

JOIN THE ONLINE REVOLUTION

Engage in Radical Self-Promotion

The Goal of Social Media is to Increase sales. Really? Social media provides the tools that enable us to have online conversations. I know, the common advice out there today about social media is don't try to sell anything to anyone. The idea of social media is to be part of the conversation to build relationships over time. Of course, our goal in business is to sell more stuff to more people.

The new revolution in business is social media marketing. If done right, it can be your key to radically improving sales. The question is how you increase sales by using social media? Sun Tzu in the *"Art of War"* explains that strategy is determined by the terrain. Here is an overview of the social media terrain.

There are three ways your customers eventually find you online:

1. Search engines
2. Browsing
3. Recommendation

Susan Boyle, chances are you have heard of her, the *Britain's Got Talent* superstar already had just under 40,000,000 views on one YouTube video in just 11 days. She is listed on the second page of most viewed videos of all time for YouTube. Most of us heard about her because her performance was recommended to us. The idea is you want your business, your products and your services to be recommended as well.

Social media gives your word-of-mouth marketing a megaphone. You have a good business, your customers love you. You just need more customers. *Here is an important rule of social media marketing . . .*

YOU MUST BE PRESENT TO WIN

Out of sight is out of mind. There is a saying in business, "You must win mind share before you can win market share." Social media is where conversations and recommendations are happening. By joining the conversation you become visible and good things can happen from there.

Here are some things that have NOT changed with and about social media

- Begin with a goal, a plan and way to measure success – what do you want your social media effort to achieve? How will you know if it is getting the results you want?
- A channel, not a destination – in most cases, social media is not your business – it is a tool to do your business
- Financially free and time expensive (you get the point)
- Commitment driven – you drive it – if you make it important it will be if not...

Here are some ways to be present to win:

- ✓ Listening to the conversations you are interested in
- ✓ Participating in those conversations
- ✓ Publishing information
- ✓ Facilitating a conversation

LISTENING

Ask your customers which social media they use. Twitter, Facebook, forums, YouTube, Yelp, others? You can also search topics that relate to your business to find where relevant conversations are occurring online. You can use Google alerts and www.search.twitter.com to find articles, blogs, newsletters, and other online content that will help you gain insights into your customers, your industry, and discover a whole new world of ideas.

Keep your plan in mind – some critical steps:

- Review properties – find out which social media align best for your business
- Find target segments – what type of customer are you looking to get the attention of?
- Identify opportunities – short list your focus
- Craft message – what do you say?
- Maintain effort – ain't a one time show
- Measure, adjust repeat! Repeat! Repeat!

PARTICIPATING

By participating on social media websites like Biznik.com, LinkedIn.com, Twitter.com and hundreds more just like them you can create a profile that will show up on the front page of search engines. (I was surprised today to find I was on the front page of Google when I searched

my name.) Participating in social media increases the likelihood that you will show up on the front page of search engines when customers are looking for you.

Some interesting ways to participate:

You can start a blog, comment on other people's blogs, comment on relevant news articles, comment on published online articles, and link to interesting information on your website and other people's websites on Twitter.

PUBLISHING

You can publish (for free) pictures, videos, articles and announcements. Your new customers will find your published materials and those materials will link back to your website. There are hundreds of places to publish your information.

FACILITATING

Websites like Biznik.com, LinkedIn.com, Facebook, Ning.com, and others like them allow you to create social networking groups for free, for your customers. You can facilitate your own conversations that will meet the specific needs of your existing and new customers.

Social Media is More Customer Service than Sales and Marketing

There is a buying process customers go through when they are deciding to do business with you:

1. Awareness
2. Consideration
3. Purchase
4. Loyalty

Social media helps with the awareness, consideration, and loyalty aspects of the buying process. Think of social media marketing as a customer service outreach. Chances are, you are already good at customer service and social media gives you exposure to new people very quickly.

“GIVE THEM SOMETHING TO TALK ABOUT”

You know what I mean. Believe me; we are all learning how to use and how to win customers with social media. I've talked to several social media experts and they admit they are still learning and discovering. No one has all of the answers. So don't feel badly as you feel your way

through this new terrain. The best advice I have heard about social media marketing is to *spend no more than one hour per day working on it*. You are already busy enough. What you put online stays online and works for you 24/7. So giving it an hour a day allows you to build slowly and get better as you go. You may not get results over night; however momentum will build as you give them something to talk about.

RADICAL SELF-PROMOTION - CRAWL, WALK, RUN

People do business with people they know, trust, and like. Social media gets you out there. You are the face of the company. As you participate and publish you build credibility and trust. That's why we call it "radical self-promotion." We want to get know you. Start small. Crawl, then walk, and then run. Do one social networking site at a time and then add more as you go. The good news is, you become visible, your search engine ranking improves, you encourage raving fans, you get recommendations, you get to know your customers better, you get to meet new people, and yes social media will result in more sales. I highly recommend it.

Social Media Action Plan:

- Search online for information about your industry or line of business
- Join and check out several online communities as you have time
- Pick one social media website at a time and learn how to use it
- Spend one hour a day listening, participating, publishing, and/or facilitating
- Track website traffic, search page rank, and increased sales for effectiveness

Tools to manage social media:

- Dashboards like Tweetdeck, Hootsuite, uberVU and Sprout Social
- Analytics like Sysomos, EdgeRank and Simply Measured
- Monitors like Alerti, Radian6 and SocialMiner
- Social CRM like Shoutlet, SpreadFast and Tweetpi

Tools to research social media trends and data:

- www.ignitesocialmedia.com
- www.alexa.com
- www.quantcast.com
- www.pewresearch.org

- www.othersonline.com

Ignoring the reality of how business is done today will only make your success more elusive. Go ahead and incorporate social media into your business model and see how it can improve your bottom line.

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