on relevant blogs achieves marketing goals and therefore do not realize its full potential as a marketing tool. It's a great platform for discussion and an engaging method of marketing.

- **Increases readership:** Find leads who are looking for you, but just haven't found you yet. Some people just need that link to click to your website when they aren't actively searching for it, and you can meet them halfway by providing information they want and a link to one of your related blog posts.
- **Heightens brand awareness:** Make your brand top-of-mind. Leads are doing research on the internet for your product, so be where they are, which won't always be on your website. Once they see that you have been commenting on blogs with great information, they'll start to wonder what your company does and how your company can fix their problems.
- **Strengthens relationships:** Customers may be commenting on others' blogs, which is a perfect time to begin a relationship with them by engaging them in a discussion. If customers are the ones writing the blog posts about you, just drop them a simple thanks! They will appreciate it, and you will benefit.
- **Enhances your SEO:** Your blog comments will generally include keywords that leads are searching for. The more you comment, the more likely your lead will find you. However, be careful: it is not a best practice to load your comment with keywords and a link – this is frowned upon. Write a comment that continues the discussion, and if a link is relevant, post it! You are doing them a favor. Additionally, if the blog is considered credible in the eyes of search engines, you can possibly increase your position in organic search results as more people click on your website and therefore increase visits to your site.
- **Identifies you as an expert:** Leads are looking for information. If you can provide what they're looking for, awesome! You just won points in their book. Now they'll be looking to you for answers.

However, comment with caution! Comment and engage with prospects and customers on blogs with topics similar to yours, but be careful not to merely advertise your blog or products. Instead, further a discussion and spark their interests in the topic with your expertise, and if you have a relevant article or blog post that covers a similar topic, add a link to your post if you think they'd appreciate it. Chances are, if they're interested in what you have to offer, they will religiously follow what you have to say and share that information with their colleagues.

## **Blogging Key Metrics**

- Number of posts
- Audience growth – unique and repeat visits
- Referring traffic
- Time on site
- Number of conversions (e.g. prospect to lead, lead to opportunity, etc.)
- Conversion rate (depending on specific conversion goals)
- Subscribers
- Inbound links
- Technorati, Alltop and other directory listings
- SEO improvements

## **Commenting Key Metrics**

- Number of comments
- Increased number of conversions from commenters (e.g. new leads)
- Increased traffic from searchable Comments

## BOOKMARKETING:

Social bookmarking lets users share the websites that they think are interesting. The bookmarks are not stored on an individual browser, but exist on web-based bookmarking sites such as Reddit and StumbleUpon. B2B companies can benefit tremendously from social bookmarking through increased awareness and visibility, and in their SEO efforts as well.

### StumbleUpon and Reddit

These sites focus on providing the “best of the web” by having users vote on what they find most interesting, valuable, entertaining, etc. Once you start identifying the articles that you find useful and interesting, take note of who’s contributing this content and become friends with them. They will most likely find what you have to contribute interesting as well, and could potentially be customers or partners for your business.

### Bookmarking Key Metrics

- Referrals and visits from these sites
- Page rankings on key terms from these sites
- Button views – the number of times the sharing icon (button) was viewed on your site
- Bookmarks – the number of bookmark events
- Bookmarking rate – the number of bookmarks divided by button views

## PODCASTING:

**A podcast is a type of multi-episodic digital media that can be downloaded. Podcasts are great for webinars and thought leadership series. There are a number of podcast directories that can be used to distribute your podcast content such as your company’s webinars and phone conferences. Below are some ways podcasts can drive B2B success.**

### Podcasts are automatically distributed to series subscribers

When you have subscribers to your podcast series, their podcatcher application will automatically recognize and download your latest podcasts. So when you create a new podcast it will reach your subscribers without you having to formally execute a new marketing campaign.

### Leverage Podcast directories for SEO

In addition to the Apple iTunes store, there are a number of sites dedicated to helping users find the most popular and useful podcasts according to their interests. These podcast directories are yet another way for your company to improve its SEO through additional inbound links.

### A Podcast series offer a unique way to interact and converse with your customers and prospects

Make sure to provide a dedicated phone number or email address that is associated with your podcasts so people can respond to you. Then you can dedicate an upcoming podcast to answering questions or addressing the feedback you received.

### Podcasting Key Metrics

- Referrals from podcast directories
- Views of podcasts (if hosted on podcast sites)
- Number of subscribers and conversions



## SEO & SOCIAL

Search engines have long relied heavily on external links as a proxy for quality. The assumption is that if a website site is good it will naturally attract lots of inbound links from other websites and blogs, and therefore that site should rank highly in search. However, as the internet evolves, social marketing mentions and “likes” are becoming increasingly common, and search engines realize that they need to look at those social marketing signals, in addition to normal links, to judge what ought to be ranking highly. So, by having plenty of buzz about your site in popular social marketing like Facebook and Twitter, you could receive a direct SEO boost.

That said, as of 2012 the direct impact of social signals is estimated to be relatively minor compared to links, according to SEOMoz’s survey of industry experts. This relatively small direct impact is expected to increase in the future, so for wise marketers looking to future-proof their SEO strategies, social marketing is probably a good investment.

As a side note, many social marketing sites, particularly in profiles, will allow you to insert links back to your website. While this may seem like an easy way to build links, unfortunately most “no-follow” those links, which is a piece of invisible code that essentially tells Google, “Don’t count this link as a vote.” That’s not to say you can’t get some good traffic through those profiles, or that other search engines besides Google won’t follow them, but it probably means you won’t get a direct link boost in Google’s eyes.

### Infusing SEO keywords into blog posts and social marketing properties

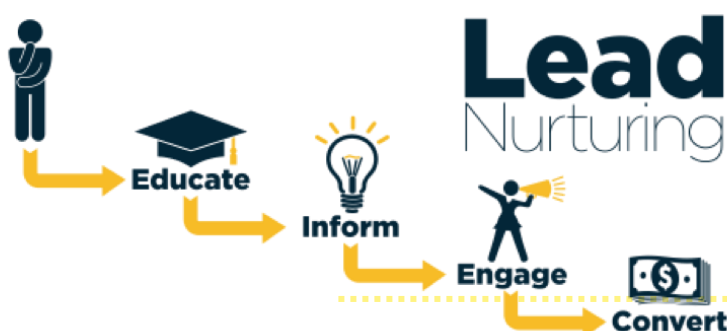
Part of SEO is being mindful of the keywords your target audience is searching for, and then using those keywords within all properties you want to rank well in search engines. For an easy and free way of doing keyword research, check out the Google Keyword Tool. After you identify target keywords, don’t go crazy. “Keyword stuffing” is a bad idea and went on Google’s chopping block a long time ago. You want to use keywords in a way that reads naturally to humans. With that caveat in mind, titles, descriptions and headlines are particularly important, as well as including keywords at least a few times in text blocks. By having keywords infused into your social marketing properties, you can use them as additional pieces of bait in the SEO ocean.

## NURTURING LEADS FROM YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA:

Social marketing plays a key role throughout your entire sales pipeline, beginning before prospects are even identified (while they research or follow thought leadership on social media sites), to after they become customers (as they remain loyal customers through retention and cross- and up-sell opportunities).

There are four key areas where social marketing can play an expanded role across your sales pipeline:

- Developing relationships with very early-stage prospects before they even enter your database through social lead generation techniques
- Building and maintaining relationships with known prospects as they educate themselves
- Supporting the sales cycle once the buyer engages in a formal buying process with a sales rep
- Deepening and expanding relationships with existing customers



## **Nurturing Prospective Leads through Social Media**

Lead nurturing comes into play when qualified prospects visit your site or social media sites anonymously. It is a vital part of the sales process that consists of investing in and building relationships with prospects regardless of whether or not you have their contact information. Just because you can't identify these individuals doesn't mean they aren't qualified leads; nurture them just as you would the known contacts in your database. If you don't, more agile competitors will steal these prospects from under your nose. Essentially, you should use social marketing interactions and conversations just as you would online activity on your own website – to increase the relevance and targeting of your marketing and sales efforts.

### **Here are a few examples of how to use social marketing interactions to bolster your lead nurturing methods:**

- **Focus in and be specific:** Use what you've learned from listening to social media conversations to engage with prospects with greater relevancy. For example, after identifying a prospect's Twitter username, follow his or her Twitter conversations that include keywords you care about, and track all of this data in your marketing automation system. You can also engage with the prospect via Twitter by @mentioning him or her and including a piece of relevant content. Retweeting is also a great way to get a hot prospect's attention.
- **Segment and trigger your campaigns based on social interactions:** Think about the potential of segmenting and triggering based on explicit conversations among people on social marketing sites. Get a strong indication of buying intent by combining knowledge of these interactions with tracking of other engagement activities such as email click-throughs, downloads and web page visits.
- **Interact with prospects over multiple media channels:** Integrate social marketing channels with traditional channels such as email, direct mail, and phone. Make sure you are incorporating blogs, videos, and links to your social sites in your lead nurture email programs.

Social marketing can be quite valuable to your internal marketing and sales operations as well. You can promote greater alignment between the two departments by refining the lead handoff process and bolstering the “lead lifecycle” – the path that your leads take once in your lead management system. A successful lead lifecycle requires agreement between marketing and sales on what constitutes a “sales-ready” lead, and agreement on when and how leads should get recycled back to marketing for further nurturing. Social media interactions can provide deep insight into sales readiness and buyer intent, so they are critical to keeping leads moving along the lead lifecycle.

### **Here are a few key ways you can make social marketing a deeper part of your sales and marketing alignment objectives in the future:**

- **Use social conversations to enhance your lead scoring and impact lead handoff to sales:** In addition to demographic, BANT, and behavioral data, begin to use social interactions as factors in your lead scoring methodology. Then, tailor your automated business rules for lead handoff to include social media interactions. Let social media activities trigger the hand-off and impact which leads are deemed “hottest” for sales.





- **Notify sales reps when prospects and customers show increased activity or are make interesting comments:** Hot leads demonstrate “interesting moments” or behaviors that indicate their sales readiness. This might be increased website activity, email click-throughs, and in the case of social media, increased interactions and conversations on social media sites. By notifying the sales team of these interactions immediately, you will dramatically increase the relevancy and timing of their conversations with these prospects.
- **Have social marketing activities play a key role in lead recycling campaigns:** You could set up a rule whereby an increase in activity on social sites triggers a lead score change that then re-engages the lead with sales. While this business rule will be automatic, be sure to also give sales the ability to manually indicate a specific timeframe in which the lead should be re-engaged if they have deeper insight into the relationship.
- **Sell using all available channels:** Social marketing interactions provide a great way for the individual sales rep to build relationships with contacts, especially younger contacts who may be as comfortable interacting online as they are using email or phone. Understand what channels each contact uses to communicate, and communicate with him or her in that manner.

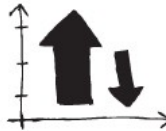
### Social Customer Nurturing:

**Existing customers are a tremendous source of new and continuing revenue, and should be continuously nurtured just as much as new leads. Customer marketing is a worthy investment for your marketing dollars, and here’s how social marketing can help:**

- **Use social marketing to reaffirm customer purchases after the decision is made:** Just because a prospect has agreed to buy your product or service doesn’t necessarily mean you’re home free. In fact, the period between when a purchasing decision is made to when the deal is signed and officially “closed” is critical. Use social marketing to reaffirm their choice is the right one.
- **Create lead nurturing campaigns optimized for new customers and incorporate your social marketing segments and triggers:** When an opportunity is closed and won, this is the perfect time to put all the associated contacts into a new drip marketing campaign that’s optimized for customers. Make these campaigns even more effective by incorporating the social marketing segments and triggers we discussed earlier. Over time they will help you cross- and up-sell additional products and strengthen customer loyalty.
- **Listen to the social media conversations of existing customers for new needs and requirements, or even the risk of defection to your competitors:** Many of your existing customers aren’t going to tell you explicitly when they need an additional product or service from you. So you’re going to have to monitor their social interactions to spot the cues. Be especially attentive to the complaints from existing customers – you may stop them from being poached by a competitor.

By incorporating social marketing into lead nurturing, marketers can better understand and interact with prospects and customers by increasing the relevancy of marketing campaigns and sales conversations. Ultimately, this will increase the volume and quality of sales leads, boost conversion rates, and help you realize tremendous revenue growth.

Companies that excel at lead nurturing generate 50% more sales ready leads at 33% lower cost. Source: Forrester Research





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**Marilyn K. Dayton, Owner**

Phone: 860-389-2521

Email: [marilyn@marketingandbizpro.com](mailto:marilyn@marketingandbizpro.com)

