

Social Media Marketing 2

Last month we introduced the idea of social media marketing, this month we're going to give you some solid pointers about what to do and what not to do.

Do:

- Understand social media marketing. Successful social media marketing isn't about the tools, it's about the people.
- Practice that well known BNI mantra "giver's gain". Successful social media marketing is about listening, participating and giving value before expecting anything in return.
- Commit time and resources. It's like any marketing; skimp and you will fail. If it succeeds then know how you will scale it.



- Be transparent or you will alienate your connections. It's generally pretty obvious what types of commercial messages are allowed or reasonable. Remember as in all networking you are not attempting to sell directly.
 - Listen. Remember it's a conversation. Knowing what people think gives the opportunity to improve or to explain.
- Welcome participation and feedback. If you are not comfortable with that don't do it, people can be more direct than they are face to face.
 - Know your objectives. But remember social media marketing is more like public relations than direct marketing. Cause and effect can be difficult to link.

Do not:

- Try to control 'the message'. Once it's out there people will inevitably mash it up, stretch it, pull it and reshape it according to their interests. You can protect logos, copyright and intellectual property but little else.
- Be fake. People know. They just do.
- Break the rules. Understand what is acceptable in any particular community so you can 'speak like a native'. Every community has unwritten as well as written guidelines for behaviour that can only be understood by observing and participating.
- Be pushy. Adverts and sales pitches are often taboo. Remember it's a social environment and asking for opinions and help and providing information is more

likely to work.

Create silos. Work across all the platforms of which you are a member so that you don't have totally conflicting messages in different communities – it just causes confusion.

So, having understood the rules where do you start?

Register with the bookmarking sites such as Delicious, Digg, Mixx, Reddit, StumbleUpon so that you can research hot topics and get ideas.



Now register for the site(s) that will give you the right exposure and conversational reach.

Once you've registered:

- Understand the tools available in that community. How to set up a good profile, join or start clubs, use blogs and any marketplace, set up events etc etc. Only by understanding the tools available can you make best use of the site.
- Join active groups (activity is more important than size) that fit your target audience and become a trusted and well known user. Remember that other users can spot those who are just joining to promote their own stories and pollute the system. So submit things that you think will appeal and be very careful about mixing in too much of your own content.
- Connect. Reach out to the influencers in your community, be polite, honest, sincere, and you'd be amazed what they will do for you. Be patient – social media marketing takes time. Be opportunistic and flexible - you never know what's going to happen so you have to constantly adjust and learn.
- Work out what will appeal to people and what will help you and then consider setting up your own club or group. But only do it if you are committed. An active club takes effort and people remember if you leave them high and dry.
- Quality content is absolutely crucial. People don't watch irrelevant or badly produced garbage unless it's so bad it becomes viral. Content with plain boring presentation or lots of adverts stands a much higher chance of failure than average content with remarkable presentation. Try to use enticing titles for your content, never lie and always back up your facts by citing your sources. Video consumption is growing fast. Create a "how to..." or "top tips..." videos. In generating all content, remember #1 rule: no direct selling. Humour, controversy and weird stuff works very well, keep that in mind - don't be afraid to test.
- Optimise your social media marketing. The term 'social media optimization' was first used by [Rohit Bhargava](#). His five rules for social media optimization are:
 - Increase your linkability – get others to link to your site
 - Make tagging and bookmarking easy – quick tag buttons for example

- Reward inbound links - list and reciprocate links
- Help your content travel – put it on other sites
- Encourage the mashup – let others use your content



- Analytics: open an [Google analytics](#) account, a [Technorati](#) account for your blog and a [Tubemogul](#) account for your videos (there are other analytics providers than these too).

Look at your analytics and track referring domains and review traffic movements regularly so that you can see what works.

So, there you are, as Aleksandr would say: “simples”.