



The Definitive Guide to B2B Social Media

A Marketo Workbook

Why Should I Read *The Definitive Guide to B2B Social Media*?

Why this is important

Social media is here to stay.

And, while consumer marketers may have taken the lead in harnessing its power, B2B companies can no longer afford to ignore it.

As discussed in *The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing*, B2B buyers are spending a lot more time on the web doing independent research, getting information from their peers and experimenting with forums and microblogging.

Like it or not, social media plays a huge role in the new B2B decision-making process. As a B2B marketer, you need to learn to leverage it – for building relationships, listening to the market and influencing buyers before they're even identified as potential leads.

This guide shows you how to use social media to drive new business and revenue. Whether you're just starting out or have a well-defined social media plan, this guide is your go-to handbook.

It's an introduction to social media, a best practice survey and a collection of concrete examples and success stories – plus some killer checklists and tactical tips on every type of social media opportunity out there.

We hope you find it useful and share with us your own experiences and best practices so we can include them in future editions.

Let's get social!



Part One

What is Social Media and Why Does My Business Need It?

What is Social Media and Why Does My Business Need It?

The Definition of Social Media

Social media is the production, consumption and exchange of information through online social interactions and platforms.

Why Social Media for B2B?

Some Context

Before Google, the primary way a prospect could get information about a company was by engaging directly with a sales person. Marketing focused on brand building and awareness, using mass advertising, tradeshows, PR and print media. Direct mail and cold calling made up the majority of targeted interactions, and marketers passed all new leads – hot or cold – to the sales team for follow-up.

With the arrival of Google in 1998, B2B companies started to focus on search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click (PPC) advertising and e-mail marketing to drive traffic to their website; then created content such as whitepapers and webinars to convert traffic into leads. The best marketers realized that their leads were often sent too early to sales, and invested in lead scoring and lead nurturing to find the hot leads and develop the rest.

Today, marketing through SEO, PPC and e-mail are still very much a part of the marketing mix, but social media sites such as Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube and SlideShare drive a large portion of the B2B interactions on the web. According to Forrester Research¹, 77% of B2B technology decision-makers are active in social media.

Because prospects are more likely to click-through to third-party reviews or blog postings to get word-of-mouth recommendations, search engines rank these sites higher (which in turn makes social content more accessible). If these social media leads do find their way to your company website, they will typically contact your company only when they're ready to engage with sales. In this way, social media leads present a unique lead nurturing challenge, and a huge opportunity at the same time.

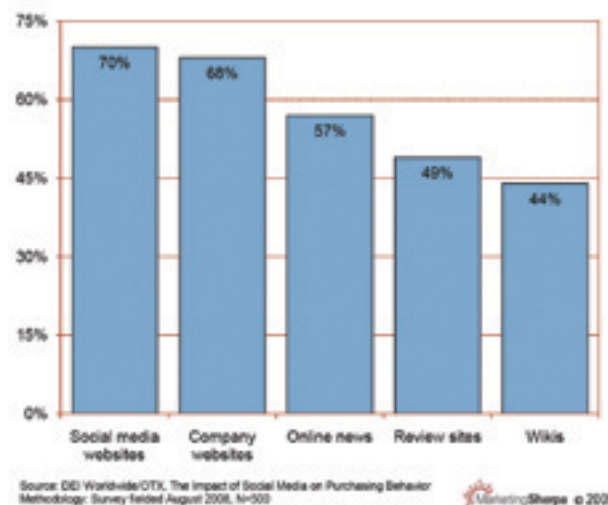
What does this mean for B2B companies?

As online activity shifts to social media, marketers keen to build brand, buzz, and awareness – and generate leads – are reallocating investment in social media, search engine optimization, and content marketing instead of mass advertising and traditional PR. At the same time, lead nurturing is evolving to include early relationship building with prospects. It starts by sharing relevant information across a variety of social media channels before they ever give you their names. These changes are already having a positive impact on lead generation, but measurement of ROI remains a major challenge.

¹ Laura Ramos, Forrester Research, in the February 20, 2009, "The Social Technographics® Of Business Buyers" report.

Social Media's Impact on Purchasing Behavior

Types of Online Sources Visited for Company, Brand or Product Information



This graph indicates that buyers look for information from social media sites more than corporate websites.

What is Social Media and Why Does My Business Need It?

Fundamental Concepts of Social Media Marketing

Choosing Your Social Media Identity

Before you engage in social media, it's important to decide what your social media identity will be and how you want to represent your brand.

If you plan to join the conversation using a company name or brand name (as opposed to personal accounts) you'll need to reserve your names on the social sites you want to use. If someone has already reserved the name you want to use, you may be able to get it back (some sites side with legitimate trademark owners over 'squatters'); but it might be simpler to choose another name.

To see if your preferred user or company name is available across many sites, use a free tool like Namechk (<http://namechk.com>) and User Name Check (<http://www.usernamecheck.com>).

A company account using a company name tends to be used for the purpose of sharing corporate information, new features and functionality, press releases and customer case studies. These corporate accounts are typically for interacting with late-stage prospects, partners and customers.

Personal accounts by staff members are generally used to share information about

the industry or their particular field, and are usually less promotional.

Social Media Monitoring (a.k.a. "Listening")

One of the first things you'll want to do is listen to the social media conversations that relate to your brand to see what others are saying about you. Here are a few of the most popular methods:

Twitter Search – search for your brand or other important keywords; limited to the last 7 to 10 days—older tweets are lost unless you bookmark them or find them using a search engine.

Facebook Search – search all public content including everything posted in public fan pages, groups and events. Privacy settings on personal pages may restrict what you can see.

LinkedIn Search – the "Answers" section is the best place to start; see if people have asked questions about your company, competitors and industry, and how people responded.

Search Engines – many, like Google, capture social media interactions, so you can find a specific tweet or blog comment, but can be hard to use due to sheer volume of results. Search engines may not display blog comments (at the blog owner's request).

Specialist search engines can fill this gap. BackType.com is one example.

Alerts – view search engine results more efficiently by setting up alerts around keywords. For example, establish a Google Alert for your company name. You may get some irrelevant results but it's an easy and effective way to keep up to date with what people are saying about you at no cost.

Social Media Monitoring Software – a more sophisticated approach that lets you:

- Automate searches
- Monitor high volume keyword mentions across many social media channels
- Run reports on the mentions of your brand, competitors and top keywords

Social media monitoring tools, such as Visible Technologies or Radian6, are available as a software-as-a-service model at a monthly or annual fee.

Social media monitoring will also help you decide where to get started when beginning your social media efforts. Start engaging on sites where your company is mentioned the most, or where you can find the largest number of customers.

What is Social Media and Why Does My Business Need It?

You can translate what you hear into action. If you capture social media conversations in your CRM system, you can respond to them or pass them to sales. This is called “Social CRM” and is discussed in further detail in the [“B2B Social Media Tactics and Metrics”](#) section.

Social Sharing

Social media also makes it easy for others to share your content.

A simple way to make your website and blog social media-friendly is to use a plug-in, such as ShareThis or AddThis. These sites add a small bar or picture to a blog post or web page that allows content to be distributed to hundreds of sites.

Tips for Sharing and Socializing Content

- Make sharing options visible and personal
- Allow e-mails to be viewed as web pages
- Frame web pages with a social bar
- Enable forward to a friend
- Stream relevant tweets on the home page
- Pull in latest news and posts to key pages



This image shows the range of sharing options available at the click of a button.

How to Customize Social Sharing

The challenge with social sharing, especially for content in e-mails and on landing pages, is customizing the message that is going to be shared. This means sharing more than a URL by adding the content title or promotion into the message as well. Fortunately, custom links that share your content in social media are easy to create. This can be done in e-mail or landing pages for many social media sites including LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and more.

Simply replace (xURLx) with the actual URL and (xTitlex) with the actual title for these popular sites.

Share on Twitter

Link code:

<http://Twitter.com/home?status={xTitlex and xURLx}>

Example:

<http://Twitter.com/home?status=Marketo Leader in Marketing Automation- http://www.marketo.com>

Share on Facebook

Link code:

<http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u={xURLx}&t={xTITLEx}>

Example:

<http://www.facebook.com/sharer.php?u=http://www.marketo.com&t=Marketo%20Leader%20in%20Marketing%20Automation>

Share on LinkedIn

Link code:

<http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url={xURLx}&title={xTITLEx}&summary={xSummaryx}&source={xSourcex}>

Example:

<http://www.linkedin.com/shareArticle?mini=true&url=http://www.marketo.com&title=Marketo%20Leader%20in%20Marketing%20Automation&source=Marketo>

Share on Del.icio.us

Link code:

<http://del.icio.us/post?url={xURLx};title={xTITLEx}>

Example:

<http://del.icio.us/post?url=http://www.Marketo.com;title=Marketo%20Leader%20in%20Marketing%20Automation>



What is Social Media and Why Does My Business Need It?

The Definition of Social Validation

Social validation, or social proofing, is a psychological phenomenon that occurs in ambiguous situations when people do not have enough information to make opinions independently, and instead look for external clues like popularity, trust, etc.

Social networks play an influential role when it comes to mitigating the feeling of risk that overcomes B2B buyers when trying to solve a problem or purchase a solution. A huge part of this is from the social validation or social proofing inherent to many social media sites. For example, sites that focus on bookmarking, ranking, voting, and commenting all incorporate social validation when users give their opinions through comments or ratings.

B2B companies can use social validation to help increase their credibility and allay their prospects' fears. By opening your website up to the ratings, reviews (and sometimes rants) of social media, you're telling your prospects that you value transparency, are open to feedback, and can be trusted as a vendor. Here are two popular ways to do this:

RSS feeds of your own content

RSS ("Really Simple Syndication") feeds offer subscribers content that's updated automatically. You can use RSS feeds to share press stories, blog posts, case studies and testimonials, or Twitter account tweets via a widget on a web or landing page. If you use RSS feeds to direct attention to the valuable content on your web or landing page, users will trust your company more as they find

value in what you're offering. The stronger your reputation becomes, the more likely other users will start to think likewise.

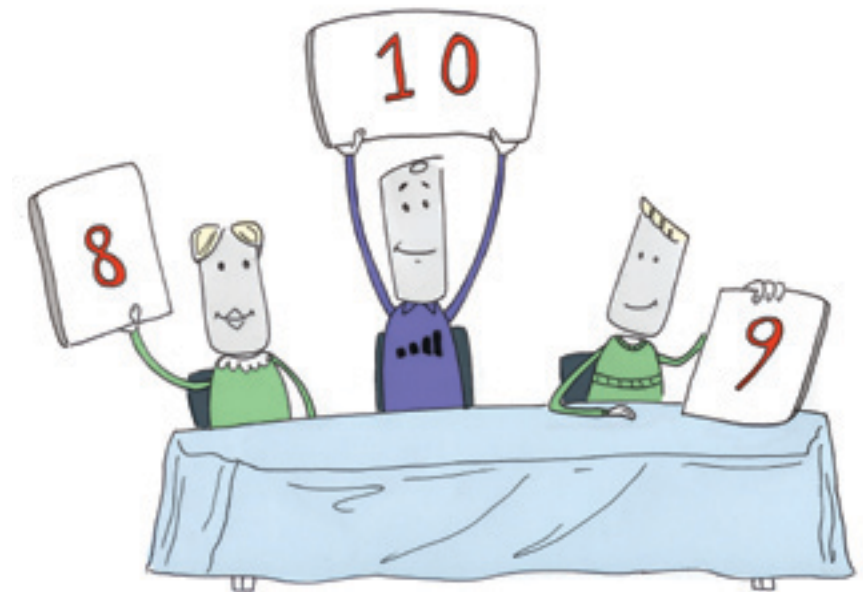
Widget feeds of external comments and reviews

You can also use widgets on your web pages to present continuously updated content from external sources such as Twitter. This lets viewers see both positive and negative comments – all in the spirit of openness that characterizes social media.

In this example, MarketingProfs, a popular resource for marketers, displays tweets about an upcoming conference on the home page of the conference website – unsolicited testimonials are a great source of social validation.

How Marketo Uses Social Validation

One way that Marketo incorporates social proofing is by marking tweets about our marketing automation product as a "favorite" on Twitter, and providing a link on the company website to these "favorites." By doing so, prospects can quickly and easily see what people on Twitter are saying about our product.



Example of Social Validation.

What is Social Media and Why Does My Business Need It?

Advertising in Social Media

There are two ways to advertise on social media sites:

‘Organic’ Advertising – such as status updates that praise your product, fan pages, etc. The trick is to use this kind of promotion judiciously and transparently.

Paid Advertising – similar to PPC advertising but highly targeted because the social network can use demographics, behavior or a combination of both to display your ad to specific users. With the sheer volume of social media visits, it’s a potentially very attractive audience.

The concept is simple: be where your audience is.

Many social media sites, such as LinkedIn and Facebook, offer members the ability to use paid advertising to promote their business. These programs are very similar to pay-per-click advertising where a text or banner ad promotes your company. You pay for impressions or click throughs generated by your ad.

A key difference between social media advertising and PPC advertising is the targeting power of social media. A social network can use information gathered from members to display your ad to a specific target market based on demographics, behavior, or a combination of both.

With millions of unique visits taking place on social media sites every day, advertisers know there are interested eyes ready to look at their messages. It’s a growth area of advertising that currently shows no signs of slowing down.

What is Social Media and Why Does My Business Need It?

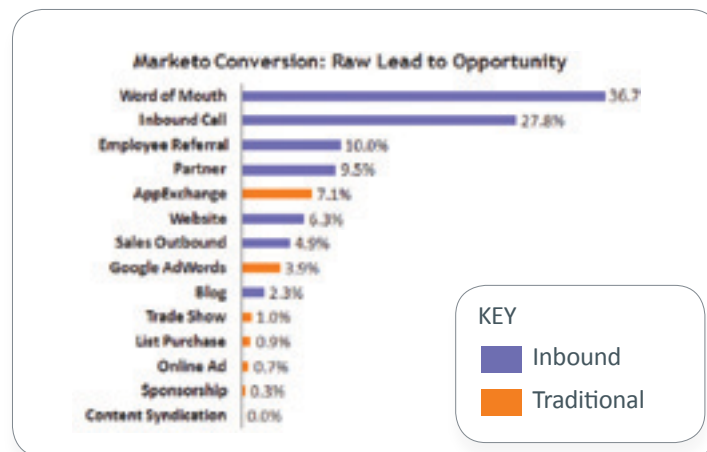
The Definition of Inbound Marketing

A marketing approach that focuses on getting found by prospects through channels such as search engine optimization, social media sites and word-of-mouth recommendations.

Inbound marketing is when prospects seek out your company rather than the other way around. Take a look at the graph, which represents the raw lead-to-opportunity conversion rates that Marketo has experienced.

Of course, the real value lies in the number of leads that convert into real, qualified opportunities. This graph clearly shows that leads generated from word-of-mouth and other inbound leads result in far more opportunities than traditional “demand generation” channels. The beauty of the inbound lead lies in its inherent higher level of interest, because the lead sought out your company.

Social media offers a great way to generate these valuable inbound leads because it addresses the prospect’s perception of risk. Social media provides the buyer with information that supports a decision outside of the traditional sales or marketing context. Done properly, social media marketing can be one of your most effective sources of inbound leads.



“Your prospect...cares about his boss or the story you’re telling or the risk or the hassle of making a change. He cares about who you know and what other people will think when he tells them what he’s done after he buys from you.

The opportunity, then, is not to insist that your customers get more rational, but instead to embrace just how irrational they are. Give them what they need.”

– Seth Godin, The Rational Marketer (and the Irrational Customer), 2009

Part Two

Laying the Foundation

Laying the Foundation

Social media holds tremendous opportunities for B2B companies looking to drive new business and increase revenue, but only if you first develop a solid foundation and an understanding of what makes the world of social media tick.

CHECKLIST – Is Your Company Ready for Social Media?

Don't jump into social media just because everyone else is doing it. Here's a checklist designed to help you determine if your organization is ready and, if so, how to make your efforts successful.

- ☐ **My company has clear goals for social media.** Be as specific as you can (e.g. increase lead conversion rates, increase the number of qualified leads, build awareness measured by online traffic, decrease the time needed to resolve customer service issues, etc.) and keep these objectives in mind for every initiative you execute.
- ☐ **We have the human resources to commit to social media.** Before you start a corporate blog or Twitter account, ask yourself if you can allocate the resources needed. Social media is about real-time response and continuously updated information—both of which require commitment and dedication.
- ☐ **We produce enough quality content to sustain social media conversations.** Content feeds the social media beast. Audit your existing marketing assets and identify the educational pieces—these perform much better in social media than traditional sales collateral.
- ☐ **We know which social media sites are popular with our prospects and customers.** Do your research and focus your energy and investments where your audiences are.
- ☐ **Our company website is prepared for social media attention.** Before you set up multiple social media profiles and pages, make sure your own website is in good enough shape to handle the attention (i.e. you're proud of the way it looks and works). And be sure you have a plan in place to market to the leads generated.
- ☐ **We're ready to incorporate social media strategies throughout the buying process.** Social media is not just for the top of the demand generation funnel. It's important to monitor and track your prospects and customers throughout the revenue cycle.

Part Two

Laying the Foundation

ACTION ITEMS – Developing a B2B Social Media Plan and Social Media Policy

Although it's tempting to dive right into the various social media sites out there, you need to develop a social media plan first. Goals and metrics will help ensure that the time and resources your organization invests in social media are well spent. Because social media is pervasive and easy to participate in, it's important to have guidelines that structure your efforts and prevent any scenarios that might have a negative impact on your company.

WORKSHEET – Your B2B Social Media Plan

Developing a social media plan is similar to developing any other strategy. While there is no standard approach, the basic components can be addressed by answering these simple questions:

- WHO – Who are you targeting with social media?
- HOW – How can you deploy social media tactics for measureable success?
- WHAT – What goals or objectives do you want to accomplish?

Who are you targeting with social media?

This should be the easiest question to answer. Who are you targeting? Prospects? Customers? Media? All of the above? Once you've decided on the targets, flesh out the defining characteristics of each group. If you've already read *The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing*, you know about the importance of developing buyer personas: a fictional character who represents a target group. Start by listing the characteristics you would have for a typical buyer persona, but add a social media dimension to it.

Our Example:

Name	John Smith
Age	31
Title	Director of IT
Industry	Commercial Real Estate
Buyer Role	Influencer
Preferred communication method - Personal	E-mail, Facebook, Twitter
Preferred communication method - Professional	E-mail, SMS
Preferred social media sites – Personal	Facebook, Twitter, Digg
Time spent on social media – Personal	1 hour per day
Preferred social media sites – Professional	LinkedIn, SlideShare
Time spent on social media - Professional	2 hours per day

Your Turn:

Name	
Age	
Title	
Industry	
Buyer Role	
Preferred communication method - Personal	
Preferred communication method - Professional	
Preferred social media sites – Personal	
Time spent on social media – Personal	
Preferred social media sites – Professional	
Time spent on social media - Professional	

Adding a social media dimension to buyer personas

Part Two

Laying the Foundation

How can you deploy social media tactics for measureable success?

In the next section of this guide, “Social Media Tactics and Metrics,” we’ll address a number of different tactics that you can employ to achieve the business results you’re seeking through social media. Select a few that you think will have the most impact on your organization and start with those.

Our Example:

Social Media Tactics and Key Metrics for ABC Company

Social Media Tactic	Key Metrics
Blogging	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of posts• Audience growth - unique and returns• Number of conversions (e.g. prospect to lead, lead to opportunity, etc.)• Conversion rate (depends on your specific conversion goals)• Subscribers• Inbound links• Technorati, Alltop, and other directory listings• SEO improvements
Social networks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Number of posts• Referrals from social networks• Reach friends from social networks• Velocity at which friends are built• Influence of friends from social networks• Number of conversions (e.g. prospect to lead, lead to opportunity, etc.)• Conversion rate (depends on your specific conversion goals)

Your Turn:

Social Media Tactic	Key Metrics

Part Two

Laying the Foundation

What do you want to accomplish and what are your distinct action items for each goal?

Social media requires time, effort and resources. Take the tactics you've just decided on and associate clear goals, objectives and action items for each one.

As with any new strategy, try and test a variety of social media tactics to see which has the most significant impact on your goals. For more information on standard social media tactics, objectives and metrics, go to: <http://www.marketo.com/library/Social%20Media%20Plan%20Template.pdf>.

Our Example:

Social Media Tactic:	Blogging
Time Invested:	2 hours daily
Short-term objective #1:	<div>Increase brand awareness<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create blog publication schedule• Add RSS button• Promote thought leadership through blog postings on industry best practices</div>
Short-term objective #2:	<div>Increase engagement<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Respond to comments within 24 hours• Add links to blog on website and in e-newsletter• Invite relevant guest bloggers and market to their networks</div>

Your Turn:

Social Media Tactic:	<hr/>
Time Invested:	<hr/>
Short-term objective #1:	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Short-term objective #2:	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

Part Two

Laying the Foundation

Social Media Policy

The social media landscape can feel unstructured. That's why it pays to have a social media 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).

A formalized document will help protect your company in a legal sense, while ensuring that you're acting consistently across all social media sites, reinforcing your brand and value in the marketplace (a bit like a corporate style guide). Here are some suggestions:

Define what social media means for your company.

When people think of social media, some think strictly in terms of Facebook and LinkedIn, while others would automatically add Digg and Flickr to the mix. Use your social media 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. Intel has a great example of this in its social media policy under a section called "Rules of Engagement".

Address how employees, contractors and consultants should engage with and contribute to social media.

Decide how your organization will want to engage as a social media participant and contributor. Will your company's social media conversations come from a single person or will everyone in your company participate? Will social media 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 media contributions just as they would conversations taking place in public.

Intel Social Media Guidelines

These are the official guidelines for social media at Intel. If you're an Intel employee or contractor creating or contributing to blogs, wikis, social networks, virtual worlds, or any other kind of social media both on and off Intel.com—these guidelines are for you. We expect all who participate in social media on behalf of Intel to be trained, to understand and to follow these guidelines. Failure to do so could put your future participation at risk. These guidelines will continually evolve as new technologies and social networking tools emerge—so check back once in awhile to make sure you're up to date.

When You Engage

Emerging platforms for online collaboration are fundamentally changing the way we work, offering new ways to engage with customers, colleagues, and the world at large. It's a new model for interaction and we believe social computing can help you to build stronger, more successful business relationships. And it's a way for you to take part in global conversations related to the work we are doing at Intel and the things we care about.

If you participate in social media, please follow these guiding principles:

- Stick to your area of expertise and provide unique, individual perspectives on what's going on at Intel and in the world.
- Post meaningful, respectful comments—in other words, no spam and no remarks that are off-topic or offensive.
- Always pause and think before posting. That said, reply to comments in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.
- Respect proprietary information and content, and confidentiality.
- When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite.
- Know and follow the Intel Code of Conduct and the Intel Privacy Policy

Rules of Engagement

Be transparent. Your honesty—or dishonesty—will be quickly noticed in the social media environment. If you are blogging about your work at Intel, use your real name, identify that you work for Intel, and be clear about your role. If you have a vested interest in something you are discussing, be the first to point it out. Transparency is about your identity and relationship to Intel. You still need to keep confidentiality around proprietary information and content.

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A great example of a social media policy ("Intel Social Media Guidelines" at: http://www.intel.com/sites/sitewide/en_US/social-media.htm.)

Part Three

B2B Social Media Tactics and Metrics



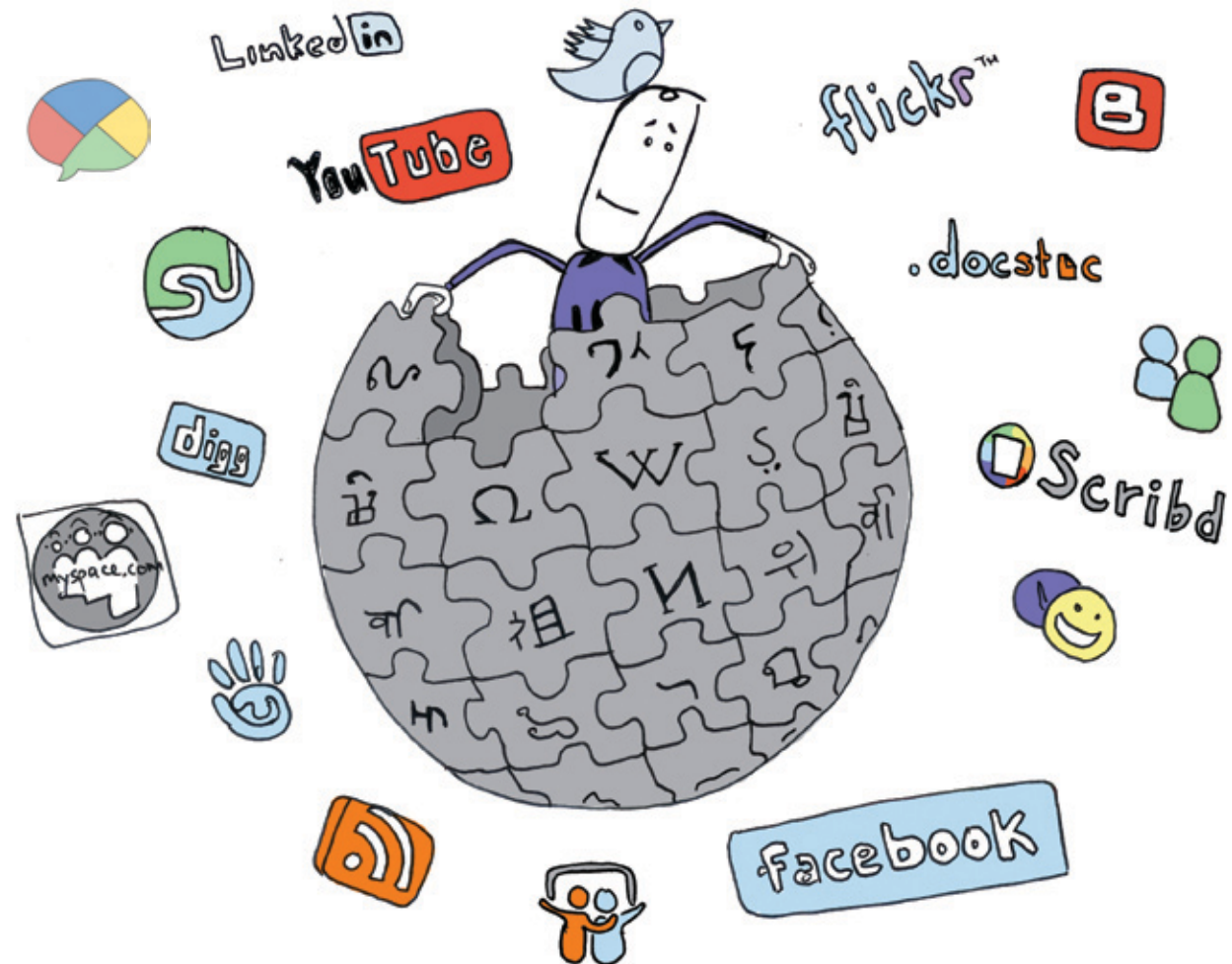
B2B Social Media Tactics and Metrics

Social Media Tactics for Every B2B Marketer

Here's a quick review of the major social media applications and how you can use them to achieve your goals. The types of social media tools we'll cover include:

- Blogging
- Microblogging
- Commenting
- Social networks
- Online video
- Presentation and document sharing
- Widgets
- Bookmarking
- Photo sharing
- Podcasting
- Social CRM

For a few of these social media tools, we'll provide you with 101-level introductions to best practice techniques. Master each tactic first before moving on to new approaches.



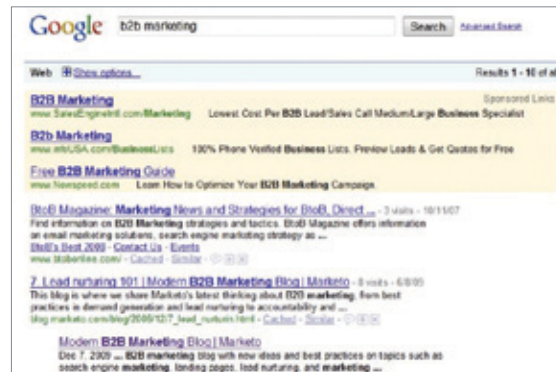
Blogs

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. This is reason enough to update your blog often to keep readers coming back for more. 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. Blogs act as a source of valuable content and thought leadership with a “human” face. The content on your corporate website focuses primarily on your company, the value of your products and services, and how potential customers can get in touch with you. This is all very useful and necessary, but a blog adds a human touch, especially when a blog has several contributors. It also lets you focus on your prospect’s agenda instead of yours.

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. It also gives other sites a reason to link to you, increasing the number of inbound links and boosting your search engine rankings.



A search for “b2b marketing” demonstrates how blog postings often yield the highest rankings in organic search results.



Blogs offer the perfect opportunity to “humanize” the web through different voices and perspectives (and photo thumbnails can further enhance the experience).



“Now visited by over 67 percent of the global online population...social networks and blogs... have become the fourth most popular online category – ahead of personal e-mail.”

– Global Faces and Networked Places, The Nielsen Company, March 2009

Blogging – Key Metrics

- Number of posts
- Audience growth—unique and repeat visits
- 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

You can benefit from commenting whether you're the blogger, the commenter on someone else's blog or a participant in an online forum—here's how:

As a blogger, write interesting blog posts that engage readers and encourage comments. Start a two-way conversation by offering engaging commentary that is insightful and stimulates dialogue—then openly ask for comments.

As a reader, only comment when you have something valuable to say. There's nothing worse than a person who only comments with self-promotion in mind.

When someone comments on something you've said, return the favor. Everyone wants to know that they're being heard—so reply to them with something more engaging than just 'thank you for commenting'. You might get a debate going.



Be as engaged as your readers are with the conversation that you started—respond to their commentary and continue the dialogue.

Commenting – Key Metrics

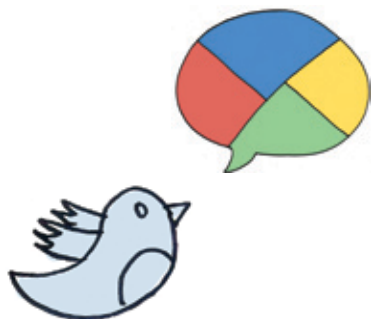
- Number of comments
- Increased number of conversions from commenters (e.g. new leads)
- Increased traffic from searchable comments

Microblogging

Microblogging is ultra-brief blogging, 140 characters or so. The most famous microblogging platform is Twitter, but it's not the only one.

Foursquare, another microblogging tool, encourages users to microblog about their locations and the places they're visiting or activities they're doing in specific neighborhoods. Unlike Twitter, Foursquare utilizes the spirit of competition among its users to encourage them to earn points and promote customer loyalty for businesses.

Google Buzz is a new form of microblogging and social networking integrated into the Google e-mail platform. The status updates, sharing options and geo-tagging for your mobile phone bring together elements found on Facebook, Twitter and even Foursquare. You follow people in Twitter fashion and, once connected you can send information direct to your friends' inboxes.



Twitter 101

Creating Your Account

- When you first create your account, make a complete profile, with a picture, links to your company site or blog, customized background, and a description of what you'll be tweeting about. Accounts that don't include this information appear "spammy."

Twitter Following

- Becoming someone's follower on Twitter accomplishes three goals:
 1. You identify Twitter accounts that will be relevant and interesting to you, your organization and your industry.
 2. You let people know that you're on Twitter, and encourage them to follow you back.
 3. You associate yourself with a specific group of industry experts and thought leaders, and demonstrate your interest in the space.
- 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 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 using a corporate account, make sure to follow back everyone that is following you. You don't want to upset prospects, customers or partners by not following them!
- Read the tweets of those you follow and search for tweets on keywords relevant to your product or service. Twitter client applications such as TweetDeck and Twhirl are useful for organizing your Twitter feeds and managing multiple microblogging accounts.

Interacting with Prospects and Followers on Twitter

- To engage your followers, tweet a few times a day. Focus on relevant content, not what you had for breakfast.

Here are some sample generic tweets (notice they tend to include links!):

The new guide on lead nurturing answered all our customers' questions! A whole checklist covered in one paper- Yes! <http://bit.ly/15xXZL>

Just released! New Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing – check it out before your competitors do <http://bit.ly/15xXZL>

The links in these sample tweets were shortened for Twitter using URL shorteners like Tiny URL or Bit.ly (they're built into Twitter tools like Tweet Deck and Twhirl).

- Research has shown that asking for a retweet actually increases its chance to be retweeted. Just don't do it with every tweet—save it for those that are most important or relevant.
- 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 media campaigns and connecting with customers.
- 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. If you use them, make sure they provide value and don't just say: "Thanks for following me."
- Keep tweets below 140 characters. It makes retweeting easier to do.
- Use Twitter lists to find, group together, and follow like-minded users.

Here's why microblogging can be good for business:

Microblogging gives people real-time insight into your business in a digestible way. You present timely information without making people visit your website or conduct a search.

Microblogging automatically supports permission marketing.

In the case of Twitter, followers choose which tweets to follow. This makes the platform a great form of opt-in, inbound marketing, so it's worthwhile treating Twitter as a lead nurturing platform. After all, you never know when your followers will convert into leads.

Social Media Success Story: IBM Uses Social Media Sites to Boost Event Attendance and Lead Conversions

In a MarketingProfs case study, IBM discussed its success with using social media to increase lead conversions and event attendance despite the downturn. According to MarketingProfs:

IBM sought to drive up registration, close more SOA business with those who attended the conference and generally build more lasting relationships with attendees and prospects. It wanted higher conversion from leads, because of the economic climate.

Among other online initiatives, IBM took these steps to leverage social media:

- Set up an IMPACT group on LinkedIn and encouraged users to invite others from their personal networks to join.
- Tweeted about the event and offered contests to win one-on-one sessions with SOA experts.
- Developed a Facebook page that offered information, video and calls to follow conference feed on Twitter.
- Established a "Friends of IMPACT" YouTube channel and invited partners and customers to produce and upload their own videos explaining how IBM SOA solutions had helped businesses, and why people should attend the event.

Courtesy of "Event Attendance: IBM Gets Social," Get to the Point e-newsletter, MarketingProfs, February 2010.



Retweets promote viral marketing on microblogs. Hashtags provide a streamlined way to organize and track specific topics and events.

Microblogging – Key Metrics

- Number of friends/followers
- 2nd-order followers (follower's follower count)
- Velocity - average of first- and second-order followers attracted per day since the account was established
- Social Capital - influence of Twitter followers
- Centralization - how much influence (reach) is invested in a small number of followers
- Pages ranking on key terms from microblogging sites

Successful Twitter Marketing Tactics Used by B2B and B2C Marketers Worldwide, September 2009 (% of respondents)

	B2B	B2C
Monitor Twitter for PR problems in real time	40.7	46.9
Created an in-person event using only Twitter invites	37.4	36.0
Contacting Twitter users tweeting negatively about the brand	36.7	44.0
Driving traffic by linking to marketing webpages	35.7	35.2
Provocative text to drive link clicks	34.8	40.6
Invite Twitter users with positive brand tweets to do...	34.0	33.9
Increased Twitter following using traditional media mention	30.7	30.4
Timing tweets to maximize views	26.9	30.5
Driving sales by linking to promotional webpages	22.4	24.6
Note: n=722 B2B marketers and n=329 B2C marketers who used the Twitter tactic Source: MarketingProfs, "The State of Social Media," provided to eMarketer, December 10, 2009		
109979	www.emarketer.com	

While some Twitter marketing tactics appeal to both B2B and B2C marketers alike, specific approaches may be more useful than others depending on your specific marketing goals.

Social Networks

“To date, Facebook has been predominantly a personal social network, but that hasn’t stopped businesses and their proactive marketing and sales teams from adapting its existing features to suit their networking and promotional needs. As their own networks of business contacts grow friend by friend, so does the site’s B2B community as a whole, and the opportunity for interactive marketers to target it.”

– Tessa Wegert, “Facebook as a B2B Marketing Tool,” ClickZ.com



Social Networks

Social networking has become a huge force in people’s personal lives. Businesses are now seeing the potential. There are countless networks, but we’re focusing on the two most relevant and popular: Facebook and LinkedIn.

Facebook

Many businesses are leveraging Facebook as a way to create awareness, build their brand, promote thought leadership and even manage events. While the core component of Facebook is the personal profile, this and other features mentioned below could all be used to promote and market your business.

Here are some additional ways that B2B companies can benefit from Facebook:

Facebook Pages can help your company build awareness, share enthusiasm, create loyalty and strengthen inbound marketing.

Facebook 101:

- Don’t “friend” people you don’t know. It’s considered bad etiquette to connect with people you’ve never met or spoken to. It’s fine to ask someone if you can add them as a friend, particularly if you’ve only spoken over the phone.
- Take advantage of privacy profiles to manage your personal content separately from your business content.
- Like tweets on Twitter, Facebook status updates can be used to provide bite-size yet powerful content that helps with thought leadership. But keep your updates fresh, interesting and insightful.
- Add a picture. It’s considered odd not to have a picture of yourself on Facebook (although choose carefully: your business contacts will see it).
- Your business can have a Facebook page too. If you’re not comfortable with the idea of putting yourself out there personally you can still create a profile for your business.
- Try to gather people together by creating groups around particular topics or interests. This can then become a forum for discussion and sharing, and allows you to demonstrate thought leadership.
- You can use Facebook to invite people to events – whether webinars or in-person events. This is particularly suitable for more informal business events where an RSVP isn’t necessary.

Part Three

B2B Social Media Tactics and Metrics

Your **Facebook Page** is a mini-website where you can share company information, grow a fan base, offer multimedia content, communicate events and give status updates. All of these contribute to brand awareness and increased loyalty by keeping prospects and customers informed. Unlike some Facebook Profiles, pages are public and can show up in search results, which means your business page can help boost your inbound marketing efforts.

Facebook Groups let you create your own community.

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 Page is a great way for businesses to create awareness, increase inbound links and foster loyalty.

“...Approaching your social network marketing with a word of mouth or viral marketing mentality is important. Viral marketing is a way of using customers to promote awareness of your business. One way to think about Facebook for the marketer is that it makes viral marketing simpler.”

– Courtesy of Facebook® Marketing For Dummies®, by Paul Dunay and Richard Krueger, Wiley Publishing, Inc., 2010.

Successful Facebook Marketing Tactics Used by B2B and B2C Marketers Worldwide, September 2009 (% of respondents)

	B2B	B2C
Created a survey of “fans”	37.1	37.9
“Friending” recent customers with corporate Facebook profile	34.4	26.3
Used Facebook user data to profile your customers demos or interests	33.5	30.5
Creating a Facebook application around a brand	33.1	41.9
Driving traffic to corporate materials with status updates	29.0	28.4
Buying targeted CPC ads on Facebook	24.5	27.1
Note: n=643 marketers who used the Facebook tactic Source: MarketingProfs, ‘The State of Social Media,’ provided to eMarketer, December 10, 2009		
109984	www.emarketer.com	

As with Twitter, B2B and B2C companies are finding value in Facebook in different ways.

LinkedIn

As a leading social networking site for professionals, LinkedIn is perfect for B2B organizations. Its basic functionality is similar to that of Facebook, but the focus of LinkedIn is on education, work history, companies and professional interests, which is perfect for the B2B company looking to market and sell to a specific business niche and demographic.

Here are a few other ways that B2B companies can take advantage of the features that LinkedIn offers:

Use “shared connections” to make introductions into companies you want to target.

One of the primary capabilities of LinkedIn is its ability to connect you to a larger network of people through your own connections. LinkedIn shows you the degrees of separation between you and other LinkedIn users, and lets you connect with those outside of your direct network through introductions. Use LinkedIn introductions as a form of target account marketing by identifying potential prospects and asking your own contacts to introduce you.

Build a LinkedIn Group around your company’s specializations and core competencies.

The Groups feature is a great way to demonstrate thought leadership around a specific area – and to gain insight into the pain points of potential customers.

LinkedIn 101

- On LinkedIn you can be banned from the site if you try to connect to people you don’t actually know. But it’s fine to connect with people that you have known in a professional capacity, but don’t have a strong personal connection to.
- Aim to send an invitation to connect with a person soon after your conversation so he or she remembers the interaction. The more connections you have the better, because it indicates a higher number of 2nd degree connections (and thus a larger network).
- Make sure your profile is as complete as possible. Fill out as much information as you can about what you do and why you have joined the site. Although it’s optional to add a picture, it’s good to be able to put a face to a name and “humanize” your profile.
- 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.
- 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.
- You may want to consider LinkedIn’s paid services, which will provide more communication features, communication access and more powerful search options.

B2B Social Media Tactics and Metrics

Research LinkedIn Groups to find out where your prospects are hanging out, and join them.

LinkedIn Groups makes it easy for B2B companies to locate potential customers. Simply make a list of keywords that relate to your prospects or the industries you target, and run a search for any LinkedIn Groups related to these keywords. Once you find the right groups, participate in discussions, ask questions and make connections.

Use LinkedIn Answers to ask thought-provoking questions or become an “expert” by providing valuable answers and demonstrating thought leadership.

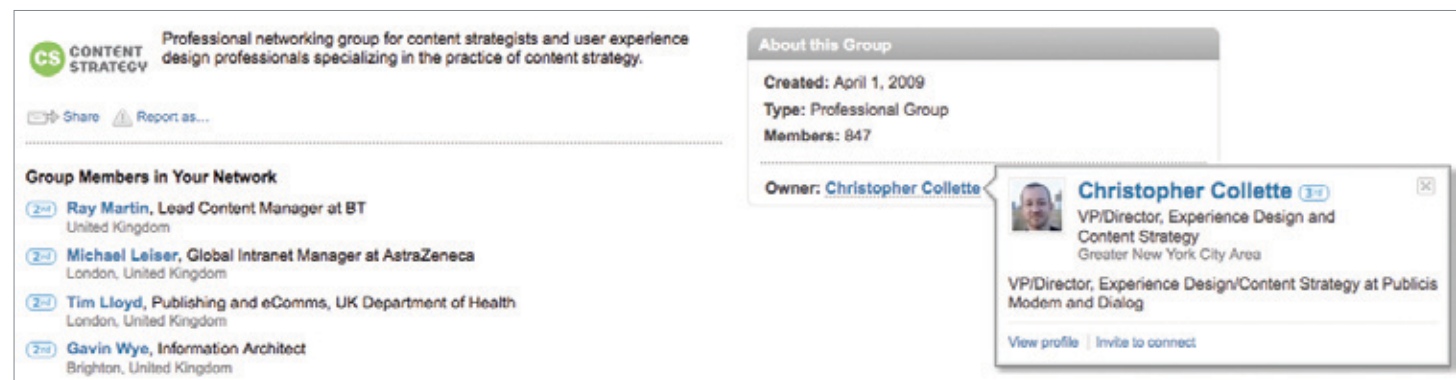
LinkedIn Answers are a great way for you to demonstrate your interests, expertise and problem-solving capabilities to entire networks of people, which can indirectly drive interest in your company and new business. You can do this by asking interesting questions, or by providing helpful answers to other people’s questions.

Promote events on LinkedIn.

The events section of LinkedIn allows event organizers to post events and encourages those attending to RSVP for the event.

Social Networks - Key Metrics

- Referrals from social networks
- Connections on social networks
- Interactions in groups and fan pages
- Members of groups and fan pages



LinkedIn Groups offer businesses a way to create communities around the best practices in which they specialize.

Online Video

While YouTube may be known for its videos of baby animals and college students doing silly tricks, it also houses a huge assortment of B2B videos. Other popular video sites include Vimeo and Viddler.

Online video sites offer B2B companies a number of opportunities to increase awareness, demonstrate thought leadership and drive new business. Here are just a few ways:

Improve your SEO.

Video links will show up in search engine results. Just be sure to use clear descriptions including keywords for each of your videos.

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 without the need for IT.

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 e-mails, blog posts and other outbound communications.

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

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



Online Video - Key Metrics

- Referrals from social video sites
- Views of videos on social sites
- Pages ranking on key terms from social video sites
- Subscribers to video channels



The Salesforce Channel on YouTube is a good example of a branded video experience on YouTube.

Presentation and Document Sharing

While many B2B marketers may be hesitant to release their content for free, social media sites require a shift in mindset. 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.

Audit the content on your corporate website and upload key pieces to the right sites.

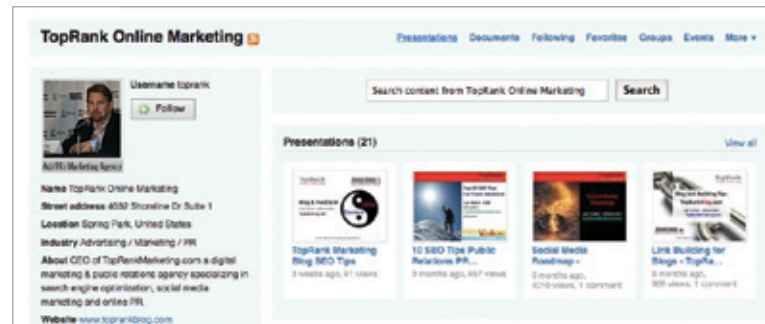
Think of these sites as an extension of the “Resources” or “Downloads” section on your company website, with the added benefit of even greater exposure.

Upload and share content that addresses your buyer personas and start to track which sites are most popular with each persona.

We discussed the importance of mapping content to specific buyer personas in *The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing*. Make sure the content you distribute on social media sites addresses a full range of your buyer personas and, over time, analyze which sites are most frequented by the personas you target. You can then refine which topics and content work best on different sites.

“Creating appropriate content to develop a lasting relationship over a long sales cycle is possible only when an organization knows the buyer personas well and understands the sales process in detail.”

— David Meerman Scott, Marketing Products with Very Long Sales Cycles, Web Ink Now blog, 2009



TopRank content store on SlideShare

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

Widgets

Widgets are stand-alone web applications or tools that provide dynamic content (usually pulled in from a third-party source) to enhance a user's experience. Widgets should be both relevant and useful. They're great viral marketing tools for businesses because they offer interesting features and content in an easy-to-use application.

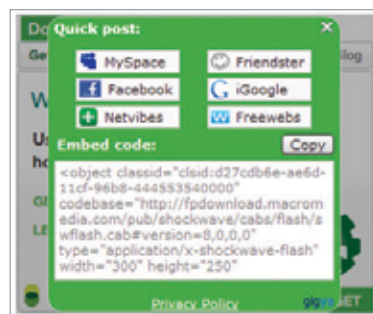
Before creating a widget for your company, think about your goals.

Make sure it provides real value to your prospects and customers. Otherwise it's just window-dressing.

Invest in a widget that's visually appealing and easy to understand so people will want to use it often – then make it easy to find on your website.

Widgets – Key Metrics

- Usage of widgets (by count)
- Posts or mentions about social widgets offsite
- Referrals from offsite widgets (if any)



Bookmarking

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 Delicious, Digg and StumbleUpon. B2B companies can benefit tremendously from social bookmarking through increased awareness and visibility, and in their SEO efforts as well.

Delicious

Delicious lets users tag, save and manage their bookmarks, then share them with other users that have similar interests. Users can also see which bookmarks are most popular or most recent based on Delicious submissions.

Digg and StumbleUpon

Digg and StumbleUpon 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

Part Three

B2B Social Media Tactics and Metrics

Photo Sharing

The ease at which you can share photos 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.

Photo sharing lets you add a personal, human touch to your company.

By putting a face (or faces) to your company name, people are more likely to engage with you.

Use shared photos to start conversations with your prospects and customers, and to learn more about them.

Sharing photos is a great way to engage prospects and customers. Flickr offers the ability to add notes to pictures and form groups that provide discussion forums. By monitoring the forums, you can learn more about the interests of your target audiences.

Improve SEO by including links on photo sites that reference your website or blog.

Photos and images are searchable on the web, so providing relevant links back to your company website and blog through photo sharing sites can help drive traffic and improve SEO.



The Group feature on Flickr is an effective way to foster a sense of community with your prospects and customers by documenting events, engaging in conversations with them and gaining insight into their needs and interests.

Photo Sharing – Key Metrics

- Referrals from photo sharing sites
- Views of photos on social sites
- Subscribers to your photo profile or pages
- Pages rankings on key terms from photo sharing sites
- Subscribers to your video series or channel



“55 percent of respondents said they would be more likely to consume white papers and analyst reports if they were delivered as podcasts.”

– Research: Podcasts Penetrate B2B Mainstream, MarketingVOX

Podcasting

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.

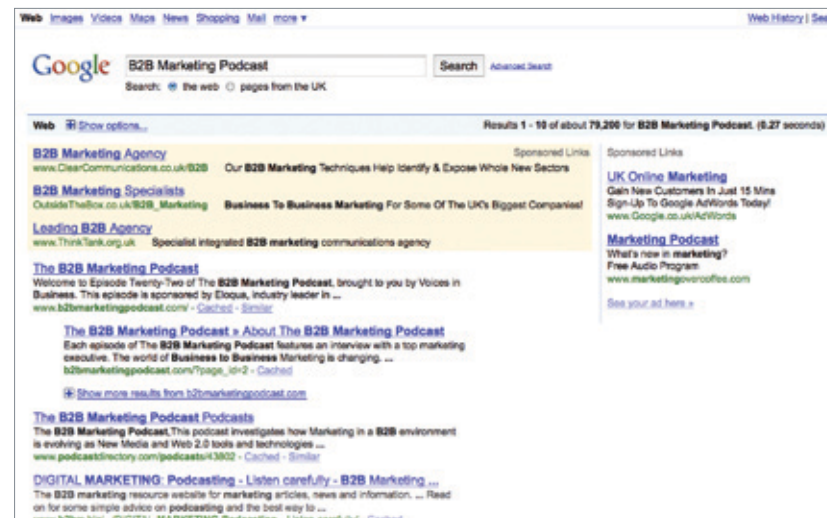
When you have subscribers to your podcast series, their podcatcher applications will automatically recognize and download your latest podcasts. So when you create a new podcast it will reach your subscribers without you having to formally execute a new marketing campaign.

Podcast directories and SEO improvements.

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.

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

Many businesses are using podcasts to engage in dialogues with their customers and prospects. Provide a dedicated phone number or e-mail address 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.



Podcasts are yet another great way to help your SEO efforts, as users can find your podcasts via your corporate website or through any number of podcast directories.

Podcasting – Key Metrics

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

Social CRM

Social CRM is the application of social networking, or Web 2.0 technologies, to the traditional idea of customer relationship management. This results in a new way of thinking about the relationship between companies and their prospects and customers, in which:

- Companies build relationships with prospects long before any contact information is given
- Prospects and customers empower each other within a social community through collaboration, content creation and support
- Customers become powerful spokespeople and salespeople for companies, products and services through word-of-mouth recommendations

Accompanying this paradigm shift is the evolution of CRM technologies to support social media and the power of online communities. An example is Marketo Sales Insight, which enables “social selling” by letting sales reps define the “social network” of leads and contacts they are interested in following. It then presents the rep with Facebook-style “status updates” from the leads and contacts they follow, highlighting the key moments that indicate buying interest.

Here are a few ways to shift your mindset to Social CRM and drive revenue:

Recognize that B2B buyers are now in control and that they rely on social media to inform their buying processes.

Social CRM lets you use social media sites to educate prospects and promote brand awareness, but also allows you to gain insight into the needs, challenges and interests of your target markets.

Move beyond page visits as behavioral indicators of buying intent—monitoring social behaviors is a must.

While a prospect’s online behavior and activity will always be a strong indicator of buying intent, social behaviors can be even more indicative of buying interest. For example, by monitoring the tweets of your prospects, you can ascertain their levels of interest (e.g. when they ask others for opinions on your products).

Customers can be your company’s strongest advocates in the social world, so help them be successful.

Social CRM makes it easier to get to know your customers on a more personal level, which can do wonders as they advocate for you in the marketplace.

If you understand their interests and needs, and give them the tools and resources they need to solve their business challenges, you’ll have positive recommendations (and new customers) coming out of your ears.

Leverage user-generated content to deepen your understanding of prospects and customers, and better inform your business processes.

To benefit properly from user-generated content, be sure to monitor the comments and forum areas that they use and put the insight you gain to good use. There’s a good chance you’ll hear problems discussed. If so, tackle them head-on. Open and honest problem management can quickly turn a negative into a positive.

Social CRM – Key Metrics

- New leads generated from social media sites
- Opportunities created from social media sites
- Increased lead-to-opportunity conversion rates from social media sites

CHECKLIST – Pitfalls to Avoid in Social Media Marketing

- ☐ **Don't dive into social media unless you're ready.** You need objectives, goals and ways to measure success and accountability.
- ☐ **Don't be a big brag.** Know the difference between becoming a thought leader and endless self-promotion.
- ☐ **Don't be afraid to try social media because it doesn't rely on the traditional metrics you're used to.** ROI will be challenging with social media, but there are ways to measure impact if you have a baseline to start with.
- ☐ **Don't use social media sites as advertising opportunities.** Keep your brand human on social media sites and save your ad-speak for real advertising.
- ☐ **Don't assume every social media site is good for your business.** Research which social media sites your customers frequent and how they prefer to consume content.

“Every company needs to have forward-looking insight to compete in today’s 2.0 world. Whether it is exploring pools of profit, the competitive landscape, client needs, or the wisdom of crowds, companies need to see the world for themselves. Seeing the world today involves multiple perspectives and requires not just data but insight from multiple angles.”

– Courtesy of The New Language of Marketing 2.0 by Sandy Carter

Part Four

Incorporating Social Media at Every Stage of the Revenue Cycle

Incorporating Social Media at Every Stage of the Revenue Cycle

The Definition of the Revenue Cycle

The revenue cycle is a new and improved way of looking at the traditional “sales cycle.” In contrast to the sales cycle (which tends to focus only on the current or subsequent quarter and what happens after marketing hands a lead off to sales), the revenue cycle starts from the day a prospect first hears about a company and continues to a dialog and then to the sale and beyond to the customer relationship.

Social media plays a key role throughout the entire revenue cycle, 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 media can play an expanded role across the revenue cycle:

- Developing relationships with very early-stage prospects before they even enter your database as a lead (“seed nurturing”)
- Building and maintaining relationships with known prospects as they educate themselves (“lead nurturing”)
- Supporting the sales cycle once the buyer engages in a formal buying process with a sales rep (“opportunity nurturing”)
- Deepening and expanding relationships with existing customers (“customer nurturing”)

Seed Nurturing

Seed 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.

Keeping all of this in mind, you can successfully nurture anonymous leads in the following ways:

Make valuable content freely available on social media sites.

By eliminating the need for registration in order to obtain your whitepapers, eBooks and other valuable content, you’re building relationships with people before you have

them in your database. These dedicated yet anonymous leads will likely come to you as inbound leads once their levels of interest are high enough.

Use social media to build a rock-solid reputation that builds credibility and trust with prospects.

While a reputation of thought leadership will never be as “risk-reducing” as a personal referral, it’s a great way to build awareness and increase your chances that the prospect will respond to future demand generation efforts.

Incorporating Social Media at Every Stage of the Revenue Cycle

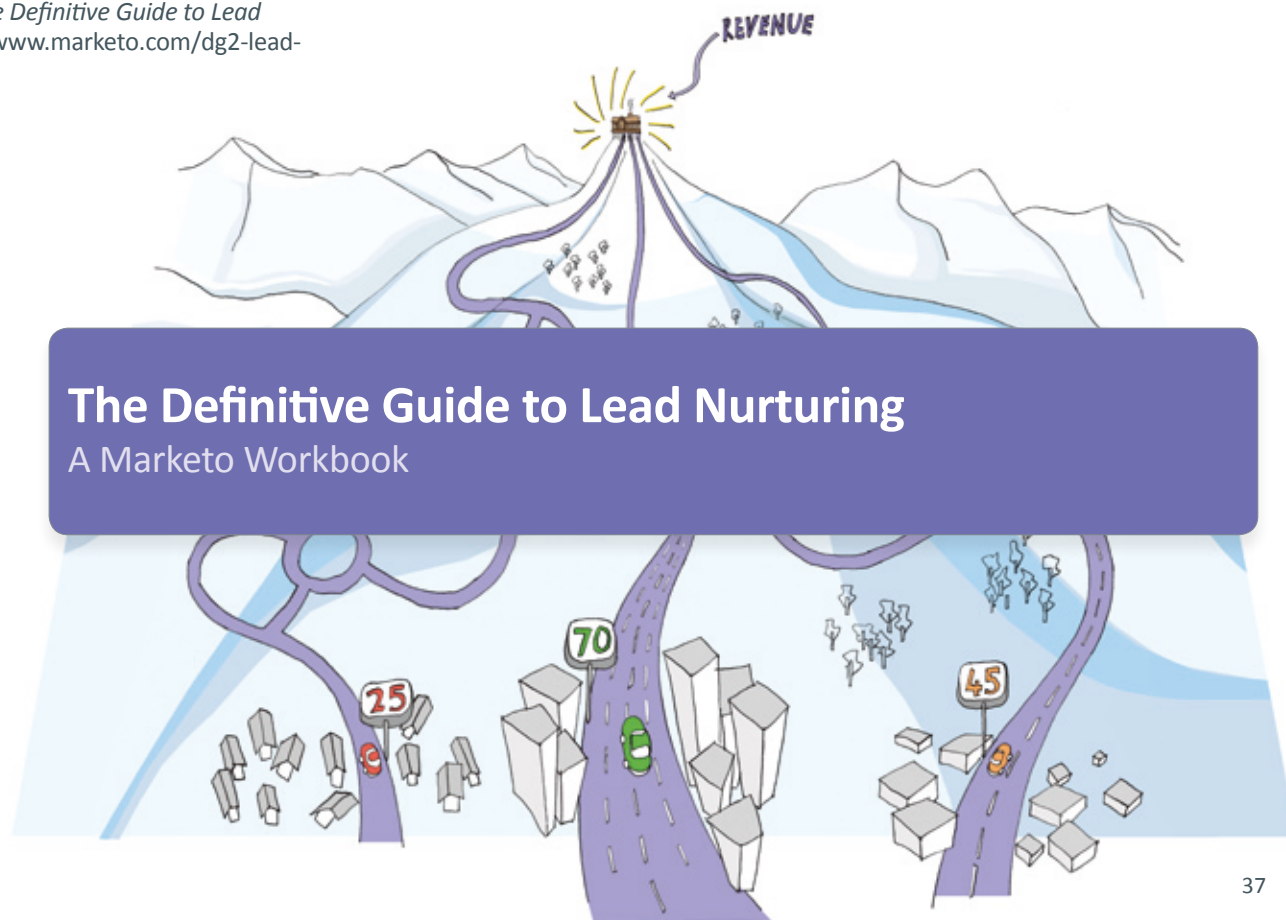
A Quick Look at the Basics of Lead Nurturing

Social media shifts our ways of thinking about nurturing and building relationships with prospects, but the following components are still essential to any successful lead nurturing effort:

- **Incoming Lead Processing Campaigns** – These enable you to identify sales-ready leads versus those requiring further nurturing. They're also an opportunity for you to ask prospects to opt-in or opt-out of your nurturing programs.
- **Stay-in-Touch Campaigns** – These are useful for prospects that are not ready to engage with sales. This kind of campaign can form the backbone of your lead nurturing program by dripping out relevant content to prospects over time.
- **Accelerator Campaigns** – These attempt to move prospects along the buying cycle faster by providing relevant “nudges” at the right time, usually triggered by specific buyer behaviors or sales updates.
- **Lead Lifecycle Campaigns** – These maximize marketing's investment in lead generation by ensuring that leads never grow stagnant or lost. Three important categories of Lead Lifecycle campaigns are:

- **Lead Handoff** – An automated campaign to pass the lead to sales when it becomes sales ready.
- **Lead Recycling** – This reassigns and tracks leads that for any reason cannot be pursued by sales in a timely manner.
- **New Customers** – A drip marketing campaign that's optimized for new customers to promote retention and cross- and up-sell opportunities.

If you'd like more information on this topic, download *The Definitive Guide to Lead Nurturing* at www.marketo.com/dg2-lead-nurturing.



Incorporating Social Media at Every Stage of the Revenue Cycle

Nurturing Prospective Leads

Essentially, you should use social media 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 media 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 that you care about, and track all of this data in your marketing automation system.

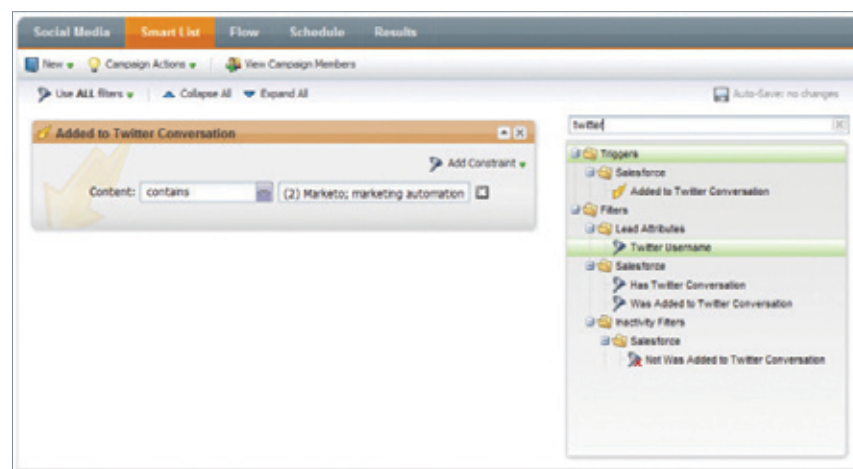
- **Segment and trigger your campaigns based on social interactions.**

Think about the potential of segmenting and triggering based on explicit

conversations among people on social media sites. Get a strong indication of buying intent by combining knowledge of these interactions with tracking of other engagement activities such as e-mail click-throughs, downloads and web page visits.

- **Interact with prospects over multiple media channels.**

Integrate social media channels with traditional channels such as e-mail, direct mail, and phone.



Incorporating Social Media at Every Stage of the Revenue Cycle

Opportunity Nurturing

Social media 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 media 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 handoff and impact

which leads are deemed “hottest” for sales. For example, if a prospect tweets that they’re interested in opinions on your product, use this activity to trigger a sales alert indicating a sales-ready lead.

- **Notify sales reps when prospects and customers show increased activity or make interesting comments.**

Hot leads demonstrate “interesting moments” or behaviors that indicate their sales readiness. This might be increased website activity, e-mail 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 media 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 media 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 e-mail or phone. Understand what channels each contact uses to communicate, and communicate with him or her in that manner.

Incorporating Social Media at Every Stage of the Revenue Cycle

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 media can help:

- **Use social media 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 media to reaffirm their choice is the right one. ([Read about Social Validation on page 7.](#))
- **Create lead nurturing campaigns optimized for new customers and incorporate your social media 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 media segments and triggers we discussed earlier. Over time they will help you cross- and up-sell additional products and strengthen customer loyalty.

- **Listen to 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 media interactions to spot the cues. Be especially attentive to the complaints of existing customers—you may stop them from being poached by a competitor.

By incorporating social media into lead nurturing, marketers can better understand and interact with prospects and customers, and increase the relevancy of their 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.

"Once people are aware of your product, a new dynamic kicks in: people learning from each other. Social technologies have revved up that word-of-mouth dynamic, increasing the influence of regular people while diluting the value of traditional marketing."

— Courtesy of Groundswell by Charlene Li and Josh Bernoff, Harvard Business Press, 2008.

Part Five

The ROI of Social Media



Part Five

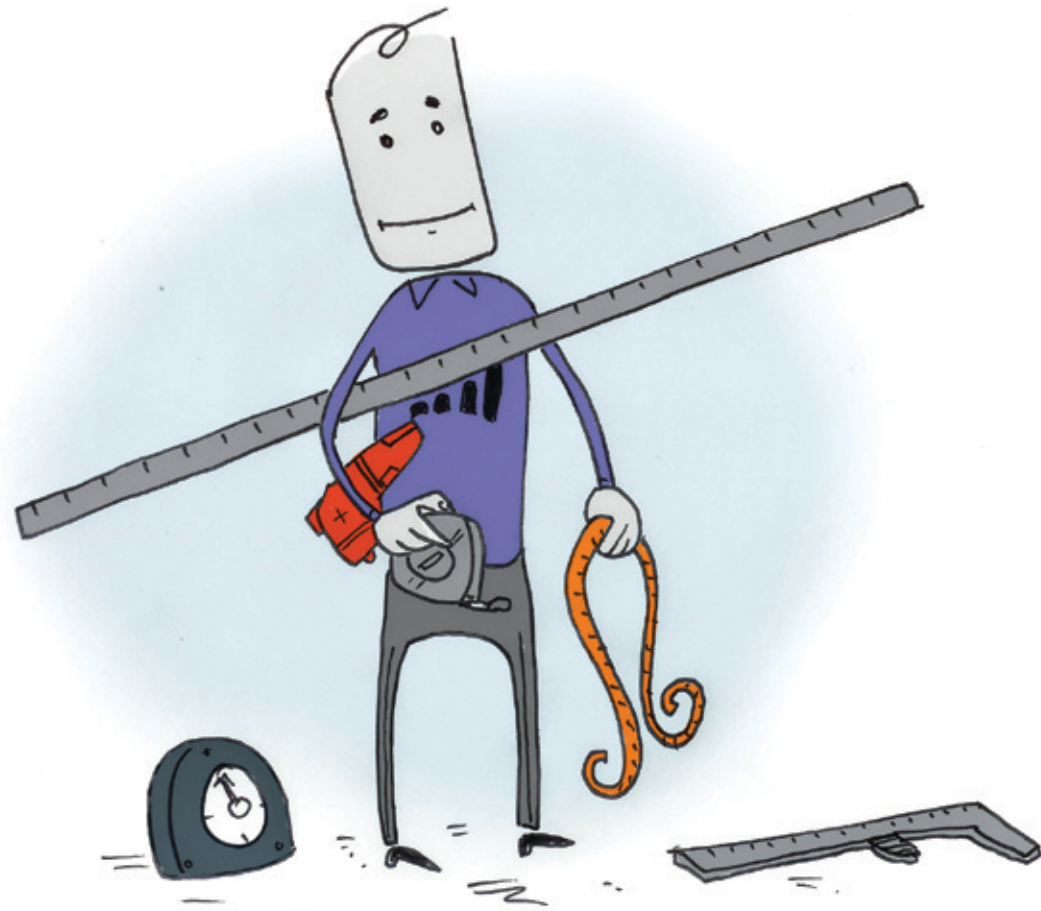
The ROI of Social Media

The Return on Investment of Social Media

The topic of social media ROI is really a subject worthy of its own Definitive Guide, but we'll try to give you enough information in this section to understand:

- How people are measuring social media today
- What the challenges are
- How to choose the areas of measurement that make the most sense for your business

Many companies fear that there's no true way to measure the ROI of social media activities. In comparison to other marketing channels such as e-mail, SEO, and display advertising, social media doesn't offer a very direct or concrete ROI measurement. This is partly due to the fact that social media interactions revolve mostly around online conversations, which are not as easy to measure quantitatively as click-throughs and CPMs. Because social media is very much about the qualitative not the quantitative, this results in much debate about what metrics are truly useful and accurate when it comes to social media marketing.



Part Five

The ROI of Social Media

The Challenges of Measuring Social Media

Just because measuring social media ROI is a challenge doesn't mean it's impossible. The world of social media ROI is still evolving. In most cases, we have to rethink traditional metrics to include the ways that people interact with social media. For example, the standard metrics for e-mail marketing include delivery, open and click-through rates. While it's still possible to find value in measuring click-throughs from specific URLs on sites such as Twitter or YouTube, social media also lends itself to new categories of measurement, such as activity and engagement.

There's still a lot of debate around what "engagement" really means and if it's something that can actually be measured quantitatively. For the purposes of this guide, we consider engagement to be a category of interaction that includes posts/threads, comments, tags, votes, bookmarks, and more.

Another important area of measurement for social media is brand and awareness. Traditional media might measure brand and awareness through reach and frequency: how many people have seen an ad and how many times they've seen it. These days, there are technologies that measure posts for positive and negative sentiments, and which measure "share of voice" (i.e. the number of articles, tweets, posts, etc. in which a specific brand is mentioned in comparison to its competitors).

Although the world of social media brings with it new ways of measuring activities and interactions, the traditional ROI metrics of revenue – cost savings, conversions, cost per lead, etc.— are still what matters when it comes to proving the value of your social media marketing initiatives. While it may be difficult to be definite about attributing leads to specific social media sources, you can make useful correlations between social media and improvements at your organization in revenue, website traffic and other areas.

What an "Inbound Lead" Really Means

Much of the difficulty in measuring social media efforts stems from the inbound lead. While it's revered for its high level of qualification, interest and sales readiness, it is also difficult to attribute it to any specific marketing campaign. As we mentioned earlier in the guide, many inbound leads can be attributed to "word-of-mouth" and partner or employee referrals. For inbound leads arriving via a website or phone call, attribution to a single referral source can be even more difficult. Moreover, the idea of "first touch" and "last touch" (meaning an original lead source versus the campaign that really closed the deal) is even more complex when it comes to social media.

Social Media Success – Key Metrics

- Activity and engagement
- Revenue and business development
- Cost savings
- Awareness and value
- Sentiment trends

"Think very carefully about what you are measuring if you do measure engagement. If engagement to you is repeat visits by visitors then call it Visit Frequency, don't call it engagement."

– Avinash Kaushik, Occam's Razor blog, October 2007

The ROI of Social Media

Focusing on the Business ROI

When you're dealing with a lot of different B2B marketing channels including social media, e-mail, search and more, it's easy to get caught up on how each channel is performing. However, what matters overall when you're talking about ROI is that you're earning more money than you're spending. Regardless of which channel you're talking about, the equation for ROI remains the same:

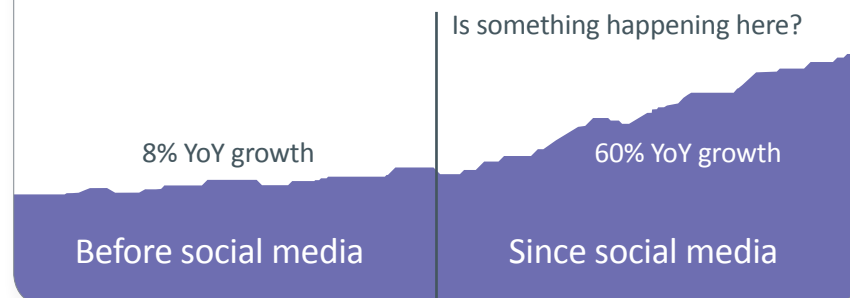
$$\text{ROI} = \frac{(\text{Amount Gained from Investment} - \text{Cost of Investment})}{\text{Cost of Investment}} \times 100$$

Don't let the challenge and uncertainty of measuring social media ROI deter you from finding value in it. Even if you're wondering what "engagement" means for your business and how you're going to measure it, you can still prove the value of social media by establishing baselines and tracking your progress.

In his popular presentation, *The Basics of Social Media ROI*, social media consultant Olivier Blanchard recommends an easy way to start measuring the impact of social media. First set up a timeline and draw a line to signify the point in time in which you started to use social media in your marketing efforts. Then map onto this timeline the various social media activities in which you're participating, as well as the results (e.g. opportunity creation, new customers, sales revenue, etc.) that your company has experienced since implementing its social media strategy. This will show what type of overall impact social media has had, and whether or not it has helped you increase your goals over the baseline. Even with numerous marketing activities occurring at the same time, you'll still be able to prove that social media has had a positive impact on your overall business ROI.

As any B2B marketer knows, it takes multiple touches to convert a lead into a sale. This means even those prospects that were attributed to a PPC or e-mail campaign may have also read your corporate blog and tweets before making the decision to purchase your product or service. Even though you may not be able to get any more granular than "inbound call" or "word-of-mouth" as referral sources for some of your leads, you are still making a case for social media in your organization.

Baselines illustrate deltas (changes)



By establishing a baseline and measuring progress over time, companies can begin to see the effects of social media on growth and revenue. (Image taken from "The Basics of Social Media ROI" by Olivier Blanchard.)

"As control of a company's marketing messages—and, indeed, its very brand image—continues to migrate from traditional media to social media, it has become imperative that companies not only pay close attention to how they're being perceived in online conversations but that they also take appropriate action, based on the insights they glean. In many cases, their future depends upon it."

— Jeff Zabin, *The ROI on Social Media Monitoring: Why It Pays to Listen to Online Conversation*, Aberdeen Group

Conclusion

Social media is a powerful tool for B2B marketers.

But before jumping on the bandwagon, consider whether or not it is appropriate for your business objectives. If it is, then treat it as a critical and accountable part of your marketing and sales strategies.

It's important to recognize that the B2B buying process has changed: prospects rely on social media to research and educate themselves before actually engaging with your company. It's important to consider how social media impacts every stage of the revenue cycle, from before prospects are even identified to after they become customers and beyond.

Forget what everyone else is doing. Choose the social media tactics that are right for you. Then get out there and engage – always in the spirit of experimentation.

While the ROI of your social media initiatives won't be easy to determine, actively measuring everything you can measure is a great place to start. Not everything you try in social media will work. But stick with it and you'll develop a powerful new source of revenue that costs a lot less than traditional media.

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“Social media challenges nearly every assumption about how businesses should communicate with their constituencies. The most important change to understand and to accept is that those constituencies now have the capacity to talk – to each other and to the businesses they patronize. In the past, those conversions have been limited to groups of at most a few people. Today, they are global and may include millions of voices. Once a shift like this occurs, a lot of change happens, both predictable and unforeseen.”

— Courtesy of Secrets of Social Media Marketing by Paul Gillin

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About Marketo

Marketo is the revenue-focused marketing automation company, revolutionizing how marketing and sales teams of all sizes sell and succeed at every stage of the revenue cycle.

Delivered in the Marketing Cloud, Marketo's powerful and easy solutions provide the fastest time to value and ignite explosive revenue growth from the earliest stages of demand generation and lead management to the pursuit of revenue and customer loyalty.

Marketo Lead Management helps Marketers acquire, nurture and qualify more high quality sales leads with less effort, while Marketo Sales Insight helps Sales understand, prioritize and interact with the hottest leads and opportunities to close business faster. Known for providing breakthrough innovation and the utmost in usability, Marketo was voted 'Best Marketing Automation Application' and 'Best Mass Emails Solution' by Salesforce customers on the Force.com AppExchange.

As of February 2010, more than 400 enterprise and mid-market clients in 14 countries have selected Marketo.

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