

Why Social Media Marketing?

10 reasons to take your marketing to the next level

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By now, you've probably heard everyone talking about social media marketing.

Everything is Facebook this, Twitter that, Foursquare check-in, Yelp reviews, and so on. You may know the basics about which social media networks are which, and what's notable about them, but do you know why you should be actively participating in social media marketing?

Quite simply, because it works. In Constant Contact's Spring 2011 Attitudes and Outlooks Survey, 95% of small business owners said that not only were they using Facebook, but 82% of those people found it effective. Perhaps that's why, in that same survey, 81% of those currently using social media marketing to connect with customers, members, and prospects, said they expect to increase their efforts in the coming year.

Whether you're looking to find new customers or are looking to engage more with your existing ones, here are 10 other reasons why you should dip your foot into the social media marketing waters comfortably.



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Why Social Media Marketing?

1

Social media extends you, your brand, and your relationship with your customers.

The two goals of marketing are to find new customers and to stay top of mind with your existing customers. You use email marketing to reach your existing customers' inboxes, and you can use the reach of social media sites to extend your presence into other interactive areas of the web where your customers and members gather with their friends, family, coworkers, and peers.

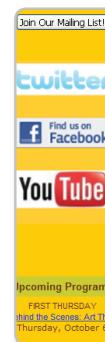
Think of it this way: When one of your customers or members shares a piece of your content (e.g., an issue of your newsletter, a blog post, or an event check-in), or talks about you on a social media site, he's offering his endorsement of what you do and sharing you with his network — without you having to lift a finger or spend any additional money. This introduces you to many more people than you're currently connected to, and could bring new business, members, or donations your way. In fact, according to HubSpot, businesses that use Twitter average two-times more leads per month than those that do not use the service.

2

Social media marketing sites are popular.

Facebook alone has more than 750 million users. (To put that in perspective: That's about 440 million more people than the population of the United States.) In addition, Twitter claims 200 million registered users, LinkedIn has more than 100 million users, Google+ has 20 million users, 50 million people use Yelp, and Foursquare claims it has 10 million users worldwide (and growing). Point is, chances are good that many of your customers and members, or the people you want to reach, are using at least one social media site.

Use email marketing to reach existing customers' inboxes, and social media to extend your reach.



Tweet about Art!

Dear Currier Members,

We hope you are excited about [The Secret Life of Art](#) exhibition opening tonight. If you have responded that you will be joining us for tonight's members only preview, we look forward to seeing you for a great night of art and intrigue!

Those of you who follow the Currier on [Twitter](#) and [Facebook](#) know that we recently launched a blog with behind-the-scenes information about the show. We would also like to invite those of you who are on Twitter to "Tweet" live from the exhibition, using the hashtag [#curriertasla](#). *The Secret Life of Art* exhibition is intended to be an interactive experience for visitors and we want to hear from you before, during or after the show!

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Social media isn't just for college kids.

One major stereotype associated with social media is that it's only for young folks. This is not true at all. In fact, according to a 2011 study conducted by IBM, Baby Boomers have demonstrated the most growth on social media sites. In 2010, 72% were using Facebook, Twitter, and other networks — up from 50% in 2009.

4

Social media users are active.

Facebook says that half of its users log in on any given day, and that users spend more than 500 billion minutes on the site each month. In addition, more than 700 billion pieces of content (web links, blog posts, photos, videos, etc.) are shared each month on Facebook. Similarly, Twitter claims that its users post 350 billion tweets every day. Yes, some people join social media sites just to listen and observe, but most do it to engage, converse, and participate.

5

Social media provides instant feedback.

Active users means you're going to get your customers' and members' opinions (positive and negative) about everything — your products, your services, your employees, your events, and more. This will give you important real-time information to make changes or adjustments, or to put a bigger spotlight on things that are working. And, you can use social media to detect trends and then take a deeper dive with an online survey.

LinkedIn has more than 100 million users.

You don't have to be at your computer to "check in" on social media sites.

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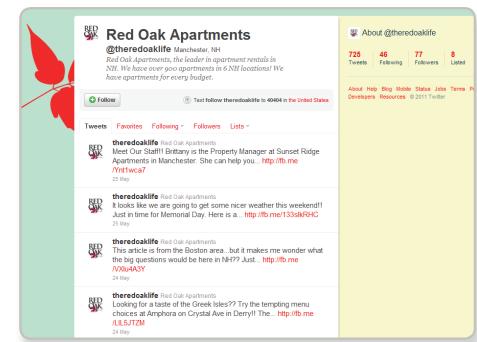
6

Social media encourages two-way communication.

As hard as we try to make it more interactive, email on its own is a one-way communication channel. On the other hand, sites like Twitter and Facebook allow you to more easily have a “conversation” (albeit a public one) with your customers and members. You can see what they’re saying about you and you can respond, and vice versa. Using tools like Twitter Search (<http://search.twitter.com>), you can quickly see any mentions of your business, organization, product, or service, or you can look up key terms related to your business or organization and find out what people are saying about them. Even better: Tools like NutshellMail (<http://www.nutshellmail.com>) allow you to have all that’s being said about you sent right to your inbox, and you can respond right there.

Speaking of which, responding on social media is simple. For example, with Twitter, you don’t even have to be following someone or connected to him to post a response. If something relevant comes up in your search results or in a NutshellMail email, you can respond by mentioning the person’s handle (i.e., his username preceded by the @ symbol) in a tweet. On Facebook, if someone posts a comment on your Page, you can respond right there on the same item. (Of course, sometimes it’s better to respond privately. Use your judgment to decide what’s appropriate for your situation.)

There are real benefits to responding, too. According to a 2011 InboxQ survey, almost 60% of respondents said they would be more likely to follow a business that answered them on Twitter, and 64% said they would be more likely to purchase from that business.



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On Facebook, you can have an account for personal use and one for your business or organization.



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The sites can share a lot about you.

Profiles on these sites can help boost awareness about your business or organization as they can contain pertinent information about your products and services. Think of them as dynamic yellow pages for the digital age. Much of your activity and profiles on social media sites can be made “public,” meaning they can be indexed by search engines — one more way to make sure your business or organization comes up as the answer when someone is searching for a solution to a problem.

8

Social media marketing sites are free.

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Foursquare, Yelp, and other sites all offer free accounts for businesses and organizations. You can even blog for free with services like [Wordpress.com](#) or [Google's Blogger.com](#). Some sites — like LinkedIn — do offer paid accounts with features that are targeted at more advanced users, but for the purposes of getting started, there's no upfront cost for most of the social networking sites.

9

Social media sites allow you to be personal and professional.

On Facebook, you can have two identities: one for you and one for your business or organization. Facebook offers an option known as Pages, which are different from the standard Friend connections, and allow you to post messages just to people who “Like” your business or organization, keeping any personal information about you separate and contained to your profile.

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Social media is everywhere.

You don't have to be at your computer to post to any of the major social media networks — in fact, quite often you don't even have to be on a social media network at the time to post to one of them. For instance, you can post to your Twitter feed via a simple text message, or to Facebook by sending an email. If your site has a Like or Tweet button on it, all a reader has to do is click that and a link will show up in his newsfeed or Twitter stream. If you have a smartphone like an iPhone, Blackberry, or Windows Mobile device, there are applications that let you update your social networking sites on the go.

You can go beyond text too: Your mobile phone's camera can be used to capture images and video, which can be uploaded to your blog and social media accounts right then and there, giving customers a richer (and real-time) media experience. Many of the popular blog platforms also allow posting from a mobile device.

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Why Social Media Marketing?

These are just 10 of the many reasons why social media marketing is worthwhile.

Try it for yourself by signing up for an account on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, or by claiming your business on Yelp, Foursquare, or other sites. You have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Even if you don't plan to use any or all of the sites right away, they're great places to experiment with different marketing tactics.

And of course, sign up for a [NutshellMail](#) account so you can monitor the activity taking place on those sites, right from your email inbox.

Also, be sure to check out our social media resource center at <http://www.constantcontact.com/socialmedia> for more hints and tips about effective social media marketing. We are staying on top of the best practices and sharing them with you all the time.

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