



Building Your Social Media Team

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Select the right resources for a social media marketing team
- ✓ Define how to use social media to build an internal community.
- ✓ Use metrics to measure the impact of a social media plan

Building your Social Media Team

Building the Team

To realize the best return on your investment in social media marketing, you need to focus your efforts on the same media your customers and prospects are using and are interested in. Getting the right people on your social media marketing team is also essential.

In a large business, social media responsibilities can be assigned to a range of positions: the marketing department, sales, communications, or public relations. You may have several people blogging, updating profiles and statuses, and writing. In a smaller business it can be just one person, but in any case, it needs to be the RIGHT people.

Social media needs to be a part of their job responsibilities, not just something that is added on as an extra task or else it'll be treated like an extra task and take last priority. There needs to be a budget for time and resources so that your messages look professional and represent your brand. You also want to ensure that there are no copyright infringements or other legal problems.

The social media team could easily be drawn from each of the disciplines mentioned above so that you leverage strengths of each team member and your messages look good. You may also want to determine what kind of giveaways, contests, or other methods you will use to draw your community to you. Whoever looks after your social media marketing needs to research and understand the rules for any site they use because some social media sites restrict what a business can do. Check out the Terms of Reference for every site that you use.

Test your knowledge

Who are the ideal people for your social media marketing team?

What strengths will they bring to the team?

Which goals of the social media marketing plan will they be able to meet? Which goals will they need support and assistance in order to meet?

The Community

A strong presence in social media is about far more than marketing. Some companies have really captured the idea of creating a community and leveraging the subsequent connection to their customers to energize, inform, and entertain them instead of selling to them all the time. In other examples, you will see an association or networking group become a place for learning and development that supports different business ideas, their growth, and establishing a network.

People are social animals. They are motivated to make connections, share stories, and to share their time and lives with one another. A company that is able to tap into this sense of togetherness through their business efforts and strategic plan, even when not directly related to the business, will connect to their community in a meaningful way. (It could come through sponsoring a school, a sports team, a charity, or other worthwhile endeavors.) Social networking is social, and so the more connections there are, the more you reflect the social nature of social media.

Does it Mean Everyone is Online All the Time?

While you are consciously thinking about your external communities, the next consideration is your **internal communities**. We know that water cooler chatter, loading dock conversations, and the internal ball team already exist, and that they are a good reflection of the social beings that we are. Instead of focusing on just the external community and a marketing benefit, we are encouraging you to look at your internal community, too.

Many companies still frown upon employee use of social networks, so websites such as Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter may be blocked on company computers. Not surprisingly, employees simply pull out their phones to complete status updates and keep in touch during their breaks if it's not forbidden!

Interacting with social media doesn't necessarily mean that people are distracted from their work or making poor use of their time. We often encourage employees to eat meals together (food is a great tool for community building), take part in community events (have you volunteered for a blood drive, charity

bowling, or Habitat for Humanity?), and yet we are still hesitant in many workplaces to encourage internal social networking.

From the perspective of employee engagement, internal connections, community, and acceptance are critical, so we recommend that you consider carefully what the limits are for social media within your company. In addition, there are social networking options that help you develop your internal community while preserving dedicated work efforts. (See Session Fourteen: Using Specialty Sites for more information.)

If your company issues staff a BlackBerry or iPhone, that encourages communication with other phone users without costing money. Other places have an internal instant message system or set up an internal message board or forum that is just for employees. The benefit of these systems is that they allow people to communicate within the organization, even if they are off-site. People who work from home, travel a lot, or are located in different offices but work on project teams, for example, all have ready access to one another.

Using internal social networks has value, are an inexpensive way to develop internal relationships, and they connect people. If you facilitate these internal networks, you may find that it is a productivity booster rather than a time waster. You'll provide a venue for people to have conversations about work and out of work topics and a sounding board for working through ideas. You might even cut down on employee negativity or chagrin that would otherwise be shared on public social networking sites.

We often see job advertisements that are looking for candidates who can collaborate, work on cross-functional teams, work flexible hours, and work well together. We also hear about people who feel isolated and refer to working in silos, or being kept like a mushroom – in the dark. Can our people be more effective and more engaged when they have the opportunity to take part in some of the water cooler chitchat from their computer or a mobile device?

Being socially connected internally should not be frowned upon if you want your employees to get to know one another. It also sends a message about your commitment to building community internally and externally, and even bringing the two together.

Test your knowledge

Make it Work

Create a list of pros and cons for an internal social networking strategy in your workplace.

Pros

Cons

One of the things that we want to measure is **interaction**. It will not mean a thing if you amass a kajillion followers unless they are developing a relationship with you and at some stage start using your services or products, even if those services and products are free. I know plenty of professional trainers and speakers who offer free tips, reports, and information guides about their industry. Their intent is to establish relationships rather than sell directly on social media. The result is that they do not bug anyone with bothersome “buy now!” or “special offer for ten minutes!” messages. They provide information, and then when a prospect wants something, the prospect can also buy from them.

Make sure that you check the account settings and properties for any profiles that you establish, and that you check the number of people you interact with on a regular basis. If you are a small company, you will want to check in about once every quarter to make sure your digital reach is as deep as possible, and that your efforts to connect are working. Large and multi-national companies will want to check even more often. No matter what size you are, keep an eye on things, just as you do with all of your marketing efforts.

Understanding Metrics

Although you will be tempted to compare yourself to everyone else, you have to discipline yourself to read results in terms of comparable information, and not absolute numbers. Just because you have 9,000 followers on Twitter does not mean you should compare yourself to anyone else with the same numbers. Look at your marketing strategy, your goals, and your own results. Determine whether you have relationships with your community, or you are simply gathering numbers.

Look for specific issues, such as:

- Abrupt or unexpected changes in lists, contacts, and/or visitors
- A peak in traffic or sales that can be linked to a specific social marketing tactic
- Negative and positive trends that last for several weeks or months

Abrupt or unexpected changes can mean that your account(s) have been hacked and are being sabotaged.

A **peak** related to a specific event can be tough to replicate. Consumers don't want (and won't respond to) the same tactics again and again. If you launch a campaign that does well, but requires every visitor to fill out a form with their name, e-mail, and demographics, they may not be as willing to comply on subsequent visits.

While **positive trends** are normally desirable, they can also signal a problem. For example, if your account or website is accumulating visits but readers only stop for a moment on your page, they are not reading what you are saying.

Negative trends that last for a prolonged period can signal a real problem, like the loss of your client base. Make sure you know, or are able to figure out, what is going on. Look everywhere you can for information; not just at the metrics, but at what people are saying about your company in all forms of media.

Timing is everything

There is some interesting research being done about when you release a campaign and how effective it is. The actual research is constantly evolving and varies depending on geography, industry, and other factors, but we will share the essential ideas here with you. (If you're looking for a place to keep up with trends, as of this writing www.mashable.com is an excellent resource. We are not affiliated with Mashable and take no responsibility for any third-party website.)

If your goal is to reach as many people you can as fast as possible, then you need to launch your campaign at a time when your target market is using social media. Many times, marketers will launch a campaign while they are at work. They might work a Monday to Friday schedule, work like mad on a campaign all week, and then hit "send" on the campaign just before going home on Friday afternoon. They are not available to interact with readers, answer questions, or even to see if something goes awry. Not surprisingly, the targets of that campaign might be on a journey home or to begin their weekend too. The campaign fails before it even gets started.

If you want your message to catch people's eye before they start a workday, and your prospects are around the world, the saturation rate might be more effective if you stagger messages by time zone. You may also want to release your messages with slightly different wording at several different times to catch as many people as you can.

Things to think about:

- If you are gearing your message toward specific people, what is the best time to catch their attention?
- If your target audience works shifts and you have no idea when they are reachable, how will you get your message to them?
- Avoid sending campaigns toward the end of the work week. (The beginning is better.)
- Use multiple channels and multiple messages to connect with your market.
- People don't usually look for your messages. You have to reach out and catch their attention.
- Sometimes a strong campaign goes viral (the best digital reach of all) because they stir up emotions in your marketplace: they make people happy, sad, or irritate them into action. What's the best message for your product or service to reach your customers and prospects? (Accept the fact it may not be the way that you prefer. It may also not be the technique that marketing instructors teach.)

Test your knowledge

Target Market Worksheet

My target market interacts with social media mostly on the following day(s):

My target market is available on the above days most often at the following time(s):

What areas of interest apply to my target market? (List complementary and competing businesses and industries.)

My target market responds actively to:

- Products/services that meet their practical needs
- Products/services that add luxury to their lives
- Standing out and making a statement by using my products/services
- Being able to quietly acquire my products/services

Use the space below to capture your ideas and outline the tasks to determine when to reach out to your prospects and customers with social media.

Keeping on Top of the Trends

The Times are A-Changing

Social media is here to stay, that much we know for certain. The way people experience the Internet has evolved from a place where we used to follow links and addresses to find information. Now, many of us see it as an active part of our everyday lives. For many users, it's really exciting! Social media has been embraced much more quickly by individuals than businesses, although big business is slowly getting on board as well.

Social platforms such as Facebook have increased their integration with our personal lives by being accessible on desktops, tablets, and smartphones. They started as a website to visit and post status updates. Now, they offer a dedicated chat service; a personalized experience; ability to add photos and videos; and applications for gaming, shopping, and more. In addition, many social platforms now work together so that you can access all of your social information in one place, meaning that information you post on one service pushes to other platforms as well.

From a marketing perspective, you've got to determine which social networks are worth your time. Establishing a presence takes time, as does making those very important connections with your prospects and customers. If you do it right, your market share increases. If you make a mistake, your time and money have been wasted.

The overall trend seems to be that social media is becoming a bigger part of an individual's life. Businesses are understanding that they need to catch people's attention, and how to do it. Keep in mind that marketing with social media is still a segment of Internet marketing, which is all just a part of your overall marketing plan. Putting a business profile onto the next social media platform might be a good strategy if they reach a large part of your target market and they are going to be around.

Case Study: Google+

In the middle of 2011, Google launched Google+. Although they probably won't abandon it entirely, it has not flourished as it predicted. This is the third time that Google has tried to go up against the other social networks without success. (Google + was preceded by Buzz and Wave.) Unless something changes, if you have devoted a lot of energy into Google+ you're going to be sadly disappointed. We could not have accurately predicted this result when the service was initially launched.

Test your knowledge

Generate a list of social media sites that you are familiar with.

Damage Control

That's Not Good!

Case Study: Ashleigh

Ashleigh is a mid-twenties tech savvy individual. When she moved to a small town, she soon got the hang of online shopping to fill her need to shop and to avoid driving for more than hour each way to get what she needed. She also started to use Twitter.

Ashleigh's boyfriend is an avid game player, and not long after the move, his headset stopped working properly. She decided to post about it on Twitter. The reply from the manufacturer was fast and efficient, and they coordinated a return. Several weeks later, a problem with the television was handled in the same way.

What It Means For You

If your customers are talking about you on social media, you need to know about it so that you can get involved as needed. People do not make comments about you just to a neighbor or their best friend, or even to their close circle of friends. They tell their whole network, which can be in the hundreds and even thousands.

When you are dealing with something sensitive, a disgruntled employee or shareholder can use a similar network to create a public relations issue. In order to catch these kinds of messages, you have to be looking for them on a steady basis. You can set up searches that will tell you when someone searches for your company, your shareholders, stakeholders, and additional keywords.

Case Study: United Breaks Guitars

In 2008, Canadian musician Dave Carroll was on a United Airlines flight from Chicago to Halifax. While the plane was being loaded, he and some of the other passengers witnessed the baggage handlers throwing guitars on the tarmac, but there was no response from the employees that Carroll complained to. Upon arrival in Halifax, Carroll retrieved his badly damaged guitar, but the airline was not willing to pay his claim for damages. Carroll wrote a song and created a music video, titled "United Breaks Guitars," which he released on July 6, 2010. Within 24 hours, the video had been viewed 150,000 times. By the middle of August 2010, 5 million people had viewed it. Since then, he has developed a social media site for customer complaints (<http://gripevine.com/>), written a book (*United Breaks Guitars: The Power of One Voice in the Age of Social Media*), and built a public speaking career. Reportedly, United Airlines' stock fell 10% over this incident. If something were to happen that negatively impacted your organization by 10%, could you weather the storm?

Get Smart

Here are some guidelines for responding to a social media storm (or even a glitch).

Set up alerts everywhere.

An alert allows you to constantly scan for comments (good and bad) about your company. You can set up alerts with all the search engines, including Google, Bing, and Yahoo. You can also use services such as Google Feed Reader, Kurrently, Twitter Search, HyperAlerts, Yelp, and others that are emerging. Enter the keywords you are looking for and the service will send you an e-mail when your name comes up.

While your focus should be on managing your reputation, you can also set up alerts for your competition and see what people are saying about them, too.

Take the conversation out of the public eye.

When you are dealing with a complaint, shift the conversation from a social media platform to a private one as soon as possible. (This is also known as “taking the conversation offline.”) Encourage the individual to contact you directly through company e-mail or telephone. You will find this approach efficient at focusing on problem solving and making decisions because there is no audience to weigh in or influence the proceedings.

Apologize and mean it.

If you mess up, admit it. People are much more willing to work alongside you if they know you are not a faceless corporate machine and there are real people who care looking after them. If you missed an order, broke something, forgot a deadline, or made a goof and someone calls you on it, step up and accept responsibility.

Develop policies about how you will respond to negative and positive comments.

People get leery about doing business with you if all they find are glowing reports and five star reviews. Don't pay for reviews. Make sure your employees know how complaints and kudos are handled, and who they are handled by.

People sometimes complain on social media even for things they are responsible for. For example, if someone does not get a damage deposit back when they move out of an apartment, they may complain about it in social media. A policy that explains the most common reasons for people not to get a full refund (such as not cleaning the oven properly or not washing the floor underneath the fridge or stove) helps you reply without getting defensive.

Encourage people to engage positively.

Do you remember those signs that said “if you like us, tell your friends; if you don’t like us, tell me!” that used to hang in stores everywhere? You can use this approach with social media. Have a notice in your business area and on your website that says something similar: “Like us? Review us online!”

Learn from your mistakes.

In the example about United Breaks Guitars, United Airlines asked Dave Carroll if they could use his video in their training program. They were keen to learn, and not repeat, what had happened.

Remove spam.

You are going to be the target of spam until we can come up with something absolutely brilliant to stop it from happening. In the meantime, have your moderator monitor all your pages, blog posts, and hiding holes, to remove spam posts instantly.