

Social Media Marketing 3

Social Media Workflow

Whenever I talk with people about social media they say one thing: "It's all very well, but where do I find the time?" and that is a reasonable question.

Many think that using say Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and Ecademy whilst trying to do your job seems impossible. Especially if you can't multi-task and some research now shows that heavy media multi-taskers are paying a big price and even some comments that some sites like Twitter diminish your IQ. 'Scary' stuff and obviously reports like this let you off the hook – no one wants to make themselves stupid! So, it's easy, I'll just ignore social media.

Better not. There is always the latest fad on the web, but sites like Ecademy have been running since 1998 and Facebook has more than 250 million users so, it's not just going to 'go away'.

Indeed there are emerging case studies (admittedly from Twitter) that show that large companies like Pepsi and small businesses such as Naked Pizza are finding ways to make money. Then on Facebook the big brands such as Coca Cola are there.



And things like this have happened before. Do you remember a few years ago – well, ok just a bit more than a few years ago, but certainly within the last 15 – that not everyone had a mobile phone for business and certainly not everyone had email? And now? Mobile phones and email have become so essential in business that we forget what it was like before them.

Social media is also changing the way we communicate and if you want to get a flavour of how then look at the list of well over 750 top social media sites that we have found.

So where do you start – well if you read our recent newsletters Social Media 1 and Social Media 2 and you know what it's about, how to plan it and how to behave.

This newsletter concentrates on workflow and workflow, as I am sure you know, is the management of tasks and steps in business processes. A workflow specifies what tasks need to be done, in what order (sometimes linearly, sometimes in parallel), and who or what programme has permission to perform each task.

In the case of social media there are plenty of tools that allow you to publish once and then decide where it all goes. Of course, you want to keep it simple to start and pick just a few sites on which to get started. Many people start off by going for the big guns such as Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr.

There is nothing wrong with this, but if you looked at the list of 750 top social media sites we mentioned you'll see that they may not be the best places to 'hang out'. So choose wisely by thinking through the most important and valuable activities that you could be doing via social media and make those your priority.

Creating your Social Media workflow

Once you have decided on the sites that are most important to you, you need to make your presence regular and ongoing. It is a marathon and not a sprint, so repeated, regular involvement is needed. To make sure you do this you need to set up a schedule and then a workflow.

Firstly, decide when you will commit time to social media. Maybe it's first thing, then around lunch and then just before leaving? Whatever suits you, but like any other activity you are learning you must devote time. You are just not going to be successful otherwise. It's like going to school for the first time a little scary but you find you soon make friends and then you play together and joke together and.....

Being a regular in any community will also establish your personal (and / or business) online brand.

Now you have to find a way to make sure it all works together and that is workflow. This can be something that is quite personal, but also, of course it depends on your position in the hierarchy, the level of independence you may have, your job and whether you work as part of a team in all of this as well as a whole host of other factors.

Where do you start?

Well, Dave Fleet has posed [25 questions to make your social media workflow work for you](#) that are well worth a look.

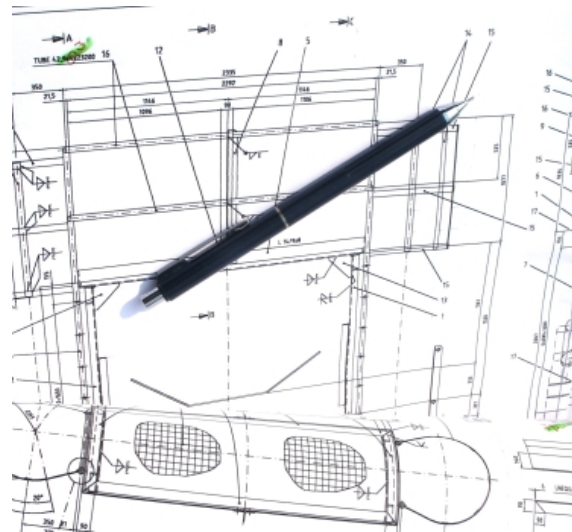
But once you have considered these then, unless you are going to build your own systems you have to look for standard tools that may help. They exist.

For example Salesforce CRM have just launched [The Service Cloud™](#) which includes integrated support for Twitter amongst other enhancements and, of course, if this is the company line then.....

But let's assume you are not looking for a team-based, corporate focused solution.

Most sites already allow some form of cross-import so that you can bring in some services. For example Ecademy allows you to import from pretty much all the sites of which you are a member. Facebook has a whole load of apps to allow you to interface with it, but then it's not everyone's cup of tea as their main dashboard.

If you just use Twitter, Facebook and MySpace then something like [Tweetdeck](#) works very well. It will allow you to deal with those sites from one place and also add other data such as their directory feeds on your favourite subjects.



Ping supports more than 40 sites and allows you to interface them all to Ping so that you can post from Ping and send the message and link etc to them all. With the custom URL facility you can also set it up to post to any page on which you can put script.

However it may be that you want something a little more 'complex'.

Then I suggest you use one site for each purpose. That is one site for status updates, e.g. Twitter, one for reading news streams e.g. Google Reader, one for photos, e.g. Flickr, etc. etc. This way you don't have to upload things more than once. There is a real benefit to this as each site does what it does and none of them do it all. In any case it is quite likely you have multiple memberships already because sites specialise.

Once you have decided which site is doing what you will want to use an aggregator to tie all the different sites you've updated / uploaded together and you will be able to share your identity across many sites.

There are a number of aggregators out there and it requires some thought if you are using a number of sites to decide on the best and the flow between them so that the sites update in the way you want with minimal effort and that you don't start creating a loop when sites keep cross posting the same things, that really does make some people angry!



One to look at is Friend Feed which automatically imports shared stuff from the sites you use across the web – they cover 58 at last count. But not only can you import you can export too not only via widgets but also via RSS straight to your own or any other site that accepts and RSS feed.

As you can see there are plenty of ways to make your life easier out there when it comes to getting your message across via Social Media. Not only that it really is still early days and the technology is evolving all the time. Remember those 1980's mobile phones and compare them with an iPhone and you get where we are.

SITES THAT WORK WITH FRIENDFEED

Blogging	Hatena	Photobucket	tipjoy	Dailymotion
Ameba	Twine	Picasa Web	Upcoming	Joost
Blog	Books	Albums	Wakoopa	Seismic
LiveJournal	Goodreads	SmugMug	Yelp	Smotri.com
Skyrock	LibraryThing	Zoomr	Music	Vimeo
Tumblr	News	Status	iLike	YouTube
Baidu	Digg	brightkite.com	Last.fm	Miscellaneous
Bookmarking	Google Reader	Facebook	Pandora	Custom
delicious	menéame	Gmail/Google	Comments	RSS/Atom
Diigo	Mixx	Talk	Backtype	Amazon.com
Furl	Reddit	identi.ca	Disqus	LinkedIn
Ma.gnolia	Photos	Plurk	Intense Debate	Netflix
Mister Wong	Flickr	Twitter	Video	Netvibes
StumbleUpon	Fotolog	SlideShare	12seconds	Polyvore