



SOCIAL MEDIA
SURVIVAL GUIDE

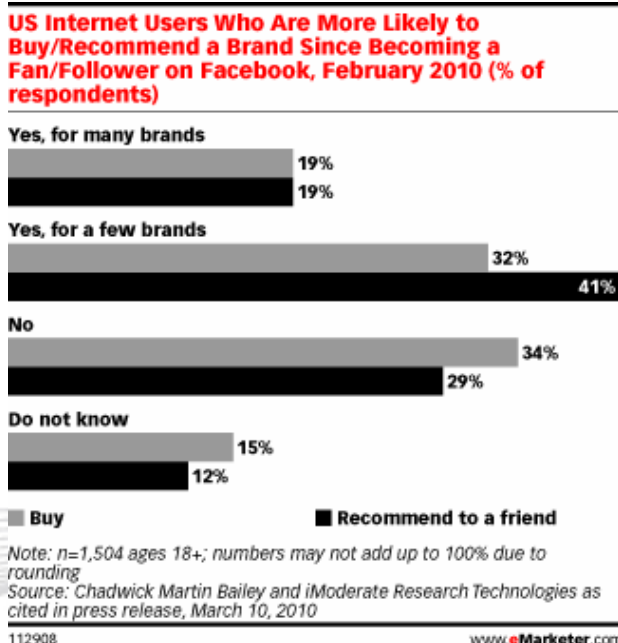
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You've no doubt heard the buzz about social media. It's true that much of the hype is due to novelty—social media is the hot new thing that everyone is either doing or wants to do. But that's not the whole of it. Social media is huge and growing because it serves so many different functions. It can be a PR vehicle, reputation management tool, customer service channel, brand community, promotional or sales tool, lead generation avenue or simply a way to generate traffic. The function depends on your industry, target market, campaign goals and which social networks you're using.

Each social media strategy is unique; it's difficult to provide blanket statements of what to do and what not to do. However, there are some best practices you can follow that help to increase opportunities for success. We'll walk you through these best practices and explain how to integrate and promote your social media profiles through various other online and offline means. In addition, we'll explain how to measure social media success using free and inexpensive tools. And finally, because social media is all about celebrating others, we'll highlight some brands that are doing social right and getting great results.

Social Media Landscape

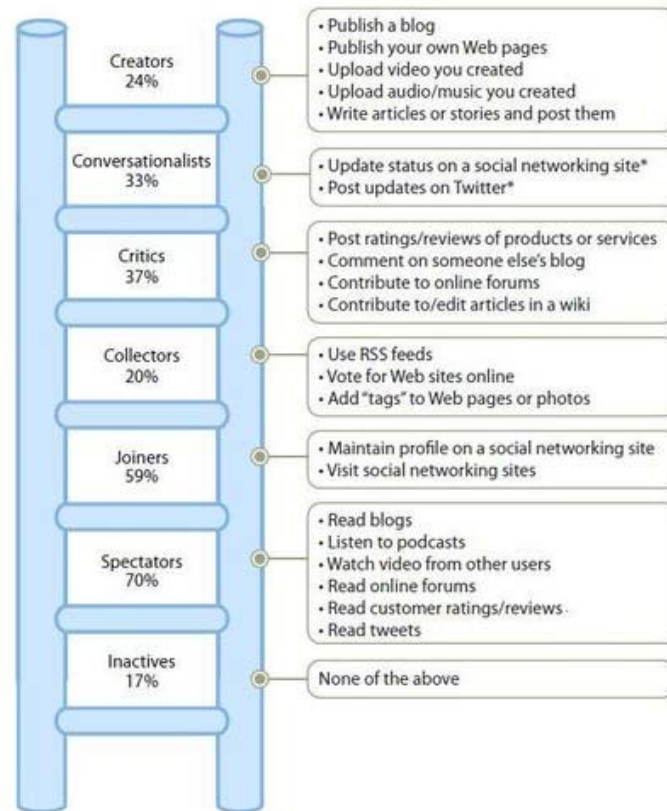
Some people aren't quite sold on the idea of social media as a valid marketing initiative. "Who's interacting with brands on social media?" "Isn't it just a bunch of teeny-boppers gossiping and sharing semi-inappropriate photos?" "Why should my business develop a Facebook Page, YouTube Channel or Twitter account?" These are just some of the many doubtful questions floating around out there. Before you write social media off, check out some of these statistics revealing the powerful nature of social media marketing.



Social media users can be broken down into various categories based on their level of activity and potential for engagement. Forrester Research developed this social media segmentation,



the Social Technographics Ladder, where the highest rungs indicate greater participation. The top rung, the “creators,” publish blogs, upload videos, write and post articles and publish their own web pages. Back in 2007, when Forrester first came up with the Ladder, creators made up 13%. Over the years, the rungs have shifted and grown, and a new category of social media participants was created: conversationalists. The image below explains the various categories and shows what the landscape looked like in January 2010:

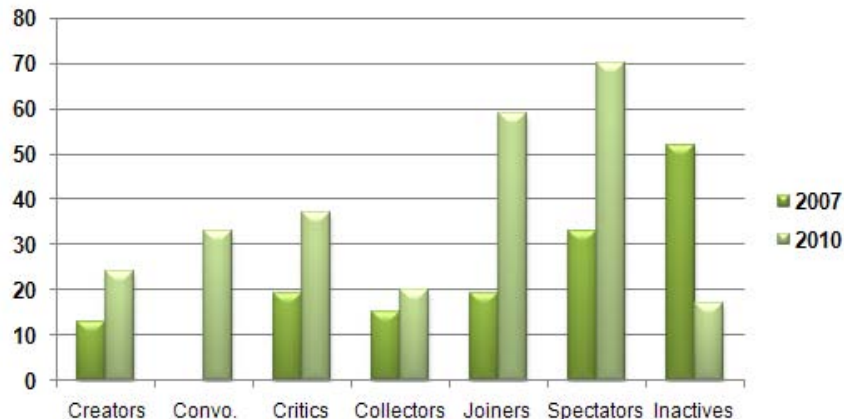


Source: Forrester Research, Inc./North American Technographics Empowerment Online Survey, Q4 2009

Here is the change in social media engagement categories from 2007 to 2010. Notice the major increases in each category in just three years' time.



Change in Social Technographics



What do these charts mean? They show that not only are more people becoming involved in social media, but more people are becoming *more* involved. That means a larger audience and bigger pool of potential influencers for your business.

The Four Cs of Social Media

Social media is many things to many people; however, the one thing it is to everyone is a unique medium that offers new and effective marketing opportunities. The following four aspects are common to every social media marketing program:



C O N T E N T

Social media starts with content. You need compelling and unique content before you can even think about getting others involved. Whether it's instructional articles, educational podcasts, goofy videos, newsworthy press releases, entertaining apps or other items, your content must be custom-created, branded and motivational.



C O M M U N I T Y

Once you've developed interesting content, you must develop a brand community where your customers and employees can gather, learn, and grow together. The members of this community are all there because they share at least one thing in common: appreciation of your business and products/services. While your brand may not always be the main topic, the community still formed around your company and you can use that to your advantage.





C O M M U N I C A T I O N

Naturally, social media requires communication. It's this piece of the social media puzzle that really brings it all together. As a business using social media, you need to communicate to your online community, not just push salesy information or promotions at them. Remember, your end goal should be to develop relationships with your community, which will likely result in improved brand loyalty and increased sales.



C O M M E R C E

This last C is an outcome of the previous three. Since every business's goals are different, you'll need to determine what "commerce" means for you. Maybe it's sales. Maybe it's traffic. Or maybe it's just gaining exposure. That's for you to decide, but you must pick a goal and continually strive for it.

Social Media Networks



T W I T T E R

Twitter is a microblogging service that allows you to connect with people around the world through short updates of 140 characters or less, called "tweets." Anyone can view your tweets (unless you make your profile private), and people that "follow" you see your updates in their nearly real-time feed.

You can converse directly with a user by including the @ symbol followed by their Twitter name; while these messages are directed to one person in particular, everyone can see them. Private conversations are conducted using direct messages—the letter *D* followed by their Twitter name.

You can also "retweet" someone else's updates, which is essentially like forwarding an email. To retweet, use the letters *RT* followed by a Twitter name. Twitter.com and most platforms have specific buttons allowing you to easily reply, direct message and retweet.



F A C E B O O K

Facebook is a social networking site that allows you to connect with friends, family, businesses and organizations to share status updates, photos, videos and more. Personal profiles connect as "friends" and require approval before becoming connected. Some, but not all, Group Pages require approval. Until recently, business profiles connected as "fans"; now, users simply "Like" the Page, there's no need for approval from admins. We'll discuss the difference between Groups and Fan Pages in further detail.



Facebook has become an invaluable tool for some businesses, helping them connect with current customers and find new ones by leveraging their fans' social networks.



LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is a business networking website, connecting colleagues, clients and potential new business. Individuals can post work and school experience, responsibilities of current position, accolades, contact information and recommendations. LinkedIn is more beneficial for personal branding—establishing yourself as an industry expert—rather than corporate branding. However, companies are wise to ensure the accuracy of their profile info, and there's also the option of creating a "Group" for your business.



HOOTSUITE

HootSuite is a social media client that allows you to manage multiple social networks at once. Currently, HootSuite handles Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, WordPress, MySpace and Foursquare. HootSuite's clean multi-column and tabbed layout lets you easily manage your accounts, monitor conversations and more. You can track statistics of links and allow multiple users to manage accounts.

Note: We do not have an endorsement deal with HootSuite (but we're open to it, wink, wink). We just believe it's an extremely simple-to-use, attractive and effective platform.



YOUTUBE

YouTube is a video sharing website where you can upload and watch videos, comment on them and share with friends. Businesses can create branded "Channels," where they can post original videos and commercials. Your Channel and individual videos can be tagged with relevant keywords to increase ranking. Videos can be uploaded to YouTube and easily embedded into numerous other sites, including Facebook and your corporate blog.



FLICKR

Flickr is a photo sharing website where you can upload pictures and videos, comment on them and share with others. You can follow others' photostreams and monitor your profile using Flickr's stats. Photos can be tagged with relevant and branded keywords to help increase search engine results page (SERP) ranking.



BLOGS

A blog (portmanteau of "web" and "log") is a website with separate articles, often referred to as posts or simply blogs, that are displayed in reverse chronological order. Blogs are often maintained by an individual or small group of people, and typically focus on one specific topic.



Two important aspects of many blogs are: 1. the ability to link to other blogs/sites and 2. the ability for readers to leave comments on each post.

Businesses use blogs to provide educational and instructional content for customers and make company announcements, much like a press room.



OTHER SOCIAL NETWORKS

Thousands of social media networks exist and it would be impossible, not to mention futile, to maintain a presence on each and every one. It's important that you decide which are the most relevant and beneficial for your business. The following are some of the more popular and likely relevant networks not yet mentioned:

- Digg – social news site allowing people to discover and share content by submitting links to stories, and voting and commenting on other news items
- Reddit – another social news site that operates much like Digg
- Delicious – social bookmarking site for discovering, storing and sharing web content

You may also want to create your own social communities, allowing you to better control messaging and welcome users into a unique, casual, branded environment. You can use a third-party site, such as Ning, or employ web developers to create a custom one for your business.

Your Social Media Team



The employee(s) you select for your social media team should mostly likely come from your marketing team; however, depending on the function you select, you may wish to choose from your existing PR, customer service or sales teams. Or, you may opt to create an entirely new in-house position. Regardless of whom you select, know that this individual will need to dedicate a good amount of time to social media each week.

The upfront work—creating profiles, optimizing pages, locating fans/followers, etc.—will be heavier than the ongoing management; however, you can't just update your status once a week as an ongoing activity. You must continually engage with customers, and create worthwhile content that is related to your business and industry. Creating the content is what requires the most time; but you'll surely find it's time well spent.

If you are a small business with limited resources to dedicate to social media, we recommend only spending two to three hours per week (after the initial setup, which may require more time). If you can afford more time, spend it. Social media can warrant a full-time, forty-hour-per-week



position, if you're inclined to employ someone in that way. If not, ten hours per week is a moderate amount for a moderate sized company.

You also need to think about those employees that aren't on the official social media task force—how do you want them using social media? Some companies develop strict social media polices for their employees, even going so far as to say that tweets will be edited retroactively.

As a company, Location3 Media doesn't believe in this stifling process; it undermines the purpose of social media, which is ultimately to open up communication and encourage engagement between consumers, brands, friends, family, business partners, strangers and, yes, even enemies. If you must prescribe rigorous rules and continuously monitor employees, you probably don't have the right employees. But if you trust and respect your employees—people whom you presumably hired and continue to employ because they are intelligent, talented and capable—then there is no need for a stringent social media policy.

Rather than developing concrete rules, offer up helpful tips and guidelines that your employees can use as a reference. Rather than saying “don't do this” and “don't do that,” explain how social media can benefit them individually and the company as a whole. Focus on the positive and the practical.

Social Media Functions

Social media can be used for a variety of different functions. You can elect to focus on just one function, or tackle all of them at once. The various functions are as follows:

Public Relations

Use social media to connect with traditional press and reach out to bloggers whose beat matches your business. Pitch story ideas, push out newsworthy announcements, establish yourself as a talking head of your industry.

Online Reputation Management

Monitor the blogosphere to discover if and when people are discussing your brand and products/services. Determine sentiment of conversations, encourage brand evangelism and attempt to reverse negative slants.

Customer Service

Use social media channels to address customer service concerns and answer product/service questions.

Create a Community/Engagement

Create a unique brand community through social media networks where members can interact with each other, share stories and suggestions about your products/services, learn more about your company and become more invested in your brand.

Promotions/Sales

Use social media to roll out promotions and generate more sales. Offer specials to your fans and followers—coupons, discounts, pre-sale offers and other exclusive deals.



Lead Gen

Use social media to find prospective clients and start relationships.

Drive Traffic

Use social media networks to drive traffic to other sites you own, such as your company website, official blog, etc. Cross promote content on all social sites.

General Best Practices

As we mentioned before, there's really no "right" way to do social media. However, there are some generally accepted best practices and principles that you can use to help guide and shape your social media efforts.

Compelling and Correct Information

Stick to your area of expertise and provide unique, individual perspectives on the industry, strategies and news. Engage and communicate with others; don't just talk *at* users, talk *with* them.

Transparency

Never pretend to be involved with a company or organization that you are not or pretend *not* to be involved with a company or organization that you truly are. Be completely transparent about your identity. It will be discovered sooner or later, and it is best to have never been devious.

Confidentiality

Always respect proprietary information and content. If you have any doubts or hesitations about the nature of information, do not do make it public.

Mind Your Manners

When disagreeing with others' opinions, keep it appropriate and polite. Always pause and think before posting, and give your content a brief edit before putting live.

Keep Your Cool

In the same vein as "Mind Your Manners," you need to remain calm, cool and collected when responding. Whether it's positive or negative, be sure to take a deep breath before hitting send, share or post. Don't let your emotions take over. Remain consistent to your brand's tone and language.

Use in Moderation

Do not bombard users with tweets, Facebook updates, etc. Keep updates to a healthy medium and always deliver useful, interesting and meaningful content that will inspire them to engage frequently.

Response Time

Reply to comments, discussion posts, @ replies, direct messages, etc. in a timely manner, when a response is appropriate.

Celebrate Others

Social media has allowed brands to open up and get more personal. And what's one of the main things that defines a person? Their friends and those that they admire. Social media lets brands celebrate others and explain why they appreciate these people and/or brands. Be sure that you're celebrating others by retweeting, linking, reviewing and giving shout outs whenever appropriate and possible.

Brand Dialogue

Social media is a new form of marketing. It's no longer a monologue, where a brand speaks at consumers, urging them to buy products. Instead, social media is dialogue between a brand and its current and potential customers, business partners, vendors and even competitors. Learn to listen, not lecture. Learn to speak with, not spout at. Learn to engage, not exhort.

Quality versus Quantity

In nearly every aspect of life, quality always beats out quantity. Same goes for social media. The quality of your fans/followers, content and interactions is infinitely more valuable than the amount. A hundred thousand followers that never retweet or reply are worthless; one hundred followers that frequently engage with you, retweet the majority of your posts, suggest your Twitter profile to others and interact with your social circle are ideal. It's all about the context of your social media relationships.

Patience Truly is a Virtue

Be patient. Don't get frustrated if there isn't a great deal of activity on your Facebook Page after month one, or if you only get one blog comment every two weeks. It takes time to build a solid social network with a large group of fans and constant conversations. If you're consistent in your activity and consistently offering useful and compelling content, you'll get there.

It's All in a Name

Choose your profile name, avatar and bio info wisely. It's acceptable to have a corporate account using your company name and logo, but don't use stuffy corporate speak—there's no place for it in social media. Bio info can be tricky, especially in the strict confines of Twitter's 160 character limit. Be brief, be light and be real.

Don't Get Fooled

All types of marketing contain spam and, unfortunately, social media is no exception. While the incidence of social media spam has decreased in recent years (now < 1% on Twitter, according to Twitter's data from February 2010), this unsolicited contact is still alive in many forms. Don't get fooled by social media spam; be wary of messages from friends that seem a little off.

Look for the Weakest Links

Friend-of-a-friend or extended social circles are where you can create the most influence. These weak social links are a great way to reach an extensive audience and increase potential for going viral.

Set Social Hours

If you're using social media as a customer service tool, you should consider setting hours when your reps will be on duty and when customers can expect an immediate response. Make note of these hours on your social profiles. This ensures that your employees aren't answering



questions at 3:00 a.m. (unless you boast 24 hour support) and that customers don't get angry when their wee-morning inquiries don't receive answers right away.

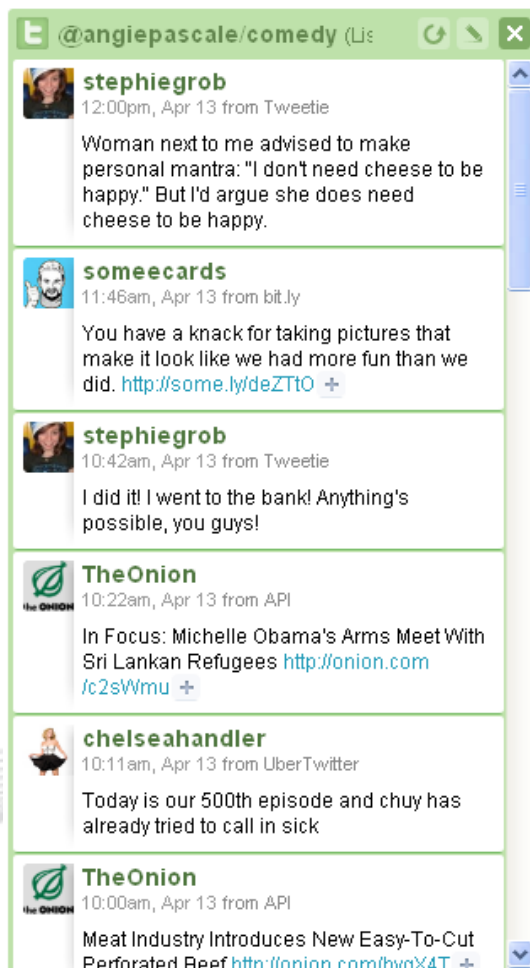
Best Practices by Network

The previous best practices can be applied across all social media channels; however, there are some techniques that are particularly useful for the various networks. The following are some best practices and tips by network.



Creating Lists

Lists are a great way to organize your followers. You must create the lists through Twitter.com, but you can maintain them through HootSuite. You can also add columns for specific lists. For example, here's a list column that helps to keep me sane throughout my hectic days:



Have some fun with it, but don't let the good times roll out of control. You'll want to create lists for specific people in your industry, relevant news channels, current customers, potential customers or any other topics that fits your needs.

Be aware the users can see the lists you place them in, unless you make them private. You can also view the lists that others have placed you in. This can be a great way to refine the topics you tweet about and find new followers.

To Automate or Not?

You can set up your Twitter account to automatically tweet RSS feed updates, automatically follow users and automatically send direct messages to new followers. But should you do this? There are mixed opinions on the issue, and it's best to weigh the pros and cons for your business.

Pros

- Saves time
- Consistent messaging
- Find followers you may miss if doing manually

Cons

- Seen as spammy by some users
- Seemingly insincere messaging
- Miss opportunities because you assume Twitter is self-sufficiently operating
- Lose followers that don't appreciate automation

Make Some Room for Yourself

You want to make it simple for others to retweet your posts. One easy, yet often overlooked way is to make sure RTers don't have to edit your post. That means, if your Twitter name is nine characters long, you want to make sure your tweets are only 127 characters at the very most. That leaves 13 characters—enough space for your Twitter handle and four spaces for the letters *R* and *T*, a space and the @ symbol. Even better though, leave even more room so that the RTER can provide an original comment of their own.

Twelve Tenets of Tweeting

Tweeting is an art form. There are certain things you should not broadcast to the world, particularly anything related to a recent meal or a bodily function (unless you happen to be, say, a café or physician's office, respectively). To do Twitter well, there are certain types of tweets you should post and specific ways of writing them. Here's our *Twelve Tenets of Tweeting* list:

1. *Ask questions* and provide answers – Helps you engage others and get the conversation started. Asking questions shows that you're interested in others, not just spreading your own agenda (by the way, this is the number one advice for first dates, too!). You also want to look for questions that others are asking and respond to those. This shows that you are engaged, knowledgeable and helpful.
2. *Share news and links*– Twitter can be a great way to break news before traditional news sources, and thus position yourself at the forefront of your industry. Additionally, you should link to other interesting and timely items, such as photographs, videos, etc. The majority of these links should be directly related to your business; however, a few random links to things that pique your interest personally help to show that you're human, not an automated bot only concerned with one topic.
3. *Give compliments* – Because everyone loves them and will in turn think more highly of you (again, more great advice for dating!).



4. *RT generously* – Retweeting is the newest form of flattery and a great way to quickly share information and connect with others. You can simply retweet without editing, but adding a brief explanation of why you find it interesting is nice and shows you actually took a moment to read it.
5. *Recommend others*– Do this on #FF/#FollowFriday, or any day really. Remember, social media is all about celebrating others. Consider recommending your competitors; just because you compete doesn't mean you have to war. Establishing a friendly relationship is the more intelligent (and adult) way to go.
6. *Explain yourself* – If you provide a link, explain what it's about so your followers can determine if they're interested in clicking on it. If they don't know what it is and only see a cryptic shortened URL, they're not likely to click. Same goes for #FF—don't just add a list of Twitter names; explain why you think others should follow these people, even if you have to write separate tweets for each person.
7. *Help others* – Use Twitter as a support desk or customer service channel for your business. Answer questions, find solutions and be a guiding hand for those in need when it comes to your products/services.
8. *Market yourself* – Here's the part you're most likely looking for, but note how it's only one tip of many and more than halfway down the list. There's nothing wrong with a little shameless self promotion; you can market your business either blatantly or subtly, just make sure to exercise moderation. If this is all you're tweeting, you'll get unfollowed in no time.
9. *Insightful, sayings, quotes, words of the day, etc.* – Shows that you pay attention to and value what others are saying; that you are perceptive and thoughtful.
10. *Mundane info* – Usually, this is the true answer to “What are you doing?”—something rather normal and dull. It's okay to use these tweets, as long as you're not doing it all the time. And try to make it a bit more interesting than just “eating a PBJ sandwich.” Something like: “Eating a PBJ sandwich with crusts. Not so bad. Can't believe my entire childhood was crustless. I missed out!”
11. *Use sarcasm with caution* – Until someone invents a special sarcasm symbol and the whole world adopts it, you must be careful with sarcasm in written form. It is often misinterpreted and can lead to confusion or insult. Yet, sarcasm can be amusing if done right. Just know your audience, exercise caution and be prepared to offer an apology if someone just doesn't get it.
12. *Get fired up!* – Emotion fuels engagement, especially anger and frustration. When you rant and rave about a topic, people notice and are more likely to interact. Some might agree and want to commend you on your courage to say so. Some might feel the exact opposite and want to berate you on your asinine opinion (their words, not mine!). Understand that you will have people who disagree and want to tell you so. Remember to take a deep breath before lashing out and writing something you might regret, but don't be afraid to get fired up.





Group vs. Fan Page vs. Community Page

Facebook offers three types of pages for businesses—Groups, Fan Pages and, the newest addition, Community Pages. Which is the right one for your business? Typically, we recommend creating a Fan Page; however, the other types can be beneficial for specific organizations. Here's a quick breakdown of the various page types, their features and functionality:

Facebook Group

Facebook Group Pages connect users who share a professional interest or hobby. They are analogous to membership-driven clubs in the offline world. You can implement various privacy settings for Groups—open to everyone, open to particular networks, closed (admin must approve members) or secret (admin must invite members). Administrators manage the Group, and admin-appointed officers can help although their power is limited.

Groups are not particularly brand friendly. Firstly, and most importantly, they are not indexed by external search engines. If you create a Group for your business, it won't rank in Google. Fan Pages and their content is indexed by the search engines and will likely rank high for branded searches.

Additionally, Groups are more closely linked to personal profiles. If you post something to a Group, it appears to come from your personal Facebook account. If you are the admin of a Page, you can post content that comes from the Page itself. The one downside to this is that you cannot engage with a Page that you admin from your personal account. For example, when I post a status update from the Location3 Media Facebook page, I cannot "Like" it or comment on it from my personal account. It automatically assumes that I'm the brand, not the person. While this is an inconvenience, it shouldn't be considered a big enough one to dissuade you from creating a Page.



Location3 Media Enjoy reading expertSEM? Then please nominate us for Search & Social
Nomination info: <http://bit.ly/cXLq6k> Thanks! via HootSuite - last Wednesday clear

Wall Info Boxes L3M Times Events Photos >> +

What's on your mind?

Attach: Everyone Options

Location3 Media

12 tweets **Interactive Marketing Weekly Roundup 4.2.10**
It's Friday. That means it's time to relax a bit and catch up on your reading from the week. Luckily, we've compiled a few of the most interesting and newsworthy items from around the interactive marketing industry. So s...

482 Impressions · 0% Feedback
Yesterday at 4:06am · Comment · Like · Share

Location3 Media

4 tweets **Google PageRank: What's Your Position on the Web?**
PageRank is shrouded in mystery. Is it a boon, a bane, or simply irrelevant? Some despise its ambiguity, and others use it as the primary factor for determining a sites worth. I would like to discuss both sides of this issue...

1,058 Impressions · 0% Feedback
Fri at 3:00am · Comment · Like · Share

Location3 Media

6 tweets **Google Leaves Australia**
It's already April 1st in Australia but this does not seem like a great April Fools Day joke on behalf of Google. They have declared that they are exiting the Australian market effective immediately, citing the Australian Governments proposed internet filter. ...

1,058 Impressions · 0% Feedback
Fri at 3:00am · Comment · Like · Share

Location3 Media

Who is Location3 Media? I'm glad you asked! We're a Denver-based interactive marketing company. We do everything from SEM and social media to analytics and web design. Poke around our page to learn more about our company.

Information

Founded: 1999

Insights See All

6.3 Post Quality

1 Interactions This Week

Most Active Countries

Facebook Community Page

Community pages were first introduced in late March 2010. Community Pages were created to address the causes or topics that didn't quite necessitate a Group or Fan Page (e.g., [Can this pickle get more fans than Nickelback?](#) and [Betty White to Host SNL \(please?\)!](#)). If a Community Page becomes extremely popular, generating thousands of fans, Facebook will open it up, allowing any Facebook user to edit the page. Therefore, very popular Community Pages will become much like a wiki, where the public owns and maintains the content.

Facebook Fan Page

Fan Pages are the most versatile and useful for businesses. They function much the same way as personal profiles do—they can have friends, create and edit tabs, upload photos, share info through status updates and fans can post on the wall. Fan Pages also let you add applications, which can make your page more engaging and interesting for users.



All content on a Fan Page is public and anyone can become a Fan at any time (now referred to as “Liking” a Page); there is no approval process. Likewise, anyone can comment on a Fan Page wall, photos, discussions, etc. without having their comment undergo a review process. For these reasons and the relatively flexible layout, allowing you to customize your Facebook Fan Page, we recommend creating a Fan Page rather than a Group or Community.

Since this is the type of Facebook page we advocate for businesses, all tips and best practices in the rest of this paper will focus on Fan Pages.

Pimp Your Page

One of the great things about Fan Pages is the ability to manipulate the layout and add fun applications. The default applications differ depending on what category you select for your Page. For example, a Band Page comes with a music player, video player, discography tab, reviews tab, tour date tab and discussion board. Yours may vary; however, the typical default applications for businesses are discussion board, info, events, photos, videos and notes.

Developers have created nearly limitless other applications to choose from, but the following are the best ones for businesses (in addition to the defaults):

Facebook Markup Language (FBML)

FBML is a unique box that adds advanced functionality and customization to your Page. Add FBML to nearly any tab of your Page and customize with HTML. FBML can also be moved around and resized within the tabs.

Social RSS

Allows you to add your blog RSS feed and Twitter feed to your Fan Page. You can add it to either the wall, boxes tab or another unique tab. The feeds update automatically and your fans can subscribe to your blog feed directly from Facebook.

Vanity URL

When you create a Page, Facebook assigns a random string of letters and numbers at the end of the URL to identify the Page. You can create a vanity URL with your company name, as long as it's available. This shorter, branded URL will make it simpler for users to find your page and easier to include the link on other material, including print collateral and business cards.

Simply visit <http://www.facebook.com/username/>, click the link for “Set a username for your Pages” (you can create a vanity URL for your personal profile here as well, if you are so inclined) and select the Page you'd like to edit. Be careful when choosing your name, though, because you *cannot* edit or transfer the username once you set it.



LINKEDIN

Pimp Your Profile

Your LinkedIn profile doesn't have to be just an online resume. Yes, it's important to have information about your current position, experience and education; however, there's so much more that can help you build business relationships through LinkedIn. You can pimp your profile with numerous apps and other items. Here are some of the top items to enhance:

Profile Picture



We're all adults here, so this should go without writing, but I'm going to do it anyway: choose an *appropriate* photo for your profile. If you've had headshots taken by a professional photog, use one of those. If not, be sure to find or take a photo that represents you as an individual and as a professional. Don't have a beer in your hand, unless you're a brewmaster. Don't have silly makeup on, unless you're a clown. Don't have full body shot, unless you're a model.

While we're on the topic, use the same photo for all your profiles. It helps to establish your personal brand across numerous social networks and online channels. If you change one profile photo, be sure to change them all.

Vanity URL

LinkedIn assigns each profile with a random string of numerals at the end of their profile URL. You can easily customize your URL with your name and/or personal brand. Here's how:

Click on "Edit" link show in image below.

The image shows a LinkedIn profile summary with the following sections:

- Current:** Communications Manager at Location3 Media [Edit] Add Current Position
- Past:** Account Executive at Marich Communications
- Education:** Penn State University- Main Campus
- Recommended:** You haven't been recommended Get Recommended
- Connections:** 117 connections
- Websites:** Interactive Marketing Agency [Edit], Interactive Marketing Blog [Edit], My Personal Blog [Edit]
- Twitter:** angiepascale [Edit]
- Public Profile:** <http://www.linkedin.com/in/angiepascale> [Edit]

The "Public Profile" section and its URL are circled in red.

You're taken to a page containing the below box. Type in the URL extension you want, hit "Set Address."

The image shows a dialog box titled "Your Public Profile URL" with a "What's this?" link and a "[Hide]" button. The current URL is displayed as <http://www.linkedin.com/in/angiepascale>. Below this, it says "Update this address:" and "Note: If you change your custom URL, your previous custom URL will no longer be valid." There is a text input field containing "www.linkedin.com/in/" followed by a blank space, and a "Set Address" button. A note at the bottom states: "Note: Your custom URL must contain 5 - 30 alphanumeric characters. Please do not use spaces, symbols, or special characters."

Blog Feed

You can easily add your blog feed through one of the many applications offered by LinkedIn. Depending on the type of blog you have (e.g., WordPress, TypePad, LiveJournal, etc.), you will either use the WordPress application, or the BlogLink application. Because our blog, www.expertSEM.com, is on WordPress, I will use that as my example below. However, adding any of the LinkedIn apps is super simple—LinkedIn walks you through each step of the process.

First, go to the applications page. You'll find an "Add Applications" link under your summary (if you have one, if not, it will be located near the bottom of your profile):



Applications

[Add Application](#)

Tip: Add more to your professional profile by **adding applications** from our featured partners.

Next, you simply need to find the application of your choosing. Look for WordPress or BlogLink in the list.



WordPress

by WordPress

Connect your virtual lives with the WordPress LinkedIn Application. With the WordPress App, you can sync your WordPress blog posts with your LinkedIn profile, keeping everyone you know in the know.



Blog Link

by SixApart

With **Blog Link**, you can get the most of your LinkedIn relationships by connecting your blog to your LinkedIn profile. Blog Link helps you, and your professional network, stay connected.

The WordPress application allows you to select specific types of feeds. If your blog has numerous authors or different categories, you can choose to show only your blogs or only those in a specific, relevant category. For example, this is the feed I use on my LinkedIn profile:

WordPress [Remove]

expertSEM » Angie [edit]

Interactive Marketing Weekly Roundup 4.2.10 6 days ago

It's Friday. That means it's time to relax a bit and catch up on your reading from the week. Luckily, we've compiled a few of the most interesting and newsworthy items from around the interactive marketing industry. So sit back in your chair, grab your coffee and pretend you're reading this on an iPad. Come [...]

Interactive Marketing Chat | Paid Search 10 days ago

Jared Schroder, Location3 Media's director of paid search and resident karaoke champ, discusses a couple recent topics in the SEM industry: Google's new sitelinks feature for paid search ads; and what the Search Alliance will mean for the SEM industry. Jared also discusses an interesting approach he and his team have come up with for [...]

Interactive Marketing Weekly Roundup 3.26.10 13 days ago

You may not know it, but Google leaving China wasn't the only thing to happen in the interactive marketing industry this week. The annual east coast edition of SES went on all week in New York, and several companies took the opportunity to announce new products and features. Microsoft had a number of these announcements, [...]

Social Media: A Bottomless Suggestion Box 17 days ago

Social media serves a number of different functions—a customer service tool, a traffic driver, a PR vehicle, an online reputation management tool and a method for generating sales or leads. While these are all great uses, they are more focused on the short-term benefits. The long-term benefits of social media management are just as profitable [...]

Twitter Integration

You can add your Twitter feed in two ways: 1. through an application or 2. in your settings. If you do this, however, remember that your tweets will be automatically posted as your LinkedIn status. Be sure not to double-post by clicking on your LinkedIn account within HootSuite.

To add the Twitter app, follow steps above, find app and follow directions.





Tweets
by LinkedIn

Access the most important parts of the professional conversation with Tweets, a Twitter client you can use right on LinkedIn.

To add through your settings, click on “Settings” in upper right-hand corner. Find the Twitter Settings” link.



Settings

Profile Settings

My Profile

Update career and education, add associations and awards, and list specialties and interests.

My Profile Photo

Your profile photo is visible to **your network**.

Public Profile

Your public profile displays **full** profile information.
<http://www.linkedin.com/in/angiepascale>

Manage Recommendations

You haven't received any recommendations.

Status Visibility

Your current status is visible to **your connections**.

Member Feed Visibility

Your member feed is visible to **your connections**.

Twitter Settings

Add your Twitter account on your profile.

Edit settings to display your Twitter account and share tweets in LinkedIn status.

Share Presentations

You can add presentations and documents that you have created to your LinkedIn profile with the SlideShare application. You must have a SlideShare.net account to import documents.

Follow the steps above for adding an applications, then look for the SlideShare app and follow directions.



SlideShare Presentations

by SlideShare Inc

SlideShare is the best way to share presentations on LinkedIn! You can upload & display your own presentations, check out presentations from your colleagues, and find experts within your network.

Share Documents

Although you can add PDFs to your profile with SlideShare, you are limited to three documents. We recommend using SlideShare for your three most recent presentations, and using another app for PDFs or other documents.

Again, follow steps for adding applications, find Box.net Files and follow directions.





Box.net Files by Box.net

Add the Box.net Files application to manage all your important files online. Box.net lets you share content on your profile, and collaborate with friends and colleagues.

Polls

Use polls to help you gain knowledge and perform market research. Polls can be added through an application and customized for your business.

You know the drill. Here's the app you're looking for:



Polls by LinkedIn

The **Polls** application is a market research tool that allows you to collect actionable data from your connections and the professional audience on LinkedIn.

Strategic Anchor Text

LinkedIn allows you to add three website links to your profile. These links should direct to your corporate website, corporate blog, personal blog, corporate Facebook page or other relevant sites that you own and control. The key to these links is using strategic keywords. For example, I've used "interactive marketing agency" to link to the Location3 Media website on my profile.

Click on the "Edit" link beside your websites. You will be taken to a page with this section:

Websites:			
Other:	▼	Interactive Marketing Ag	http://www.location3.com Remove
Other:	▼	Interactive Marketing Bl	http://www.expertsem.com Remove
Other:	▼	My Personal Blog	http://www.angiepascal.com Remove

In the drop down, choose "Other," enter your keyword in the first field and your URL in the second one.

Recommendations

There are two secrets to getting recommendations on LinkedIn: 1. recommend others; and 2. ask for them. Okay, so neither of those are all that mystical, but they work fantastically!

Start by recommending your current and past colleagues, business partners and other contacts. Be honest—don't inflate your opinion of the individuals just to get a similar recommendation. If you don't truly have anything nice to say, then don't write one.

Don't be afraid to ask for recommendations, but make sure you're reaching out to people that truly know you and your work. Use the recommendation invitation offered by LinkedIn; it makes it simpler and less painful for the person you're asking a favor of.

Participate in Discussions and Groups

You can show expertise in your field by answering questions in the [Questions and Answers](#) section, and participating in Group discussions about related topics.



LinkedIn keeps track of every question you answer. The people with the most answered questions are labeled as experts. Group discussions allow you to assist others and make connections based on your knowledge. You can browse the [Groups Directory](#) to find relevant and interesting groups.

Any answers you provide or discussions you participate in show up in the activity feed on your profile. This is just another way to show off your expertise and position yourself as a credible and intelligent professional in your field.

Create Events

If you often attend or host industry events, the LinkedIn Event Application is a great tool for you.

Find the Events app in the directory and follow directions.



Events

by LinkedIn

Find professional events, from conferences to local meet-ups, and discover what events your connections are attending.

Now you can create events, invite people, keep track of the events you're attending and find other happenings to crash, er, attend in the utmost professional manner.

Who's Peeping Your Profile

You can get an idea of the people that have been researching you by looking at the "Who's Viewed My Profile" section. It tells the number of people that have looked at your profile along with their job function, location and/or company, based on the level of information they share.

For example, my profile was recently viewed by "someone in the Operations function in the Public Relations and Communications industry from Greater Nashville Area." This info doesn't do much (besides make me *extremely* curious), but it can be beneficial to understand how many people are looking for you, especially when they share their company name. You can also upgrade your account to learn more about the people viewing your profile; plans range from \$25 to \$500 a month. If you're in business development, this is a wise option.



HOOTSUITE

Collaborate with Others

You can invite others to collaborate on the social networks you have set up within HootSuite, allowing you to share posting responsibilities and tag team on monitoring duties. Simply visit the




“Settings” section in HootSuite, go to the “Social Networks” tab and click on “Invite Team Member” button (shown below). You can invite people by email and check the box beside each social network you wish to give them access to. Grant each team member advanced control, allowing them to manage other team members and modify account settings, or basic control.

Team Members:

You have not yet invited any Team Members to collaborate on this social network

Invite Team Member



Organize Contacts and Monitoring

As mentioned before in the Twitter section, you can add columns to HootSuite to view various streams of tweets. Columns can be created for @ replies, DMs, sent tweets (especially helpful if collaborating, so you don't double tweet), specific keyword searches, lists, individual Twitter users or hash tags.

Convenience, Not Laziness

HootSuite and other social media applications are great for integrating all of your profiles and saving time, but don't let this convenience make you lazy. Just because you can post the same message to Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn all at once doesn't mean that you should. Each site has a unique focus and audience; you must craft separate messages for each, even if they ultimately say the same thing. And if your Facebook updates contain @ replies, it's obvious that you just don't get how social media works and may need to review this document a few more times!



YOUTUBE

Custom Background

Add a custom-designed skin to your Channel, which should include branding elements or other images unique to your business. A custom background makes for a more interesting viewing experience and helps to establish your brand.

Video Descriptions

YouTube allows you to add a description to each video that you upload. Naturally, your description should explain what the video is about, but it should also contain a call to action and link to more information. A layout change that occurred in early April 2010 made it so the description section, when unexpanded, displays approximately 110 characters; the old layout



displayed about 150. With this new layout, you must ensure that the most pertinent and motivational information is showing in that first 110 characters.

Titles and Tagging

Your title should not only help explain what the video is about, but contain the important terms or phrases from your keyword strategy.

Add branded keyword tags along with those that are related to your business and the content of the video. You can add as many tags as you'd like that are relevant, but don't go overboard. Users know when something seems spammy, and may just report your video (all it takes is the click of a button to flag it as spam). Forego pronouns, articles, conjunctions and other filler words (e.g., "or," "the," "and"); however, make use of adjectives as users often include these terms in their searches.

Branding in Videos

Include branding elements, calls to action and links in the actual videos. If you don't have access to super expensive video production tools, simply add a title slide at the end that include your logo, company name, URL and other pertinent contact information. Just don't go overboard: no one wants to see a full-screen watermark of your logo throughout the entire video.



Flickr is a great place to host photos, images and videos created by your company. If this was the only purpose, that would be just fine, as you'll most likely need a third-party site to host photos on so that you may embed in other locations. However, we've found that Flickr ranks extremely within the SERPs for branded searches. Many companies don't include Flickr in their social strategy because little is known about its ranking nuances (even our inside sources claim there's no way leverage keywords in Flickr). Yet, through simple trial-and-error, we've found some beneficial ways to organize and label photos:

Proper Tagging Techniques

Tag every set of photos you upload into Flickr with your brand name. You may use additional tags as well, just make sure your brand name is in there. When naming photos and writing descriptions, toss in your brand name as much as possible without sounding spammy. This may not help within Flickr itself, but it's a great asset for your brand within search results.

Mapping Your Photos

Add another element of interaction by marking the locations of each photograph. For a business that travels the globe frequently or attends numerous local events, this can be a great way to show your diversity. It's also an opportunity to rank in Google Maps for local searches.



Remain Active and Engaged

Most of all, you need to stay active. Create a living, breathing Flickr page by frequently uploading photos and videos, viewing photos by others, responding to comments and commenting where ever possible. There are some absolutely gorgeous images taken by talented photographers in Flickr; when you're moved by an image, let the artist know. You'll be complimenting them, and helping to build your profile's strength.

Interactive Widgets

Developers have created interactive widgets that you can embed into various other sites and social media networks. Here is one that we added to our blog, www.expertSEM.com:



The photos move through a slideshow and vary in size, and the entire widget links back to our Flickr page. This particular widget is called a Flash Badge; you can also embed an HTML badge. Choose your badge here: <http://www.flickr.com/badge.gne>.

On a side note: Facebook has some of these widgets as well, but they look rather clunky. While they serve their purpose well—to get more fans and drive traffic to your Facebook page—I would be wary of adding them to your other sites, as it can lessen the attractive, well-planned design you likely paid a pretty penny for.



BLOGS

The line between social media and SEO can get hazy; with blogging, it's practically invisible. Because you can comment on blogs and interact with the writer, it's considered social media; based on its ability to provide link juice for keyword ranking, it's considered an SEO tactic. Naturally, you want to create an integrated program that leverages both functions. For this paper, however, we'll focus mainly on the social aspects.

What Should You Write About?

That's a big question, and will take some research and thought on your part. What you don't want to blog about is your business and your business only. Unless your target market is your mother and spouse, no one cares that much about you! Create a press room on your website if you want to push out news solely about your company, but don't use your blog for this purpose.



Your blog should offer helpful information for readers. It can be methods for getting the most out of your specific products. Or it could be little know facts about your industry in general, never once mentioning your own company.

For example, if your company sells vitamins, you can write blog posts about health conditions, current industry laws, alternative treatments and moving stories from customers,

If you are a bicycle shop, you can write about biking laws, bike-related products (even if you don't stock them), maintenance, repairs and anecdotes from customers about their lives as bike commuters. These are just a few examples; you'll be writing for this blog on a regular basis, pick topics that will not only be well received by customers, but that you'll also enjoy writing about.

For blog topic brainstorming (or any other social media content) try these resources:

- Yahoo! Answers – Search for a relevant keyword on [Yahoo! Answers](#), then watch the topics come rolling in. It's like the Golden Goose of blog topics! A quick search for “bicycle parts” delivered “Will all aluminum bicycle parts eventually break?” and “How do you upgrade bicycle parts?” along with some 1,300 other results. Answer these questions in blog form, in tweet form and in any other form you like.
- Google AdWords Keyword Tool – Shows how many people have searched for specific terms or phrases. Look up a keyword, then peruse the associated searches to select the most relevant and popular ones. Bam! Blog topics!
- Search Suggest – Start typing a related phrase in the Google search query box, using a question format. The suggested searches are what people are actually typing in and, therefore, could make interesting and helpful blog posts. Here are some good ones from the bicycle example:



- Analytics – Review keyword lists and top content; does anything jump out at you that could warrant expansion or repurposing?
- Twitter Searches – Search for your keyword(s) and review the tweets that contain those terms. What are the people saying? Is there one question or theme that sticks out?

Writing Titles/Headlines



Headline writing skills can't be taught in a brief paragraph, but we can provide basic tips for writing SEO-friendly titles. Mostly, that involves using your keywords somewhere in the title, preferably near the beginning. The title of your blog posts should not only reflect the contents of the article, but should also help with ranking. Oftentimes, depending on the blog platform, your title will also become your permanent URL, another area that should contain your keyword.

Anchor Text Linking

Use your blog to link back to specific pages of your website. Consult your SEO keyword reference guide that you've no doubt been using religiously for link development purposes. If you don't have a keyword reference guide, which lists the two to three relevant terms and phrases associated to each page of your website, there's no time like the present to create one! We won't go into it here, because that's a whole different animal that requires strategic SEO planning, but we highly recommend that you create one. If you need assistance, we just happen to know an agency that can help with your [SEO management](#) and development!

Referencing your document, add anchor text links throughout your blog when these keywords appear in your posts. Since you'll be writing about topics that are related to your business, the keywords should fall naturally into your posts, you shouldn't have to force them in. Again, moderation is the key: don't put ten links in every single blog post. One per post, every couple of posts is sufficient.

Making Your Blogs Enjoyable to Read

People spend thousands of dollars and their whole lives trying to become better writers (myself included!). So, how can you learn to write better in just a brief paragraph or two? The truth: you can't. You can only learn to write better by reading more and writing more. Fortunately, if you're writing about a subject that gets you excited—something you're passionate enough about to do 40+ hours a week—you're likely to create enjoyable blogs posts. No, they may not be Pulitzer worthy, but (most of) your customers will forgive your grammatical and thematic errors if you're providing interesting and useful information. Unless, of course, your business offers copywriting and editing services. Then you're not allowed to make a mistake. Ever.

Distribution Methods

Setting up RSS and retweet buttons are the first and simplest steps for distributing your blog posts. This allows your readers to distribute the posts themselves. However, that doesn't mean you can sit back and watch the readership count soar; you need to do some work yourself. When you've got a super interesting or timely post, submit it to Digg and reddit. Your automated feeds on Facebook and LinkedIn will update automatically, showing up in the news feeds of your fans and contacts.

Another way to distribute each post individually is to find relevant posts on other blogs and link to yours in the comments section. For example:

“Great article. I especially like the parts about XXXX and XXXX. Here's a link to one of my blog posts that I think you may enjoy: <http://www.xyzblog.com>. It's about the same topic and...”

Be sincere and transparent, and you shouldn't have to worry about sounding spammy.

Social Media Integration



To truly build a social community, you must integrate and cross-promote your social media profiles. We've already offered some specific suggestions for integrating your social profiles (e.g., Social RSS app on Facebook, retweet buttons on your blog, Twitter and blog feed apps on your LinkedIn profile), but here are a few more for good measure.

- Links on website
- Website feeds ([AddTweets](#))
- Email signatures
- Business cards
- Email campaign/newsletter
- In-store fliers/signage
- Newsletter links

Create custom landing pages on your site for social media traffic; don't send visitors to a generic landing page or one created for another marketing medium. Social users have been given different messages and, hopefully, engaged with your brand on a more personal level. They won't respond well to a bland, canned marketing message. Focus on these users' interests and offer content or deals that entice them to both convert and share the offer with their social circle.

Social Media Measurement

Now for the most important, and arguably most difficult, part—measuring the success of your social media efforts. First and foremost, you must understand that social media measurement is an ongoing process. As the networks, features and functionality change on a daily basis (and they do!), methods for measuring success must adapt as well.

Since social media is more about engaging with customers, it would serve your bottom line to move away from ROI, and start thinking in terms of ROE (i.e., return on engagement). Seeing that *engagement* is relative and unique to each business, you must assign a value to it. What is a Facebook fan worth? How much value would you place on gaining 100 Twitter followers? How much revenue might you consequentially generate through 1,000 views on YouTube? What is the context behind your fans and their engagement practices? Much like branding, there is not a direct number attached to these metrics, but you can assign one based on reasonable assumptions. It's the same idea as cost per lead metrics; this, too, is an arbitrarily set value that can come to be seen as a concrete number.

It's not all intangible though. The results you get from social media *are* measurable. You can segment in two ways: soft numbers and hard numbers.

Soft Numbers

Record the number of Facebook fans, Twitter followers, YouTube Subscribers and Blog subscribers at the start of your program. Note the increases you see in these contacts each month. This increased contact base means more potential business for you. Naturally, it's up to you to turn those contacts into customers, but the increased potential is extremely beneficial as it opens up communications with a highly-engaged and qualified audience.



Determine what one customer is worth to you. Then consider the cost of a lost customer, one that will no longer buy because they read someone else's negative comment. Additionally, think about the cost of a saved customer, one that you convince to stay by your side because you reached out to them and addressed their issue.

While you have just attached hard numbers to these customers, the major issues at hand are reputation and branding, and this can be an important part of your social media program.

Hard Numbers

These are what make your CEO sleep better at night. Actual sales generated through outreach programs are the hardest numbers; other hard numbers include promos redeemed and SMS opt ins. By noting the number of promos redeemed, you not only know the increased sales, but you also have an idea of how successful your program was.

If you send a promo code through Twitter to your 200 followers, and many of them retweet that code generating 800 promo redemptions, that's a 200% increase in exposure. Not too shabby for a free service!

How do you gather these numbers, though? There are nearly limitless tools and technologies you can use to measure your social media programs and find conversations about your brand. The following are the most useful ones:

GOOGLE ANALYTICS

An extremely effective way of measuring social media impact is through web analytics. Google Analytics (GA) is our platform of choice because it provides robust data at a price that can't be beat—free!

When reviewing web analytics data, be sure to note the following elements:

Referring URLs – Where is traffic coming from?

Note the traffic being generated by Twitter, Facebook and the like. Also note any other niche sites generating a great deal of traffic—these could be opportunities for social media communication, media placement or links.

Time on Site/Bounce Rate – How relevant is the traffic?


Note the quality of traffic coming from each social media source based on longer times on site and lower bounce rates. If Facebook traffic tends to be of a better quality, you may want to focus your efforts there. If Twitter traffic is more engaged with your site, consider making it your priority.

Unique vs. Returning Visitors – How many new visitors come from social media sites?

Take note of the social media visitor count. Has the number increased since you began your program? Have you reached a new market and generated fresh visitors through social media?



GOOGLE ALERTS

 [Google Alerts](#) provides email updates of the most recent Google results for the keyword(s) of your choosing. Emails can be delivered in a few ways: as results happen, daily or weekly.

GOOGLE ADVANCED SEARCH

Google Advanced Search allows you to find web pages that include specific words or phrases and don't include other terms. Specify publish date, region, usage rights and more.

RADIAN6



[Radian6](#) is a comprehensive social media monitoring and online reputation management tool. Provides detailed reports for keywords of your choosing, sentiment of brand conversations, associated word clouds and more.

TWITTER SEARCHES

Perform simple searches on Twitter.com or within the Twitter client of your choice (ours is HootSuite, if you don't know by now) for brand terms or relevant keywords. This information lets you know who is talking about your brand or related topics, and what they are saying. You may wish to reach out to these users, or simply record the info for future use.

TWEETSCAN

[TweetScan](#) provides a list of all posts on Twitter and identi.ca (another microblogging site, not nearly as popular as Twitter) containing specific keyword(s). Search for your brand name, products/services or other related topics. Quickly see who is tweeting and what they are saying.

BIT.LY

[Bit.ly](#) is a free URL shortening service that is SEO-friendly and offers basic click tracking.

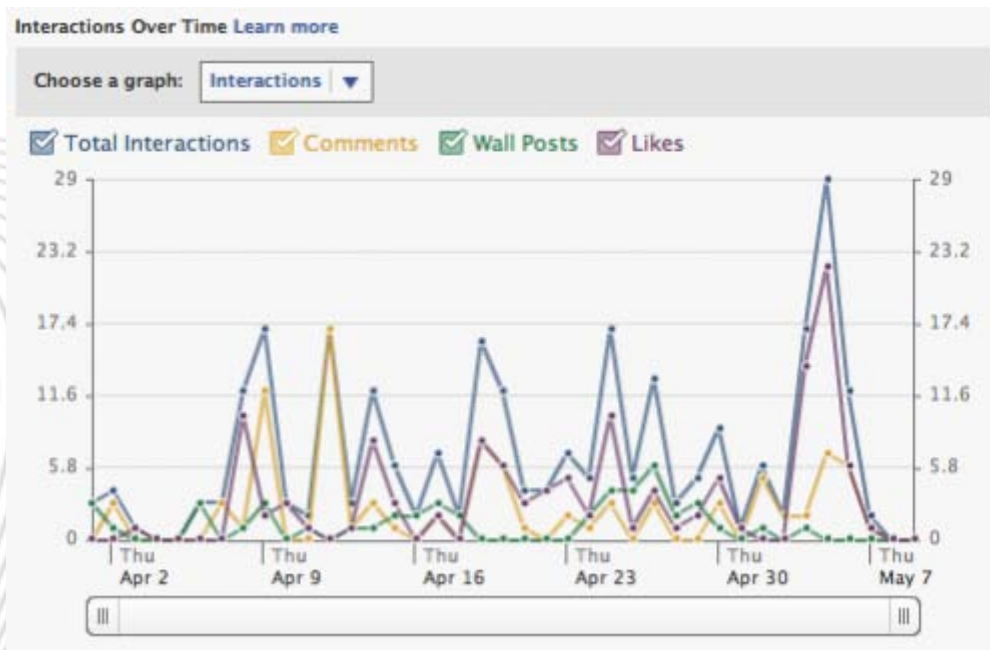
FACEBOOK INSIGHTS

Facebook Insights measures user exposure and engagement, quality of posts and fan demographics. It's a free service that only Page admins can view. It's nice to have this basic information about Pages, but Insights is not the most sophisticated platform. It's common to see gaps of data and obviously incorrect numbers (e.g., Fans drop from 350 to 0 in one day then



back up to 350 the next day). This missing and incorrect data skews averages and sometimes makes it difficult to understand month-to-month improvements or failures.

However, if you take Facebook Insights with a grain of salt, you can learn some interesting and beneficial things: which posts created the biggest response, which fans interacted the most, basic demographics of your fan base (age, gender and geographic location). This information can help you better engage with your audience and craft more interesting messaging that will appeal to fans directly.



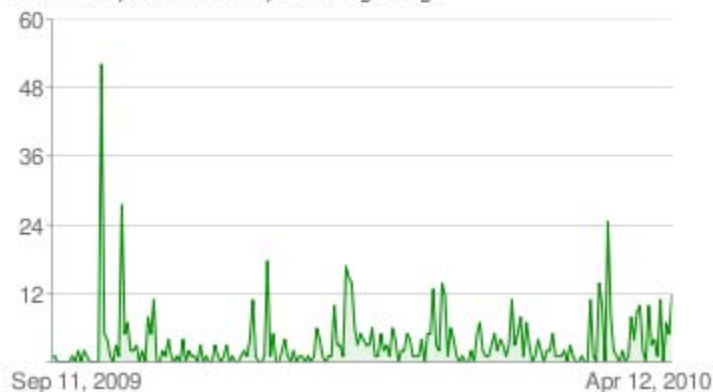
YOUTUBE INSIGHT

Through YouTube's Insight section, you can learn how many views your videos are getting, basic demographics of your viewership, how many times your videos were rated, favorited or commented on and basic info on subscribers. A new feature on the line graphs allows you to drag a window to view data from specific timeframes. This information can help you refine the types of videos you create and upload based on popularity, engagement and demographics.



Views

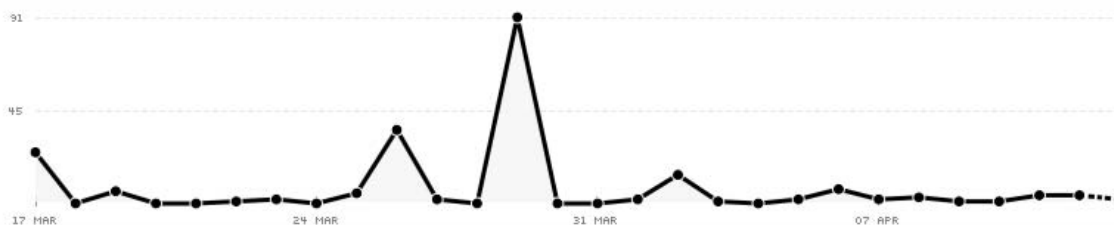
How many views are my videos getting?



FLICKR STATS

Flickr Stats provides insight on the way people are finding your photos. Only pro account holders can view Stats, but the membership is extremely affordable (only \$24.95 for a year or \$47.99 for two years, at time of print). If you plan to include Flickr in your social media program, we recommend that you cough up the bit of dough.

Daily aggregate views on your account



Flickr Stas provides a daily aggregate view, view counts, most viewed photos of the current and previous days, referrers from the current and previous days and breakdown of photos that are public/private, tagged, in sets and more.


Study the view counts and most viewed photos to learn which are the most popular. If candid shots from company events are getting the most views, consider adding more. If photos of new products are the most popular, add more of these. You get the idea. Also, review the breakdown of tagged photos to ensure you're optimizing as many as possible.



Miscellaneous Tools and Services

There are a million and one other tools and services out there for keeping track of your social networks and measuring results. It's hard to know which are the best. Here's a short list of some that we find to be the most useful and interesting:

HOW SOCIABLE

 [HowSociable](#) is a free service that provides an arbitrary social visibility score for various keywords. One-time measurement is useless; however, continued monitoring over time could reveal improvement or weakening.

KNOWEM?

 [Knowem?](#) lets you check to see if your brand terms have been registered on numerous social networks, allowing you to snag your names while you can. Free service provides results from 300+ networks.

COPERNIC



[Copernic](#) monitors updates made to websites, not just blogs. Good method for keeping tabs on competitors and other related businesses.

COMBO



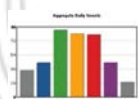
[Combo](#) is an all-in-one platform allowing you to publish to multiple social networks and microsites at once, manage campaigns from one interface and learn about fans/followers using realtime social media analytics.

YAHOO! PIPES



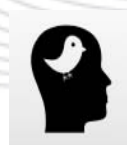
[Yahoo! Pipes](#) aggregates and mashes up content from around the web, among other functions. Select the keywords, sources and other variables to mash up into your own branded Pipe.

TWEETSTATS



[TweetStats](#) creates graphical representations of tweets for individual profiles. Graph by tweets per hour, tweets per month, tweet timeline or reply statistics.

TWEETPSYCH



[TweetPsych](#) provides a psychological analysis of Twitter users. You can only analyze one account at a time for very generalized results, but it's pretty amusing, nonetheless.



Companies to Watch



Zappos is one of the first companies to really find a corporate use for Twitter. Zappos uses Twitter for communicating with their customers about their mutual love of footwear and addresses customer service issues. Follow them here: <http://twitter.com/zappos>



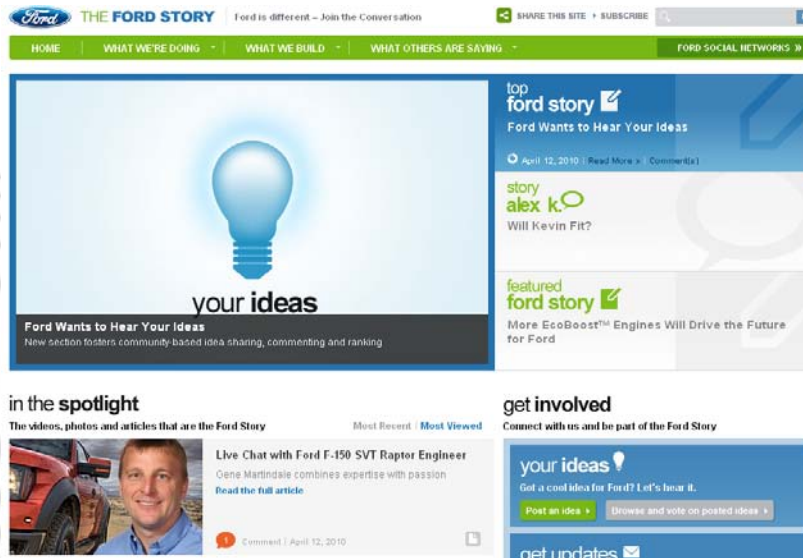
[Nuts about Southwest](#) is a blog written and managed by Southwest employees. Employees share their experiences and provide a sort of “inside look” into the workings of Southwest Airlines. There is very little marketing speak, just honest and candid stories from the people that make up Southwest.





Ford created a custom social media community, [The Ford Story](#), where customers can share their stories and submit ideas, learn more about what makes Ford different, live chat with Ford employees and more. Reading through some of the comments on customer-submitted articles, you'll see some less-than-positive responses; Ford doesn't immediately remove every negative statement. While they take each one seriously and address them

offline, the comments remain to show transparency, confidence in their products and loyalty to customers.



Dell, after being the brunt of online complaints for years, successfully bounced back to become one of the shining stars in social media. Dell uses a number of social media platform to engage with customers and respond to support questions and concerns. Dell also created a unique 3-D virtual world, called [Second Life](#), where users can create avatars and live out their dream lives.





Gaiam, a lifestyle company with products for a healthy mind, body, home and planet, has done a fabulous job of turning their Facebook Page into a unique fan community. When you first visit [Gaiam's Page](#), you are taken to a custom welcome tab that provides reasons for getting involved in the conversation and links to other sites and offers from the company. Additionally, they have a newsletter signup tab, special offers tab and other unique FBML boxes.

Gaiam [Become a Fan](#)

Wall Info Welcome Newsletter Special Offers Photos >>

We make products for a healthy mind, body, home and planet. Post on our wall and get quick answers to your questions and comments. Connect with us and get updates on our latest products, contests and deals!

join the conversation!
Become A Fan

Articles, blog posts and videos on healthy living | Sign up for e-mails — you could win a \$500 spree! | Exclusive deals + special offers for Facebook fans | Check out Gaiam photos and upload your own!



[Einstein Bros Bagels](#) has taken advantage of the freedom afforded through FBML to create unique fliers and informational banners for their Fan page. They offer special coupons and discounts to their fans, and they created a custom store locator tool and menu for the Page.

Einstein Bros Bagels [Become a Fan](#)

Wall Info Offers Locator Menu Catering >>

FIND AN EINSTEIN BROS.®
LOCATION NEAR You

City State
or
Zip Code **Go**



The Big Picture

Social media can be a fun strategy that drives return, but don't let the daily tasks and marketing numbers blind you from the big picture. Every once in awhile take a step back to remember what social media's main objectives can and should be:

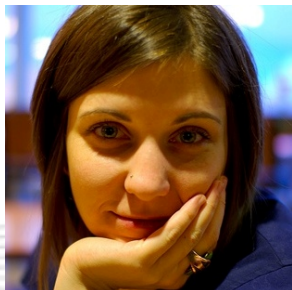
- to better understand your customers' needs and desires
- to develop a more positive business-customer rapport
- to create loyal, gregarious "brand ambassadors"
- to improve upon your products or services, and better your business as a whole

Through social media, you can learn things from customers that they'd never say to your face. Through social media, you can share information and converse with the public like never before. Through social media, you can make changes that will positively affect the quality of your offering and the lifespan of your business.

If you've got dirty laundry—shady practices, cheap products, paid favors—you should forgo social media until you clean it, fold it and neatly put it away in drawers. However, if your offering is high quality, your staff is attentive and your practices sound, you should have nothing to worry about. And if you are one of those companies that are truly concerned about their customers—not those just out to make millions no matter who they offend or inconvenience along the way—you're more likely to succeed in the long run. So don't be afraid to get involved with social media. Just know your goals, know your audience, have fun and don't be surprised if you discover a whole new side of your business!



About the Author



As communications manager, Angie Pascale oversees internal communications for Location3 Media, and social media programs for Location3's clients. This dual role involves a number of responsibilities, including public and social media relations, copywriting and editing, philanthropic endeavors and strategic planning of social media programs and conversations. Regardless of the medium—ink, pixels, smoke signals or spoken words—she draws on a creative understanding of the English language to generate awareness for Location3 Media and its clients.

Prior to joining Location3 in 2006, Angie was an account executive at Marich Communications, a literary, entertainment and consumer products publicity firm based in Los Angeles. Angie played an active role in founding the Colorado chapter of SEMPO, and is currently the social media committee head for NDAC. She graduated from Penn State University with a bachelor's degree in English.

About Location3 Media

Location3 Media (www.Location3.com) is an interactive marketing agency with emphases on search marketing, social media and creative services. For over a decade, Location3 Media and its division, Local Search Traffic, have been helping clients to increase conversions, drive additional traffic and improve user experience through integrated interactive programs.

Our knowledgeable, experienced staff don't just work for the weekends—we truly geek out on this stuff. We're passionate about search, social and creative marketing and it shows in the innovative strategies we use and the results we get for you.

