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INTRODUCTION

Believe it or not, B2B buyers are social

If you follow the latest trends in online marketing – and maybe even if you don't – you are probably hearing plenty of buzz about social media. Marketing professionals throughout the world are praising social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn as the answer to all our marketing prayers.

While there is a lot of cheerleading going on, there are legitimate business reasons why you should integrate social media into your marketing mix. Consider these statistics:

- 94% of B2B buyers conduct online research before purchasing a business product (Source: Accenture)
- 75% of B2B buyers, including 84% of C-level or VP-level executives, use social media to make purchasing decisions (Source: IDC)
- Content marketing costs 62% less than traditional marketing and generates three times as many leads (Source: Demand Metric)

There are compelling reasons to jump on the social media bandwagon, but what should you do? In this guide, I will separate the hype from the helpful in social media marketing so you can learn the proven way to produce results with social media.

Let's get started!



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WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING?

Your peer-to-peer public relations machine

Social media marketing involves leveraging social networking websites to share relevant and interesting content, or social media, with your network of fans, followers, and connections. Social media marketing campaigns typically focus on creating compelling content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks.

From a relationship-building perspective, it offers a unique opportunity to connect with others with minimal cost, in a manner in which many of your customers and prospects will be comfortable.

There is a lot of confusion about social media marketing and its various components, so I feel it is important to define a number of terms.

- **Social Media:** Social media is a broad term used to describe information created in text, image, audio, and video forms that can be easily shared and distributed in online social networks.
- **Social Networks:** Social networks are online destinations, such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and LinkedIn, that allow people to share social media with their followers, friends, and connections.
- **Social Media Marketing:** Social media marketing is the process of sharing of social media on social networks and other websites for the purpose of nurturing customer relationships.

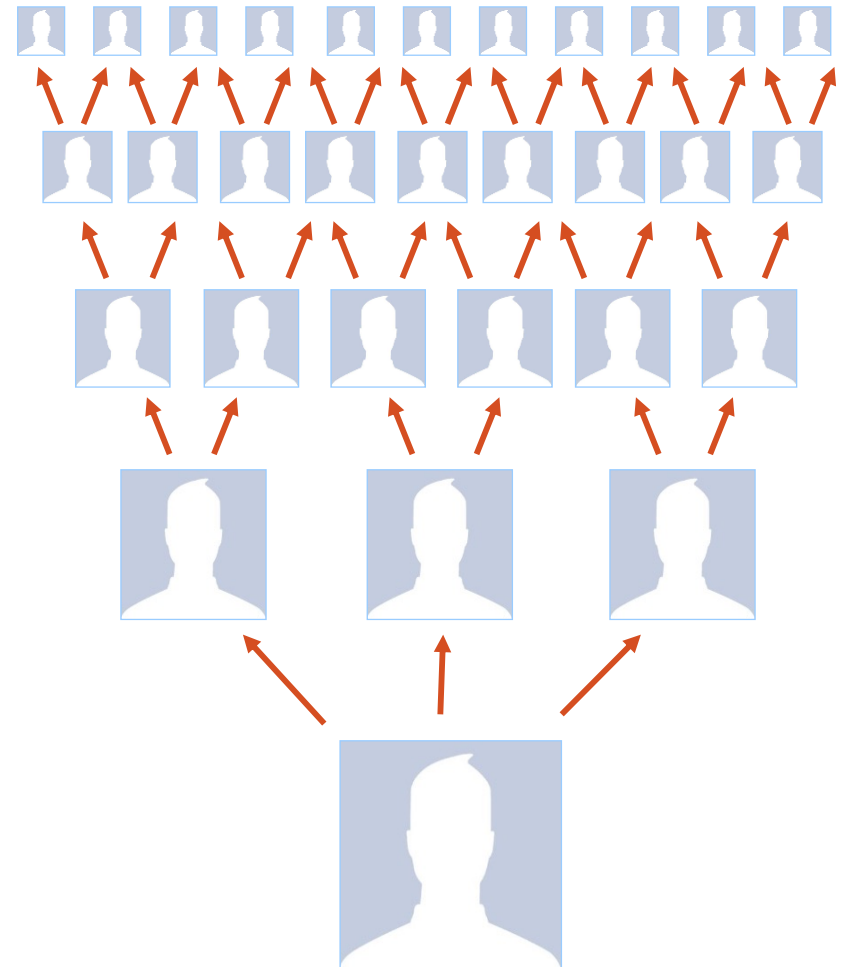
It's that simple. The key is to use each of these components strategically to produce results.

Think of it as peer-to-peer public relations

A simple way to understand social media marketing is to think of it as public relations. However, instead of pitching the media, you are pitching your peers, but without the appearance or feeling of being pitched to. As detailed in the diagram to the right, by sharing useful and relevant content with members of your network, your message can achieve a tremendous reach as your network shares your content with members of their networks, who share it with members of their networks, and so on, and so on, and so on.

Since you are a B2B company, you may think social media marketing is not for your business. There was a time when I would have agreed with you. However, a number of significant changes in the online world have changed my mind.

The most significant change is that the line between social media marketing and search engine marketing is becoming increasingly blurred. Google is now tracking your website's social media activity to help determine your search ranking. If your Website has content that is widely shared on social networks you will earn the coveted first page position. So, if you think social media marketing is a waste of time, it's time to change your opinion.



THE SECRET TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING SUCCESS

Become a content marketer

The secret to success in social media marketing is to stop marketing your products and services. You need to stop thinking you are only in the business of selling products and services. You are also in the business of *knowledge*.

To effectively market your products and services today, you cannot rely exclusively on your traditional marketing and sales tactics. There are a number of reasons people choose to do business with you besides your having the right product at the right price. They might appreciate the way your company stands behind its products, for example. Or they might enjoy the relationship you've created with them.

Establishing your company or individuals or teams within your company as experts or specialists adds great value to customer perception and to your relationship. They'll choose to do business with you because of your specialized knowledge about the applications and best practices for the product

You need to market your specialized knowledge to demonstrate to prospects and customers that you are the expert in your field. In other words, you need to become a **content marketer**.

Content marketing involves creating and distributing relevant and valuable content to attract, acquire, and engage clearly defined target audiences with the goal of driving action.

Content marketing needs to serve as the cornerstone of your social media marketing strategy – creating educational items that are considered interesting, relevant and useful by your prospects and customers.

Your content marketing backbone

The following are proven content marketing vehicles that should form the backbone of your content marketing efforts.

- **Blog Posts:** Blog posts are insightful and timely Web content that highlight important news, observations, tips, and other useful content. Readers of your posts are encouraged to share their comments, allowing for a two-way dialogue. Blog posts offer a great opportunity to keep your website current and relevant through short 250- to 500-word posts. Blogs themselves are essentially one-page websites that are simple and inexpensive to set up.
- **'How To' Articles:** Articles are a fantastic content marketing tool. By creating 500- to 1,000-word educational articles that demonstrate a best practice or little-known insight, you can showcase your expertise and demonstrate to your customers that you understand their needs.
- **Whitepapers:** Whitepapers are topical, educational reports or guides oriented toward a particular industry challenge, opportunity, or best practice. Generally, whitepapers are 5 to 15 pages in length and can really help you demonstrate thought leadership on issues that are important to your customers.
- **E-Books:** E-books are like whitepapers on steroids. They are lengthier than whitepapers, generally ranging from 10 to 100 pages in length, and present complex information in a compelling and entertaining way.
- **Videos:** If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a million. Use online video to demonstrate a product, illustrate a best practice, allow customers to see your company behind the scenes, etc. Online videos do not have to be professionally produced--an inexpensive digital camera will work well. The key is to film content your customers will find useful and actionable.
- **Testimonials and Case Studies:** Use the words and experiences of customers to demonstrate value to prospective customers. There is no better way to prove your worth as a company and make people feel good about doing business with you — you just have to ask the right questions.
- **Webinars:** A webinar is a seminar that is conducted over the Web that participants can easily view from their office or home--either live or on-demand. Most Webinars include a visual slide presentation, as well as an audio broadcast that is accessed either over the computer or phone. Webinars should range from 30 to 90 minutes with some for Q&A.

DEFINE YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY

Begin with the end in mind

Many companies dive into social media marketing without a clear strategy. Don't make that mistake. Spend some quality time identifying the key elements of your social media marketing strategy. The following questions will help you develop a successful strategy.

Define Your Social Media Marketing Goals

Social media marketing can help you achieve a number of strategic marketing goals. Think about the goals and objectives for your social media marketing efforts. Some common social media marketing goals include the following:

- Increase brand awareness
- Become a thought-leader
- Attract direct traffic to your Website
- Gain inbound links for SEO
- Educate and inform customers
- Enhance customer service
- Monitor your brand's reputation
- Learn more about your target audiences

Define your Social Media Audiences

After you know why you want to leverage social media marketing, it's important to spend some time defining the audiences you are trying to engage. Begin by brainstorming about your target audiences. For each of the niche customer audience groups you serve, it's important to define the following elements.

Questionnaire: Your social audience profile

- ✓ Who are you trying to connect with via social media? What is their role within the company? Are they the end-user of your products and services?
- ✓ Describe the demographic characteristics of the individuals you want to connect with (e.g., age, gender, income level, education level, profession, etc.).
- ✓ Describe the psychographic characteristics of the individuals you want to connect with (e.g., personality, values, attitudes, interests, lifestyles, etc.).
- ✓ How are these individuals using social media?
- ✓ What are they currently talking about on social sites?
- ✓ To whom are they listening to on social sites?

While customers are a big part of your social media audience, there are other influencers you can interact with, including consultants, competitors, and other industry players.

- ✓ Who are the influential players within the community you want to be a part of?
- ✓ Who are the influential players within the community you want to be a part of?

- ✓ Who are the authorities relevant to your industry? Which blogs are read the most by players in your industry?
- ✓ How are your competitors involved in the community?
- ✓ What topics, information and beliefs are important to the community?
- ✓ How do you plan to connect with other experts in the community?

Internal audiences are also crucial to your social media effort, because social media marketing is not a quick, one-time fix. It requires a long-term commitment involving multiple departments within your company. Individuals from marketing, sales, public relations, customer service and R&D should all have an important role to ensure your social media marketing campaign is a success.

- ✓ Do you have the full support of upper management? If not, what do you need to do to get their backing?
- ✓ Have you discussed your social media marketing campaign with other key departments (i.e., marketing, sales, public relations, customer service and R&D), and do you have their support? If not, what do you need to do to get them on board?

HOW TO GET STARTED

Get yourself in the game

Are you already an active participant in the social media community? If so, you are prepared to start leveraging it as a marketing tool. However, if you are not, I bet you didn't know how to answer some of the questions in the previous section.

If you're not a social media participant, it's time to get your feet wet. You need to have a good understanding of the social media landscape before you can harness its marketing potential. To get started, follow the following three-step process:

- 1. Join the community.** Identify a number of social networks and social media Websites and join the community. This is the best way for you to get an understanding of the lay of the land. Set up a profile for yourself on LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, and other social networking sites described in the next section.
- 2. Listen to the conversation.** Once you set up your profiles, start listening to the discussion. Browse online communities related to your industry and frequented by your customers. Read posts by experts in your industry. You can do this manually by visiting each social networking site. You can also automate the process using software like HootSuite (<http://hootsuite.com>) that updates you about the people, topics, and discussions you care about.
- 3. Participate and create.** After listening for a while, you will know who the players are, what they are saying, the topics that they find important, and how your competitors are involved. Now it is time for you to start participating and creating. Begin by replying to topics with your opinions. Add value to the discussion and share your ideas. Then, after participating in the discussion of others, start your own by creating valuable content the community will appreciate and respond to.

By following this three-step process, you will be a social media pro in no time. Now that you know how to approach social media, it's time to learn about where you should be spending your time and resources.

HOW TO LEVERAGE SOCIAL NETWORKING WEBSITES

It's all about relationships and content

There are so many social networks out there that it can seem overwhelming. Many companies fail to get started with social media marketing because they are confused about which networks to get involved with. I recommend focusing on the social networks that are most effective for B2B marketers, including:

- **LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a powerful tool for B2B marketers to reach out to professionals in their target audience. With over 800 million users, it is the world's largest professional networking site. It offers a wide range of features that can help businesses build brand awareness, generate leads, and drive traffic to their website.
- **Facebook:** Facebook is the largest social media platform, with almost 3 billion monthly active users. While it may be more commonly associated with B2C marketing, many businesses have found success using Facebook to connect with potential B2B customers by creating a Facebook page for their company.
- **YouTube:** YouTube is a video sharing platform that allows users to upload, share, and view videos. YouTube can be a powerful tool for businesses looking to reach a large audience with video content. With over 2 billion monthly active users, the platform offers a vast potential audience for B2B marketers.
- **Twitter:** Twitter is a powerful social media platform that has become an important tool for B2B marketers to connect with their audience and increase brand awareness. With over 465 million active users, Twitter offers businesses the opportunity to engage with a massive audience and promote their products and services in real-time.
- **Instagram:** Instagram is a social media platform that allows users to share photos and videos with their followers, currently with over 1 billion monthly active users. The platform offers an opportunity for companies to engage with their target audience through creative visuals, videos, and Stories.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn (<http://linkedin.com>) is the most “professional” of the major relationship social networking websites. Since it is largely focused on business-to-business connections, LinkedIn should be a big part of your social media marketing strategy.

At its most basic level, LinkedIn allows you to set up a personal profile and connect with other professionals you know or want to know. Then, you will receive status updates on a regular basis as your “connections” update their profiles. In addition, you can set up a LinkedIn profile for your company to allow people to follow your company’s updates.

One of the "cool" features of LinkedIn is their "six degrees of separation" approach, which allows you to easily see how you are connected to someone via others. You may be surprised to see how closely you connect to your prospects or customers, and how connected they are to others, including your competition.

Your LinkedIn Profile

Think of your LinkedIn profile as an interactive resume on steroids. In addition to listing information about your work experience and education, LinkedIn allows you to enhance your profile with interactive capabilities that showcase your expertise.

- **Profile picture:** A professional headshot photo is recommended to create a positive first impression. It should be a high-quality image that is clear and in focus.
- **Background photo:** This is the large banner image that appears behind your profile picture. It can be a branded image or a photo that represents your industry or interests.
- **Headline:** This is the short sentence or phrase that appears directly below your name on your LinkedIn profile. It should be a brief summary of your expertise or area of focus.
- **About:** This is the section where you can provide a more detailed overview of your professional background, skills, and accomplishments. It should be written in a way that showcases the individual's unique value proposition and what they can offer potential employers or clients.
- **Experience:** This section lists your work history, including your current and previous positions. Each position should include a brief description of the role and your responsibilities and accomplishments.
- **Education:** This section includes information about your academic background, including degrees and certifications earned.
- **Skills:** This section lists your key skills and areas of expertise. It is important to keep this section up-to-date and relevant to your current career goals.

- **Recommendations:** LinkedIn allows you to request recommendations from your connections. These recommendations serve as testimonials from colleagues or clients and can help to build credibility and trust.
- **Interests:** This section allows you to showcase your personal interests and hobbies. This can help to humanize you on LinkedIn and make you more approachable to potential connections or clients.
- **Contact Information:** A section where you can provide your email address, phone number, and other contact details for professional networking.
- **Status Updates:** One of the best ways to keep your connections informed about your happenings is by posting “status updates.” Status updates are brief statements that you feel your connections will find useful. They can include links to related content on your website or third-party websites. To appear active in the LinkedIn community, post useful and actionable status updates on a regular basis.
- **A Banner Image:** The banner image is the first thing people will see when they visit your company page. Design one that reflects your company’s brand and the image you want to portray.
- **Your Company Profile:** You can complete fields to fill in your LinkedIn company page profile, including a summary, specialties, your Website address, and more. Be sure to complete as many fields as possible—this is your space to give your followers information about your company if they want it.
- **Status Updates:** The best way to engage your followers is to regularly post status updates to your LinkedIn company page. These updates can feature content from your Website. For a fee, you can also promote your updates throughout the LinkedIn community through Sponsored Updates.
- **Career Opportunities:** For a fee, you can post open positions to recruit new employees.

Your LinkedIn Company Page

In addition to your personal LinkedIn profile, you can create a Company Page to tell your company's story, showcase your products and services, share updates with followers, and recruit new employees. Your company page can feature:

LinkedIn Community Features

In addition to your personal profile and company page, LinkedIn provides a number of community features that allow you to communicate and collaborate with other LinkedIn users, including:

- **Groups:** LinkedIn Groups are communities of professionals who share a common interest or background. They can be public or private, and members can engage in discussions, share content, and connect with each other. Participating in LinkedIn Groups by adding value to the discussion is a great way to expand your circle of influence.
- **LinkedIn Events:** LinkedIn Events allow users to create and promote professional events, such as conferences, webinars, and workshops. Attendees can RSVP, view event details, and connect with other attendees.
- **LinkedIn Polls:** LinkedIn Polls enable users to gather insights and opinions from their network on various topics. Polls can be created and shared with specific groups or with the entire LinkedIn community.
- **LinkedIn Learning:** LinkedIn Learning is an online learning platform that offers courses and tutorials on a wide range of topics, including business, technology, and creative skills. Users can earn certifications and add completed courses to their LinkedIn profiles.
- **Influencers:** LinkedIn Influencers enables you to connect with well-respected thought leaders in many walks of life. Influencers like Tony Robbins, Guy Kawasaki, and Richard Branson, as well as many lesser-known experts, contribute original content in the form of blog posts. You can comment on their posts to express your opinion. In addition, you can share these posts as status updates on your personal LinkedIn Profile.

Tips for Using LinkedIn as a Marketing Tool

LinkedIn is a valuable business tool that can help you grow your business and catapult your career. The following tips will help you use this resource to produce results:

- **Brand your LinkedIn address:** When you create a personal LinkedIn profile, it will create a LinkedIn address that will appear like a collection of odd letters. Customize this address with a branded LinkedIn address with your name.
- **Become an expert:** By posting educational status updates and actively participating in LinkedIn group discussions, you have an opportunity to establish yourself as an expert.
- **Warm call sales prospects:** If you're in sales, you can use LinkedIn as a "warm calling" tool. If there is a prospect you want to reach, you can easily find them on LinkedIn and see how you are connected to them. If you have an active list of LinkedIn connections, you are most likely only two or three connections away from the prospect.
- **Find employees:** Successful business people are always looking to find valuable employees that will ensure their future success. LinkedIn provides you with an easy place to find them, since you can target applicants based on experience and expertise.
- **Keep your connections current:** Whenever you meet someone (especially in a sales setting, event or trade show), connect with them on LinkedIn. It's a great way to follow up, expand your influence, and keep connections up to speed on your accomplishments. For best results, be sure to personalize your introduction message.

Facebook

Facebook (<https://facebook.com>) is by far the largest social networking website, with more than one billion registered users. For the most part, Facebook is a place for friends: providing a platform for friends to connect (or reconnect) and share ideas, happenings, photos, videos, and other information. It also offers a bunch of widgets and apps that you can integrate into your Facebook page to make it more engaging.

If you're not on Facebook, here is a general description of how it works. After setting up a personal Facebook account, you can search for people you know and send them a request to be their "Friend." If they accept your request, you then can access their full Facebook profile and related information. In addition, they will have access to your information. You then can interact and share information with all of your Facebook friends.

As a business, you can also use Facebook as a marketing tool. By creating a Facebook "Page" for your business, you can create a public-facing Facebook destination that all of your customers can access easily without you having to approve them. You can use this page as an outpost for your website's content.

Your Facebook Business Page

A Facebook page is a public profile for a business, organization, or brand on Facebook that allows businesses to reach and connect with their target audience. The essential elements of a Facebook page include:

- **Name:** The name for your page should be the name of your company or name of your product.
- **Cover photo:** This is a large, horizontal image at the top of the page that can be used to showcase the brand, products, or services. It's the first thing people will see when they visit your page. Choose a cover photo that represents your brand and showcases your product or service. It's important to use an eye-catching cover photo that is relevant to your business. You may want to change the image every few months or so to give your business page a fresh look. However, even when you change it, it should look consistent with your branding and other social profile images.
- **Profile picture:** This is a small image that appears on the left side of the cover photo and represents the brand or business. It can be a logo or any other image that represents the brand.
- **About section:** This is a brief summary of the business, including its mission, products or services, and contact information. It appears under the profile picture and cover photo.

- **Call-to-action button:** This is a button that appears prominently on the page, encouraging visitors to take a specific action such as "Call Now" or "Shop Now."
- **Tabs:** These are sections on the page that can be customized to display different types of content such as photos, videos, and reviews.
- **Posts:** These are updates or announcements that appear on the page's timeline. They can include text, photos, videos, and links to external content.
- **Reviews:** This is a section where visitors can leave reviews and ratings for the business, providing social proof and feedback for potential customers.

Facebook's Community Features for Business Pages

Facebook is a great platform for sharing your multimedia content with your customers and prospects to attract them to your website. Specifically, the community features of Facebook pages include:

- **Sharing content:** Facebook is all about sharing ideas, thoughts, photos, videos, etc. So, your business page should be all about sharing useful information related to your area of expertise. Think of your Facebook business page as an outpost for your valuable website content.
- **Like:** "Like" is a critically important concept on your Facebook business page. You need to be "liked" to be successful. The success of your Facebook business page is judged by how many people like it. Likewise, everything you post on your business page is judged by how many people like it. When people like your content, their friends will become aware of it as well.
- **Comments:** In addition to liking your content, people can post comments on your content. Try to be active and interact with your fans when they comment on your content.

Tips for Using Facebook as a Marketing Tool

Your Facebook business page can serve as a valuable marketing tool that allows you to bring your content directly to your customers. These tips can help you get the most marketing value out of your Facebook page:

- **Build a company page:** Your Facebook company page is a great way to establish a presence on the platform and connect with potential customers. Use the page to showcase your products and services, share company news and updates, and engage with your audience.
- **Use SEO to help your page get noticed:** Unlike personal pages, your Facebook business page is freely accessible to anyone. That includes Google! Use your important keyword phrases throughout your content.

- **Share relevant content:** Share industry news and updates, blog posts, and other content that will be of interest to your target audience. This helps establish your company as a thought leader in your industry and keeps your audience engaged.
- **Create custom tabs for your business:** Facebook allows you to create custom tabs to enhance your page and help market your business. You can use Facebook Markup Language (FBML), which is very similar to HTML, to create compelling content and features.
- **Integrate your social media offerings:** Facebook Apps make it easy for you to integrate your blog, Twitter profile, LinkedIn profile, and other social media content. Take advantage of these features to make sure you are cross-promoting all of your social media content.
- **Create Facebook Offers:** Facebook Offers allow you to reward customers with special offers without the need to provide them with a coupon. This self-service marketing tool allows you to easily create an offer, specify a start and end date and designate the number of claims you will allow.
- **Run targeted ads:** Facebook offers powerful advertising tools that allow you to target specific audiences based on factors such as job title, industry, and company size. Use these tools to create ads that reach the right people and drive leads and sales.
- **Join and participate in industry groups:** Facebook is home to many industry-specific groups where professionals share information and connect with one another. Find groups that are relevant to your business and join them to participate in discussions and share your expertise.
- **Use Facebook Messenger for customer service:** Many businesses are now using Facebook Messenger as a customer service tool. Customers can send direct messages to your company page, allowing you to respond quickly and provide assistance when needed.

In my experience, B2C promotion is generally more successful than B2B promotion on Facebook. However, thoughtful engagement and sharing can produce results, and create social signals for your company that Google finds valuable.

YouTube

YouTube (<https://youtube.com>) is a video sharing website and social media platform where users can upload, share, and view videos. It was founded in 2005 and has become one of the largest and most popular websites in the world. The platform offers a variety of features that make it useful for both personal and business use, including the ability to create and manage channels, subscribe to other channels, and interact with viewers through comments and messages.

YouTube is actually a search engine in itself, even though it's a content sharing site. People can search for videos by keyword and get access to content like how-to videos, tutorials and more. In addition, because Google owns YouTube, YouTube videos appear in Google search results when their content matches a search query.

From a B2B marketing perspective, YouTube offers a powerful way to share product demonstrations, educational videos, webinars, and other forms of multimedia content. You can create your own branded channel for your company and use a variety of tactics to drive engagement and increase their audience reach. YouTube also offers robust analytics tools that can provide valuable insights into viewer behavior and engagement metrics.

Your YouTube Channel

A YouTube channel is a dedicated page on the video-sharing website where users can upload, manage, and share their video content. Your YouTube channel can be used for marketing purposes and offers several customizable elements to help you brand your content and connect with your target audiences. Here are the key elements of a YouTube channel:

- **Channel banner:** The channel banner is the large image that appears at the top of the channel page. It is a key branding element and should represent the channel's identity and theme. The recommended banner size is 2560 x 1440 pixels.
- **Channel icon:** The channel icon is a small image that appears next to the channel name and on every video thumbnail. It should be simple, recognizable, and consistent with the channel's branding. The recommended icon size is 800 x 800 pixels.
- **Channel trailer:** The channel trailer is a featured video that appears at the top of the channel page for visitors who are not subscribed. It is an opportunity to introduce the channel and showcase its best content.
- **About section:** The about section is where the channel owner can provide a description of the channel, its content, and its purpose. It should be informative, engaging, and optimized with relevant keywords.

- **Playlists:** Playlists are collections of videos organized around a specific theme or topic. They help users find and navigate the channel's content more easily.
- **Featured channels:** Featured channels are other YouTube channels that the channel owner wants to promote. They appear on the channel page and can help increase visibility and cross-promotion.
- **Social media links:** The channel owner can add links to their other social media profiles in the about section or as an overlay on the channel banner. This helps connect with viewers on other platforms and increase engagement.
- **Video content:** Of course, the most important element of a YouTube channel is its video content. The channel owner can upload, manage, and customize their video content to showcase their expertise, promote their brand, and engage with their audience. It is important to optimize the videos with relevant titles, descriptions, tags, and calls-to-action to increase visibility and engagement.
- **Comments:** YouTube allows viewers to leave comments on videos, which can be a great way for businesses to engage with their audience. Comments can also provide valuable feedback and insights into what viewers like and dislike about the content.
- **Likes and Dislikes:** Similar to other social media platforms, YouTube allows viewers to show their appreciation for videos by clicking the "Like" button. Viewers can also click the "Dislike" button if they didn't enjoy the video. Likes and dislikes can help businesses understand what types of content their audience prefers.
- **Shares:** Viewers can share videos on other social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. This can help businesses increase their reach and gain more exposure.
- **Subscriptions:** Users can subscribe to channels on YouTube, which means they will receive notifications whenever a new video is uploaded. This is an important feature for businesses, as it allows them to build a loyal following of subscribers who are interested in their content.
- **Playlists:** Playlists allow users to organize videos into categories or themes. This can be useful for businesses that have a variety of content on their channel, as it makes it easier for viewers to find videos that are relevant to their interests.

YouTube Community Features

YouTube is a great platform for businesses and marketers to promote their brand, engage with their audience, and drive traffic to their website. Here are the community features of YouTube:

- **Live Streaming:** YouTube allows users to live stream events, which can be a great way for businesses to connect with their audience in real-time. Live streaming can also help businesses build a sense of community and engage with viewers on a more personal level.
- **Community Tab:** The Community tab on YouTube allows businesses to interact with their audience by posting updates, polls, and other content. This feature can help businesses build a stronger relationship with their audience and foster a sense of community around their brand.

Tips for Using YouTube as a Marketing Tool

YouTube can be a valuable B2B marketing tool to showcase your products or services and engage your target audience. Here are some ways your company can use YouTube as a B2B marketing tool:

- **Offer product demonstrations:** You can create videos showcasing your products or services, providing a detailed explanation of features and benefits. These videos can help to educate potential customers and differentiate your company from your competitors.
- **Demonstrate thought leadership:** By creating videos that discuss industry trends, challenges, and best practices, you can establish your company as a thought leader in your industry. This can help to build trust and credibility with potential customers.

- **Provide testimonials and case studies:** Videos featuring testimonials from satisfied customers or case studies highlighting successful projects can be very effective in building trust and credibility with potential customers.
- **Present webinars and training:** You can use YouTube to host webinars and training sessions, providing a valuable resource for customers and establishing your team as experts in your field.
- **Build your brand:** By creating engaging and informative videos, you can build your company's brand and increase your visibility on the platform. You can also use YouTube to showcase your company culture.
- **Optimize your videos for SEO.** Use relevant keyword phrases in your video titles and descriptions. Tag your video with targeted keyword phrases to make it easier to find on YouTube. Finally, include a clickable link to your website at the top of the description.
- **Include a "call to action."** In the last few seconds of your video, provide a call to action that viewers can use to take next steps. Invite them to visit your website or get in touch with you to learn more and capitalize on what they learned in the video.

To effectively use YouTube as a B2B marketing tool, you should ensure that your videos are high quality, engaging, and informative. You should also promote their videos on other social media channels and optimize them for search engines to increase visibility and reach.

Twitter

Twitter (<https://twitter.com>) is a real-time micro-blogging network that connects you to people and information that you find interesting. With Twitter you can share 140 character “Tweets” with your “Followers” and other interested parties. In addition, you can choose to “follow” other individuals you have interest in. When you “follow” someone on Twitter, their tweets appear on your Twitter feed, or homepage. A major difference between Twitter and other social networking websites is that you do not need other people’s permission before you can follow them, as long as their accounts are public.

On Twitter, you commonly post original tweets to your followers. Ideally, this information is content your followers will find useful and interesting. In addition to posting original tweets, you can Retweet (or RT, for short) a tweet of someone you are following. This is one of the highest honors one can earn on Twitter, and it is one of the best ways to increase your following.

Your Twitter Profile

Your Twitter Profile is pretty simple. There aren’t many pieces of information that you can manage or manipulate, so it is important for you to use each one of them strategically.

- **Full name:** Enter your first and last name. I recommend using your real name if you are tweeting for yourself, or your company name if you are tweeting on behalf of your company. In order to create a real and lasting relationship on Twitter, be open and honest about your identity.
- **Handle:** Create a handle username for your Twitter account (e.g., @bobdestefano) that will be used in your personal URL (e.g., <https://twitter.com/bobdestefano>). People need to remember and recognize your name to find you, so use your own name or your company name.
- **Bio:** Create a short bio that will let people know who you are, what your expertise is, and what information you have to share. Make sure your bio is compelling and understandable (with no jargon) to increase the likelihood that people will follow you.
- **Photo:** Choose a profile picture that will help others identify you easily, and help others who do not know you understand who you are. Use your personal photo if you are a spokesman for your company. If not, a company logo can work well if you are tweeting on behalf of your company.
- **Header image:** The header image is a horizontal bar that is presented behind your photo and bio. When designing a header image, choose a design that reflects your brand while complementing the photo and ensuring that the bio is legible.

- **Web address:** Include your web address so people will know where they can find you. Leave off the 'www' if you can, as in <http://bobdestefano.com>, to keep your address as short as possible.
- **Location:** Add a location (e.g., Red Bank, NJ) so that people will know where you are based.
- **Pinned Tweet:** If you'd like, you can "pin" a Tweet to your profile so it shows at the top at all times. Use this to promote your best or most popular tweets.
- **Verified badge:** This is a blue checkmark that appears next to the username of accounts that are verified by Twitter. It indicates that the account is authentic and belongs to a public figure, celebrity, or brand.
- **Tweets and media:** This is a feed of the user's tweets, retweets, and media content, including photos and videos. It is the main area where users can engage with a user's content and message.
- **Followers and following:** This shows the number of followers and accounts that the user is following. It can be an indicator of the user's influence and popularity.
- **Moments:** This feature allows users to create curated collections of tweets around a specific topic or event, which can be shared with other users.
- **Tweet:** A Tweet is a 140-character (or less) text message that you share with your Twitter followers. While it began as simply text-based content, Twitter now allows for the sharing of photo and video content.
- **Retweets:** A Retweet (or RT) is a type of message posted on Twitter that shares information previously tweeted by another user. Retweeting is an effective way of sharing information you like on Twitter. When you come across interesting content shared by a Twitter user, retweet it to your followers, making sure to include RT and their name (e.g., @bobdestefano) in the message. If people regularly retweet your posts, you are doing the Twitter thing right!
- **Hashtags:** Hashtags allow you to label and categorize your tweets. A hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by the "#" symbol. For example, if you are tweeting about "social media marketing," you can use the hashtags #socialmedia and #smm to label your tweet. Clicking on a hashtagged word in any message shows you all other tweets in that category. But don't overdo it; limit your hashtags to three or less per tweet.
- **Direct Messages:** A Direct Message is a private message sent via Twitter to one of your followers. When you send a direct message, it is private. The rest of your followers will not see it. Send direct messages when they make sense, but don't abuse them by bothering people.

Twitter Community Features

While it appears to be a very simple service on the surface, Twitter provides a number of community features that allow you to communicate and collaborate with other users:

- **Lists:** Lists allow you to organize the people you're following on Twitter. They give you a way to organize other Twitter users into groups so it is easy to keep track of them. Again, if people add you to their lists you are doing the Twitter thing right!
- **Twitter Chats:** Twitter chats are organized events where users come together to discuss a particular topic. These chats are usually moderated and use a specific hashtag to make it easier to follow along.
- **Moments:** Moments are curated collections of tweets that tell a story or highlight a particular event. These can be created by users or by Twitter itself.
- **Become a friendly resource:** To effectively market yourself or your company on Twitter, establish yourself as a friendly, go-to resource for your area of expertise. Don't blatantly tweet about your products or services. Tweet about your knowledge and expertise as they relate to your products or services.
- **Build a strong following:** Building a strong following on Twitter isn't as easy as you might think. You need to offer a compelling reason for people to follow you. The best way to do so is to Tweet valuable content. Next, follow interesting and successful Twitter users with a strong following. If these people find you interesting, they'll follow you and retweet your content. Also, use hashtags in your tweets that are related to your content or expertise (e.g. I use #b2bmarketing a lot). This will allow you to easily get your tweets in front of like-minded individuals.

Tips for Using Twitter as a Marketing Tool

Twitter can serve as a valuable marketing and customer service tool if you are committed and continually share content that people will want to read. To be effective, you must:

- **Tweet value, not nonsense:** This should go without saying, but I'm going to say it anyway. No one cares what you just ate for lunch. No one cares that you just took four Advil® tablets for your bad back. It's ridiculous how much nonsensical crap is flowing through Twitter. Don't contribute to the nonsense. Tweet content your followers will find helpful and actionable.
- **Participate in Twitter chats:** Participating in relevant Twitter chats can help you connect with industry peers and potential customers.
- **Use Twitter ads:** Twitter offers a range of advertising options to help you reach your target audience. You can promote your tweets, profile, or account to increase visibility and drive engagement. Use Twitter's targeting options to ensure your ads reach the right audience.

- **Monitor and respond to mentions:** Monitoring your brand mentions on Twitter is important for reputation management. Use tools like Hootsuite, Sprout Social, or Mention to monitor your brand mentions and respond promptly to any customer inquiries or feedback.
- **Use Twitter for customer service:** By tracking brand mentions and hashtags related to your business, you can quickly respond to customer inquiries and issues. Respond to customer inquiries and complaints in a timely manner to demonstrate that you value their feedback and are committed to resolving issues.
- **Obey Twitter etiquette:** Twitter etiquette runs the gamut. Don't be offended if someone doesn't return your follow. Keep the boring tweets to yourself. Don't send direct messages to people you do not know. Don't be misleading. Don't be afraid to be personal. Don't be overly personal. The list goes on and on. Think of Twitter (and most social media sites) as a form of online public relations. If you don't want your clients to read it in the newspaper, don't tweet it on Twitter.

Of all of the social networking sites, I find that Twitter requires the most work. If you neglect your account, your follower count will drop quickly. It needs consistent TLC, but can pay dividends.

Instagram

Instagram (<https://instagram.com>) is a social media platform that allows users to share photos and videos with their followers. It was launched in 2010 and quickly became one of the most popular social media platforms, particularly among younger demographics. Instagram allows users to upload and edit photos and videos, add captions and hashtags, and engage with other users by liking, commenting, and sharing content.

Instagram also features various tools and features for businesses to promote their brand and products. Business profiles on Instagram can add a "Contact" button to their profile, allowing users to call, text, or email the business directly. Business profiles can also add links to their website and other social media profiles. Additionally, Instagram offers advertising options for businesses, including sponsored posts and Instagram Stories ads.

In recent years, Instagram has also added various e-commerce features, allowing businesses to sell products directly through the platform. This includes features such as shoppable posts, product tags, and Instagram Checkout.

Your Instagram Business Profile

An Instagram business profile is a marketing tool that can help businesses connect with customers and showcase their products or services in an engaging and visual way. Your Instagram business profile has several key elements that can be utilized for marketing purposes, including:

- **Profile photo:** A small square image that is typically your company logo or an image that represents your business.
- **Bio:** A short description of your company, which can include a tagline, mission statement, or any other relevant information that showcases what your company does or offers.
- **Contact information:** An option to include your business email, phone number, and physical address to make it easy for potential customers to get in touch with your company.
- **Instagram Stories:** A feature that allows you to share short-lived content such as images, videos, or polls to engage with followers and promote new products or services.
- **Instagram Feed:** A collection of your company's most recent posts, which can include photos, videos, and captions that promote your business.
- **Highlights:** A collection of past stories that have been saved and can be viewed at any time by followers.
- **Insights:** A feature that provides valuable analytics and data about your company's followers, posts, and engagement rates. This information can be used to refine and improve your company's marketing strategies.

Instagram Community Features

Instagram has several community features that businesses can use to engage with their followers and build brand awareness. These include:

- **Likes and Comments:** Users can like and comment on posts to engage with other users and start conversations.
- **Hashtags:** Instagram users can add hashtags to their posts to make them more discoverable to other users who are interested in a particular topic. Businesses can use hashtags to promote their products or services and reach new audiences.
- **Direct Messaging:** Instagram has a direct messaging feature that allows users to communicate with each other privately. This can be useful for businesses to answer customer questions or provide support.
- **Stories:** Instagram Stories are short-lived posts that disappear after 24 hours. Businesses can use stories to showcase their products or services, share behind-the-scenes content, or promote upcoming events.
- **IGTV:** IGTV is a standalone video platform within Instagram that allows users to upload longer-form videos. This feature can be used by businesses to share educational or informative videos about their industry or products.
- **Instagram Live:** Instagram Live is a feature that allows users to broadcast live video to their followers. Businesses can use this feature to host Q&A sessions, product launches, or behind-the-scenes tours.
- **Explore:** The Explore page on Instagram is a section where users can discover new content based on their interests. Businesses can use this feature to get their content in front of new audiences who are interested in their industry or niche.
- **Category:** The first thing you will do when you setup a Business Page is select a category (e.g., Local Business, Product or Brand, Company, etc.). Select your category carefully, because it will influence your placement and presentation. For example, if you are a local distributor serving a fixed geographic area, pick “Local Business” so you can bubble up in Google’s localized search results.
- **Name & Website address:** You need to add basic information to identify your company, including company name and website address.
- **Cover Photo:** Choose a cover photo that represents your product, company or brand, and one that can promote and enhance your business. Make it consistent with your branding and other social images.
- **Story:** Write a short and compelling tagline, as well as a lengthier description that will tell your company’s story. Describe who you are, what you do, and who you do it for.

- **Links:** Include links to your company's website, including deep links to featured content on your website.
- **Photos and Videos:** Post interesting company photos organized into albums, as well as any videos you've posted to YouTube.
- **Posts:** Posts are the primary content on your Google+ business page. Update your posts regularly with interesting content your customers will find valuable.

Tips for Using Instagram as a Marketing Tool

B2B companies can leverage Instagram as a marketing tool to enhance their brand image, showcase their products and services, establish themselves as thought leaders, attract potential employees, network and drive leads and sales. Specifically, Instagram can be used as a marketing tool in the following ways:

- **Improve brand awareness:** Instagram can help B2B companies to increase brand awareness and visibility by posting engaging content and using relevant hashtags. Companies can also collaborate with influencers to reach a wider audience.
- **Showcase products and services:** Instagram provides an excellent platform for showcasing B2B products and services through visually appealing posts, videos, and stories. This can help businesses to generate interest, leads and sales.

- **Demonstrate thought leadership:** B2B companies can use Instagram to establish themselves as thought leaders in their industry by posting informative and engaging content. This can help to build credibility and trust with potential customers.
- **Recruit employees:** Instagram can also be used to attract potential employees by showcasing the company culture, values and benefits. Companies can use Instagram to post job vacancies, employee testimonials, and showcase their work environment.
- **Network with peers:** Instagram can also be used for networking with other businesses, industry peers, and potential partners. Companies can use Instagram to connect with others in their industry, participate in industry-related conversations, and join industry-specific groups and hashtags.

To effectively use Instagram as a B2B marketing tool, you should ensure that your posts are high quality, engaging, and informative.

CREATE A PLAN THAT COMBINES CONTENT MARKETING WITH SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Think like a publisher

As mentioned earlier, good social media marketing starts with good content marketing. If you have great content, social media marketing gets much easier. Plan your social media marketing and your content marketing efforts together for best results. Follow these tips.

- **Make an editorial calendar and add social media marketing activities to it.** If you plan to create a piece of content, plan to promote it on social media. Assign someone the responsibility of both publishing pieces on your Website and Social Networks where applicable, and promoting them via status updates.
- **Don't recreate the wheel.** Status updates across social networks are extremely similar, but sometimes they require different formatting. For example, Twitter only allows 140 characters, but LinkedIn offers more space and includes multimedia. While you can and should customize your update for platforms where you're posting it (and the audiences who engage there), the main idea of those messages can be the same. Write one and create variations to save time.
- **Stay regular.** The only thing worse than not having a social media presence is having one that's never updated. If you create a Facebook page and then don't bother to use it for six months, it makes your company look bad. If you're creating content regularly, you will have a steady stream of fodder for social media updates and engagement. If you have limited time and resources available, pick the social media outlets you think will have the most impact for your business and start there. Leave others alone until you have time to focus on them.
- **Be a good conversationalist.** Social media marketing is about engaging with people in virtual conversations. Just like real life, you have to listen just as much (if not more) than you talk to create meaningful conversations. While your content creation efforts will give you plenty to "talk" about, be sure to listen, too. As described earlier, find and follow others in your community that add value to your industry. Listen to what they have to say and help them out when you can. They will return the favor.

MEASURE SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING SUCCESS

It's all about the ROI

Social Media Marketing is one of the most difficult strategies to track, because word of mouth is often hard to quantify. But if you focus on the results you want to happen because of your social media marketing efforts, you can identify measures that will tell you if you're reaching your goals.

Below you will find a summary of recommended success measures, as well as a discussion of tools you can use to track your success.

- **Website Traffic:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are people visiting and using your Website as a direct result of your social media marketing efforts?* To answer this question, examine the Social channel of Google Analytics, plus the Social reports in the Acquisition section.
- **Content Consumption:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are people reading and viewing our social media content?* As discussed earlier, you should be publishing references to your content on your social networks, linking people back to your Website for full details. Look at the top Landing Pages report in the Social section of Google Analytics. Are they seeing the content you want them to see?
- **Content Contribution:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are people interacting with me and my company through social media?* Monitor how people are communicating with you through social media. Are they posting comments on your blog posts? Are they commenting on your Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook posts? Are they commenting on content sharing Websites?

- **Content Sharing:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are people sharing your social media content with their networks?* The biggest compliment you can get in the social media world is when someone thinks so highly about your content that they are compelled to share it with their peers. Put content sharing widgets on your Website to make it easy for people to share your content. Monitor how often this occurs and for what information. For example, keep track of how often people Retweet your content on Twitter, and monitor how often people share your content on Facebook and LinkedIn.
- **Chatter:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are people talking about your company, products or services on social media sites?* There are several tools available to help you monitor how often your company name, key executive names, product and service brands, and any other important company information is mentioned in social media. Try HootSuite or TweetDeck to start, as they offer free tools.
- **Network Growth:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are you increasing your influence by continually gaining Friends, Followers and Connections?* Monitor the growth of your network on each social media site, or use software like HootSuite to monitor this and other social media marketing metrics.
- **Profile Engagement:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are people visiting your social network profiles?* Most social media sites have analytics built in to give you an idea of how often people are visiting.
- **Leads & Sales:** With this measure you are answering the question: *Are your social media marketing efforts helping to fill your sales pipeline?* To answer this question, examine the Social channel of Google Analytics, plus the Social reports in the Acquisition section. Pay special attention to conversions. You can also create trackable URLs via the Google Analytics URL Builder to track specific social media campaigns. However, these trackable links can be very lengthy, so pop them into URL shortening sites like Bit.ly (<http://bit.ly>) to create a short URL. Use these shortened, trackable URLs as the links in your posts.

NEXT STEPS

Do something!

Don't make this harder than it needs to be. You know how to speak to your customers. You know what content they will find valuable. You just need to translate that knowledge into a thought leadership process. Social Media Marketing offers you a fantastic opportunity to reach and engage B2B buyers.

As you get your content marketing and social media marketing machine in place, you'll see your conversion rates improve and your bottom-line increase.

Now, go out there and make me proud!

A great next step will be to [setup a free consultation with me](#), Bob DeStefano, to discuss your B2B online marketing strategy.

I guarantee I'll provide you with tips and ideas you can use immediately to boost your results.

Call me at **(877) 786-3249 x234** or click the link below to schedule your consultation.

[SCHEDULE CONSULTATION](#)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob DeStefano, B2B Online Marketing Strategist & Speaker

Bob DeStefano is an internet marketing pioneer with over 25 years of experience helping B2B companies leverage online marketing to produce bottom-line results.

Through his speaking, writing and consulting, Bob makes online marketing understandable and empowers business leaders with actionable tips and strategies they can put to work immediately to:

- Increase sales & profits
- Generate new business leads
- Strengthen relationships with customers
- Boost marketing results on a limited budget
- Measure marketing ROI



Bob's online marketing career began during the birth of online marketing in the early 1990's serving as a strategic planner for Dean Witter, Discover & Co. At Dean Witter, Bob spearheaded the creation of the company's first Dean Witter and Discover Card Websites.

As president of [SVM E-Marketing Solutions](#), a leading B2B online marketing agency, Bob has worked with a wide variety of companies, from Fortune 500 companies to small family-owned businesses, to help them leverage online marketing to produce bottom-line results.

Bob is the author of the [Old Dog, New Clicks: Online Industrial and B2B Marketing Know-How for the 21st Century](#), a step-by-step plan to transform your marketing practices from past decades to ensure your company's success for the next decade. In addition, Bob is a regular contributor to a variety of publications, including Modern Distribution Management, Contractor Supply and MarketingProfs, on the subject of actionable online marketing strategies.

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