

# Intro to Social Media



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# Preface

This book is aimed at managers, business owners, marketing managers, and aspiring social media marketing interns and managers. I will assume that however accomplished in your own field – baker, developer, teacher and that even as successful business owners, you approach the topic of social media marketing as a beginner. Even if you are a digital native, or an avid personal user of social networks, we will treat this book as a guided tour of social media for marketing purposes.

While this is a textbook, it is not meant to read like a traditional textbook, especially on a topic that is rooted in digital to an audience who, let's be honest, doesn't really like to read. No shade. I too would rather watch a YouTube video on how to fix a problem with my laptop than read the manual.

Like many of my Generation X peers, I began using forums and chat rooms in the early 1990's and have watched social networks come and go (AOL and Yahoo chat rooms, Friendster, Myspace) – To those not inclined to spend countless hours online over the past couple of decades, it may seem as if things change too often.

For others, particularly those born into the technology, aka digital natives, social networks as with most technology, are second nature to you, but not having work experience may leave you perplexed as to what your boss/ client / customers really want from you as a social media manager.

If you fall within either one of these audiences, this book is for you. I will do my best to help you sort out a basic understanding of the why of social media as a marketing tool for business, for personal brand building, and perhaps more importantly, where to find supporting information and research to help you design, monitor, test, and re-define a social media marketing strategy.

If you are utilizing this book as an instructor or are considering using this book as an instructor, first of all, *Thank you very much!* Here, you will find the instruction plan and a practical way of teaching students how the principles of marketing work. We will also explore the principles for each prominent social website. Also, the exercises with every chapter will give students a better chance at understanding these concepts as well.

To sum it up, the target audience for the book is a person who is interested in social media marketing for brand building.

## **PLAN OF THE BOOK**

PART 1 – we'll discuss the origins of marketing principles. A definition of marketing and

how many of the concepts that have been around for ages are the same as what we do today in social media marketing. Part 1 answers the question, “what is marketing?” and we’ll begin to explore marketing strategies for the modern age. We’ll touch on the basics principles of marketing and a bit of the psychology of as a way to introduce concepts that hopefully won’t be so foreign to you as we dive deeper into the nature of social networks.

PART 2 – we’ll get into more of what social media marketers know and how it fits within a marketing strategy. We’ll talk about social networks in a way that no matter what networks are present and popular when you read this book, you’ll have an understanding of how you can create content, engage with your customers, and grow your brand.



# Open Education at Oklahoma State University

*Introduction to Social Media* is an Open Educational Resource (OER). This means the book is free (It was a good joke, right?). When Dr. Joshua Daniel became Director of First Year Composition in June of 2020, one of the first things he did was survey instructors and students to learn what they thought of the program. At that time, the program had two commercial textbooks students were required to purchase, and they were in negotiations with another textbook company to add a third. Many things became clear when he talked to students and instructors, but two points are relevant here: 1) instructors hated using the textbooks; 2) students hated the textbooks and generally did not do the reading. Dr. Daniel didn't think that is because instructors or students are lazy; he thought it was because commercial textbooks generally aren't very good. The reason for this is they, as products that need to be marketed and sold for profit, need to be as applicable as possible in as many contexts as possible. In other words, the textbooks the program was using stood the best chance of being profitable if they were equally as useful at OSU as they would be at OU, or UC Davis, or NYU. See the problem? Even though many commercial textbooks are quite good, by being applicable in so many contexts, they are never as good as they could be in any specific context. This book was built by and for the instructor of this course, an entrepreneur and practicing professional in her field. Moreover, when we find problems, we get to update it as you go (none of that, "Do I have to purchase the third edition, or can I get by with the second edition?").

So that's a reason to embrace Open Education: the textbooks are better. Here is another. Education is both a right for every human being and a responsibility for every democratic nation. Speaking as a 90's child now staggered by student loan debt, Joshua Daniel comments with certainty you are already paying more than enough for your education, and textbooks for your courses, when possible, should not add to that burden. All told, if you calculate the three textbooks previously in use for the first year composition program, students were spending just under half a million dollars per academic year on commercial textbooks. This for textbooks that instructors hated and students did not read. Not the best investment, at least not for us. Dr. Daniel believes all of you have a right to pursue education as far as you wish, and a small way we can help enable that is to remove as many barriers to entry as possible. Dr. Daniel was a first-generation college student. He grew

up on a farm in Mississippi. Both of his parents had to drop out of high school for work, and none of his siblings were able to pursue higher education. When he arrived at my first undergraduate institution (he bounced around quite a few before he managed to graduate) he was lost and straight up broke. He dropped more than one course simply because he could not afford the textbooks. Many of your instructors have similar stories to this. For this reason as well as others, the instructor of this course is committed to removing the cost of commercial textbooks as a barrier to your education.

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# Accessibility Statement

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## Accessibility features of the web version of this resource

The web version of *Who Teaches Writing* has been designed with accessibility in mind. It is our goal to optimize the resource for people using screen-reader technology. Content should be navigable using a keyboard, and links, headings, and tables should be formatted to work with screen readers. All images considered essential include alt-tags. Information is not conveyed by color alone, and there is an option to increase font size. (See tab on top right of screen titled, “Increase Font Size.”)

- It has been optimized for people who use screen-reader technology.
  - all content can be navigated using a keyboard.
  - links, headings, and tables are formatted to work with screen readers.
- All images in this guide are screenshots that are considered non-essential as they are described fully in the text. As such, they do not include alt tags.
- Information is not conveyed by color alone.
- There is an option to increase font size. (See tab on top right of screen titled, “Increase Font Size.”)

## Other file formats available

In addition to the web version, this book is available in a number of file formats including print PDF, EPUB (for eReaders), digital PDF and various editable files. Here is a link to

where you can download this book in another file format. Look for the Download this book drop-down menu to select the file type you want.

## Known accessibility issues and areas for improvement

While we strive to ensure that this resource is as accessible and usable as possible, we might not always get it right. Any issues we identify will be listed below. There are currently no known issues.

### List of Known Accessibility Issues

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Location of Issue	Need for Improvement	Timeline	Work Around
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## Accessibility standards

The web version of this resource has been designed to meet Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 2.0, level AA. In addition, it attempts to follow all guidelines in Appendix A: Checklist for Accessibility of the *Accessibility Toolkit – 2nd Edition*.

## Let us know if you are having problems accessing this guide

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Please include the following information:

- The location of the problem by providing a web address or page description

- A description of the problem
- The computer, software, browser, and any assistive technology you are using that can help us diagnose and solve your issue
  - e.g., Windows 10, Google Chrome (Version 65.0.3325.181), NVDA screen reader

You can contact us by completing this web form or by sending an email to [kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu](mailto:kathy.essmiller@okstate.edu).

**This statement was last updated on June 23, 2022, by Kathy Essmiller.**

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# PART I: MARKETING PRINCIPLES





# Marketing in the Age of COVID-19

If 2020 taught us anything, it is that our work lives are no longer about being in a specific location, small businesses are essential businesses, Wi-Fi is a luxury not afforded to so many in our society, and toilet paper is king. But I digress.

As millions of people worked from home, businesses were forced to adapt, the gig economy provided a new way for small businesses and individuals to survive financially. Without a doubt, social media and other digital platforms were better equipped at handling all of our professional and personal needs than most previously realized. You only need to look at companies like Zoom, Instacart, TikTok, and Youtube as examples of how important digital marketing is to all of us.

**Reading:**

**Instacart's Frantic Dash From Grocery App to Essential Service**

**Videoconferencing apps saw a record 62M downloads during one week in March**

## 1.1 What Is Marketing?

The American Marketing Association defines marketing as:

*“The activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large.”*

<https://www.ama.org/the-definition-of-marketing-what-is-marketing/>

This definition sounds pretty vague and general, but one word should stand out to you in this description – **Customers**.

In the well-known marketing Guide, *Principles of Marketing*, the authors Philip Kotler and Gary Armstrong explain marketing in the following ways.

*“Marketing, more than any other business function, deals with customers.”*

*“Marketing is engaging customers and managing profitable customer relationships”*

– *Principles of Marketing*, Northwestern University 13th edition

Their definition may sound a little more familiar to those of you in business. Marketing professionals assist businesses in attracting new customers through superior value proposition as well as achieve customer satisfaction to earn loyalty and build credibility.

It's a prevalent misconception that marketing is all about selling and advertising. Others misinterpret the concept and think that marketing involves promoting products available in display shelves at stores and maintaining inventories of products for future sales. However, the job of a marketer isn't only inventory management and pushing people to purchase their products.

**Reading:**

**What is Marketing**

**Video**



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://open.library.okstate.edu/introtosocialmedia/?p=231#oembed-1>

What is Marketing Today? With Seth Godin

## 1.2 What Is Digital Marketing?

At a high level, digital marketing refers to advertising delivered through digital channels such as search engines, websites, social media, email, and mobile apps. Using these online media channels, digital marketing is the method by which companies endorse goods, services, and brands. Consumers heavily rely on digital means to research products. For example, Think with Google marketing insights found that 48% of consumers start their inquiries on search engines, whereas 33% prefer to consult brand websites and the remaining 26% consumers search within mobile applications.

While modern day digital marketing is an enormous system of channels to which marketers simply must onboard their brands, advertising online is much more complex than the channels alone. In order to achieve the true potential of digital marketing, marketers have to dig deep into today's vast and intricate cross-channel world to discover

strategies that make an impact through engagement marketing. Engagement marketing is the method of forming meaningful interactions with potential and returning customers based on the data you collect over time. By engaging customers in a digital landscape, you build brand awareness, set yourself as an industry thought leader, and place your business at the forefront when the customer is ready to buy.

By implementing an omnichannel digital marketing strategy, marketers can collect valuable insights into target audience behaviors while opening the door to new methods of customer engagement. Additionally, companies can expect to see an increase in retention. According to a report by Invesp, companies with strong omnichannel customer engagement strategies can retain around 89% of their customers as compared to companies with weaker omnichannel programs that have a retention rate of just 33%.

As for the future of digital marketing, we can expect to see a continued increase in the variety of wearable devices available to consumers. Forbes also forecasts that social media will become increasingly conversational in the B2B space, video content will be refined for search engine optimization (SEO) purposes, and email marketing will become even more personalized.

*“Digital is at the core of everything in marketing today—it has gone from ‘one of the things marketing does’ to ‘THE thing that marketing does.’”*

– Sanjay Dholakia, Former Chief Marketing Officer, Marketo

**Reading:**

<https://www.marketo.com/digital-marketing/>

Case

Amazon in 2020

<https://hbsp.harvard.edu/product/514025-PDF-ENG?Ntt=digital+marketing&itemFindingMethod=Search>

# How Many P's are in Marketing Now?

The concept of Marketing Mix is evergreen in the marketing industry. Despite the world moving from traditional to digital marketing, this stays effective and relevant for businesses. Since it's a mixture of four different elements, it's often referred to as 4 P's of Marketing. Neil Borden first came up with the term Marketing Mix. However, it was later popularized by Jerome McCarthy of Notre Dame University who named it "the Four P's of Marketing". He used it first in his marketing guide, "Basic Marketing: A Managerial Approach".

The Father of Marketing, Philip Kotler, highlighted the 4 P's of Marketing in the following manner:

*"Marketing Mix is the set of controllable variables that a firm can use to influence the buyer's response."*

## Product

In simple words, a product is a market offering that solves a problem for consumers. It can be a good, service, or experience and can be tangible as well as intangible.

Businesses invest in products that meet an existing customer need and can earn profits due to their high demand in the market. Traditional businesses opt for product ideas that are well-known to their audience. For instance, a traditional business person may start manufacturing and selling running shoes to athletes. Innovative entrepreneurs, however, have a different mindset.

Such business people turn to innovation and create a need for their products. Uber is a popular example of innovation. They noticed taxi services and came up with a unique idea to facilitate customers. Instead of purchasing vehicles, they developed a platform to connect customers with taxis and generate revenue through commissions. Some other top innovative businesses include Apple, Amazon, Tesla, SAP, The Walt Disney Company, etc.

There are three levels of any product that are as follows:

- **Core Product** – This is the main product that satisfies the fundamental customer need. For example, the core benefit of a car is the ease of traveling
- **Actual Product** – This involves additional design features that add value to customers. For example, car manufacturers design vehicles with appealing interior and exterior body and install heating system, music system, and more features to attract customers
- **Augmented Product** – This refers to the additional features that aren't a part of the actual part but meet the wants and needs of specific audiences. For example, car dealers may offer free or discounted insurance policies to new buyers

## Types of Products

A product can be a good, service, experience, or idea that can be sold or exchanged. It is further divided into two categories: Consumer Products and Industrial Products.

**Consumer Products** are those that are ready for consumption and can meet consumer needs without further processing.

It is termed as Convenience Product when the customer tends to buy it on a frequent basis without spending much time in research. Its example is detergent or dairy products.

Another type of consumer product is Shopping Product that involves higher customer engagement. Customers spend significant time and efforts in learning about the quality, features, and longevity of the product. They may compare multiple brands to shortlist the best product option before making a purchasing decision. Its examples can be gaming devices and microwave ovens.

Specialty Product is another type which includes products focused at specific niche. These are premium quality products that target smaller customer groups and those customers are willing to pay a premium price for the brand. For example, Rolls Royce cars and Rado watches.

The last type of Consumer Products is Unsought Product which has lesser market demand because customers either don't feel the need to purchase them or don't know much about the product. Therefore, marketers have to aggressively promote and advertise them. Common examples of unsought products are funeral insurance, smoke detectors, and cemetery plots.

As the name suggests, **Industrial Products** are those goods that are used by businesses. These can be further categorized into three types.

The first type of industrial products is *Capital Item* which includes items that support buyer's operations. For instance, a plumbing business may purchase wrench, drill, and pliers to install and repair plumbing pipes for their customers.

The second type of industrial products is *Materials and Parts* which refers to raw materials. These products are further processed and usually become a part of a larger product. An example is bottle caps purchased by a pharmaceutical company. These bottle caps are of no value when sold as a stand-alone product and installed on medicine bottles before reselling.

The third category of industrial products is *Supplies and Services*. Its examples are roof repairing service, smartphone repairing service, and operating supplies such as primers for house painters.

## Product Lifecycle

A product usually goes through multiple phases since the idea inception. Businesses must analyze the current standing of their products and come up with relevant strategies to stay ahead of the competition. This PLC has five stages: New Product Development, Introduction, Growth, Maturity, and Decline. This must be noted that not every product experiences all five stages.

*New Product Development* stage is when the business only has a new idea and they need to invest in the idea to develop the product. New product development starts when a stakeholder gets a new idea. This idea is tested to determine whether it would be viable in the market before developing the product. After thorough analysis and testing, the product is made available to customers.

The next stage is *Introduction* and this phase starts immediately after the product is launched. During this time, sales are usually low and businesses focus on increasing awareness.

The third stage is *Growth* when the product starts generating profits and more and more customers get introduced with the brand.

After the growth stage starts the *Maturity* stage. This is when the product attains maximum profits and can't further increase profits or market share. The business can develop appropriate strategies to retain the product in this stage for the longest possible period.

Every product has a limited lifespan and sooner or later, its popularity comes to an end.

This is when the product enters the *Decline* stage. During this phase, sales gradually drop and customers lose interest.

## Price

In a marketing mix, pricing is the amount of money customers need to give up to obtain a product or service. This is one of the most important elements that defines the profitability and sustainability of a company.

## Pricing Strategies

While deciding the right pricing strategy is crucial, many businesses fail to do so. Their prices are either too high or too low since they fail to understand market dynamics. If a product is priced too high, customers are less likely to show interest since they would rather turn to alternative options that offer higher value at lower prices.

On the other hand, if a business sets their prices too low, they may end up losing revenue. If the price doesn't cover the cost, the business would experience huge losses. Furthermore, customers often regard a product to be of low quality if it's priced too low as compared to other similar products. Therefore, it's vital to set the most suitable price for a product.

There are multiple strategies for setting the right price, but we will discuss only the prominent three strategies: value-based pricing, cost-based pricing, and competition-based pricing.

**Customer Value-Based Pricing** strategy relies on customer perception of the product and brand. The higher value customers perceive, the higher will be the price of the product. Marketers that prefer to take this route should evaluate whether or not the product delivers expected benefits to customers to increase sales and earn customer loyalty.

Another common strategy for setting the price of a product or service is known as **Cost-Based Pricing**. This strategy enables a business to set the price of the product by considering different types of costs involved.

If you take a look at costs involved in manufacturing a product, you will notice costs such as Direct Material, Direct Labor, and Factory Overhead Costs.

Direct Material is the cost of raw materials that directly go into manufacturing the final product. Direct Labor includes the expenses of the labor force that directly engages in the manufacturing process of the said product. Lastly, Factory Overhead Costs covers all other expenses that aren't a part of direct material and labor costs. This may be supervisor salary, utility bills, security guard wages, etc.

Apart from these categories, Cost can be categorized into two types based on its behavior. These are Fixed Cost and Variable Cost.

The former stays the same regardless of the level of production. Let's take the example of a magazine facility. Regardless of how many magazines are printed by the publisher, certain costs would stay the same such as rent of the facility and depreciation of machinery.

The latter cost, however, increases or decreases with production. The more units of products are manufactured, the higher will be the variable cost. In the above-mentioned the magazine facility example, the cost of paper is variable. The more magazines are printed, the higher amount of pages would be needed that will automatically increase the price.

**Competition-Based Pricing** refers to the pricing strategy in which a company decides to set product prices by analyzing the prices set by competitors for similar products. However, it's important for the company to compare features, benefits, costs, and perceived value before adopting this strategy.

## New Product Pricing

When it comes to deciding the price of a new product, there are two different ways to do so: market-skimming and market penetration. The key to setting suitable prices for new products is to understand the market and customers.

During the product introduction phase, the company focuses on building awareness. They may opt for Market Penetration Strategy to propagate the product in the market. This strategy works best if the product is intended for the mass market. Lower pricing gives such brands a competitive advantage and they can achieve customer attention through reduced pricing.

The other option for selecting a price for a new product is market penetration. This



means a business sets premium prices for products instead of taking the low-pricing route.

This strategy is ideal when the product is innovative and can change the lives of customers for the better. First movers may benefit from this strategy and earn high profit margins. Furthermore, market skimming also works when a product targets a niche market that agrees to pay premium pricing due to brand image or quality.

## Place

Also referred to as placement or distribution, Place is a fundamental element of marketing mix. It is the process of strategically delivering a product to places where customers can easily find and purchase it. Marketers need to ensure that the product is readily available to customers at the place of their choice. Even the highest quality products can fail if they aren't available to customers when needed.

For instance, a customer may visit a superstore to purchase kids' diapers. They may look for diapers by ABC brand, but if the product isn't available, they would end up purchasing another brand. If the new product meets their needs, they are likely to stick with it. As a result, ABC would lose loyal customers.

It's rightly said that "Out of sight, out of mind". This proverb perfectly explains the distribution concept. Ineffective channel distribution hurts businesses like nothing else. Products that aren't delivered to customers on time lead to customer dissatisfaction, ruin brand reputation, and cause inventory management problems.

## Distribution Channels: What Are the Options?

Distribution channels or marketing channels describe the methods through which a manufacturer makes the product available to potential customers. A manufacturer has two major options to achieve this goal. They can either distribute the product on their own and keep this function in their hands or involve as many intermediaries as needed.

The first option is **Direct Distribution** in which the company hires staff and sets up operations in the geographical areas of its target audience. This approach enables customers to purchase the product directly from the manufacturer. While significant

investment is required to initially establish a network, this approach can reduce on-going channel management costs since the company directly sells its products to consumers. A common example of this case is Dell Computers.

Direct distribution is suitable for businesses that have sufficient resources and a strong network. It's also important to understand the needs of the local market to best meet customer needs. Otherwise, the decision may backfire and the business would incur huge losses.

The other option is **Indirect Distribution** where a business involves third-parties to make its products available to target customers. Businesses can benefit from the expertise, network, and local experience of distributors. Furthermore, these distribution networks can also help a business expand its customer base and find suitable vendors.

Before making the decision to outsource distribution management, a business should understand its risks too. While this decision saves businesses from the cost and efforts of creating a distribution network, it decreases your control over place-related decisions. Moreover, manufacturers and intermediaries sometimes get into conflict which may negatively affect the performance of the distribution channel.

Now, let's take a look at some prominent intermediaries that can be part of a distribution channel.

*Wholesalers Intermediaries* purchase products in bulk and usually sell them to retailers or other businesses at lower rates. Since they purchase the product in higher volumes, they benefit from the **scale of economies** concept and get reduced pricing from the manufacturer.

*Retailer Intermediaries* may purchase the product from the manufacturer or another intermediary to sell the product to consumers. Nowadays, retailers are turning to digital platforms, including social media to facilitate customers in purchasing the items they need from the comfort of their home.

Aside from distributors, wholesalers, and retailers, a business may consider hiring independent facilitating agencies to outsource specific tasks. These agencies can be logistics and warehousing providers, order fulfillment agencies, advertising agencies, financial agencies, and insurance firms.

The keynote in this section is that not every business engages all types of intermediaries. They may acquire the services of certain third-party businesses as per their needs. When the business grows, they may consider setting up an in-house distribution department and eliminating these intermediaries through vertical integration.

# Promotion

Promotion refers to activities that are helpful in selling a product. These activities are important to familiarize customers with the brand. Regardless of how good a product is, the brand won't be able to achieve sales goals if target customers aren't aware of its existence.

Many people confuse promotion with advertising. However, advertising is only a small component of this entire process. The business may start promotional activities even before the product enters the introduction phase. They may create the hype to raise brand awareness and encourage the audience to give it a try.

The purpose of promotion is to increase awareness and generate sales and leads. It's a must to set appropriate KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) to determine whether the activities are proving fruitful. Based on these KPIs, the business can evaluate its performance and review promotion strategies accordingly.

Some of these KPIs can include:

- Customer Acquisition Cost
- Marketing Qualified Lead
- Sales Qualified Lead
- Customer's Lifetime Value
- Website visits
- Marketing ROI

## *Exercise:*

Harvard Business Publishing Education

## *Reading:*

The Marketing Mix – Is It Still Relevant Today? – Business 2 Community



# Social Media Marketing. A Brief History

Social media is one of those phrases that many people think they should know because it involves the word “social”. After all, people are social beings and can’t survive without interaction.

Today’s kids spend most of their time indoors, playing video games or lying around. This is why mothers encourage kids to go outside and be social. Being social is human nature and a desirable thing.

The next important word in social media is “Media” and it refers to the methods of communication information. From news channels to newspapers, these mediums have a huge influence on society and help people stay up-to-date with the latest information. These organizations capture the attention through compelling storytelling and captivating images.

There has always been a strong relationship between businesses and traditional media. Media has always been good at gathering people to read, watch, or listen to something of interest. From young kids to retired people, they have something for everyone. Knowing this, businesses run ads on print and digital media to cash in on this interest and convince people to buy their products. This is a norm in the business world and it’s normal for a business to attempt to influence consumer behavior through lucrative advertisement.

Back in the day, neighbors would meet each other in the street and co-worker would meet and chat at the water cooler to discuss the latest news and trends. Sometimes the conversation was about life and death and sometimes it was simply about a discount at a local store. Regardless of the discussion topic, people would communicate. Modern technology hasn’t eliminated the need to meet at the water cooler. Instead, technology made it easier to share information with family, friends, and colleagues.

It has turned every person into a market maven. For example, you can capture a robbery at a local auto dealer on your smartphone camera and send it to your local TV station within seconds, or you can snap a few shots of a new hybrid vehicle at the showroom and send it to your brother who’s trying to reduce his carbon footprint.

## Social Marketing Is Not New

The reason why many marketers struggle with gaining expertise in social media marketing is that they consider it a new and foreign method of marketing. However, social networking isn't something new. It has always been present in society in one way or another. The only difference between modern and traditional social marketing is technology.

Back in the day, people used to throw parties on New Year Eve or other special occasions. Such events are still held today, but none of them can match parties arranged by Malcolm Forbes, the well-known entrepreneur and the publisher of Forbes Magazine. His 70th birthday party, held in August 1989 created a buzz with its exotic theme, extraordinary arrangements, and the list of famous guests who joined him on his birthday.

The purpose of social gatherings is to celebrate accomplishments as well as meet new people and make friends. You can meet people you may or may not know, get to know them, share thoughts with each other, and make lasting relationships that can come handy in the future. Now compare this with modern social media platforms. Don't they serve the same purpose?

Networking events don't only revolve around business meetings. These conferences have always been family events where business people attended meetings and then enjoyed dinners and games of golf with their spouses. These activities make conferences enjoyable and give entrepreneurs a chance to meet like-minded people in an informal setting.

By critically analyzing social platforms, we can reach the conclusion that social media is like a cocktail party. At these parties, people enjoy themselves, make connections, and often discuss business ideas. It's not uncommon to find people who are interested in your idea and set up a partnership startup with their help.

## Social Marketing: Modern Times

In the book *Social Network Analysis: Methods and Examples*, Song Yang and two other co-authors verified the claim that the concept of social marketing is not new in the following words:

“Social networks have been a defining feature of society.”

In the modern times, brands such as Mary Kay and Avon are known for promoting networking. With their multi-level marketing schemes, they encourage customers to refer new customers and earn a commission on every sale. These people then held events and invited over people they knew. This way, they could get in touch with their network to promote these products. These strategies work on the principles of networking and social marketing around the community. These days, people mostly use digital platforms to find referrals.

This concept has always been a part of business marketing. Many of you must be familiar with conferences held at huge Conference Centers. I remember when distributors in the automotive industry used to have full house dealer conferences in Las Vegas, Nashville, Chicago, and other big cities. At these conferences, automotive dealers and enthusiasts can preview the latest models. These days, car shows like Back to the 50's Car Show, Goodwill Festival of Speed, and SEMA Show are all the rage.

Another modern example is the annual TechCrunch Disrupt conference held in cities across North America and Europe. At these technology events, IT startups and professionals can meet new faces, learn from experiences of others, and build business connections. These events support marketing activities and promote brands like nothing else.

## Social Media for Business

Not many people realize that social channels can offer unprecedented business opportunities. People prefer to conduct business with people they trust and with whom they share a social experience.

For instance, when a person skydives, the memory stays with them and they enjoy sharing it in social gatherings. If another person accompanied them to the activity, they would excitedly recall the skydiving experience whenever they meet them. This creates a bonding between strangers. Similarly, it's normal for a person to reminisce about the memories of shared experiences with people they know.

The gist of this discussion isn't a new concept. It's rather a new source of sharing experiences. Take the example of a conversation on a Facebook group. The group members share social experiences by sharing posts and posting comments on content. They may later discuss that particular conversation in an online or in-person setting. This conversation is likely to lead to a discussion about potential business opportunities.

Regardless of the platform you use, social marketing thrives on shared experiences. Social media users share experiences in several ways. They may follow each other on Twitter, Instagram, and TikTok or subscribe to YouTube channels to become a part of their experiences.

While many social websites can be found in the digital world, the following 10 sites are extremely useful for businesses:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Twitter
- TikTok
- Pinterest
- Yelp
- LinkedIn
- WhatsApp
- Snapchat

On Facebook, businesses can set up pages or groups to stay in touch with followers. Instagram, Pinterest, and Snapchat are also trending because visual content usually attracts internet users the most. The same goes for YouTube where more than 5 billion videos are watched per day. LinkedIn is mainly a professional platform and it works best for attracting corporate audiences.

One of the major benefits of social media is that businesses can build global followership. They can interact with followers through posts, live videos, and messages. Moreover, they can also target the right market segment on the basis of their interests or geographical location. For instance, Instagram and Snapchat are more popular among teenagers and youngsters. Businesses that intend to reach the younger audience can get active on these platforms to get desired results.

Social media aids businesses in raising brand awareness at a fraction of the cost as compared to other marketing methods. Engaging content can be posted such as text posts, videos, images, and polls to gain attention. If the content is valuable and attracts followers, they would share it on their social profiles and become brand promoters. Therefore, it's a must for businesses to build a social media strategy.

Despite the various benefits of social media, not many business owners are able to fully utilize these platforms. However, the following tips can help them stand out:



## Shortlist the Most Suitable Platforms

It doesn't make sense to set up a profile on every popular social media platform. Not only does it waste time, but also tampers with the efficiency and makes it difficult to stay connected with the audience.

It is rather a better idea to choose platforms where the target audience is present. By staying active on social sites where the ideal audience is present, companies can build a community and become a well-known name in the industry.

## Visual Content Is Important

The more engaging the social media posts, the better will be the performance. To attract followers, a brand ought to add visual content in social media posts. This may include video clips, images, and GIFS. Moreover, brands can also ask questions from followers to encourage interaction.

## Social Media Contests

Another effective way to drive engagement is to host competitions on social sites. A brand may ask followers to share a post with as many people as they can. The person who invites the most social users to the page can be offered a gift hamper or discount vouchers.

## Try Social Media Ads

Social media sites enable businesspeople to promote their brand and products through unpaid posts. But they can also turn to paid advertisement to attract targeted followers and increase engagement in a shorter span of time. Aside from regularly posting updates, brands must also run ads on Facebook and other social sites to generate leads and boost revenue.

*Exercise:*

Harvard Business Publishing Education

Harvard Business Publishing Education

Harvard Business Publishing Education

# What Business Are You Even In?

Do you aim to become a successful marketer and build brands? Then before you begin the journey, ask yourself a simple question. *What business am I in?*

I know the question may seem quite strange to your ears, but let me explain. The reason why many marketers fail to achieve their goals is because they lack industry knowledge. You need to have a strong grasp on current industry and market trends to come up with an effective marketing plan.

Whether you want to develop a marketing plan for your own startup or intend to develop a plan for a client, you need to have clear goals. Before proceeding, find the answers to the following questions. Trust me, social media marketing will get much easier for you.

- What is the purpose of the business?
- Am I selling a product or a service?
- Why do I want to run a social marketing campaign?
- Which resources are available for marketing?
- Should I use traditional marketing along with social media marketing?

Picture this scenario.

You run a small business and offer services to customers, let's say web development services. You recently learned about the benefits of digital marketing and chose Facebook platform to promote services and gain clients. Before thinking anything else, you jump onto the platform and invest money in running ads. But the efforts go in vain when you notice the investment didn't generate sufficient ROI.

So, why did the social marketing campaign fail despite the investment of huge resources?

The answer is simple. There was no effective plan to make the campaign fruitful. This is why it's important to be clear about your industry and goals before taking action.

## Know Your Business

It's easy to start a business. You have to choose a product that not only attracts you, but also has a market demand. Then you need to come up with a business plan and gather sufficient resources and bam! You are ready to become an entrepreneur. But is it enough to survive in today's competitive market?

Every entrepreneur strives to make their business a success. While it's no piece of cake, you can achieve this goal through an effective plan.

The first step is to understand every aspect of our business. From suppliers, to customers, market trends, legalities, and marketing avenues, you ought to understand how your business works. You can make better decisions if you know your business well. Let's have a look at certain aspects of business marketing that are crucial for every business.

## Know Your Customers

A business cannot survive without customers. Whether you specialize in selling products or services, you need to offer products that solve specific problems of customers. When they purchase these solutions, your business will earn revenue that is crucial for supporting operations.

Therefore, you need to know who your ideal customers are. When you know their lifestyle, preferences, and interests, and demographics, you can better promote products.

From market segmentation to developing buyer persona, there are several strategies to identify ideal customers. We will discuss these strategies in more depth in the 6th chapter.

## Customer Relationship

Customers are the vital stakeholders for your business and you can't ignore them. When you understand who your customers are, you can offer products or services that meet their needs. With the help of top-notch customer service and quality products, it's possible to gain their trust and build lasting relationships.

Marketing isn't only about aggressively advertising your products and forcing customers to give them a try. What's more important is to focus on building relationships. Most customers prefer purchasing brands they trust.

Take the example of a salesperson in a hardware shop. When a customer wants to buy a product, the salesperson can earn their trust by guiding them about which brand or product would be suitable for their needs. Knowing that the business cares about customers, they would return to the shop whenever they need hardware supplies.

The modern social media marketing isn't much different. Through your social media page, you can interact with customers to answer their queries and share valuable information. When they start trusting you, they become loyal customers. They may also become brand promoters by recommending your business to their social circle.

## Customer Engagement

The term customer engagement is often associated with social marketing, but it has been a part of marketing for ages.

Brick and mortar stores used to keep customers engaged through personal interactions. For instance, a small business owner would talk to in-store customers to ask for their opinion about products. They would conduct surveys and short interviews to understand their problems and further improve quality. Suggestion boxes have always been present in stores so customers could share their suggestions.

The concept of customer engagement is still the same, but social marketing has made it easier for businesses to increase engagement. They can set up social media profiles and post informational content to educate customers.

Social platforms facilitate customers to interact with a brand through private messages or comments on posts. They can easily share their suggestions and ideas as well as the issues they faced when interacting with the business. Through regular interactions, your brand stays on top of mind of customers and they are likely to stay with you in the long run.

## Customer Reviews

Brand goodwill is an invaluable asset. Through a good reputation, businesses can gain a myriad of benefits such as more customers, power to negotiate better rates with vendors, lower interest rate on credit, and much more. An effective way to establish goodwill is through positive customer reviews which aren't possible without exceeding customer expectations.

Since before the advent of modern business methods, people have relied on word-of-mouth technique to choose a product. This is still very much in practice. When you need new shoes, you may ask your friends which product out there is the best. This is the oldest form of customer review and endorsement. Digital media has made things much easier.

Customers can now easily share their feedback or reviews via the business website, Yelp, or other social profiles. Any person looking for similar products can go through these to make up their mind.

## Lead Generation

Leads are prospective customers who have a particular interest in the market offerings of a firm. The company collects information of those potential customers and designs a strategy to capture their attention.

No matter how large your business and how much resources you have, you can't promote your products to each and every individual or business out there. It doesn't make sense!

What you should rather do is to specify your audience and put in the effort to convert those people into customers. And this can't be possible through lead generation.

Traditional marketing relied on personal interactions for generating leads. Salespeople would go door to door to promote products. Companies often sent direct mails to potential customers. Furthermore, networking events, radio or TV ads, pamphlets, and customer surveys were extremely helpful in this regard.

The purpose of lead generation didn't change with time. What really changed are the methods through which marketers perform this task.

The internet has modernized lead generation. Businesses can now easily create a lead generation form through MailChimp or other online tools. The link to this form can be

shared with customers via email, social media or website. And customers are offered incentives in exchange for their contact information. This information enables marketers to send personalized offers and information to interested customers.

Social platforms such as Facebook and LinkedIn also offer businesses to run targeted ads for lead generation purposes.

## Competitor Analysis

Always remember that your business isn't the only business in the industry. With so many business people working hard to succeed, you can't ignore the competition. After all, businesses that simply ignore the tactics of their competitors tend to fail down the road.

Remember what happened to *Yahoo*? They were once the leading internet company around the globe. In 1998, a new small business entered the market, named *Google*. The founders offered to sell the company to Yahoo in 1998 for a meager sum of \$1 million. But the tech giant refused the deal. In 2006, they had another chance to buy another emerging company, Facebook. However, the CEO rejected the deal again.

What happened then? Yahoo made bad decisions because it ignored the great potential of new market entrants. If they performed effective competitor analysis, they could come up with better strategies to retain their market share in the tech world.

The conclusion of this scenario is that businesses must be aware of their competitors, no matter how small they are. There are several techniques such as Porter's Five Forces Model through which a company can evaluate and analyze its competitors. We will discuss these strategies in Chapter 7.

### *Further Reading:*

Understanding the Business You Are In | by B. L. Teague | The Startup | Medium

New insights for new growth: What it takes to understand your customers today (mckinsey.com)

# Do You Even Google?

Who doesn't want to make a good impression on others? When we meet people we never got the chance to meet before, we often feel the urge to impress them. After all, it's rightly said that *first impressions are last impressions*.

The same goes for your business. You want to build a reputation and make a positive impression on potential customers when they first interact with your brand.

With an immense increase in ecommerce stores over the past decade or so, the buyer journey now usually starts online. When customers face a problem, they turn to the internet to find a product that solves that particular problem. Not only do they collect information about suitable products, but they also conduct research to compare different available options. At this time, reviews of past customers and product details help them make the right choice.

As a marketer, don't forget that this research is mostly done via a search engine.

## How Search Engines Work

You must be familiar with search engines. But do you know how they work?

There are over 1.8 billion live websites on the internet today and this number is constantly increasing. It's not possible to organize such a huge quantity of web pages and find the information you need. Thanks to search engines, this is no longer a challenge.

A search engine is an online program that checks published web pages and ranks them to facilitate users. Whenever a user enters a search term, they go through these pages and list the most suitable items.

For this purpose, it performs several tasks. The first of these is Web Crawling and is performed by bots. This refers to the process of searching available content. Crawling is done to find new pages as well as review the existing web pages.

Next comes the Indexing. Did you read the index of chapters at the start of this book? You must have read chapter names and then accessed the chapter relevant to your need. Indexing works the same way.



Google bots and bots by other search engines create an index of published pages and display relevant results when a user asks.

The last step is Ranking. Do you wonder how search engines determine which websites are relevant when you enter a search query? Then let me disclose that this action is done via ranking. Published pages are ranked as per their relevance, quality, and originality. Whenever a user performs a search, these pages are displayed as per the ranking.

## Top Search Engines

While there are many search engines available to internet users, the most popular one is Google. In fact, this paved way for a new phrase, **Google it!**

When a person wants to find some information, they usually turn to Google to find answers. It's no surprise that Google holds around 75% of global search market share. Here are a few other popular search engines you can try:

- YouTube
- Bing
- Amazon
- Ask
- Aol Search

Google is the leading search engine and YouTube occupies the second position. And guess what? YouTube is also owned by Google.

## Google Search

Interested in capturing customer attention and convincing them to purchase your products? Then you need to ensure that they can easily find you via search engines. Hence you need to focus on increasing brand visibility.

Start the process by searching for your business on Google. You will notice a list of results. This may include your website and social media pages. However, you may be

surprised that Google displays other businesses in the same list. And sometimes, other businesses are ranked above your own venture.

The next step is to improve the ranking of your business in search results. This way, more and more potential customers can find you online and you can convert them into loyal customers by making a good impression.

## How to Improve Search Engine Visibility

Businesses are competing with each other to secure the highest search engine ranking because top 3 search results for any search query tend to attract visitors the most. Google evaluates businesses on the basis of over 200 factors to determine which of these are most relevant to users.

There are various strategies to improve ranking, be more visible, and impress customers. Let's take a brief look at some of the most prominent strategies:

### SEO

Search engine optimization is the process of gaining higher visibility in an organic way. Some sources claim SEO to be free, but let's not forget nothing is free in this world. You have to pay a cost for everything. As for SEO, the price is your time and efforts.

SEO is a complex, on-going process. Since there are no hard and fast rules, you can learn SEO best practices through the trial and error method. Google also provides basic guidelines to facilitate business owners.

The best strategy for a business is to value customers and consider their preferences. An essential step is to have a user-friendly website. If you don't have a website yet, it's time to get a business website. These websites are not too expensive and some platforms such as WordPress and Wix offer free websites with certain limitations.

The interface or design of the website should be simple. The easier it is to use different functionalities, the better will be the treatment by search engines. Whether you design a website on your own or hire a professional website designer, getting a good understanding of design guidelines will assist you in implementing SEO strategies.

Search engines are very particular about content. They penalize websites that plagiarize

content from other web pages. So, not only should you come up with unique content, but also add valuable insights that add value to potential visitors. Through quality content, you can attract higher traffic volume and significantly improve the search engine ranking.

## Google My Business Tool

Now that you know how important it is to build impactful online presence, you can't ignore Google My Business. It's a powerful tool that enables businesses to create business listings and manage their appearance on Google platforms including Maps and the search engine.

Traditional marketing interacted with the audience through newspaper ads, billboards, and setting up promotional stalls in shopping malls. With this digital tool, interaction is now much easier. You can understand how customers interact with your business.

This platform facilitates businesses to attract potential customers via attractive images, useful information, and satisfied customer reviews. With the help of detailed analytics tools, it's no longer a challenge to find out demographics, geographical location, and interests of target customers.

## Run Paid Ads

Aside from organic marketing, you should also add paid advertisement to your marketing strategy. Search engine ads and advertisement on social media are effective in raising brand awareness, generating leads, and increasing revenue.

Although these ads appear at prominent positions on screen and increase visibility, you need to meet specific criteria. However, if done right, these paid ads can help you in achieving goals and customers will start noticing you through Google.

## Blogging

Around 78 million blog posts are published every month and receive over 77 million

comments by readers. These statistics are eye-openers for marketers who want to gain attention and gain brand visibility through digital marketing.

Back in the day, marketing people wrote articles for magazines and attended interviews with reporters for better visibility. These methods are still a part of marketing, but blogging and especially guest blogging has made it easier for startups to compete with larger businesses despite limited financial resources.

You can set up a blog for your customers and share valuable insights about their areas of interest. For instance, you can write posts about how the business adds value and share valuable tips to build credibility. Digital platforms like Medium and LinkedIn are suitable for this purpose. Moreover, you can also publish guest posts on reputable websites such as Forbes and Inc.com to increase traffic to your website.

## Miscellaneous Options

Remember the yellow pages directories that listed a myriad of businesses along with their contact information? Not much has changed today when it comes to these business directories. The only difference in traditional and digital marketing is that directories are now available online.

Online business directories publish information of businesses on websites. The most popular ones are Yelp, Angie's List, Zillow, TripAdvisor, YellowPages, Foursquare, and many more.

It's an effective way to let people know about your market offerings and share contact information. Furthermore, Quora is another great platform to communicate with potential customers by sharing answers to their questions and informing them about your products.

### *Further Reading:*

21 Web Directories That Still Have Value

Is SEO Important for Every Business?

# Who Is Your Customer?

A prevalent myth about marketing is that the more you promote a product, the higher will be the chances of increasing sales. However, marketing enthusiasts know this statement is far from the truth.

The key strategy for promoting a brand is to identify ideal customers. This approach makes it easier to target customers and develop the right actionable marketing plans that are likely to attract customers. A lesser-known, yet effective way to build a customer base is to focus on personality tests, especially the DISC test.

## What Is the DISC Test?

DISC test is an effective personality test, based on the DISC theory by William Moulton Marston. It explores behavioral characteristics of a person based on four categories: Dominance/Directing, Inducement/Influence, Submission/Steadiness, and Compliance/Conscientiousness.

With the help of this tool, marketers can identify their character traits and develop a plan to better fit into their job roles. For instance, if you are a shy person and find it difficult to interact with others, this tool can guide you about the best action plan for achieving personal and professional goals.

It indicates the general behavior of a person and highlights factors that motivate them. It offers self-awareness and provides you a chance to learn about your strengths and weaknesses. Being a marketer, you would benefit from learning about your tendencies. You can work towards managing those weaknesses and leverage strengths to succeed.

As you progress in your career and reach top management position, you may want your team to take the DISC personality test as well. It's a great tool for helping managers understand the working style team members. This way, they can better manage them and assign tasks that best fit their strengths to get the desired results.

## DISC Test for Marketers

Personality tests help individuals choose the most suitable goals in life. You may opt for a test to determine which career option would work best for you. But you may not be aware that this assessment can also add value for business marketing purposes.

If you have a *Directing* personality type, you may be strong-willed, persistent, and ambitious. With a strong mindset and the ambition to take on challenges, you can cross every hurdle and win your sales goals. Marketers with this personality type tend to focus on facts and figures. So, you may emphasize selling points to generate sales for your business and make a good impression on stakeholders through informative presentations.

Marketers with the *Influencing* personality type are good at communicating. They are usually extroverts, can easily impress others with their persuasive style, and find it easier to achieve marketing goals with help from your network. If you belong to this category, you are likely to be a very creative person who frequently comes up with innovative ideas to boost marketing campaigns.

*Steady* personality type makes a person stable, focused, and patient. Such marketers tend to be detail-oriented and are quite consistent with their marketing strategies. They may take their time in adapting to change and don't get excited with the idea of updating the marketing plan based on its performance or customer feedback.

The fourth personality type *Compliance* makes the marketer completely opposite of the *Directing* personality type. These salespeople are research-oriented and prefer convincing customers to buy their products through a detailed message about the benefits of products. They tend to believe in educating customers about the brand and earning their trust.

## Targeting Customers Based on Personality Types

A successful businessperson makes it their priority to understand the needs and wants of their customers. It enables them to choose products that solve a problem and make their lives easier. When it comes to the marketing plan, it's equally important to know who your customers are and what personality traits they may have.

The DISC test gives an idea about personality types and you can choose which ones you

want to target. This strategy is extremely helpful in creating marketing content that can get the attention of ideal customers and build a lasting relationship.

Directing personality customers are interested in facts about a product and brand. They carefully make buying decisions by evaluating its features. Before making a buying decision, they would want to learn about the experiences of other buyers. They may visit your social media pages and ask in their social circle for recommendations. Marketers can make the most of this opportunity and convert them into customers by offering them what they want.

For Influencing customers, the same strategy won't work. They are driven by innovation and show interest in products that stand out. They are usually impulsive buyers who make buying decisions on the go. Regardless of whether or not they actually need it, the customer may purchase a product if an ad or other marketing collateral seems attractive at first sight. When a new product is launched, you may want to target these customers first.

Customers with a Steady personality are unswerving with their choices. They thoroughly evaluate a brand before giving it a try and stick with their choice in the long run if it suits their needs. They aren't much interested in alternative products and are loyal customers. However, it's important to note that it's a challenge to bring such customers on-board in the first place. They may be loyal customers of your competitors and may not show interest in your products unless your market offerings are significantly better than competitors.

Compliance personality suggests that the customer is detail-oriented. Before they make a decision, they conduct a detailed research about every feature and aspect of the product. They may conduct online research and ask company representatives about its specifications before they make up their mind. They won't purchase it until they are fully satisfied.

## Which Social Platforms Work Best for Different Personalities

Traditional marketing revolves around mass marketing. When marketers promote products and services through traditional marketing, they consider the needs and wants of the general audience. For instance, if they place an ad in a newspaper, radio, billboard, or TV channel, they are aware that the ad would be noticed by people of all ages. Digital media, on the other hand, offers more flexibility and makes it easier to target specific

audience groups based on demographics, interests, personality types, location, and other criteria.

Social media platforms are arguably the best methods for promoting products these days. They offer unlimited targeting options to ensure your advertisement content reaches the audience that is likely to be interested in the offer.

With so many social media websites available these days, it is quite a task to determine which platform is most suitable for you. The best bet is to determine which personality types you want to target and then choose platforms where those customers are present.

For instance, Dominant or Directing customers prefer Twitter and YouTube for information gathering and entertainment. They also listen to podcasts about their areas of interest. If you want to reach them, you may want to create a business presence on these platforms.

Next comes the Influencer. These people are outgoing and enjoy spending time in crowds. They join Facebook groups and chat with them through messaging apps. They may also be active on Instagram or Snapchat and making an impression on others with impactful content. Furthermore, they are also likely to be on TikTok, making videos for their followers.

Steady customers are old souls and seek stability. They are usually found on Facebook and LinkedIn even though these platforms have lost their charm with time. They believe in staying loyal to known networks and trusted friends. These customers may not be interested in the latest social platforms and stay with their choices for quite a long time.

Lastly, customers having Compliance personality type are less likely to create personal accounts on social media. They are interested in numbers. They may keep track of data and ROI and learn about various analytics tools for fact checking. These folks are often the only people who read the policy and terms of service for each network.

## Creating Buyer Persona

Traditionally, marketers relied on buyer persona to streamline marketing efforts. They would create profiles of imaginary customers they want to target. The customer persona document would include detailed information about customers which helped marketers create a specific plan to make the product attractive to customers who fit the criteria.

In this digital era, nothing much has changed and buyer personas are still as effective



as they used to be. Social marketers can better promote their products and convert leads into customers by optimizing the ad or social content as per their preference.

Since there are no rules or standards for generating buyer personas, you need to brainstorm different factors for this purpose. Here are a few aspects you may want to add into the document:

- Age group
- Occupation
- Education
- Income group
- Family size
- Geographical location
- Social platforms they use
- Personality traits
- Social class

You can add as much information as needed to describe ideal customers. However, make sure the profile suits a big enough group since it's not practical to create personas for individual customers.

Aside from creating buyer personas for target customers, it's also recommended to think about negative buyer personas. This profile is for people that aren't included in your target audience or you may want to exclude them from the target customer list.

*Exercise:*

Take the personality test by Tony Robbins and discuss the results with the class.

DISC Profile: Free Online Personality Strengths Test ([tonyrobbins.com](http://tonyrobbins.com))

*Further Reading*

How to Use the DiSC Model to Improve Customer Service (hubspot.com)

(PDF) Using disc® to facilitate instruction of adaptive selling (researchgate.net)

THE SURVEY

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR RESPONDING**

In the space provided below, identify those behaviors which are **MOST - TO-LEAST** characteristic of you in an identified situation. Working left to right, assign “**4**” points to the **MOST** characteristic behavior, “**3**” to the next most characteristic, then “**2**” and finally “**1**” to your **LEAST** characteristic behavior.

**EXAMPLE**

3 Directing                      4 Influencing                      2 Steady                      1 Cautious

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_____ Directing	_____ Influencing	_____ Steady	_____ Cautious
_____ Self-Certain	_____ Optimistic	_____ Deliberate	_____ Restrained
_____ Adventurous	_____ Enthusiastic	_____ Predictable	_____ Logical
_____ Decisive	_____ Open	_____ Patient	_____ Analytical
_____ Daring	_____ Impulsive	_____ Stabilizing	_____ Precise
_____ Restless	_____ Emotional	_____ Protective	_____ Doubting
_____ Competitive	_____ Persuading	_____ Accommodating	_____ Curious
_____ Assertive	_____ Talkative	_____ Modest	_____ Tactful
_____ Experimenting	_____ Charming	_____ Easy-Going	_____ Consistent
_____ Forceful	_____ Sensitive	_____ Sincere	_____ Perfectionists
_____ TOTAL	_____ TOTAL	_____ TOTAL	_____ TOTAL

### INSTRUCTIONS FOR COUNTING AND GRAPHING

Total the numbers in each of the four columns. Place the total number in each column in the blank at the bottom of the column “TOTAL”. Check the accuracy by adding all the columns together. When all four columns are added together they will equal 100.

Plot the numbers from the totals columns on page one on the graph below. For example, if the total number in the “D” column was 15, you would place the plotting point (Dot) half-way between the 14 and the 16 on the graph for that dimension.

### LEVEL OF ENERGY GRAPH

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 \_\_\_\_\_



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40	40	40	40
38	38	38	38
36	36	36	36
34	34	34	34
32	32	32	32
30	30	30	30
28	28	28	28
26	26	26	26
24	24	24	24
22	22	22	22
20	20	20	20
18	18	18	18
16	16	16	16
14	14	14	14
12	12	12	12
10	10	10	10

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After completing your graph, circle the highest visual point. This represents your strongest behavioral characteristic. The higher you score on the graph, the more intensity you bring to this particular behavioral characteristic. Look at the letter at the graph on page one which corresponds to the highest visual point. Using this letter look up your behavioral style (**D=Dominance, I=Influencing, S=Steady, C=Cautious**)

### **Personality Styles - 'S' = Steady**

#### Description

This person's tendencies include:

- ◇ Performing an accepted work pattern
- ◇ Sitting or Staying in one place
- ◇ Demonstrating patience

This person desires an environment which includes:

- ◇ Security of the situation
- ◇ Status quo unless given reasons for change

#### Action Plan

This person needs others who:

- ◇ React quickly to unexpected change
- ◇ Stretch toward the challenges of an accepted task

To be more effective, this person needs:

- ◇ Conditioning prior to change
- ◇ Validation of self – worth

### **Personality Styles – ‘C’ = Compliant**

#### Description

This person's tendencies include:

- ◇ Attention to key directives and standards
- ◇ Concentrating on key details
- ◇ Working under known circumstances

This person desires an environment which includes:

- ◇ Security assurance
- ◇ Standard operating procedures
- ◇ Sheltered environment

## Action Plan

This person needs others who:

- ◇ Desire to expand authority
- ◇ Delegate important tasks

To be more effective, this person needs:

- ◇ To develop tolerance for conflict
- ◇ Opportunity for careful planning

## **Personality Styles – ‘D’ = Directing**

### Description

This person's tendencies include:

- ◇ Getting immediate results
- ◇ Causing action
- ◇ Accepting challenges

This person desires and environment which includes:

- ◇ Power and authority
- ◇ Prestige and challenge
- ◇ Opportunity for individual accomplishments

## Action Plan

This person needs others who:

- ◇ Weigh pros and cons
- ◇ Calculate risks

To be more effective, this person needs:

- ◇ Difficult assignments
- ◇ Understanding that they need people

## **Personality Styles – ‘I’= Influencing**

### Description

This person’s tendencies include:

- ◇ Contacting people
- ◇ Making a favorable impression
- ◇ Verbalizing with articulateness

This person desires an environment which includes:

- ◇ Popularity, social recognition
- ◇ Public recognition of ability
- ◇ Freedom of expression

### Action Plan

This person needs others who:

- ◇ Concentrate on the task
- ◇ Seek facts

To be more effective, this person needs:

- ◇ Control of time, if D or S is below the midline
- ◇ independence in decision-making

# Competition Check

*“If you make the opportunity, you’ll be the first in the position to take advantage of it.”*

– Biz Stone of Twitter

Competitors are those businesses who offer similar products or services in the same market as yours. For instance, if you sell electronic goods to customers, your competitors will include businesses who also offer electronic items to the same target market. Moreover, businesses that offer substitutes of your offered products are also considered the competition.

With a significant rise in ecommerce stores, it’s easier to tap into global markets. You can reach out to customers present in different countries and encourage them to buy the products through eye catching ads and organic content. This globalization offered a plethora of benefits, but its negative aspect is that it increased competition. Now you don’t only have to compete with business entities that operate in the same geographical area, but also stand out from online businesses present in another corner of the world.

Competition can hurt your business and reduce your market share if you turn a blind eye to competitors’ tactics. You can succeed by monitoring the activities of competitors and building effective strategies to perform better than others. You can learn from them with the help of a thorough competitive analysis report. However, it’s crucial to refrain from spying on competitors or indulging in illegal and immoral activities in an attempt to gain an advantage.

If you are competing with public listed companies, you can easily access their financial performance since the law compels them to publish annual financial reports.

Competing with other established businesses can be a major challenge. However, it’s possible to perform better through a proactive approach. You should focus on research and development and come up with innovative ideas. For example, you may launch an innovative product or service. If no other business deals in similar products, you can achieve the first-mover advantage and earn high profits due to the lack of direct competition.



# Types of Competition

Keeping an eye on competitors is the key to survival in the business world. If you are unaware what others are doing, it won't take long before they capture your market share and attract your customer base.

Competition isn't always bad. When you aren't alone, you feel the motivation to keep improving the quality of products and customer service. You also get to learn from experienced competitors who have been in the market for a long time.

In business terms, competition can be divided into three major categories:

## Direct Competition

Direct competition is the most common form of business rivalry. It includes businesses that target the same market and offer similar products. If you run a pizza restaurant, your direct competition will include all other pizza joints that operate in the same area.

Some most common examples of competition are Pepsi and Coca-Cola, Target and Costco, Burger King and McDonalds, and Starbucks and Dunkin Donuts.

## Indirect Competition

Indirect competition refers to businesses that may have similar products, but adopt a different strategy or platform to reach customers.

For instance, consider that you own a brick and mortar toy shop. Your direct competitor will include similar shops or stores in the same geographical region. But what about online toy stores that also target the same geographical region? They will be called your indirect competition.

## Replacement Competition

Your products meet the needs or wants of customers. Some businesses offer products that are different from your offerings, but can replace your products. These are substitutes or alternatives of your products and pose a big threat to your business.

It's not always a simple process to determine this competition unless you're fully aware of the features of your product and understand its pros and cons. When you develop a strategy to differentiate your brand from customers, it's essential to list down replacement products and come up with a plan to deal with these competitors.

Amazon Kindle platform replaced paperback books with eBooks. Therefore, it poses as a replacement competition to traditional book publishers.

Tea and coffee producers are indirect competitors, but these companies compete with fruit juice brands that can replace them. So, fruit juice brands are replacement competitors for tea and coffee companies.

## Why Perform Competitor Analysis

Performing competitive analysis assists in identifying your competitors and learning about their business. It's a time consuming process and many entrepreneurs don't find it too important. However, a comprehensive analysis can help you in many ways.

## Understand Customer Needs

Businesses often fall victim to market myopia. They focus on the internal expertise or strengths and only consider the firm's perspective. As a result, they ignore changing market trends and fail to understand customer needs.

Competitive analysis is a great way to broaden horizons and explore customer's perspectives. By analyzing the activities and strategies of competitors, you can obtain a fresh perspective and evolve processes with time to stay ahead of the competition.

## Identify Potential Threats

A business should always be aware of potential threats and risks. You can perform SWOT analysis to determine threats facing the industry. But competitive analysis is also a must.

With this approach, you can stay updated with what your customers are doing. Furthermore, you can also monitor new market entrants and take the right measures to deal with challenges they create for your business.

## Set Suitable Benchmarks

Every business sets certain standards or KPIs to evaluate the performance of different departments as well as the entire organization. Through competitor analysis, you can ensure that your benchmarks suit the current industry trends and make necessary improvements.

## Recognize Market Gaps

No matter how saturated the market, there are always some unidentified gaps. Through competitive analysis, you can identify those gaps in no time. Certain market gaps can be filled by offering new products or variants of an existing product. Or you may notice that other businesses don't target specific customer groups.

Imagine that you manufacture furniture. By studying your competitors, you may notice that no competitor specifically currently targets the millennial generation. You can come up with a strategy to sell modern furniture designs to young and first time home buyers to expand your customer base.

## Acquisition and Mergers

When you evaluate your main competitors, you may notice that some of them are doing

great and you can learn from their success. However, this won't be the case with every business and you may realize that some of them are likely to go bankrupt in the near future.

You can get in touch with businesses that are struggling to survive. It's possible that an opportunity for acquisition or merger may come up. The difference between acquisition and merger is that the former approach enables you to take over another business, while the latter allows you to combine resources with another business and form a joint organization.

Mergers or acquisitions can help you expand your business. You can make the most of their resources to improve product quality. Furthermore, you can also benefit from their distribution network to tap into new markets.

## How to Perform Competitive Analysis

Before you perform competitive analysis, don't forget to evaluate your business. When you understand each and every aspect of your organization, the competitor analysis will prove more fruitful.

Start the process by applying **SWOT analysis**. In this method, you review internal factors including strengths and weaknesses of the company. You also get to explore external factors such as opportunities and threats for the company. With this tool, you can determine the current performance of the business and develop plans to cash in on opportunities and steer clear of threats for business growth.

Another effective method for this purpose is **Porter's Five Forces Model**. Developed by Michael Porter of the Harvard Business School, this model taught businesses that a variety of factors can affect their performance. These factors are as follows:

- **Bargaining Power of Suppliers** - The fewer the suppliers in the market, the more businesses would rely on them. Consequently, they get high authority to increase rates and businesses would have no option but to accept their terms

- **Bargaining power of customers** - When a business has fewer customers, they have to keep prices low to retain them since customers have higher power to negotiate their conditions

- **Existing Competition in the Market** - This refers to the number of existing competitors in the market. The lower the competition, the more they have the power to raise prices

- **New Market Entrants** - It explains the time and resources needed to launch a new business. The easier it is to enter the market, the more efforts will be needed by a business to retain the market share and customer base

- **Threat of Substitutes** - Businesses that deal in products with no close substitutes can increase prices. The higher the number of substitutes, the more difficult it will be for the business to set prices as per their preference

There are several techniques to analyze direct, indirect, and replacement competitors. You can utilize the latest technology and get digital analysis tools to make the task easier. BuzzSumo, SEMrush, Wappalyzer, Brandwatch Audiences, and Searchmetrics are the most popular tools in the business community and help you monitor major competitors online.

## Table 7.1 Competitive Analysis Template

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<i>Category</i>	<i>My Company</i>	<i>Competitor 1</i>	<i>Competitor 2</i>	<i>Competitor 3</i>	<i>Competitor 4</i>
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**Company Name**

**Location**

**Target Customer**

**Revenue**

**Founded**

**Strengths**

**Weaknesses**

**Brand  
Personality**

**Mission**

**Services**

**Employees**

**Product**

**Marketing**

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## Table 7.2 Marketing Plan Template

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**Product**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Example</b>	<b>Your Answer</b>
<b>Who is your target customer?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ homeowner</li><li>→ 35-75 years old</li><li>→ lives in Chicago</li><li>→ 100K+ annual income</li><li>→ have children</li></ul>	→
<b>What does the customer expect from your products and services?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ quick response</li><li>→ high quality</li><li>→ great customer service</li><li>→ prestige</li><li>→ status</li><li>→ peace of mind</li></ul>	→
<b>Describe benefits</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ best warranty</li><li>→ saves money</li><li>→ more secure</li><li>→ local</li><li>→ unique design</li></ul>	→
<b>Describe major product features</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ higher quality</li><li>→ faster</li><li>→ smaller</li><li>→ made of metal</li><li>→ multiple colors</li></ul>	→
<b>Describe how is it different from competition?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ more experienced</li><li>→ high quality materials</li><li>→ better reputation</li></ul>	→
<b>How is your product branded?</b>	→ unique memorable branding that is consistent throughout all the physical and online channels	→

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## Price

Question	Example	Your Answer
<b>What is the value of your product/service to the customer?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ solves problems quickly and affordably unique and scarce</li><li>→ knowledge and expertise</li><li>→ premium pricing</li></ul>	→
<b>What is your pricing strategy and how does it compare to your competition?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ entry-level pricing</li><li>→ competitive pricing</li><li>→ loss leader</li><li>→ upsell strategy</li></ul>	→
<b>How does the value compare to your competition?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ offers additional services for the same price</li><li>→ has more experience</li><li>→ has a longer life-cycle product</li><li>→ needs less maintenance</li></ul>	→
<b>What are your pricing incentives for new customers?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ coupons</li><li>→ other promotions</li><li>→ financing</li></ul>	→
<b>What payment methods are available?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ credit cards</li><li>→ cash</li></ul>	→
<b>What are your pricing incentives for loyal customers?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>→ discounts</li><li>→ reward point system</li><li>→ VIP offers</li></ul>	→

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**Place****Question****Example****Your Answer**

*Where do your buyers look for your product/service?*

- shopping mall
- online
  - locally
  - internationally

→

*Do you need distribution channels? (product)*

- dealers
- warehouses

→

*Do you need a physical store?*

- product needs to be tested before purchase
- large display of items
- informational

→

*Do you need a website?*

- ecommerce
  - blog
  - social media

→

*Do you need physical product placement?*

- grocery stores
- specialized stores
- corporate offices

→

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## Promotion

Question	Example	Your Answer
	→ billboard	
<i>How will you reach your target audience?</i>	→ radio → online marketing → flyers → direct mail → word-of-mouth  → search engine optimization	→
<i>What online promotional tactics will you use?</i>	→ social media → email marketing → 3rd party websites like Amazon → content marketing → paid media	→
<i>Will you need a sales team for outbound promotion?</i>	→ sales reps for cold calling → cold emailing	→
<i>What are your competitors doing to promote their products?</i>	→ anything and everything they can, so how will you top them?	→

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### Source:

4 P's of Marketing Mix (Updated with Example and Template) ([angle180.com](http://angle180.com))

### *Further Reading:*

How to Do a Competitive Analysis in 2020 [Template Included] ([bigcommerce.com](http://bigcommerce.com))

Battle of the Brands: Which Famous Rival Company Has Better Marketing? (hubspot.com)

# Social Media History...How Did We Get Here

Social networking is a necessity for people as they want to share their thoughts with others. Back in the day, social gatherings and events enabled people to meet and communicate with each other. But the advent of the internet in the late 20th century offered modern ways for communication.

The earliest method of delivering messages to people living at a distance was through letters. They trained pigeons to carry letters to the desired destination and return home with a response from the recipient. It often took days for the bird to fly to and fro and deliver a message.

Then came the telegraph technology in the 1830s, based on the Morse technology invented by Samuel Morse. It's a lesser-known fact that Morse code technology was the foundation stone of modern social media. It was a telecommunication method in which the sender transmitted their messages through a telegraph machine in the form of dots and dashes.

Morse code has been used throughout the history for transmission of radio signals. During the First and Second World Wars, the US forces relied on this technology for secure communication. Since then, it has been frequently used by the commercial aviation industry as well as for military purposes.

Radio technology and telephone made it easier to remotely communicate with people. But things took a rapid turn after the invention of the internet. An early version of the internet was announced as early as 1970, but it took around two more decades before a commercial version could be developed. The modern-day World Wide Web came into being in 1990 which paved the way for convenient and efficient communication through innovative social platforms.

## Early Social Media Sites

Blogging platforms played a major role in the development and massive success of social

media networking. The first known blog was called Links.net and was developed by a young college student. He referred to this site as Justin's personal homepage.

John Barger is recognized as the inventor of the term "weblog" that was later shortened to "blog" by Peter Merholz. He is one of the founders of blogging technique and wrote informative blogs about artificial intelligence, internet culture, technology trends, and other progressive areas.

Some interactive blogging platforms originated in that era include OpenDiary, Blogger, LiveJournal, WordPress, and TypePad.

While social media gained popularity during the first decade of the 21st century, the first known social website was actually launched in 1997. **SixDegrees** was owned by MacroView and survived only until 2001. It was a unique platform that facilitated users to set up personal profiles, create contact lists, invite friends, and interact with them through short messages. The Bulletin board was another attractive feature for its users. SixDegrees was relaunched a few years later as a private and invite-only platform.

The model was adopted by many other technology companies and several other social websites came out in the early 2000s. Some of these were revamped as dating sites, job searching platforms, and gaming forums. Some examples of such sites include BlackPlanet, Friendster, Xing, Asian Avenue, and Myspace.

Myspace was formed in 2005 and was the first social website to reach 100 million active users per month. They remained the most popular website around the globe between 2005 and 2008. However, their popularity was short-lived and Facebook soon captured their market share. The website is still active, but couldn't regain its former success.

## Social Media in the 21st Century

The beginning of the 21st century was the time when multiple social platforms were launched. Almost every year, a new website is launched and older ones gradually lose their popularity.

Let's take a look at some of the most well-known social websites that are used for personal as well as business purposes.

## Facebook

With over 2.7 billion monthly active users, Facebook is currently the largest social networking website. It's an intuitive platform where you can add friends, chat via Facebook Messenger, share your thoughts, and communicate with others via a variety of content such as funny memes, live videos, polls, and 360° photos.

Founded in 2004 by a group of Harvard students, Facebook has captured the interest of marketers. Businesses can build communities around the brand through a business page or group. Aside from posting engaging content, businesses can also attract customers through ads with specific targeting options.

This site is popular mostly among Baby boomers and losing the attention of Generation-Z. Also, statistics suggest that most users access their accounts via smartphones.

## Twitter

Twitter is a microblogging network where users can write posts of up to 280 characters with a limit of maximum 2,400 posts per day. While it's available across the world, Twitter has the highest number of users in the US and Canada.

Businesses ought to be present here as a majority of people prefer interacting with brands and asking questions through this platform. Furthermore, Twitter users engage with brands more than any other platform and ads offer higher ROI than many other social websites. The key to mastering the Twitter game is by making the most of the right hashtags.

It is popular among affluent people and most users are millennial. As of 2020, 152 million users visit the website on a regular basis.

## TikTok

Launched in 2016, TikTok video sharing app soon became one of the leading social apps around the globe. It was merged with Musical.ly in 2018 and has been downloaded over

1.5 billion times by users. Initially, it was popular among the younger generation, but businesses turned to this platform when they recognized its importance.

Whether you run a business or work as a marketer, you can't ignore this useful website especially if your target audience actively uses this app. You can benefit from influencer marketing or create challenge hashtags for promoting a product.

## YouTube

YouTube isn't only the second most popular social website, but it is also ranked amongst the leading search engines.

Marketers make the most of this platform for advertising campaigns. It's because YouTube ads bring higher ROI than most other social platforms. However, it's important to remember that the YouTube smartphone app is highly popular and around 70% of YouTube users watch content on their phones.

From how-to videos to product guides, vlogs, online events, testimonials, and employee interviews, you can create different sorts of engaging videos to increase views.

## Instagram and Snapchat

Image and video content tend to interest a majority of social media users these days. It's because visual content is easier to consume and doesn't take a lot of time. For this purpose, Instagram and Snapchat are your go-to digital marketing platforms.

With over a billion registered users, Instagram offers you the opportunity to expand the reach of your brand. However, the best way to choose the right platform is by determining where your audience is present. Marketers can reach out to their customers through impactful videos, images, infographics, and stories.

For instance, Instagram has more millennial users while Snapchat is Generation-Z's favorite. Similarly, Insta users earn more than Snapchat users on average.

# LinkedIn

Launched in May 2003, LinkedIn is one of the oldest social platforms. It was developed to bring businesses on a single platform where they can network with other professionals.

The platform attracts people with a wide range of professions. Businesses can set up profiles and post vacancies for recruitment purposes. Similarly, working professionals can share experiences with their network and look for job offers.

LinkedIn introduced a targeted ad service for businesses in 2005. The latest features include live video sharing, skill development courses, and opinion polls.

There are many other social and messaging platforms that were developed during the first and second decades of this century. Pinterest, Reddit, Tumblr, WhatsApp, and Qzone are some examples. With the right social marketing strategy, you can effectively build business presence on these websites and expand your customer base.

# Blogging Platforms

The rise of blogging platforms in the 21st century paved the way for businesses to increase visibility, interact with the audience, and learn about their thoughts and experiences.

The initial blogging platforms were quite complex, but with technology developments, anyone can create a blog without breaking the bank. When it comes to blogging, there are many options such as Wix, Blogger, WordPress, Tumblr, etc. With these content management systems, it's no longer a challenge to publish informative content for the right audience.

Whether you wish to start a personal blog or need one for business needs, you can easily host it on these websites for a reasonable price. As of December 2020, over 31.7 million people publish blogs in the US alone.

Medium is another reputable online publishing website where registered users can post content for followers and read posts from other authors. It's a great way to produce and promote content and engage with people with similar mindsets. The platform offers different membership plans to users.



*Further Reading:*

A Timeline of Social Media (infographic) / Digital Information World



# PART 2: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETERS AND MARKETING STRATEGY



# Applying Basic Marketing Principles to Social Media Marketing

Before we move forward, let's go back to some of our earlier definitions of marketing. Seth Godin, the founder of Seth Godin Productions and Do You Zoom explained the concept of modern day marketing as:

“Marketing is at the core of what we do. It is the story you tell, who you're telling it to, and why people are going to buy your product or service.”

He also said, “Marketing is no longer about the stuff that you make, but about the stories you tell”.

Social media may be a new technology, but it doesn't mean carrying out marketing campaigns on this medium is a new thing too. Before you think about promoting a brand on social media, you should know about basic marketing concepts. This marketing knowledge will assist you in making the most of social platforms and spread the brand message more effectively.

In Chapter 2, we talked about 4 P's of marketing with respect to traditional marketing concepts. It's time to move forward and explore how the concept of marketing mix is applicable to social media marketing.

## Product

When you think of Product in the traditional marketing perspective, the first thing that comes to mind is a tangible product or service businesses offer to meet a specific need of the audience. The concept of product in social media marketing is no different.

You may create a business profile on LinkedIn, get active on Instagram, or launch a channel on YouTube to promote your product and build your brand. Just like other entrepreneurs in the digital world, you can also reach the target audience via social channels.

Before proceeding with marketing efforts, you need to get a clear idea of the benefits as well as negative aspects of your market offerings. You should know how it adds value to

consumers, what the USPs (Unique Selling Points) are, and what makes it different from the competition.

In the digital era, accessing the required information is easy. Customers are woke and socially aware. They prefer brands that not only develop products to meet their needs, but are also conscious about preserving nature while doing so. You can focus on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR activities) during the promotion phase, but sustainability should be incorporated into the organizational culture.

You need to invest in environmental sustainability and take actions to reduce your carbon footprint. It's best to adopt a green business model through waste management and reducing consumption of natural resources. Furthermore, workforce diversity is also an essential element for businesses these days.

It's not enough to promote the benefits of a product. However, you can gain higher visibility on social media and better promote the products by convincing the audience that you don't only believe in making profits, but are also doing good for society and the environment.

## Price

Do you remember the concept of Price in the marketing mix? It's a crucial component of your product marketing strategy and refers to the strategy of setting a price for your products.

The right pricing strategy is important because it's the driving force of the success or failure of a product. If your prices are too high as compared to the competition, then you are likely to lose customers. On the other hand, low prices may cause you losses if they are lower than the cost incurred in developing the product.

Digital or social media marketing has also affected this module. Before the popularity of social networks, business owners had to invest a huge sum in purchasing or renting a location where they could display their products. Customers would visit them and check products before making a buying decision. As a result, the cost of the product would go up by adding utilities, rents, and other overhead expenses.

While brick and mortar stores are still present, eCommerce stores have gained huge popularity and over 24 million businesses are selling products via their websites or social media. The benefit of online selling is that the overall cost is decreased.

Many businesses store products in their warehouses and send them to customers as

they place the order. As a result, you can sell products to customers at a lower price since you need not pay shelf space cost. This way, you can choose the *Cost leadership strategy* and offer products at lower prices to gain a competitive advantage.

Technology has also reduced the need to maintain huge inventory.

The concept of **Dropshipping** evolved with an increase in social media marketing. All you need to do is to contact a manufacturer and work as their fulfillment center. When a customer places an order for products they need, you forward this request to the manufacturer. From manufacturing to product delivery, they will handle every task and you can earn profits with a limited initial investment. Customers are interested in online stores due to convenience as well as lower pricing as compared to in-store prices.

If you visit a supermarket's website, it's possible that their online prices would be different than in-store prices for the same product. One of the major reasons is that the cost of running an online store is lesser than physical stores.

Furthermore, you can also adopt the JIT (*Just in Time*) method to cut down on inventory costs. By implementing an effective communication system within the organization, you can develop products when customers place orders instead of manufacturing them in bulk. With this approach, you can further reduce prices for online stores or customers that contact you through social media pages.

## Place

When it comes to 4P's of marketing, Place defines the platforms where customers can find or access your market offerings. Regardless of whether you offer a tangible or intangible product, service, or experience, the rise of social media has certainly changed how you sell products to customers.

Traditionally, in-store shopping was the only option for customers. So, manufacturers were keen on making sure that their products are easily available at supermarkets where their target market shops. They partnered with distribution networks to expand their reach and spread the word. While distribution channel management is still a part of business marketing, digital platforms especially social media websites have added a distinct platform through which a business can sell its products.

Businesses that are active on social media can make the most of opportunities. They can post engaging content to make people talk about the brand, interact with them to learn about their experiences, and respond to customer reviews for further improving customer

experience. Furthermore, customers can contact brands 24/7 through social media and place orders without hassles.

Aside from social media marketing, businesses can also advertise through search engine ads, email marketing, and other online advertising platforms and offer a unique experience to each customer.

## Promotion

The importance of traditional marketing can't be denied, but promotional marketing efforts work best when you combine traditional marketing with digital marketing.

Thanks to the modern-day digital channels, especially social media, businesses can now spread the word about their brand through multiple avenues. These platforms aren't only cost-effective, but they also save time and let you reach the targeted audience that is likely to be interested in what you sell.

For digital promotions, social media is the leading choice. Through these websites, you can build lasting customer relationships and convert them into long-term customers by winning their trust. You can run low-cost ads and promote engaging content for this purpose.

Aside from social media marketing, businesses can also advertise through search engine ads. If you manage a business website, it's also a good idea to invest in Search Engine Optimization. This way, your brand will appear in top search engine results and higher visibility may lead to higher website traffic and increased sales.

Lastly, email marketing is another powerful tactic for promoting products. You can attract potential customers through special discounts and Buy-One-Get-One-Free offers.

### *Activity:*

With reference to the Marketing Plan Template, choose a company and product of your choice. You can select your startup or a client's business too. Now apply the concept of marketing mix and answer the questions in the given table for your business.



*Further Reading:*

Marketing Mix for Next Generation Marketing – ScienceDirect

*Video:*



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://open.library.okstate.edu/introsocialmedia/?p=100>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U-jQIBxaLRw>

# What's it All For?

So far, we have discussed marketing principles as well as the impact of social media on marketing tactics. You may often hear that businesses ought to invest in social media marketing. With this constant reminder, you may wonder why marketers emphasize social media marketing so much when there are many alternative options available. So, let's dig deep and find out the importance of social media for businesses.

In social media marketing, stories matter more than the product you intend to sell. So, there is no better way than social media posting to tell your stories and spread your brand message.

You can create videos or image content regarding the background of your business, teams, and products. Customer testimonials act as a great tool to capture attention. You can post the right content to build a brand reputation.

A major benefit of social marketing is that it's cost-effective when compared to traditional marketing methods. It's not easy for small and even medium-sized businesses to compete with big names mainly due to limited financial resources. You may hesitate when it comes to investing in advertising or else your expenses may shoot up. But thanks to social media, you can now promote your brand without breaking the bank.

Businesses post on social media to keep followers engaged. The more they are engaged and respond to your content, the easier it will be for you to retain them as loyal customers. In fact, they may turn into promoters and refer your products to their friends if they are highly satisfied with your products as well as customer service.

Paid advertising on social media is useful because of its several targeting options. When you create an ad campaign, you can specify the target audience. This way, you can rest assured that your investment won't go in vain and the ads will reach Facebook, YouTube, or other social media users that have an interest in your offers.

Another exciting feature of social media advertising is retargeting options. Do you visit a website through the browser and then see the ad for the same website when you visit your social profile? This approach is referred to as retargeting.

Social platforms are aware of your online activity. Based on this information, they display ads of websites you recently visited. You can make the most of this feature to advertise your products.

For instance, an internet user may view your eCommerce store and view products.

However, they may not always buy it after viewing it only once. By showing them the ad for the same product at a later date, you can convince them to give it a try. But don't bombard them with the same ad multiple times a day, or else they would get irritated and may end up blocking you. You should use this advertising feature carefully to expand the customer base.

## SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Creating paid ad campaigns is good for promoting your business online. But it's equally important to focus on increasing the organic traffic. The better your website is optimized for search engines especially Google, the more it will benefit your business in the long run.

### Increase Website Traffic

Who doesn't want to increase traffic to their official business website? With SEO, your website will appear among the top search results when users search for your target keywords. This will drive more users to your website.

Remember that visitors who access your website through a search engine are likely to be interested in your products or services. If your website offers a good user experience, they would stay around and browse through product categories. Once they find the products they are looking for, they may place the order.

So, we can say that SEO doesn't only increase website traffic, but it actually increases quality traffic that can be converted into customers through some effort.

### Decrease Customer Acquisition Cost

Every business aims to increase customers. But you can't afford to do so if the cost of acquiring a new customer is too high. If you don't want to exceed your budget, then SEO is the right choice for you.

It takes time before SEO activities start showing the desired results. But with regular efforts, you can increase visibility through optimization. Since it's much cheaper than paid advertising, you can gain customers at a fraction of the cost.

Moreover, the SEO strategy works 24/7. You don't need to stay online to promote your brand. With a good search engine ranking, potential customers can view the website any time of the day and make buying decisions without the need for salespeople.

## Direct to Consumer

Dell is a reputable computer manufacturer that has its customer base around the globe. Initially, they used to sell their products via independent channel members, but they adopted the Direct-to-Consumer model in the 1990s. They eliminated third-party businesses and now sell their systems directly to users.

So, what made them an aspiration for other businesses?

Selling products directly to consumers isn't as easy as it seems. You need to build a strong team that can manage a myriad of operations. You may also have to compete against stores that have been in the business for a long time and have a loyal customer base. You also need to ensure that the product reaches customers without delays.

However, you can adopt this model to enjoy its never-ending perks. Direct selling gives a better chance of establishing relationships with customers. You can know their concerns and suggestions to improve their experience on an on-going basis. Since it eliminates the need for distributors, retailers, and other channel members, you can reduce pricing due to relatively lower costs.

Social media marketing is extremely beneficial to meet this goal. You can promote products directly to consumers through social platforms and deliver orders at their doorstep once they place the order.

## PR Brand Awareness

PR refers to deliberately spreading the news about a business with the help of media organizations to build a positive image of the firm.

You can't pay media organizations to assist you in this regard. However, TV channels,

radio show hosts, and popular blog owners contact entrepreneurs on their own that have made their name in the industry. You can also create press releases to inform the target audience about events, activities, and developments within your organization.

PR campaigns are fruitful since they improve customer perception of your business. When the media they trust says good things about you, there's a good chance they would want to learn more about your business.

You should plan events for the well-being of the local community to give back to society. For instance, you may arrange an event to give school supplies to needy kids, arrange charity drives for the poor, or organize blood donation drives. When local newspapers, magazines, and news shows cover these events, you will gain good publicity.

PR efforts not only bring results, but they don't cost anything in most cases. So, if you want people to think about your business, raise awareness about your work, then PR is one of the best options for you.

## Lead Generation

Digital marketing helps businesses grab attention and increase customers at a reasonable cost. But in order to achieve these goals, you should rely on lead generation tactics suitable for today's customers.

Lead generation campaigns can be carried out via social marketing, PPC search advertising, blogging, etc. This approach introduces your brand to the target audience. When they know about the products you offer, they may look for your website or social accounts.

These campaigns are good for your business because they let you collect the information of potential customers in a legitimate way. With their consent, you can later use this contact information for email marketing and SMS marketing to share brand details, discounts, and deals with leads to convert them into customers.

Lead generation works best when your audience willingly shares their information with you. You can offer them incentives for this purpose. On the basis of this information, you can engage them via tailor-made content that suits their preferences.

*Further Reading:*

<https://buffer.com/library/social-media-for-small-business/>

# The ROI of Your Mother (GaryVee said it, not me)

Digital marketing is a must for businesses in this era. It's because around 60% of the world's population is present on the internet. Your competitors are likely advertising on digital platforms and interacting with their target audience via social media. So, you may end up losing these precious prospective customers.

Social media has become a part of our lives. Whether you want to talk to friends or build business networks, social platforms are the way to go. With targeted social ads, you can effectively run campaigns to increase brand awareness, increase traffic to your official business website, convert visitors into customers, or engage the existing customer base. If you want to make the most of these platforms, you can't ignore analytics.

Gary Vaynerchuk, commonly known as Gary Vee is the king of digital marketing. During a corporate meeting, he was enquired multiple times about the ROI of social media campaigns at his company. When the top executive manager kept asking the same question, he gave back with a question of his own: "What's the ROI of your mother?"

While it may seem a personal attack to many, Gary Vee actually raised a great point. Being the marketing genius that he is, he highlighted the importance of context and efforts when it comes to social marketing.

He shared this memory in a 2011 event. At that time, not many tools were present to calculate the return on investment for social media campaigns. He implied that it's not possible to measure the ROI of his mother, but it reflects in his achievements. If his mother didn't encourage him to be his best and boost his self-esteem, he wouldn't be able to reach where he is today. To be precise, it's not easy to calculate the exact ROI of certain things, but it doesn't mean those things aren't valuable.

With time, businesses became more familiar with social marketing and a myriad of tools and metrics are now available to marketers. Therefore, he rephrased his earlier claims in 2015 and enlightened us with the fact that the ROI of social marketing can be measured and it's important to keep track of these performance indicators.

ROI of a tool is directly proportional to the time and efforts you invest in mastering it. For instance, the ROI of you playing basketball may be zero or a few hundred dollars if you bet on games. But a game of basketball will have a much higher worth for LeBron James

considering that he earns over \$39 million per annum salary, excluding sponsorship deals and other income. It is only because he spent years learning the game and investing in improving his skills.

The same goes for social platforms. If you keep investing in social media marketing and build your brand online through aggressive organic and paid marketing, then the ROI will go up in the future.

## Increasing the ROI of Social Marketing Campaigns

Social marketing works best when you create long-term goals instead of focusing on short-term benefits. Your marketing campaigns should align with the organization's vision and promote a positive image. Moreover, you should also define clear objectives you intend to achieve with social marketing campaigns. This way, you can increase the monetary and non-monetary revenue earned against these efforts.

### Time

Regardless of which business you start, it will take time for the business to become a success. You ought to build networks, create goodwill, expand the customer base, and improve cash flows. Social marketing is no different.

You need to spend a lot of time understanding the social world. Once you have set up business profiles on social platforms of your choice, you have to come up with the right content strategy. You need to learn who your ideal audience is and create content as per their interests. You also need to determine what your competitors are doing differently and learn from them.

Your social marketing efforts may not give much ROI during the initial days or even months. But if you come up with an effective plan, things will start getting better with time. So, keep exploring the world of social marketing and your brand will eventually grow online with time and efforts.



# Money

It's a prevalent myth that social media is free. Let me clear this misconception for you. Social platforms aren't free for businesses or even individuals. You spend your precious time chatting with friends and scrolling the timeline when you could have spent it doing more important tasks. So, you pay the price in the form of time.

However, it's important to remember that businesses shouldn't only rely on organic social marketing for growth. Social media ads are extremely helpful in meeting goals. Not only are they relatively cost-effective as compared to traditional marketing channels, but they also offer better targeting options.

Businesses spend millions on social ads, but you can invest in these ads as per your budget. There are a myriad of targeting options available and you can reach the audience based on their gender, location, interests, devices, online activities, behaviors, demographics, and many more specific options.

Furthermore, you can also run marketing campaigns for the audience depending on their buyer's journey stage:

- **Awareness Stage** – Brand Awareness and Reach
- **Consideration Stage** – Traffic, Engagement, App Installs, Video Views, Lead Generation, Messages
- **Conversion Stage** – Conversions, Catalogue Sales, Store foot Traffic

## Analytics Tools for Social Media ROI

You can spend significant amounts of time and money in building social profiles and running comprehensive ad campaigns. But how would you know whether your efforts bring the desired results?

The best way to track your social ad campaigns is through analytics tools. You can find various tools and software that provide useful information. With the help of this data, you can optimize your social media strategy and meet predefined marketing goals.

So, here are some of the best analytics tools that may prove the right choice for you:

## Hubspot Marketing Analytics

Hubspot Marketing Analytics dashboard offers a unique solution for your social marketing needs. It tracks the ROI of ad campaigns on any social platform, assists you with creating Calls-to-Action that drive results, guides you about the best SEO strategies, and lets you create attractive landing pages for lead generation.

## Google Analytics

With Google leading the tech industry, it's no surprise that their social media analytics tool is also one of the best options out there. It is compatible with Google partner platforms including YouTube. You can also integrate it with your business website to monitor website traffic. You can determine how much traffic each social platform directs towards your website and find out detailed information such as engagement, bounce rate, conversion rate, etc.

## Mention

Mention is an innovative tool through which you can find out how your brand is doing online. It informs you about discussions related to your brand and lets you know what your customers are saying about you. You can also use this tool to learn about your competitors and take appropriate actions to further improve your social presence.

## Keyhole

If your social marketing strategy revolves around Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, then Keyhole may be the ultimate solution for you. Not only can you explore the performance of social campaigns, but also find out when your target audience is online and how they

engage with social posts. You can also learn about reach, impressions, engagement, and conversion from individual posts as well as the entire ads campaign.

Aside from these standalone tools, you can also utilize analytics dashboard offered by different social platforms. They include Twitter Analytics, Facebook Insights, LinkedIn Analytics, Pinterest Analytics, last but not the least YouTube Analytics.

*Further Reading:*

Social Media Analytics: 12 Hidden Reports to See if Your Social Strategy is Working (neilpatel.com)

*Video:*



One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here: <https://open.library.okstate.edu/introsocialmedia/?p=104>

How to Get Your Business the Most Attention Possible in 2020 | Game Changers Summit Keynote 2019 – YouTube

# Every Network is an Island

When you decided to study social media marketing, you must have defined a few objectives. You may be exploring the social marketing world to work as a social media marketer for a business or get familiar with the concepts so you can implement the learning on growing your own startup. At this stage, many people may think “Which social media website is the best option for a business?”

It's a never-ending debate and you can waste your time in the argument. But the simplest answer to this debate is that every network is important. As for the decision of choosing which platform will work best for you; it entirely depends on your goals.

Social websites were developed to serve different purposes. For instance, Facebook brought together people from different parts of the world, LinkedIn facilitated online business networking, and Instagram enabled people of different age groups to capture important moments and share them with each other. So, before you reach the conclusion, it's crucial to understand the benefits of each platform and then decide which website has the highest capability of meeting your business goals.

## Who Lives There?

Social media attracts marketers due to its plethora of targeting options. Traditional marketing mainly focuses on mass marketing, but with social marketing you can efficiently decide the audience you intend to target with your marketing campaigns.

Before you launch a marketing campaign, it's essential to set goals. During this goal-setting phase, you need to define what type of audience should view your ads and how they should interact with the business. For this purpose, you should know what kind of internet users you will find on each social platform. So, let's learn more about the audience on popular social media websites.

## Facebook

Facebook is populated mostly by adults of 25-34 years age group. The second largest group is 18-24 years who make up 23.8% of Facebook's population and only 4.8% of users fall into the senior age group. The biggest country present on the platform is India, while users from the US and Canada are only 10% of the total Facebook population. As for gender, males dominate the platform with 56% of the total population. Also, 51% active users visit the website several times a day and 75% of Facebook users are at least college graduates.

## Twitter

With 500 million tweets sent every day, Twitter is one of the busiest social platforms. Talking about age groups, 25-34 year olds make up 28.9% of total users, while 35-49 year olds are 28.2% of total users. Lastly, the smallest age group on Twitter is 13-17 years with only 9.1% of share.

80% of users are affluent millennials from all around the world who use the website to get information. Most users come from the US, Japan, India, and Brazil respectively. As for businesses, \$913.8 million were spent on ads in 2019. Furthermore, 93% of Twitter users engage with brands by retweeting their posts or sharing their thoughts and experiences about brands of their choice.

## Instagram

On Instagram, the highest population is of 25-34 year olds who make up 33.1% of all users and age group of 18-24 years is second with 29.6% share. Most of them come from the US, whereas India and Brazil hold second and third positions respectively. 43% of these users are college graduates and 42% earn over \$75,000 per annum.

Over 510 million users are females and males are behind with a difference of 20 million. These users spend around 28 minutes a day on Insta. Most users follow at least a single

brand on the app and 73% of teens in the US find Instagram the easiest way to reach and interact with a brand.

## TikTok

TikTok is a customer favorite app and stands second among the most popular free apps of 2019. Its users are present in 141 countries while China, India, United States, and Turkey are among the countries where it is more frequently downloaded and used.

44% TikTok users are females and 56% are males. Out of these, 41% users are aged 16-24 years who spend at least 52 minutes every day on the app, watching videos related to entertainment, dance, pranks, fitness and other categories.

90% of TikTok or Douyin users access the app via Android smartphones and maintain a healthy engagement rate of 52%. In 2019, people spent \$115.3 million on the app for in-app purchases, influencer marketing, etc.

This was a brief overview of some popular social platforms. You can opt for the platform that suits your business needs.

## What Language Do They Speak?

Whether you're talking to friends in a party, communicating with little kids in social gatherings, or sharing thoughts with business associates in a professional setting, you should always be aware of your audience. When you choose the language or tone they understand, you can conveniently communicate with each other without misunderstandings.

Don't forget this rule when communicating with your audience on social media. Creating a profile on social websites is easy. What's difficult is to spread your message and get people talking about the brand in a positive manner. However, this objective can be achieved by determining what type of content the audience prefers and creating posts accordingly.

## Hashtags (#)

Hashtags were introduced by Chris Messina in an attempt to organize content on social media. Twitter platform first introduced this unique feature in 2007, but it was later adopted by Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, Pinterest, and LinkedIn due to its usability.

A hashtag categorizes content on the basis of topic. If you want to reach the right audience for your business, you need to target popular and relevant ones. Moreover, you can also create custom hashtags to promote your products.

Let's discuss this concept with an example. Imagine that a roofing service provider hires you as a social media marketer. To build their business online, you need to come up with suitable hashtags for the social marketing strategy. Here are a few trends and hashtags that may prove useful:

#roofing #roofingcontractor #construction #greenroofing #roofrepair #roofgutters

## Long Form vs. Short Form Content

The internet users tend to have short attention spans. They easily get distracted and can ignore your posts if they don't find it interesting. This is why content marketing in digital media focuses on captivating and concise content that can keep readers hooked till the last line.

*If we need to keep the content short, how can we share important information or news with the target audience?*

It's common for social media marketers to get confused about the length of content. But you should remember that the content length depends on the interest of your audience as well as the platform where you intend to post it.

If you are planning to set up a company blog, it's best to opt for long-form content. The purpose of blogging is to educate people about a relevant topic and offer comprehensive solutions to problems. For example, if you are an expert in providing electrical installation and repair services, you may want to write posts about safety tips for customers. Blog posts can be 500-1,000 words, but you should aim for publishing blogs of 2,000-2,500 words to boost SEO score.

LinkedIn is also suitable for posting long-form content. You can write about your area of expertise and experiences to share knowledge with other professionals.

Other social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc. may be suitable for short-term content. Whether you are thinking of creating text posts, videos, or images, it's a better option to keep the content short for better engagement.

Also, don't forget that long form videos aren't compatible with most social websites. Instagram supports videos of up to 15 seconds. So, if you are creating long form informative videos, it may be a good option to post it on YouTube and share a brief snippet on Twitter and other social websites. Your followers who find the topic interesting will visit your YouTube channel to watch the entire video.

## What's Their Favorite Dish?

Back in the day, social media marketing was all about text posts and still images. With technology advancements, a wide variety of content is now available to internet users. Let's first take a look at the most popular types of digital content. After that, we will discuss which content goes well with popular social websites.

- Blogs or articles
- eBooks
- Images (still images, GIFs, 360° images)
- Videos (recorded videos and live streaming)
- Infographics
- Testimonials
- Contests
- Polls
- Podcasts
- Webinars
- How-to guides

**Instagram** is an image-based platform. To promote your brand, you can share high-quality images of products, team members, as well as stills from networking events. Adding relevant captions and hashtags is also essential. A similar strategy is suitable for **Pinterest** where you can capture attention via images.

As for **Facebook**, videos perform far better than any other type of content. This includes



live streams as well as processed images for coverage of organizational events. You can also post videos developed with the aim of advertising on your Facebook page.

With the increasing population of **TikTok**, you shouldn't ignore its importance in the marketing plan. You can complement videos with captions and can include links to your website to increase web traffic.

**Twitter** network is known for its credibility when it comes to news and information. Users of this platform show more interest in professionally processed content which includes informational infographics and videos.

For **LinkedIn**, you can turn to long form articles, user guides, and eBooks to increase engagement. We all know **YouTube** is one of the most popular video streaming websites. So, you can post videos on this platform regardless of their size or length.

*Reading:*

<https://www.oberlo.com/blog/social-media-marketing-statistics>

<https://backlinko.com/social-media-users>

# What Network is on Now?

Digital marketing strategy plays a critical role in business growth. With the right strategy, you can raise brand awareness, attract the target audience, and build lasting relationships for a win-win situation. However, your marketing efforts can prove fruitful only if you understand how to use social platforms to your advantage.

Social media has become a part of our lives. Successful marketers put themselves in customers' shoes and choose a strategy that focuses on their pain points. If you want to increase the efficacy of your digital marketing campaigns, you need to learn about popular social media websites.

While a myriad of social media websites is available these days, you can't promote your brand on each and every website. By focusing your efforts on websites that are popular among your audience, you can drive results.

## Why Do You Want One to Win Or Lose?

Myspace got the first-mover advantage and remained the leading social website for quite some time. However, when Facebook was introduced, it captured a huge market share in no time and left other social media websites struggling with their loss.

When an innovative company is launched with the right strategy, it has a good chance of eliminating the predecessor and becoming the market leader. In the past, we have seen many such examples. Netflix beat Blockbuster, digital camera companies killed Polaroid, and Circuit City lost to Best Buy.

This is a common trend that old and established businesses lose to new market entrants. It is because many traditional stores prefer to stick with the strategies and actions they have been using for years and fear change or innovation.

This practice isn't good for anyone; neither marketers nor consumers. If there is no market competition, consumers would suffer the most.

Higher competition eliminates the monopoly. The more firms in the market, the more efforts would be needed for a business to make its place in the crowded market. They are motivated to innovate and offer value to consumers to stand out. It keeps them on toes

and they constantly put in their best efforts to stay ahead and stay relevant. Similarly, they are also inclined to offer better quality goods and services at reasonable prices.

Now, let's consider the example of social media in this scenario. It's best for everyone that the competition is increasing amongst social media companies. The more the competition, the higher will be the service quality at lower rates. So, whether you use the internet for personal networking or you are a business marketer, this competition will benefit you in the long run.

## How Do We Benefit From Each Network?

Investing time and money in social media is no longer optional for business marketers. With your competition gaining customers and building a good reputation via social websites, you can't afford to miss out on this invaluable opportunity.

As marketers, your first step should be to get a website where you can display products, testimonials, and other relevant information. After that, you can gain several benefits from social accounts.

Regardless of which platform you choose, you can raise awareness via social posts as well as paid social media advertising. Your social posts should include a CTA that guides users about the next action. For instance, if you post a special discount for your social media followers, you ought to add the link to the online store where they can redeem it.

Customers tend to trust businesses that have a transparent system. Not only should you share detailed information about your business, but also share accurate pricing and terms and conditions. With this approach, you can earn their trust.

Many customers post reviews about their experiences with a brand. When a satisfied customer posts a positive comment, you should respond to them. However, it's equally important to respond to negative comments. When you take action quickly to solve their problems, your popularity and sales are likely to elevate.

## What's Hot Right Now?

Being a marketer, you should be well-aware of current market trends. It will help you stay relevant and update your marketing strategy accordingly to reach your audience. On

the other hand, if you don't know which social media marketing channels are the most popular, you may lose customer attention before you know it.

With people confined to home due to COVID, the use of the internet, especially social media has significantly increased. A majority of people interact with their friends and families via social media. The use of digital media and social platforms for business purposes has also become the norm. So, you need to know which platforms are hot these days and which ones are losing popularity.

The trends for 2020 are out now and marketers can develop a strategy for 2021 based on these statistics. Here is a list of top social websites along with the number of active users on these sites.

- Facebook – 2,701 million
- YouTube – 2,000 million
- WhatsApp – Facebook – 2,000 million
- Facebook Messenger – 1,300 million
- WeChat – 1,206 million
- Instagram – 1,158 million
- TikTok – 689 million

If you don't currently use the aforementioned sites for marketing purposes, it's time to go through your social marketing strategy again and revise the strategy to adjust to these trends.

## Let's Explore

Whether you are promoting a new business or working with a business that has been in the industry for a long time, you need an effective marketing strategy for social channels.

In social marketing, there are no rules and standards. You can't follow specific rules that guarantee to meet objectives. The best way to succeed in the social media world is to adopt the trial and error technique. You should come up with a plan to promote the brand and execute it on social channels of your choice. If it brings you the desired results, then it's great! But there is a good chance that social marketing efforts won't always prove effective.

Despite your efforts to boost awareness, gain customers, or generate leads, your social

strategy won't always work. This is why it's important to have a contingency plan. If the first plan doesn't get results, you should adjust it based on the performance metrics.

The good thing is that there are several options available for marketers. If Facebook doesn't work, you may turn to LinkedIn for the next campaign. You should set clear objectives, choose the right platform that meets your criteria, and measure performance after the execution of the social marketing plan for making your social marketing campaigns fruitful.

### *Further Reading*

<https://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-marketing-strategy/>

<https://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-marketing-trends-2021-predictions-from-pros/>

# Content Speaks

Social media and content go hand-in-hand. The purpose of creating social media websites was to provide users a platform where they can interact with each other and share information. Being a marketer, you can't ignore the value of content. Hence it goes without saying that you need a content marketing strategy for social platforms.

Many companies post content on social websites without a documented strategy to back their actions. A well-documented strategy and plan streamlines actions and guides you in the right direction. It helps you stay on track towards long-term and short-term goals and get heard.

To create an effective content strategy, ask yourself the following questions:

- What are my goals?
- Who should I post content for?
- Which platforms would work best?
- What type of content is preferred by my audience?
- How often should I post content?
- Which KPIs should I use for measuring performance?

## Creating Your “Voice”

Brand voice is the distinct personality of your business that sets you apart from the competition. It creates an image or perception in customers' minds. If you promote a positive message through a captivating brand voice, then it won't be difficult for you to achieve social media marketing goals through your unique brand voice.

On social media, you can attract the audience through storytelling. Your stories should portray a consistent image to build credibility. For instance, if you are an optimistic person in real life, you notice the positive aspect of every event and don't linger in the negativity. Similarly, if you intend to portray your brand as adventurous, energetic, inspiring, or trustworthy, you should choose a tone that portrays this image and be consistent.

Customers consider the brand image of a business before they interact with them or

make buying decisions. If your brand voice is intimidating or you often post controversial content, then you may end up losing them to more stable and friendly competitors.

## Where to Find the Right Content?

Creating fresh content takes time and effort. If you engage with your audience on multiple social websites, it won't be easy to generate unique content for every platform especially when you need to post content on a regular basis. Amidst the coronavirus outbreak, getting new ideas and creating unique content has become even more difficult. This is when content repurposing comes into the picture.

It's a good idea to look at content generated by other social media users. You can get to know about the latest trends and get ideas for your business. An example is that you can work on some DIY projects and record the procedure via a time-lapse video to engage the audience.

You may have created some evergreen content in the past. Go check your social profiles and locate posts that can be reused. For example, you may find images posted on Pinterest or Instagram from previous vacations. You can create blog posts about your experiences around those images and post them on your blog. However, when repurposing the content, make sure it goes well with your brand voice and the general language of the specific social website.

You should also consider creating content around the products your business offers. You can create whitepapers to share detailed information about the product or process. It's also a good idea to complement it with a how-to article or video to educate customers.

Content repurposing works great when you understand your weaknesses and strengthens. If you aren't good at talking in front of a camera, then creating videos for social media may not be your best bet. Stammering out of nervousness portrays a negative image. You should rather choose platforms that go well with your personality and can help you promote your entrepreneurial venture.

Now that the world is moving towards online business, e-conferencing has become a norm. You can conduct business meetings as well as events via Zoom or other digital platforms. You should consider recording such online events and posting them on social media.

## How to Create the Right Content?

As a marketer, you can learn from social media trends popular among other business people. Event marketing has become quite popular these days where professionals meet and communicate with each other about topics of mutual interest. These events provide you an opportunity to create engaging content for your social media audience.

You should consider recording these events and posting them on social media for the followers. You can record videos via any device, but you may wonder whether it's better to share live and unprocessed videos or should you process them first before posting on social media. I would say both tactics can work in your favor.

In the case of live events, social media users expect to enjoy live coverage of the event. If you don't want them to miss those golden moments, you should live broadcast the event on your social media pages. Facebook Live feature comes in handy for this purpose.

Back in the day, it was believed that brands may suffer if they share unprocessed video content with the audience as they are less attractive to viewers. But this isn't the case anymore. People don't mind this approach because they are aware you may not always have professional equipment at hand when attending a business event. Moreover, people today are more interested in authentic brands. Overly processed content leads to question marks on authenticity, which is why live videos should be added to your social media content strategy.

It's also important to remember that posting live videos doesn't mean processed and professional quality videos aren't important. You can share the event live and process captured images and videos for later use. With this professional content, you can promote the brand, product, or event on an on-going basis. So, we can say that a combination of raw/live videos and processed videos works best for many businesses.

## What Tools Do You Need?

Social media content creation may seem a difficult task but it's no rocket science. You don't need to invest a huge sum in buying equipment and tools to create the right content.

Many marketers avoid generating video content for social media because they don't own professional equipment. However, you don't need highly professional cameras to record videos. It's perfectly fine to use a smartphone camera, digital cam, or GoPro for capturing



events. But it's recommended to get a portable tripod to ensure captured videos are stable and clear.

In the indoor environment, you may need to arrange lighting equipment. However, outdoor events can save you from this trouble too. Also, don't forget to get a microphone to record audio along with the video content.

If you intend to share it live, you need not process it to enhance quality, but it's important to edit and process them for professionally posting them on LinkedIn and other platforms.

There are many video editing software available that you can learn to use. However, it is a complex process that is best left to professionals. To find qualified professionals, you should visit [Freelancer.com](https://www.freelancer.com) and [Upwork](https://www.upwork.com) websites. These are popular freelancing platforms where you can hire professionals on a project basis or an on-going as per your needs.

## The Caption Game?

Posting images and videos on Instagram and other websites isn't enough; you should complement it with captivating captions to increase engagement. Its length can vary, but Insta supports captions of up to 2,200 words. The shorter the text, the more effective it will be.

For your persona profile, you may add a quote that comes to your mind. But business branding shouldn't be done this way. You should write a concise caption that represents the brand personality and resonates with your followers.

Writing long-form captions can work for brands as long as they aren't boring. If you want to adopt this method, always remember to mention important phrases or words at the beginning. This way, when the post is truncated, users will still be able to get the information at a glance.

Aside from the descriptive text, you should also add the most appropriate hashtags to increase visibility.

## What's the Hashtag?

A hashtag is a combination of letters or numbers that represent a specific topic. It's helpful for users because it helps them organize content and view posts based on their interests or the latest trends. You can follow hashtags that attract you the most so as to easily access information about that topic.

These hashtags are widely used on TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and many other popular websites. As a marketer, you should up your game and master the art of creating and using the right hashtags to better promote your brand and products online.

You can use an existing hashtag or create a new one around your business or business event. On TikTok, brands often create viral challenges and come up with suitable hashtags for these challenge videos. You can follow in their footsteps and create a challenge of your own to get customer attention.

You can brainstorm to come up with innovative hashtags for business marketing, but hashtag tools can simplify this task for you. It's recommended to explore Hashtagify, RiteTag, Trendsmap, and AutoHash to master the art of hashtagging.

## Ask Your 8-Year-Old

Social media strategy gives the desired results when it's focused on the needs of target customers. So, brands that create content that attracts their followers tend to get more views and can maintain a good conversion rate.

The population on social media is constantly increasing and more and more youngsters are creating profiles on social media. Therefore, the best way to understand what kind of content these people need is to get the opinion of kids and teenagers.

These youngsters are well-equipped with modern technology and understand how to use almost any platform. They can guide you about the content that attracts this young generation and even give you unique ideas to make your content more engaging.

With the help of these insights, you can develop a plan to increase the engagement rate and convince the audience to take action.

## Is that Wrong? The Ethical Question in Social Media

Remember when Adidas faced a backlash by tweeting the following message to participants who completed the Boston annual race in 2018, due to its reference to painful Boston bombings at the 2013 event?

“Congrats, you survived the Boston Marathon!”

Or when the skincare company, Nivea, posted a social media ad emphasizing that “White is Purity”?

Many businesses grab the headlines from time to time due to a simple mistake on social media or due to their inappropriate posts. It’s a growing concern among social media users and can bring negative publicity to businesses.

Before you post content on social media, make sure it’s free of profanities, culturally inappropriate language, racism, or other negative aspects that can cause controversy. You need to respect everyone regardless of their beliefs, ethnic background, financial status, or sexual orientation, and create content that doesn’t harm anyone’s feelings. With an ethical approach, you can effectively promote your brand and build a positive brand image.

## Am I Famous Yet?

Social media marketing is a cost-efficient yet effective way to promote your products and reach out to the audience. A common mistake made by some marketers is that they post content and ads on social media for a few days and opt out of social marketing if the posts go unnoticed.

There is no doubt that social media websites have become the leading platforms for marketing purposes. However, it doesn’t mean that your brand will suddenly become popular in a few days.

Nowadays, a majority of businesses rely on social media marketing. Under such circumstances, you can’t expect to become the market leader within a week.

What you need to do is to be consistent with your effort. During the initial few weeks, your social marketing campaigns may not do that great. However, you should follow the marketing strategy without losing hope. Furthermore, monitoring the performance of the

campaign is also essential. It can guide you about what you are doing right and which areas of your social marketing need to be changed.

With this approach, your social marketing efforts will bring results in time and can become the customer choice through constant efforts.

*Reading:*

<https://buffer.com/resources/repurposing-content-guide/>

# Time Management

Social media is a great tool for promoting your business without breaking the bank, but it can become a nuisance if you aren't careful. Working as a social media marketer can be a tough job if you constantly feel the urge to scroll the timeline every now and then.

Furthermore, social marketing tends to be a time-consuming task. Without an effective plan, you will end up wasting time and won't be able to achieve your goals.

A major reason why marketers fail to use social media to their advantage is that they try to be on every social network. This is neither possible nor a good idea. Regardless of whether you work on your own or have a social media team, it's important to choose social websites that fit your goal. This way, you can save precious time by putting your entire focus on social accounts that can increase website traffic and generate results.

Another challenge for social marketers is to stay focused on work when logging into social media accounts for job-related tasks. You may soon find yourself checking posts and messages from other users. The best strategy to tackle this issue and manage time is to set time limits for every task. For instance, if you need to post a tweet, you should specify the time needed for the task. With the deadline approaching, you will be motivated to prioritize work and avoid indulging in time-wasting activities.

When you are responsible to manage multiple social media accounts, it's not easy to keep track of the password for each account. You can neither write it down on a piece of paper due to security risks nor use the same password for every account.

The best way to avoid wasting time looking for passwords is to use password management software. These tools save credentials in a safe way and enable marketers to log in to different accounts without an issue. Moreover, when you need to check social media profiles via any other device, all you need to do is to access your password manager account and it will provide you access in no time.

## Practice Safe Scheduling

Behind every successful job is plenty of planning. To succeed as a social marketer, you need to plan the actions you need to take for running marketing campaigns.

Your priority should be to get a content planning calendar for your business. You can easily find a template online or design a calendar that best fits your requirements. With the help of this tool, you can specify the content that needs to be posted across platforms.

In organizations, social media marketers usually plan content for a month in advance. You can make slight changes to this calendar on the go based on current events. You can decide the theme of the day or week and plan which type of content should be posted on different platforms throughout the month. This practice makes sure you can regularly post content for business promotion. If you work with a team of social media marketers, it will be easier to keep them in the loop.

When you track the performance of social media campaigns, you will get to know when the majority of your audience is online and can post content accordingly. But what if that time slot isn't during standard business hours and you can't log in at that particular time? This is when scheduling tools will save you from trouble.

SocialPilot, HootSuite, Post Planner, Feedly, and other similar tools can be used to schedule social media posts for a later date or time. You won't have to worry about forgetting to post content and the software will take care of this task.

## **That's Embarrassing: Don't Let Your Scheduled Post Land at the Wrong Party**

Scheduling social media posts via software can make things easier for you and boost productivity. However, this method isn't fool-proof and can lead to embarrassing mistakes if you aren't cautious.

Some brands become the talk of the town in a negative way when they accidentally post content with unintentional profanities. Sephora once created a hashtag "#C\*\*tdownToBeauty" when they actually wanted to use the hashtag #CountdownToBeauty. This mistake can happen when you schedule a post for later without proofreading it. It's ideal to update settings for filtering out unethical phrases and words.

US Airways and a few other businesses caused controversy in the past when they accidentally attached highly explicit images or links to pornographic websites. These mistakes can happen due to minor carelessness, but can attract significant negative publicity which isn't good.

You don't want to fall victim to such craziness. So, it's best to carefully check and recheck the post before you schedule it for later.

When you manage content for multiple social platforms or working as a social media marketer for multiple businesses, there is a higher risk of making mistakes. For instance, you may want to schedule a post via software for Twitter, but accidentally do so for another website. While this mistake may not appear insignificant, it can promote a negative image of your business.

Lastly, it's a good idea to create social media posts for prominent occasions, events, and festivals, but make sure you schedule it for the right time and date. What if you create an Instagram post for Halloween, but due to the scheduling mistake, it gets posted a day or two after the holiday? You may become the laughing stock for the audience.

## If This, Then That? Social Media Automation

If-then concept is a basic principle of computer programming where you specify the system to check for the defined condition and execute the specific block of code only if it meets the condition. IFTTT platform was developed with the intention to provide similar functionality to social media marketers.

This platform allows marketers to create applets for automated content. You can create posts for suitable social websites and specify the trigger point. When the specified action is triggered, the post applet will be published.

However, using the IFTTT model may not be your best bet when it comes to comments. Some businesses use bots to post automated comments. These comments don't only seem fake, but they also portray a negative image of the company.

Alternatively, it can be used to improve customer service. For instance, you can use this model with a messaging app to facilitate customers. You can specify answers to most common queries that are frequently asked.

For example, when a customer enquires you about your working hours or the prices of your products, they can receive an automated answer to their query. This practice saves time and provides answers to customers without unnecessary delays.

Although automation can make your job easier to some extent, it never works for marketers to create a post and then forget about it. As a result, it may get published at an inappropriate time and seem irrelevant. You should go through the scheduled content from time to time and tweak posts if needed.

## Analyze That

If this then that is a valuable automation tool. Not only does it enable you to automate social media posts for business promotion purposes, but you can also use it for personal reasons. For instance, you can use this tool to wish colleagues on their birthdays or work anniversaries.

However, this functionality should be used carefully. This tool posts the same content every time an event takes place. In certain cases, this may get out of hand.

When an existing or potential customer messages a brand, they often receive an automated message where they are addressed with their first name. This may cause an embarrassing situation for businesses in some cases. A few years ago, a brand used this function on Twitter where they were addressed with their user name. But the user had previously changed their profile name with a profane and the tweet made the brand look bad to other users.

Such events aren't common and don't happen too often. But they can lead to an embarrassing situation for your business and may deter the customer base. So, before you opt for the IFTTT model, you should evaluate your decision and come up with suitable content that is less likely to lead to controversy.

### *Reading:*

<https://www.cincopa.com/blog/the-ultimate-guide-to-scheduling-video-posts-on-social-media/>

<https://blog.oneupapp.io/social-media-scheduling-tools/>



# We're Engaged! Aren't We?

When you create business profiles on social media, you may aim to increase the number of followers through content marketing. Increasing your follower base is certainly important for your brand, but you should also focus on increasing engagement for long-term benefits.

Social media engagement refers to likes, comments, and shares on posts by other social media users. Not all of your followers are active and many of them may forget about you after liking your page on Facebook or following you on Instagram. In this sense, engagement is far more impactful since it indicates that your followers not only see your posts, but also interact with you one way or another.

The phrase *out of sight, out of mind* is certainly true and is applicable in the scenario of business marketing. With the internet making it easier to reach a global audience and promote and sell products without hassles, more and more businesses are entering the market and leading to increased competition. If your content reaches them and captures their attention, they would stay with you provided that your products and customer service meet their needs. But it won't take long for them to switch to your competitor brands if you ghost them and your content stops reaching their social media timeline.

If they often interact with your brand, the social media algorithm would show them your content on priority and ensure that they remember you. Therefore, not only should you create engaging content, but also monitor the engagement rate.

There are many different tools available that can help you keep track of customer engagement on social media including Twitter Counter, Buzzlogix, Zoho Social, and Agorapulse that can help you monitor the engagement rate as well as brand reputation across social platforms.

## What If They Don't Talk Back?

Customer engagement is a key concern for brands. The more customers interact with social media posts, the more impact your business makes in the market. This is a good sign

because engagement is the driving force of ROI and makes the business profitable down the road.

However, even though business marketers try their best to attract the target audience and encourage them to like or comment on their posts, they are not always able to achieve this goal. This situation is troublesome and can make you wonder why your entire efforts are going in vain.

To get the answer, you should first analyze your current social media strategy. It's possible that your content is of low-quality or doesn't interest your audience. It's also a possibility that your choice of social website isn't right. With this detailed analysis, you may find out potential issues with your strategy and revise it to address those issues.

However, it should also be noted that defective strategy isn't always the cause of low engagement. You may need to develop more interesting content to capture the attention. It may be a good idea to hold live Q&A sessions.

Customers are no longer interested in listening to faceless brands. They rather find the human side of brands more attractive and engage with them on social media. By introducing them to your team and interacting with them via live sessions, you can win their trust and increase engagement.

Customer-generated content can also help you in this regard. You shouldn't only create and share your own content, but also retweet, or like, or share relevant posts by followers. For instance, if you find an interesting post of your followers discussing the niche or topic related to your business, you should consider sharing it with your follower base.

Influencer marketing can also be a good option. You can get in touch with social media influencers who have built a community of followers and ask them to promote your brand. When they endorse your business, their followers will visit your social profile and may engage with the content if they find it interesting.

## Should I Still Use Email?

Some people claim that email is a feature of the past and has lost its importance over time. However, digital marketers are well-aware this statement is far from the truth. Despite the popularity of other online marketing methods, email promotions are still extremely effective.

Most consumers check their emails on a daily basis which is why there is no better way for marketers to share information about their market offerings and latest product

launches. You can send newsletters to customers and leads and invite them to read the latest blog posts, visit your social media, and learn about what's new.

Email is relevant in the era of social media because it is a helpful tool for increasing website traffic and generating or capturing qualified leads. You can also curate content and send customized information to customer groups as per their interests. This targeted information can help in building strong relationships and entice customers to interact with you.

Once they are directed to your website to get more information, there is a good chance they will go through the list of products you sell and purchase them soon.

## What If They're Upset

Businesses that value their customers work extra hard to provide them an unprecedented and memorable experience. However, they may not be able to achieve this goal every time. Despite your best efforts, some customers may still be unhappy and dissatisfied.

Unhappy customers often post negative reviews about brands on social media pages or Facebook groups. If you notice such a review, you should get ready to resolve the situation instead of losing your cool.

You should calmly listen to customers and apologize for the mistake. If it was a genuine problem, then you should empathize and assure them that the management would look into the matter and resolve the problem at the earliest. You can also send them a gift or discount voucher to make up for their bad experience.

Some customers may accept your apology and let it go, but some customers get too angry and they don't listen to social media managers. They may continue posting negative reviews about your business and hurt your brand reputation.

In this scenario, the best strategy is to use tracking tools like Mention that keep you updated about discussions and reviews about your business. With this real-time information, you can tackle the situation and spread positive messages about your brand to prevent them from further hurting your business.

## Don't Feed the Trolls

Some angry customers post negative reviews because they genuinely faced a bad experience with your company. But remember that some social media users deliberately post provocative content against other users and businesses out of habit.

They poke fun at others and humiliate them with derogatory content. Interacting with such trolls and responding to their comments can further ignite the situation. So, you need to tactfully handle the situation.

First of all, write terms and policies for your community where followers are expected to be respectful of others and refrain from using offensive language. You can politely ask trolls to be mindful in the light of community policies. You can respond to fake posts regarding your business with facts or ignore them. You can also come up with witty responses to diffuse the situation.

However, social media trolls don't go away easily and they may keep trying to instigate you. Don't get into the trap and stay calm and respectful to protect your brand image.

## Do the Hokey Pokey: Turn Complaints into Gold

Brands that often receive negative comments and reviews tend to lose customers and damage the reputation. But customer complaints and negative comments aren't as bad as they are perceived.

These posts give you a chance to identify and recognize your mistakes. Your business processes or products may be harmful in some manner or fail to meet the needs of customers. Instead of treating these comments as trash and ignoring them, you should treat them as feedback and make the most of this constructive feedback to enhance service quality.

If a customer points out that the behavior of the staff wasn't good, you should pay attention to them. Offering excuses won't do good as it gives the impression that you don't consider customer complaints important. You can rather arrange training sessions for team members to help them boost their skillset and improve service quality.

You should encourage customers and social media followers to offer suggestions for further improving your business processes. Also, once you implement a customer suggestion, you should post it on social media and appreciate customer feedback.

## Do You Even Care?

Customer service is a challenging job. You need to listen to customer complaints and suggestions, and bear their anger while taking the blame for intentional or unintentional mistakes.

No matter what type of business you manage, effective customer service is the key to success. You should always prioritize customers and work hard to add value to them. Similarly, listening to and addressing customer issues is equally important for a business.

Customers are now aware of their rights and they don't want to do anything with businesses that ignore them. To become an effective business leader or social media marketer, you ought to care about your customers. You don't want to receive negative reviews due to the negligence of your team. You should develop a culture within the organization where staff members consider it their first and foremost responsibility to take care of customers and leave no stone unturned in achieving customer satisfaction.

This approach strengthens relationships with customers and creates a lasting bond.

*Reading:*

<https://www.omnikick.com/customer-engagement-strategies/>

# Social Media Jobs. Why Understanding Basic Marketing Principles Will Put You Ahead of the Rest

It's a prevalent myth that social media management is all about mastering different social media websites. The better you are with using the latest technology and creating and posting content across social accounts, the more successful you will be along the journey.

However, social media management is more about marketing than using social accounts. Therefore, you ought to grasp basic marketing principles. If you understand basic marketing concepts, you can stand out and do well as compared to other candidates.

The evolution of technology has offered a variety of platforms to marketers, but marketing principles stay almost the same. If you know marketing, you can apply these principles to promote a brand online and generate results.

## The Intern Always Gets Blamed

At the beginning of your professional journey, you may need to work as an intern to get experience, increase knowledge, and learn useful skills alongside experienced professionals.

The internship is a rewarding yet challenging job. You get the opportunity to gain plenty of useful information, but the tasks can be never-ending. Moreover, if anything goes wrong, there is a good chance you will be blamed for the mistake as the junior-most staff member in the organization.

It's a part of the learning journey. You need to be headstrong and accept feedback without getting angry. This knowledge will help you when you start working as a regular social media management employee and can use this learning to your advantage.

## How Boring is Your Resume?

When you apply for a job, the resume is your first introduction to potential employers. They decide whether or not it's a good idea to interview you for the job based on this professional document. If it's too boring, lacks information, and doesn't highlight the information they are looking for, you can already say goodbye to that internship opportunity you have been dreaming of.

Recruiters evaluate your skills, personality, strengths, and qualifications with the help of your resume. So, you can't ignore the importance of this document. If you have got rejected by recruiters or afraid that recruiters may not consider your application, then it's a good idea to update and redesign your resume.

It's best to invest in an attractive resume design that highlights your skills, qualifications, experience, and personal strengths. At the beginning of the career, you may benefit from a chronological order resume or design a custom theme that fits the specifications of organizations where you want to apply for a social media marketing vacancy.

Since recruiters get a huge number of candidate resumes, you can get more visibility and an edge over other candidates with the help of an attractive document format. Before finalizing it, make sure you proofread the document for potential errors and spice it up with attractive designs to increase your chance of getting hired.

## Is LinkedIn Still a Thing?

Launched in 2003 as a social network for professionals, LinkedIn has been going strong since its inception. It is one of the best websites to set up your professional profile and interact with professional experts from different fields.

LinkedIn facilitates you to share thoughts and knowledge with other users on the platform who might be interested in the insights you share. You can also have one-on-one chats with people via its secure private message service.

Since LinkedIn is getting old, it is rumored that this platform is losing its charm. However, it's an evergreen platform that is extremely useful in this era of technology.

Many recruiters prefer to invite and hire candidates via LinkedIn. It's because they can evaluate the person to some extent before the interview with the help of their profile

and the content they share. In fact, many recruiters conduct short interviews through LinkedIn to save time and make the recruitment process much simpler.

So, it's recommended for business professionals, especially marketers to create LinkedIn profiles. If you stay active and regularly post relevant and informative content, you can build relationships and get job offers with ease.

## Going Solo

Working as a social media marketer with an expert team of professionals can offer you learning opportunities. You can get useful tips those team members learned through years of experience. They can also guide you about enhancing your skills and the right path for progressing in the industry.

However, taking up a full-time job isn't for everyone. You may have dreams of making your name as an established social media marketer and this dream can come true only by working solo and launching your entrepreneurial career.

You may want to become a freelancer and gradually set up your social media marketing agency once you build a network of business connections and clients.

Before starting your agency, you ought to develop a business plan that covers necessary information about the business such as potential customers, vendors, business strategy, financial resources to execute plans, and your team that can work hard for the future of the organization. You may want to invest in a professional website to build authenticity and credibility.

## Building Your Portfolio

Whether you plan to take up a job as a social media marketer or aim to launch your social media agency, you need a portfolio. A portfolio is a set of previous work that demonstrates your skills.

When you send your resume to a potential employer, they would ask for your portfolio to determine how good you are at what you do. Similarly, this portfolio will prove helpful when you reach clients and offer your social media management services for their business or professional needs.



As a beginner at social media marketing, you may struggle to get your first job or assignment. You can create social media profiles for your freelancing journey. By managing these accounts the right way, you can show clients and recruiters that you are good at the job.

Furthermore, you can also present detailed insights into the performance of social media campaigns you may carry out to promote your personal brand.

# YOLO

Social media marketing is the need of the hour. Not only does it help individuals stay connected, it also adds value to businesses with low cost and effective marketing methods.

Traditional marketing is still relevant, but digital marketing in general and social media marketing, in particular, is extremely helpful for entrepreneurs. It can be an invaluable asset for lead generation, raising brand awareness, engaging existing customers, and acquiring new customers at relatively lower rates.

However, social websites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and other platforms can be tricky. Not every marketer is able to get the desired results via social media marketing despite their familiarity with social media websites. This is because they ignore the basic principles of marketing, especially the marketing mix or 4 P's principle.

Social marketing works on the basis of these fundamental marketing principles and you need to rethink these concepts in the context of digital media to achieve your marketing goals.

The key to surviving in the digital world is to understand the needs and wants of your customers. When you know which platforms are most commonly used by your target audience, then you can stay active on those websites to increase your reach.

It's also essential to monitor the activities of your competitors. This practice helps you learn about the latest industry trends, identify your mistakes, and learn from those that have working in the marketing industry for quite a long time. You can update your social marketing strategy accordingly for better results.

Despite these tactics, your business may suffer if you blindly follow in the footsteps of the competition. You should rather develop an effective strategy that suits your particular needs.

For this purpose, you should first define your goals for social marketing campaigns and specify your target audience. The next step is to identify where these customers are mostly present and then create social media accounts on those websites. It's important to remember that you cannot and should not try to run marketing campaigns on every social media website or this approach will only backfire.

The next step is to develop a content strategy for these websites. You should know what kind of content is popular on each website so you can post it when most of your target

audience is online. You don't need to create fresh content for every website and can rather repurpose and reuse it to avoid wasting time.

Moreover, there are many tools or software available that can assist you in creating unique content and repurposing the existing information. You can use these tools to maintain a content calendar and schedule social media posts so they reach your target customers at the right time.

Social marketing efforts produce results when you stay up-to-date with performance. Social media built-in tools as well as external performance measurement software can give you detailed information about the performance of marketing campaigns. You can find out which activities are performing as per expectations and which tactics need to be revised. With the help of this information, you can update and revise the social media strategy for improved performance.

This book is the first step in the right direction and provides you with guidelines for prospering as a social media marketer. However, you can learn best by implementing these principles and activities on your own. Hands-on experience further clarifies concepts, gives you a better understanding of digital and social media marketing, and helps you get down to the nitty-gritty of modern marketing strategies.



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