

The Newbie's Guide To Social Media Marketing

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Introduction

If the whole world of social media has you totally bamboozled, but you know you are missing a trick... then this short guide is for you.

If you do any sort of online marketing, you simply cannot ignore the social sites. So let's take a quick look at some of the top social networking sites and what they have to offer their users.

The top social media sites

Facebook

The biggie 😊

Billions of people use Facebook every day to keep up with friends, share photos, links, videos, and to learn more about the people they meet. It provides many different avenues of communication allowing members to connect in a way that is convenient and comfortable for them.

It provides users with a sense of community by offering groups, pages, applications and games that make networking with friends, family and colleagues easy and enjoyable, making it one of the top social networks online.

Twitter

Twitter is another incredibly popular social network that uses a micro-blogging platform, which allows users to follow and connect, by posting short messages of a 280-characters or less (it was 140 characters until November 2017, but was then increased).

Savvy marketers amass a large list of followers and feed them short yet effective updates throughout the day. This micro format makes creating in a content much easier than other forms of blogging and social networking. You can quickly post your marketing message from

anywhere using your computer, tablet, laptop or phone. Twitter can be a social marketer's dream come true.

Pinterest

Pinterest is still the new kid on the block, but is rapidly climbing the ranks to become one of the most popular social network online.

What makes it so appealing is its visual nature. This virtual pinboard makes it easy for users to organize and share all the beautiful images they have on their computers or find on the web. Businesses can use pinboards to show-case products, share helpful infographics, plan events, and even organize an online catalog of sorts.

Instagram

This strictly mobile network is taking the world by storm. It is one of the fast growing social networking platforms to date. It boasts members in the millions with the users posting an average of 80 million photos every day. Instagram users generate an incredible 3.5 billion likes per day, meaning this platform has massive potential. As a start, business owners can harness the power of this network by posting photos of themselves, their business and happy customers using their products. But of course there are many other ways – you just need to use your imagination!

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is a massive social networking site with more than 450 million members from all over the world. What makes LinkedIn different from other social networking sites is that it is focused solely on making business connections.

This network was developed specifically for business networking and is a definite must in any social media marketing campaign. It is an excellent place to connect with other business owners in your industry. Business owners can create a profile, add their resume and build a list of followers. Another important aspect of this powerful network is that members can recommend and endorse each other, which helps build strategic alliances and you a solid online reputation.

Google+

As the name implies Google+ is Google's very own social network and while it's not as popular as some of the other social networks we discussed it still holds a very important role in any social media marketing campaign.

Google+ provides its users with some very interesting features to help build their own social networks including, Google Profiles, Circles, Hangouts and Sparks. Active interaction is not as high as with some of the other social sites (particularly Facebook), but Google+ does have over 540 million members.

Flickr

This social network also revolves around photo sharing. Users create accounts and fill them with their favorite photos, and other users can leave comments. Flickr photos can be commented on, tagged, edited and shared, facilitating communication and networking purely through photography.

Digg

This social network has been around for a few years and isn't a household word like the other networks listed above, but don't count it out. What makes it unique is that it revolves around sharing media and news with other users in the community. Businesses can harness the power of this social network by adding a "Digg It" button to their websites to help in encouraging social sharing of their content.

As I mentioned above there are hundreds of social networks online and this list has just scratched the surface. You should definitely explore each of them individually. You should also look for other social networks that you can use to spread your marketing message to the masses, because you never know which one will work best for you until you try.

Social media marketing golden rules.

With the massive popularity of social networking it's no big surprise that every marketer on the planet has flocked to them in hopes of increasing their profit margins. This is because they understand what a powerful tool they can be and that they offer a world of opportunities for smart business owners who take the time to learn how to use them properly.

Respect Privacy

When using social media marketing as a tool to promote products and services it is important to participate in the community. This is not an open invitation for you to start contacting everyone within the community with your marketing message.

Randomly contacting them and sending them private message before taking the time to interact with them publicly is considered spam, they will take it as a personal invasion of their privacy, which will end any possibility of converting them into a paying customer. If they report you which many people are happy to do it may even end up getting you banned from the network forever.

Be Professional

To utilize social networking sites effectively as a marketing tool it is vital that you be professional and honestly when interacting with other members of the community. The key to success with social marketing is taking the time to get involved in the conversation, so you can position yourself as an expert in your marketplace. Never misrepresent yourself or your business and always treat people with respect.

Contribute, Contribute, and Contribute!

When it comes to achieving bankable results with social marketing campaigns, it is important that you take time to contribute to the community. Avoid the temptation of continuous marketing to fans, followers and group members on social networks, instead publish quality content, be helpful and encouraging engagement.

Trying to push your products and services in this type of social setting will ultimately backfire when not done correctly and more importantly, you should never deceive, mislead, exaggerate or provide less than accurate information about your business or the products and services you are promoting.

A common unethical tactic is to pretend to be a customer then leaving a comment in hopes of boosting the popularity and sales of a product. Unethical marketers will set up multiple social profiles on various networks and create fake conversations designed to dupe the public into believing their products are more effective and popular than they really are.

While this may be tempting, chances are you will be discovered and it will end up doing more harm than good in the long run. Besides, as we discussed before it's can ruin your reputation, damaged your credibility and literally destroy your business.

Another critical mistake is publicly criticizing your competitors in hopes of making your product look more desirable. Bashing other people's products and services, trying to make them look bad in the eyes of consumers often backfires and can have adverse effects. You may have end up losing more customers than you gain. Instead, point out what makes your products and services different and potentially better than the competitions.

As with all ethics, there are no set rules, what's right and what's wrong is a bit of a grey area. A good rule of thumb? Be nice 😊

Next step...

I hope you enjoyed this brief introduction to social media and what it can do for your business. To take your social media marketing efforts to the next level, click the link below for the 27 Social Media Marketing Principles successful brands and marketers use to grow an audience, get more attention, and increase their profits...



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