

## ***Social Media Marketing Strategy in General***

### **An Introduction to Social Media Marketing**

September 20, 2010

Social media—including networking sites like [Facebook](#), communications sites like [Twitter](#), and blogs like [WordPress](#)—present powerful possibilities for growing a brand.

Since communication is by definition a “two-way street,” there are two basic ways of interacting with the public at large via social media Web sites: You can put information out and/or you can get information in.

The value of the latter is in receiving feedback, direct from your potential market, often almost instantaneously. This is accomplished by such things as Facebook “Like” buttons or Twitter “Tweet” buttons, which not only let you know that a visitor enjoys your content but also allows the visitor to tell all their Facebook friends (who read their walls) or Twitter followers (who read their tweets) with one simple click — no wonder those social media companies have convinced countless webmasters (including yours truly) to include those buttons on their own Web sites. Taking things to the extreme is [the “AddThis” button](#), the omnipresent orange plus sign, which allows a visitor to recommend a Web site to potentially hundreds of social bookmarking sites (The AddThis button also allows a visitor to bookmark a site in their own browser or to e-mail a link to the site to any of the contacts in their address book). Of course, the potential downside is that if a site does not strike a

visitor’s fancy, they can quickly spread that negative word far and wide. The lesson is to maintain high-quality content in your Web site, blog posts, and everywhere else online.

That brings us to the flip side of communications: putting out information, the primary function of [Facebook \(business\) pages](#), your own Twitter tweets, and [YouTube](#) videos.

And putting it all together—both the output and the input of information—is the ability of various social media sites to allow visitors to reply or comment to your posts or others’ (the essence of a blog). Nothing seems to generate more excitement and “buzz” among visitors than a substantive—sometimes passionate—exchange of views.

In marketing, either online or off, there are no “magic bullets”—no methods guaranteed to succeed (or fail, for that matter). That said, the two most important things you can do in social media marketing to maximize your chances for success are:

- You should start by making any Create fresh, new, valuable content, which will generate strong “word of mouth” advertising—“viral” marketing, in online parlance, and the best (most powerful and least expensive) messaging, in any medium.

- Maximize the frequency and reach of that content to the appropriate target market (and as mentioned, with social media that means two-way communication, optimally with comments, replies, replies to replies, etc., creating and sustaining exciting conversations and building personal relationships).

You should start by making any content you have previously created readily available to anyone online—including Google and other search engines—as in archives of your Web site, which should be made searchable (as with the free [Google Site Search Engine](#)). That content should also be refreshed regularly, as with monthly newsletters. Moreover, with posts on Facebook, tweets on Twitter, and posts in a blog, you can readily increase the frequency of your high-quality messaging (which can include links to relevant images and even audio and video, either that you produce or that presented throughout the Web).

The question then becomes how do you increase your frequently updated content's effective reach, to your target market—ideally without even having to buy online advertising (such as [Facebook Ads](#), individually targeted to those users with self-identified profile characteristics that match your target demographics). The ways to increase your effective reach vary with the social medium: Facebook, Twitter, and blogs each present unique opportunities and limitations.

But the bottom line is that social media is based on interpersonal relationships—up to and including trust, as for brands—which are built by conversing about common interests, sharing your content and that of others, and praising others' work as well as (sometimes even more than) your own. Ultimately, ironically, as one successful small business owner said, social media marketing is about “not selling.”