



**BOOT★CAMP**  
**DIGITAL**  
*Get Your Digital Marketing In Shape*

# social media secrets

Social Media Marketing isn't really that new – it just involves new technologies. The keys to successful marketing are not changed – have a great product, a strong marketing strategy and a compelling message. Success in social media hinges upon the same marketing strategies and methods as traditional marketing – know your target audience, understand what they want and deliver them a compelling message.

## 1. Start by adapting what already works

When getting into social media marketing don't try to reinvent the wheel. Social media isn't a totally different marketing strategy it is typically an extension or adaptation of your existing marketing plans.

For example, if you currently market your business through the Yellow Pages, save that money (since nobody uses them any more) and invest in a social marketing strategy that focuses on Search Engine Optimization, or getting your business to the top of Google. Many traditional marketing methods are expensive and just not that effective any more.

Real estate agents typically market their business by networking and meeting as many people as possible. Social Networks are a great way to bring this same network online. Restaurants often market by placing ads with deals, discounts or promotions in local newspapers. Facebook Fan Pages are great ways to share hot deals. Rather than completely changing your marketing strategy for social networks look to adapt your current strategy.

The principles present in social media marketing – word of mouth, recommendations, customer service, advertising, promotions – are all solid traditional forms of marketing. Don't reinvent the wheel when you get into social marketing. Start with what works, get experience and results and then try some new and exciting promotions.

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“Don't try and reinvent the wheel, if the wheel already works.”

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## 2. It isn't about creating accounts. Create content.

Many people approach social media as though the goal is to create accounts – a twitter account, Facebook page, LinkedIn Profile or blog.

The goal of social media marketing is to drive business value. A solid social media plan starts with a clear understanding of social media goals and objectives.

Our Social Marketing System was specifically created to help businesses think more strategically about social media based on years of working with businesses to get real results.

Too many business start their social media marketing efforts with “I want a fan page” or “I want to be on Twitter” versus understanding what they want to achieve. Do they want new customers? Do they want to get more recommendations from existing customers? Are they looking to build general awareness?

Once you understand what you want to achieve the next step in the Social Marketing System is to deeply know and understand your target audience or who you are trying to reach. This leads to a content strategy.

The content strategy is the single most important part of a social media marketing plan. The content strategy is the meat of the plan. What are you actually going to post on social networks that is interesting and engages your target audience? Many fan pages are ghost towns with little to know interaction. This generates very little business value for the creators. A strong content strategy is vital to success since it is the actual “stuff” that you are posting on your accounts. If the content isn't interesting or useful your marketing efforts will not be successful.

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“Content is King. If it isn't interesting or useful your marketing efforts will not be successful.”

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## 3. Social Media is Conversations. Get Conversational.

Many companies have trouble with social media because social media is about conversations between actual people. It is personal and conversational and for brands to succeed they also need to be personal and conversational.

People on social media are not looking to be overtly advertised or marketed to. They are looking to connect with their friends and family and talk about their interests. Brands can be a part of this, but they have to be conversational and relevant – not obtrusive. Part of the reasons brands struggle with social media is because they can't resist the urge to sell and they don't see the opportunities for subtle marketing.



For example a friend of mine owns a company that sells promotional products like customized T-shirts, pens, trade show items, etc. He is very active on Twitter and primarily talks about marketing and general social topics, like where to get the best hamburger. He periodically mentions new products his business is carrying or shares information about an affiliate program. When he shares this information it is in a personal way, for example “Am so excited about the new T-shirt line we are carrying – what do you think?” and includes a URL to a photo of him wearing the shirt. Without saying “HEY – I SELL SHIRTS. COME AND BUY THEM” he is able to get the same message across.

The key for brands wishing to connect with people on social media is to engage in the conversation that is actually taking place. Forget about talking about your brand and overtly selling; just join the conversation. This sounds easy but time and again brands try to shift the conversation back to themselves instead of just engaging in the conversation that is happening. Overt selling and marketing is a turn-off for most people in social media – unless it is high value and requested.

For example, many people choose to follow the Dell Outlet Twitter account to get great deals on Dell products. People who follow Dell Outlet know exactly what they are getting (deals and offers). The Dell Outlet account doesn't pretend to be conversational – they are overtly selling. The key to directly selling on social media is to be open and transparent about it. Don't pretend to be conversational and then spam people with sales offers. Be open about your intentions.

## 4. You need a Call to Action

This is probably one of the biggest reasons that brands don't see results from social marketing. Once you have clear marketing goals and objectives, it is important to link your goals and objectives to a Call to Action. This will help you design and measure your social media campaigns (and all of your internet marketing) more effectively. In order to measure your success, you need to clearly define what exactly it was that you wanted someone to do –your call to action.

If you have a clear and measurable call to action, you can then measure conversions on your site.

A Call to Action is simply the action that you want someone to take. You may have different calls to action for different parts of your internet marketing strategy or social media strategy. For example, you may want blog readers to subscribe to your email newsletter or a webinar but your call to action for webinar listeners may be for them to sign up.

To this end, you may have a progressive set of Calls to Action that ultimately lead to a sale by progressively increasing your engagement level with your consumer and slowly earning the right to ask for more information and close a sale.

Your call to action should flow naturally from your marketing goals and objectives. Below are some examples of calls to action based on different marketing strategies:

Marketing Goal	Call to Action
Lead Generation ->	Sign up for webinar Call for consultation Complete form for consultation
Build Awareness ->	Watch video Click on links Read content Fan/Friend/Follow brand Sign up for newsletter

While your ultimate desired action is probably to drive or generate a sale, the best way to get there often involves intermediate steps that end in driving a sale. Getting to the sale is the final step in a chain of actions. For example, your chain to drive a sale may go from -> Click on Blog post from Twitter/Facebook -> Sign up for email newsletter -> Sign up for webinar (collect lead scoring and contact information) -> Sales person call -> Purchase. In each instance, the goal is to increase the level of interaction and engagement and ultimately make a sale at the end. Creating small incremental steps can be very effective at ultimately getting to purchase.



## 5. Use Social Media to Build an Army of Advocates

A final strategy point to consider when building your social media plan is to consider the value of building an “army” of passionate brand defenders, advocates and enthusiasts. Many businesses focus their social media efforts around talking about themselves, their business and publishing their own content. They measure social media based on the number of followers or mentions.

While social media is a valuable platform for businesses to share their content, it can be an even more powerful platform for building an “army” of people who are really passionate about your business. These people will talk about you to their friends, and not because of a contest you are running, but because they are really, truly passionate about your business. They love you and want to tell the world.

Building and cultivating these relationships can deliver real business value. First, this is the basic “word of mouth marketing” that we previously discussed. Building relationships, rewarding and giving attention to your fans are key drivers of word of mouth. In addition, these are the people who will come to your defense if you land yourself in hot water.

When I worked at a photography start-up we had a very passionate brand advocate. He actually started off as a brand enemy – he had posted a number of negative comments about our business after a misunderstanding in our FAQ. I immediately contacted him, had a quick phone conversation with him and explained the situation.

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“Consumers choose to follow you because of the inherent value of your marketing.”

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He was flattered that I had taken the time to personally call him. He set up Google Alerts for our company, and left positive comments on every blog post that was written about our company. He also recommended us and defended us in discussion forums. You can’t buy that kind of natural positive recommendation. He was never compensated by us – we sent him some promotional items and gave him “sneak peaks” at new features.

By cultivating a relationship with us he became our biggest brand advocate, and we saw conversions come from discussion forums where he recommended us.

An additional value of brand advocates is when you get in to trouble. Sooner or later most businesses do something that offends or upsets someone. Having honest, regular people who are not compensated defend you can turn an entire conversation around. Advocates can be one of your greatest social media assets.

## 6. Social Media is Permission Marketing – People have to Choose to connect with you.

Seth Godin coined the concept of permission marketing vs. interruption marketing. Old media or traditional marketing relies heavily on interruption marketing. Brands pay money to earn the right to interrupt you and demand your attention.

TV advertising, magazine ads, billboards, pop-up ads, radio ads – all are created to interrupt you from what you are doing (trying to watch a show, listen to the radio, etc), and instead advertise at you. Marketers in interruption marketing don't have to worry about whether or not you want to see their ad – they paid for the right to make you watch it. And you understand that it is part of the “cost” you pay to consume the content (the TV show, radio, magazine, etc).

The content of interruption ads is focused around how to best sell the product. It doesn't matter if the viewer has any interest in the ad or finds it useful. The goal of the ad is to showcase the product and benefits to sell the product. Many of the most boring ads are actually very effective at selling products. The key to successful interruption content is to position and sell the product. The attention does not have to be earned, it is bought.

Permission based marketing, on the other hand, is earned. Permission marketing is when consumers give you permission to market to them. Your marketing ads value to their lives and then welcome and request to receive your marketing messages.

Opting in to your email newsletter, following you on twitter, signing up for text message alerts, etc, these are all examples of permission marketing. Social media is about permission marketing. Consumers choose to follow/friend/read/listen/watch because of the inherent value of your marketing.





# social media secrets

The problem is that people are bombarded by ads. According to the Media Dynamics publication, Media Matters, a typical adult is exposed to 600 – 625 ads per day . Ads have been seen on urinal cakes, the backs of restroom stalls, napkins, airline peanuts and even on sheep! Consumers are becoming increasingly blind to much of this advertising.

We fast forward commercials and change the station when an ad comes on the radio. There is also a growing trend towards “banner blindness” that shows that consumers know where to expect ads on a web page and that their eyes don’t even focus on the ads.

They are able to completely block out the ads because their peripheral vision can see them and ignore them.

How can you possibly build your brand and gain attention in the sea of advertising? Unless you have millions of dollars to spend you probably can't. The answer is social media and permission based marketing. In a permission based marketing model the size of your budget matters less and the size of your passion and personality matters more. Permission marketing evens the playing field.

The catch? You can't buy your way in. You have to earn it. That is what makes social media marketing difficult to navigate – it requires that you earn attention from people who have a choice about whether or not they engage with you. People are choosing to engage with brands that are authentic, transparent, that care, show empathy, respect them, respect their time, respect their opinions and are human.

The good news is that if you do it well the ROI (return on investment) can be huge. Brands and businesses are witnessing tremendous growth by observing the rules of permission based marketing.

Social media requires permission based or earned marketing. Marketers don't have the right to be on my twitter stream, in my facebook page or on my blog. They have to earn the right and have my permission (implicit or explicit) to market at me. If they annoy me or accost me with uninvited sales pitches I will cut them off (at best) or possibly go so far as to flame them on my blog or in my twitter stream.

When approaching social media marketing it is important to ease your way in. Start small. Listen first and slowly begin participating once you understand your community, their language, the etiquette and the conversation (as discussed in Chapter 2).

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