



Social Media and Your Business

Social Media is here to stay! It is changing the way businesses are portraying themselves to the online community. With more than 500 billion members of Facebook and growing every day, this is a serious opportunity for businesses to replace some of the traditional ways of thinking about referrals and marketing. Between Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace, and the many other social networking sites on the Internet, it can be foreign territory to navigate.

If you have a good product or service, a detailed business plan, customer service policies in place and are willing to invest time, there are many benefits that social media could provide for your business.

Social media allows you to have one-on-one communication with your customers, gather feedback on your products and services, and provides potential opportunities for word-of-mouth buzz about your company and products or services. Most importantly, it personalizes your business/brand.

When it comes to implementing a social media strategy in any business, it is vital to discuss the WHY before thinking about the HOW. You need to decide if your goal is to increase awareness, sales or loyalty.

Once you have determined what the goal is of your program, then look at your audience. What types of people do you want to reach? Where will you find them? What

are they talking about already? How do you inject usefulness into the conversation without being overly promotional? How can you earn their trust?

The next part is the toughest part – determining your brand. What is the “one thing that defines you”? Here’s a hint: it’s not the features and benefits you find in bullets on your product’s brochure. Here are some examples, Volvo = Safety, Apple = Innovation, Disney = Magic.

Branding your business is key to your success using social media. You need to become the expert. The tricky part here is to not promote yourself too aggressively. Social network users have proven to be open to marketing, but they don’t want to hear sales pitches.

Engaging customers and potential customers in conversation is crucial. Posting content regularly is the only way to guarantee success. And, beyond just posting content, you must also be involved with the conversation that might begin based on what has been posted. The best intentions of posting will fall short of success if the conversation is dropped. This involves a time commitment. Sometimes it is best to have one person in charge to keep content and tone consistent, yet that task can be overwhelming for one person and maybe a team is better suited for your organization.

The strategy to marketing one’s brand has changed with the

explosion of social media on the internet. Having a successful social media program uses humanization and approachability to influence how the company is perceived by customers and prospects. Whether you are big business or a small shop, it’s all about people. Making connections with people to build relationships to find out what the customer wants and then meeting those needs. Social media is more than a sales pitch - adding value with your program will keep the audience coming back.

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