

PING

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Winner of Blogoff 2
-International Blogging Competition

**How to Use Social Media to Engage,
Connect & Monetize Your Target Market**

The Rule of 250

“The average person knows at least 250 people. Then each of those 250 people knows 250 people. So instantly, you have access to 62,500 people.”

--Mark Victor Hansen and Robert G. Allen, authors of “The One Minute Millionaire”

Thank you for downloading our Social Media guide. The purpose of this guide is to share a piece of the knowledge we have gained over the last several years managing advertising & marketing and social media campaigns for our client’s.

Through our blogs, speaking engagements, and guides such as this, we strive to help others understand the “why” and the “how” to using these new tools and technology to drive new business.

If you choose to manage your own initiatives we hope this guide eases your path. For those who prefer to bring in an outside resource, we hope you will consider calling Social Media Sonar.

Whichever you choose we invite you to connect with us at:



[Twitter.com/seanenelson](https://twitter.com/seanenelson)



linkedin.com/in/seanenelson



youtube.com/socialmediasonar

“Social media is just a buzzword until you come up with a plan.”

– Unknown

Ten years ago LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook did not exist. Twenty years ago hardly anyone had a personal computer. Thirty years ago Cable Television was just starting to come into it's own. Forty years ago you had 5 channels or less on TV dependent upon how well the tin foil on the rabbit ears worked. What you know today will change tomorrow.

Most of our client's are small to mid-size companies that cannot match up against their larger competitors in terms of money, labor, and resources. To out-market the competition they have to out-smart them.

In a recent article Malcome Gladwell discusses how David's can improve their chance of beating Goliaths. Normally David is successful less than 30%. But, when David understands that he cannot compete on Goliath's terms (think normal industry practices) and chooses an unconventional strategy, the success percentage more than doubles.

Recently someone asked what it is that Social Media Sonar does. Our answer was that we help David out market Goliath using traditional advertising, marketing, and social media.

We still use traditional means to help our client's including producing television commercials, writing press releases, and developing print collateral. Social media, though, allows us to cost effectively build a community of people, communicate one to one or en masse, engage in conversations, generate leads, and drive revenue.

It is understanding how it all works together in a comprehensive strategy that makes it work. You can choose to use traditional advertising and marketing, social media, or both.

Our Unconventional Advantage

Most companies providing social media solutions are busy selling the statistics and the hype. They're quoting stats such as the 3 year growth on Facebook, that Dell earned \$3 million dollars from using LinkedIn, the number of new LinkedIn members ... and so on and on.

Don't get me wrong, I love statistics. But “how can you use social media to

Dell did \$3 Million worth of Sales Using Twitter!

So What! Dell is a large company. Most of you reading this are infinitely smaller so is that really a relevant example?

Try this one: Naked Pizza Drives 20% of their \$1 Million in annual sales Using Twitter ...they have one location.

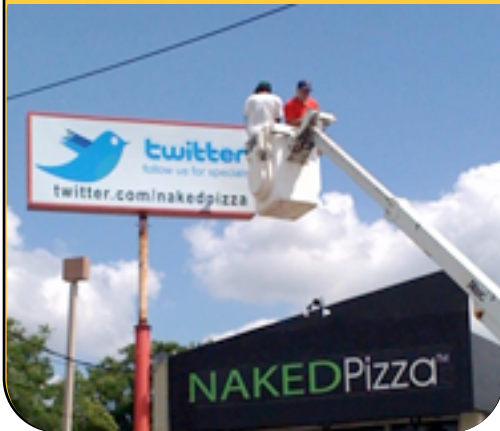
In a recent 1 day Twitter promotion, 68.60% of total dollar sales came from customers who said "I'm calling from Twitter".

grow your business?" That's where it gets exciting because most of the tools are free or relatively in-expensive in terms of cost. You just have to be willing to invest the time required to engage and interact.

From the start we understood that we would have to have the ability to aggressively price our services. You can't charge New York prices in Atlanta. Our structure is such that expenses are minimized and primarily consist of the costs involved in delivering the end solutions for our client's. A smaller overhead provides a wider degree of flexibility.

We also understand that social media is a relatively newer form of advertising. While many of our peers were focussed on talking about how they could help small businesses, we chose to show small businesses how to do it themselves. We knew that those who could, would do it themselves, and those that understood the need for social media, but lacked the time or resources, would contact us for help.

The Trail



As a full fledged member of the David clan, we continue to help businesses understand how to use the Social Web, making sure they understand the need for a strategy, and the tactics to accomplish their goals and objectives.

In business there is a process of familiarity that most people go through prior to making a purchase. The first step is they have to **know** that you exist. Next they need to **like** you or your product or service. Finally they have to have some level of **trust**. If they know, like, and trust you then you have a shot at earning their business.

Social media provides numerous opportunities to introduce you or your company to other, to capture their attention through sharing content, or build goodwill through being a resource.

- Using Twitter you might share a link to a interesting news article or blog, written by you or just something interesting you found on the internet.
- Using Facebook you might share an interesting photo or video that causes one to take notice.



Copeland's Restaurant used Twitter to connect to a customer who tweeted she was eating at her favorite place for her birthday.

They responded to her tweet and delivered a free desert. For simply paying attention and a \$5.99 piece of cheesecake they created a brand fanatic.



Atlanta Health & Life has used LinkedIn groups to drive 3 to 6 inbound calls per week.

Using LinkedIn groups to start discussions and to post news or blog articles has allowed them to stay in front of potential prospects.

Sharing value through content has resulted in people knowing, liking, and trusting them.

In 2008 Emory Johns Creek Hospital began filming short videos of their doctors as a way to introduce them to potential patients. These short videos address common questions people might have about a particular procedure.

The Result: Decreased the number of visits from 4 to 3 before a patient elected to have a procedure.

- On LinkedIn it might be starting a discussion in a group or by connecting two of your connections.
- YouTube has grown into the number two search engine. When I want to know how to work a piece of software I look to YouTube first.

The effect of providing value to others, belonging to common groups, or being connected, is that your community begins to recognize you.

If people like your content or the value you share they will inevitably begin to form a positive opinion of you. How you interact with others will also factor into the “Like” equation.

The final piece, Trust, is something that will build over time if you consistently participate, help others, share great content and value. At Social Media Sonar we have used our blogs and video to share value, helping others better understand how the social web, advertising and marketing work together.

The Metrics

If you search the internet you will find a lot of information regarding tracking social media and ROI. In working with our clients, we've focussed on tracking five metrics that we see our client's pass through in their social media initiatives.

Community

The first and easiest to track is building communities on the various social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

Traffic

You can track traffic using tools such as Google Analytics or shortened URL services such as Bitly. There is a tremendous amount of information available and you need to decide the tools that best provide a means of benchmarking and tracking results.

Conversations/Engagement

Another key statistic you can track is how your communities respond to your efforts. You can track the number of engagements on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. You can tally up the likes and comments on Facebook, Retweets on Twitter, and comments on Discussion Posts and News Articles in LinkedIn or use social listening tools.

Leads

If you want to track leads you're going to have to implement some means of tracking results. You can use tracking URL's, specific campaign forms, lead tracking phone numbers, or simply ask those who contact you how they found you. These are just a few of the tracking options available.

Conversion

The last piece of the puzzle is to quantify the dollars produced by your activity. Once again, the methods above can be used to do so.

These methods track Causation results. You communicated a message and the specific results were generated directly from this activity.

You can also use Correlation to track results. Suppose that prior to launching your campaign you averaged 500 people per month to your site. Since launching your campaign your traffic has increased to 700, 900, and 1,100 visits per month over the previous three months. You can correlate the increase to the beginning of the campaign.

Correlation doesn't generate as specific of a metric as Causation, but it still is a means of evaluating your efforts.



A Simple Strategy

Now that you understand how to track results let's talk about actually launching a campaign.

Like all marketing initiatives you need to have a strategy in place. You need to have goals and objectives. Without these, how do you know what actions you should be taking?

If your goal is to use your blog to build a thought leadership position then you need to understand what content will resonate with your target market.

The Social Web can initially be a research tool; asking questions, tracking conversations, and seeing what drives your prospects to engage is a start.

Before we go any further let's make sure that we understand the landscape. What most people call Social Media is really the Social Web. The Social Web is made up of Social Networking and Social Media.

Social Networking: Sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter where a primary emphasis is on building networks of people ideally made up of your target prospects.



Social Media: Sites such as You Tube, Blogs, and Flickr where the primary emphasis is on sharing content. These sites provide space to host and disseminate your content.

The interesting thing is that there is a cross over on social networking and social media sites. You can share content on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter. You can also build communities on You Tube, Blogs, and Flickr.

One of the key differences between Traditional Advertising & Marketing, and the Social Web is how you interact with your prospects or communities.

In most forms of traditional advertising you are sending out a message that is one sided. You hope that those who respond do so based on your call to action. You can drive responses but typically this requires sending the recipient to a location where they have the opportunity to respond.



In the Social Web, the response is in the medium itself. When you post content your communities or prospects can respond through the medium. This allows you the ability to engage in a two way conversation. It allows the communities to engage within itself.

You have the opportunity to communicate and engage in a number of ways. You can start conversations, build credibility through the content you share, build trust, educate, inform, and even entertain to share value. In addition Google is indexing a lot of the content you share which helps you be found by those who may not yet be a part of your community.

Regardless of the type of product or service you offer, someone out there is looking to be engaged and educated about it in order to make a more informed purchase decision.

When you build your communities make sure that you do so with purpose. While it's great to say you have a LinkedIn network of 5,000 people or 10,000 Twitter followers, the value will be dependent upon the number of potential prospects that are in your networks.

At Social Media Sonar we are what you would call open networkers. If someone feels that we are worth connecting to we will generally accept the connections request, friend them back, or follow them them back. You never know where that next opportunity might come from. When we initiate a connection,



Kirk Driskell, founder of GundogsBroker.com, just wanted to learn how to blow a duck call. In his blog he shared his experience.

The folks at DuckCall.com read the blog and created a video series tracking Kirk's progress as he received tutoring from Buck Gardner, a world champion duck caller.

ESPN then noticed the story and featured Kirk on their Outdoor sports page.

Not bad for simply sharing an experience.



Monetize

though, we do so only if its a potential resource, partner or prospect.

Many people use social networks for personal and business reasons. The goal as an individual is likely to be to share and learn from others, and have a social space to interact. As a business the end goal should be to simply monetize your efforts.

That doesn't mean that you should focus exclusively on selling. But rather, you should seek to share content and value that is desired by the community of your prospects so that if they ever have a need for your services they know you, like you, and trust you.

It's not an overnight strategy. You need to take the time to properly ingrain yourself into the community and understand that over time your results will be dependent upon how the community views the value of what you share.

Combined with traditional advertising & marketing, the Social Web forms and effective means to engage self built communities on an ongoing basis to drive sales from conversations rather than sales pitches.

The Social Web

facebook

twitter

LinkedIn

You Tube

flickr

WordPress

Social Networking

Social Media



Build Communities



The Social Media
SONAR
blog