

# ***Don't Be Left In The Dark***

## ***Grow Your Business Through Social Media***



***Michael A. Hammond JD, CMT***  
President & Founder of NexLevel Advisors

**NEXLEVEL**  
ADVISORS LLC  
ELEVATING RESULTS

# ***Table of Contents***

- 3. What is social media? How does it apply to Businesses?**
- 5. Why companies can no longer afford not to engage in social media**
- 11. Overview of Social Media Networks**
  - LinkedIn
  - Twitter
  - YouTube
  - FaceBook
  - Google+
- 14. The Time to Get Started is Now!**
- 16. Working with a Social Media Expert will Deliver Greatest Returns**



## What is social media?

If you ask any business executive to define, “What is Social Media?” More than likely they will all give you a different answer. For example:

Here are 9 definitions from various online sources,

- 1. Answers.com** – The online forms of communicating to the masses, which include blogs, microblogs, social networking sites and podcasts
- 2. BlackBox Social Media** – Social media is any online media platform that provides content for users and also allows users to participate in the creation or development of the content in some way
- 3. Brian Solis** – Social Media is the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers. It is the shift from a broadcast mechanism, one-to-many, to a many-to-many model, rooted in conversations between authors, people, and peers
- 4. Luke Hayes** – Social media is a group of Internet-based applications that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content. This content is then shared through social interaction
- 5. One Zero One** – Social Media, by definition, is the collection of strategies, practices and tools for communicating, creating, sharing and discussing news, information and other media online
- 6. Optimize Your Web Presence** – Social media are online venues, such as social networking sites, blogs and wikis that enable people to store and share information called content, such as text, pictures, video and links
- 7. ProPR** – Social media are online communications in which individuals shift fluidly and flexibly between the role of audience and author. To do this, they use social software that enables anyone without knowledge of coding, to post, comment on, share or mash up content and to form communities around shared interests
- 8. Radian6** - Social media is game changing, not a closed system, not just another media, transparent, more than blogs, decentralized and real-time and measurable
- 9. Social Media Vision** – Simply refers to communication/publication platforms which are generated and sustained by the interpersonal interaction of individuals through the specific medium or tool

( Matthew Tommasi, The Social Media Guide)

“Social media was originally all about broadcasting to the world – or at a minimum, your select group – about your likes, dislikes, or even what kind of eggs you had this morning. But social media today... well, it’s not just for breakfast anymore.

A fundamental shift is taking place in the way people – and businesses – are using social media. No longer is it enough just to transmit the mundane details of everyday life, or broadcast product ads to others who may or may not be interested. People want more. They want real connections. They want to meet up both online and offline with like-minded individuals to pursue and share their passions, start meaningful conversations, and collaborate to take action on issues important to them.

Businesses are turning to these social communities to engage in two-way dialogue in an effort to expand their brand identity to a broader market and inspire consumers to take action.

In short, the social world is now about building authentic conversations and amplifying messages from passionate supporters and influencers, which drive the positive activity being sought by each community." (Eric Savitz, Forbes Staff, "Social Media Evolving from Broadcasting to Conversion"  
Social media is a fundamentally transformative and rapidly evolving business tool for sales, marketing, communication, business development and the dissemination of information to today's consumers.



## ***Why Companies can no longer afford not to engage in social media?***

What many business-to-business executives question is how social media applies to their business. I hear people say, “Maybe it’s right for companies that sell directly to consumers, but I don’t see how it would apply to business-to-business transactions. How is Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, YouTube or a blog going to benefit my company?”

Actually, executives that dig a little deeper are quite surprised. There are a number of business-to-business companies utilizing social media to cost effectively grow their businesses. These companies harness social media to develop brand awareness, enhance customer communication, drive website traffic and significantly improve SEO (search engine optimization) to seize business opportunities. There’s a great deal that social media offers companies that sell business-to-business:

- 1. Build Brand Awareness**
- 2. Cultivate Customer/ Prospect Communication**
- 3. Drive Website Traffic**
- 4. Boost SEO (search engine optimization)**
- 5. Improve Opportunity Identification**

### **Build Brand Awareness**

While it may be true that business-to-business blogs or Tweets are not going to be followed by as many people as a consumer offering, it doesn’t change the fact that it will influence the decisions of your prospects. Social media creates brand awareness among potential clients.

Social media provides a powerful and cost-

effective channel for displaying critical information about your company and its products and services. Talking about your industry in an intelligent way via Twitter and a regularly-updated Facebook fan page can raise your company’s brand awareness by positioning you as a thought leader and expert in your field of endeavor.

If a prospect sees dynamic tweets with insightful information, reads informative posts demonstrating your company’s knowledge, and comes across recommendations from other users on Facebook, YouTube and Twitter, they’re going to be far more inclined to purchase your products and services.

### **Cultivate Customer/ Prospect Communication**

In today’s “Internet Savvy” world, businesses, just like consumers, seek and demand information instantaneously. These purchasers use smart phones, the Internet and social media to get a pulse on industry trends, product recommendations and customer satisfaction levels.

The Recommendation Age is transforming the way we share information on the Internet. The proliferations of social networking sites like LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter are taking the Recommendation Age to a new level. This process of recommendations and customer reviews strongly influences the buying decisions of millions of people each day. The power of these recommendations can have a profound impact



on the future success or failure of companies and their products and services.

Social media provides companies with the opportunity to frame the conversations and recommendations taking place on these social sites. Companies that don't embrace social media allow their competitors to frame the conversations; conversations that many companies who don't embrace social media aren't even aware are taking place.

## Drive Website Traffic

Quality content is highly sought after in social media networks. After all, content is what helps influence decision makers. If you want to drive traffic to your website using social media, deliver insight and expertise to your followers.

Using social media to drive traffic to a website can be an extremely efficient and cost effective method to increase awareness of your website.

## Boost SEO (Search Engine Optimization)

Make social networks like Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook work to your advantage. The keywords and Tweets that you will be using will not only boost SEO, but will also influence the number of followers you have and the type of followers.

Give your business a Facebook fan page and make use of some keywords on your page. Facebook fan pages can be found in various search engines. These fan pages rank well and can really help you in your SEO activities.

# Execs Make Jump to Social

DON'T GET LEFT BEHIND.

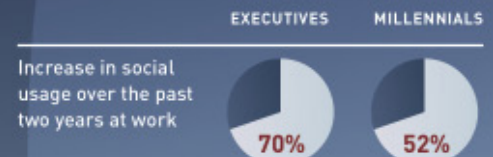
Consumer social has made the leap from our personal lives to become mission-critical for business. A workforce survey reveals why you need to get on board now.



As social usage continues to grow personally,



the more professional it becomes.



**Q.** Will social fundamentally change how business gets done? **A.** **yes 73%**  
EXECUTIVES & MILLENNIALS AGREE

But not everyone has landed on their strategy.



Only 17% of executives think their company is "ahead of the curve" with adequate adoption of a social strategy.



<sup>1</sup>Jive Social Business Index survey conducted by Penn Schoen Berland, May 2011 of 902 executives, knowledge workers, and working millennials. <sup>2</sup>Bureau of Labor Statistics © Jive software 2011. All logos and trademarks are property of their respective owners.

## Improve Opportunity Identification

At the end of the day, if business-to-business companies are going to grow they need to be able to improve their ability to identify opportunities. Social media is an extremely powerful and cost effective tool in allowing business-to-business companies to identify opportunities.

If you and your business have a strong social presence, it's simply easier for potential partners, customers, employers, and businesses to find you. In business, it's about growing your business by closing the deal and differentiating your organization; social media is one of the most powerful and cost effective ways to achieve this goal.

## Social Media's Impact on Business

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Youtube it sounds like nothing at face value. You may ask: What does it all mean really? Well, if you take a look it could mean dollars and cents. In an article called "12 Key Findings On Social Media's Impact on Business and Decision Making By CEO's and Managers". If social media hasn't resonated for you yet, it ought to.

The survey completed by 356 professionals including primarily CEO's and directors. The survey included questions designed to help the researchers better understand respondents' perceptions of and experiences with social media in support of their decision-making as CEO's, Directors and Managers.

The article asserts that "building a network or using social media to deepen customer intimacy has become the mantra of today. However, what is often overlooked is the impact of social media to change behaviors, and the potential to use social media to impact a professionals' decision-making processes.

**The CEO, Directors and Managers are asking:**

- Is social media typically regarded as a trustworthy source of information for professionals?
- Does social media offer effective tools to access information, advice, and engage in professional collaboration?
- How do they compare to traditional off-line networking?
- What are the tools and sources of social media that professionals rely on to make decisions?
- Will social media change the business and practice of enterprise-level operations?"

Social media has come on the stage recently and it is literally exploding. Everyone is using these tools, so why don't the same set of rules apply to your business growth plans?

This is no longer a nice-to-do. The key is to use these tools to get a business advantage. What do I mean? The article I referenced earlier puts it this way:

"The convergence of the Internet, Web 2.0, and mobile technologies has created a disruptive shift in business. The era of Business-to-Person (B2P) communications driven by all things social (social media, social networks, and social influence) has emerged as a new model for engagement.

Social Media Peer Groups (SMPG) have evolved to take important and influential shape in a new business and economic environment. This shift has change long standing views that have traditionally guided how companies interact, support, and collaborate with their customer.

We now work in an environment where companies have diminished control over the reputation of their brands, products, and services as the wisdom of crowds increasingly dictate the rules of reputation management and selling. Through the use of social media, customers and prospects now have an almost instantaneous platform for discussion of their ideas, experiences, and knowledge.

Increasingly, the use of social media is playing an important role in the professional lives of decision-makers as they utilize the tools and mediums before them to engage their decision-making processes. The social nature of decision-making has increased with impressive strength, connecting generations of professionals to each other—changing the dynamics of customer relationship management, marketing, and communications—forever.”

The fact of the matter is, people “live” on these social media networks. They’re there. That’s where they like to be. So, why aren’t you there? If you aren’t, you really ought to be.

Here’s what this all means to the CEO: “Specifically, this research focuses on professionals’ use of social media—and it all comes back to the strength of the relationship. Human relationships and peer-to-peer decision-making are inherently interrelated. Traditionally, we make decisions about who we trust in work settings based on a number of factors—one often being proximity. With social media, proximity is often superseded in the trust factor by relativity or like-mindedness. Is this person

- Knowledgeable?
- Credible?
- Believable?
- Do we share the same views and networks—online or offline?

Because belonging to a peer network or online community requires us to perform publically, to share our background by way of a profile, to display our professional connections and networks, trustworthiness is, in many cases, more tangibly determined and evidenced by your content and networks on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or your blog.”

As these factors arise, they present opportunity. Yes, you have to prove yourself, but in the end all you really have to do is be yourself. The hard sell doesn’t work. You have to make “friends” and be genuine. Being yourself is the way to succeed using social media.

I know you’re dying to hear what the article finally concluded are the 12 key findings, as its title suggests. The 12 key findings on social media’s impact on business and decision-making by CEO’s and Managers are:

1. **Professionals tend to belong to multiple social networks for business purposes**
2. **The “Big Three” social networks, LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter, have emerged as professional networks**
3. **Mobile is emerging as a frequent professional networking access point**
4. **Traditional decision-making processes are being disrupted by social media © 2010 Society for New Communications Research 4**
5. **Professional networks are an increasingly essential decision-support tool**
6. **High levels of trust exist in information obtained from online networks**
7. **Changes are taking place in organizations’ internal and external use of social media**
8. **There is a recognized need for peer input in decision-making.**
9. **Connecting and collaborating are key drivers for professionals’ use of social media.**
10. **Final decision makers are more likely to indicate that they conduct research via a search engine (82 percent vs. 70 percent of Decision Supporters)**
11. **Those professionals with more networks are more likely to gather opinions through their online network, read blogs and query the Twitter channel as early steps in the decision process**
12. **Younger respondents are more likely to read a company blog and to query the Twitter channel vs. older demographics**

After conducting the research, the architect of this study concluded that “As we enter the era of business-to-person (B2P) customer relationship systems, those organizations that harness Web 2.0 technologies and SMPG platforms to enable B2P communications will be the winners.



Laggards who do not understand the value of social networking and its appeal to the emotional side of customer relationship management will lose competitiveness and, ultimately, market share. Perhaps most importantly, they will lose the ability to connect and learn from their customers."

Do you want to be a laggard? Do you want to lose market share? My guess is that you would answer no to both of those questions. So, here's my question to you: Why not use social media to advance your business objectives? Really, what do you have to lose?

## Benefits of Social Media

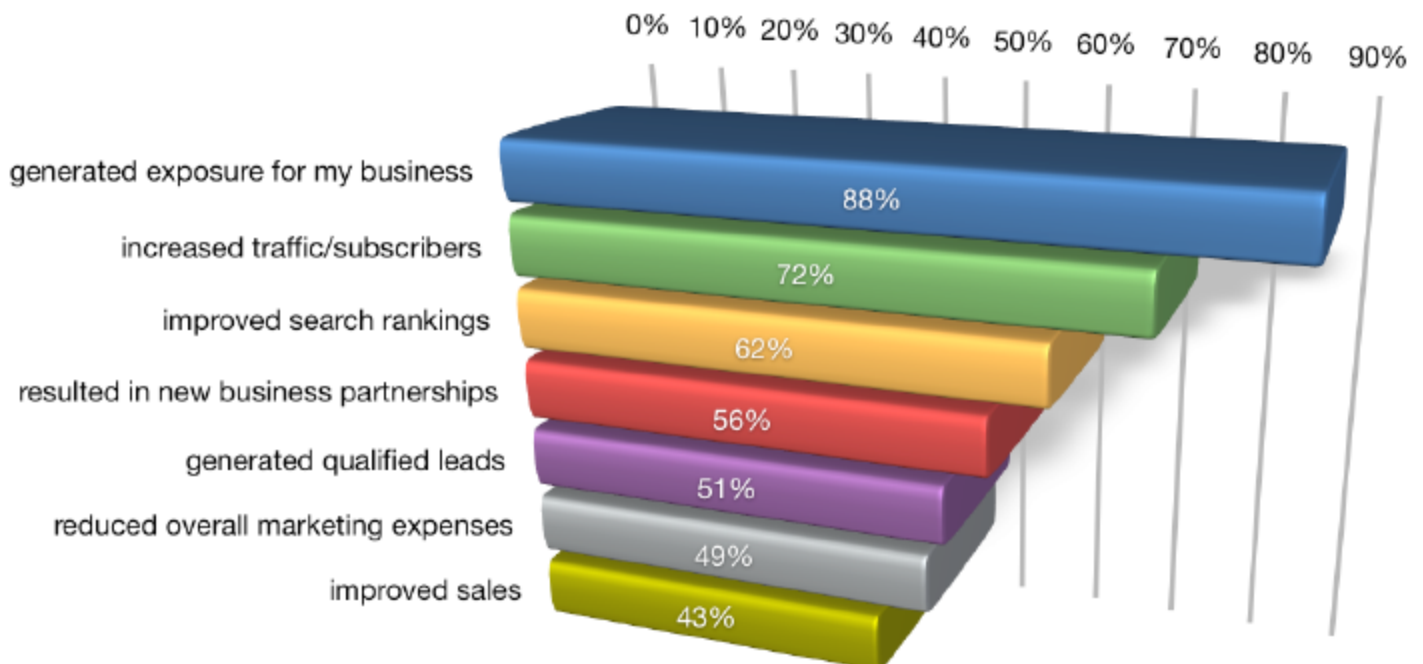
In another research report titled "2011 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING INDUSTRY REPORT: How Marketers Are Using Social Media to Grow Their Businesses". Even if you're a social media skeptic, you'll find this report compelling. You may be saying things like: "Social media isn't for me." "I don't think I can get new business from social media." "In order to do social media right it would take too much time out of my day and I don't have enough time now." Hold on, you'll want to read about the findings in this report.

Why? Because I'm going to share real numbers about how to boost business using social media.

The report starts by saying, "The No. 1 benefit of social media marketing is standing out in an increasingly noisy world. A significant 88% of all marketers indicated that their social media efforts have generated more exposure for their businesses. Improving traffic and subscribers was the second major benefit, with 72% reporting positive results.

"Nearly two-thirds of marketers indicated a rise in search engine rankings was a benefit of social media marketing. As search engine rankings improve, so will business exposure and lead generation efforts, and overall marketing expenses will decrease. Slightly more than half of marketers found social media generated qualified leads."

Maybe a lead doesn't mean much to you. I know you want closed business, but the report concludes that social can actually help you translate the lead into a closed deal. The research estimates that "72% of marketers who have been using social media for more than three years report it had helped them close business."



The next thing you're going to say is that you don't have the time. Actually you don't need much time to get results. The report concludes, "Even with a minimal time investment, the vast majority of marketers (81% or higher) indicated their social media efforts increased exposure for their business. Nearly all marketers who've been employing social media marketing for a year or longer report it generates exposure for their business. A significant 72% of those conducting social media activity agree. Those who invest the most time in social media marketing gain the most business partnerships. However, 45% of people who've only invested 12 months or less in social media marketing get results. By spending as little as 6 hours per week, 52% of marketers see lead generation benefits with social media."

Still not convinced? Results are results. What I found that was even more compelling was the cost of marketing using these tools. Most of these tools are free. What do you have to lose? And with more and more companies now using these tools you may just be left behind if you don't get started. How prevalent is social media usage among marketers? You are going to be amazed how mainstream these techniques are becoming.

In fact, the research said, "A significant percentage of participants strongly agreed that overall marketing costs dropped when social media marketing was implemented. The self-employed (59%) and small business owners with 2 or more employees (58%) were more likely than others to see reductions in marketing costs when using social media marketing."

But how do you measure results? A lot of people measure results in terms of Web traffic. The report indicated that "78% of participants found that increased traffic occurred with as little as 6 hours per week invested in social media marketing. And those who've been doing this for 3 years or more reported substantially better results (91% reported benefits).

Now you're asking: How do I get started? Which social tools do I use? Not surprisingly, the report advised "By a long shot, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and blogs were the top four social media tools used by marketers."

What are others doing? They're taking advantage of this social media phenomenon. How so? The research concluded, "At least 73% of marketers plan on increasing their use of YouTube/video, blogs, Facebook and Twitter. 92% of marketers are using Facebook and 75% plan on increasing their activities. At least 64% of marketers plan on increasing their use of search engine optimization and email marketing."

Social media isn't easy, but not much in life is. You have to be deliberate and organized about executing your strategy. But don't delay. There is a lot of business to be had if you know how to get it.



## Overview of 5 Primary Social Networks



LinkedIn is a social-networking site for business professionals.

LinkedIn has over 100 million members, with a new member joining approximately every second. When you join, you create a profile that summarizes your professional expertise and accomplishments. You can then form professional connections by inviting trusted contacts to join LinkedIn and connect to you. Your network consists of your connections, your connections' connections, and the people they know, linking you to a vast number of qualified professionals and experts.

You need to view this as a business opportunity site. In actuality, there are companies of all sizes that are a part of LinkedIn. Why so much participation by the business community? You can collaborate and share ideas on this site. This is not Facebook. This is not about what everyone did this weekend. This is not chit chat about what's your favorite food. This is a professional way to network and grow your business.



Twitter is a microblogging site that enables users to send "tweets" or messages of 140 characters or less.

Twitter describes itself as, "a service for friends, family, and co-workers to

communicate and stay connected through the exchange of quick, frequent answers to one simple question: What are you doing?"

If you're new to Twitter, then that description might seem a bit vague and ambiguous. So, to help you wrap your mind around the short-form messaging tool, start thinking about Twitter as a new form of online communication. Twitter is just communication in a new shape, but it's also a platform for listening to the communication of others in new ways.

Currently we have email, instant messenger, and VoIP tools like Skype as one-to-one or one-to-few online communication tools. For one-to-many online communication, online publishers can turn to blogs to create and distribute content rapidly and reach anyone on the web through RSS feeds.

Twitter is a combination of these various forms of communication, but its primary difference is that posts, or tweets, are restricted to 140 characters or less. As a Twitter user you can post updates, follow and view updates from other users (this is akin to subscribing to a blog's RSS feed), and send a public reply or private direct message to connect with another Twitterer.

Though users can answer the prompt, "What are you doing?", tweets have evolved to more than everyday experiences, and take the shape of shared links to interesting content on the web, conversations around hot topics (using hashtags), photos, videos, music, and, most importantly, real-time accounts from people who are in the midst of a newsworthy event, crisis, or natural disaster.



**YouTube is a video-sharing website on which users can upload, share, and view videos.**

Three former PayPal employees created YouTube in February 2005. The name and logo of the

company are an allusion to the cathode ray tube, a display device used since the early days of electronic television.

YouTube is an online public communications site. The site allows for registered users to upload and have available for the public their videos for viewing. Anyone who goes to the site can view the videos that are posted on this site. The videos are anything from beginner videos to more professional videos.

You can put just about anything you want on the YouTube site. You can also watch just about anything on YouTube. There are some great videos out there on YouTube that are very interesting and entertaining and will never be seen anywhere else.

If you have a business, YouTube is a great tool for getting your product out there, for little cost. This is also a great way to get to run ongoing information about new products or services to the same people and new people. If you are looking for cheap ways of advertising this is the way to go.



**Facebook is a social networking service and website launched in February 2004, operated and privately owned by Facebook, Inc. As of July 2011, Facebook has more than 750 million active users.**

Users may create a personal profile, add other users as friends, and exchange messages, including automatic notifications when they update their profile. Facebook users must register before using the site.

Additionally, users may join common-interest user groups, organized by workplace, school or college, or other characteristics, and categorize their friends into lists, e.g. "People From Work", or "Really Good Friends".



Facebook was founded by Mark Zuckerberg with his college roommates and fellow computer science students Eduardo Saverin, Dustin Moskovitz and Chris Hughes. The website's membership was initially limited by the founders to Harvard students, but was expanded to other colleges in the Boston area, the Ivy League, and Stanford University. It gradually added support for students at various other universities before opening to high school students, and, finally, to anyone aged 13 and over. However, based on ConsumersReports.org on May 2011, there are 7.5 million children under 13 with accounts, violating the site's terms.

Facebook is a great way to meet friends and keep up on what they are doing. Once you add a friend to your Facebook friend list you will always know when they are adding things to their blog or updating their profile. Join Facebook groups to meet people like you, or browse the profiles to find new friends. Facebook's classmates and co-worker search is good for finding friends too.



**Google+ is a social network that Google created a couple months ago. As for the site itself its kind of a mix between Facebook, Twitter, and Skype.**

Google+ integrates social services such as Google Profiles and Google Buzz, and introduces new services Circles, Hangouts, Sparks, and Huddles. Google+ will also be available as a desktop application and as a mobile application, but only on Android and iOS operating systems. Sources have declared it Google's biggest attempt to rival facebook, which had over 750 million users in 2011. On July 14, 2011, Google announced that Google+ had reached 10 million users just two weeks after it was launched in a "limited" trial phase. After less than a day of being live, the Google+ iPhone app has the number one free spot in the Apple app store. After three weeks in operation, it has already reached 20 million users.

2<sup>nd</sup>  
Annual

# THE CMO'S GUIDE TO: THE SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

CMOs will invest more in social media this year than ever before, yet this is a scene that constantly shifts and changes. Here to help you better leverage these major social media sites is CMO.com's 2nd annual guide to the social landscape—updated and revised for 2011.

GOOD!

OKAY!

BAD!

## WEB SITE

## CUSTOMER COMMUNICATION

## BRAND EXPOSURE

## TRAFFIC TO YOUR SITE

## SEO

## facebook

A social-networking site where users can add friends, send messages, and build their own profiles

A central and open communication portal, Facebook is the hub through which businesses want to drive social interaction. Positive or negative, companies can use Facebook to get their messages out and to receive customer feedback.

Using pages as a persona allows companies to position their brands on other relevant pages. For example, Starbucks' page itself can now post on large coffee-lovers' pages.

For many Web sites, Facebook has emerged as one of the top traffic sources. While the "viral potential" is lower on Facebook than others, nothing is more consistent at driving a steady flow of traffic to every message or post.

Google and Bing have both indicated that they are using "social signals" as part of their ranking algorithms, pointing to Facebook and Twitter, in particular. While the links themselves are "nofollow," the search benefits exist, especially in instances where "Query Deserves Freshness."

## twitter

A microblogging site that enables users to send "tweets," or messages of 140 characters or less

Twitter is the ultimate outbound messaging tool. Inbound customer communications are quick and to the point, allowing for simple monitoring and management of conversations.

It isn't what you're saying on Twitter that exposes your brand. It's what you can get others to say about you that has the real impact. Getting retweets and interactions can do more for brand exposure than any other social site.

The prevalence of noise and spam have reduced Twitter's ability to send direct traffic. However, it is an exceptional tool for assisting with traffic generation from other sites, like Digg, StumbleUpon, and Facebook.

As with Facebook, Twitter has been singled out as a component of Google's and Bing's social component. The links are "nofollow," but the social component is real and expected to become more prominent over time.

## flickr

An image-and video- hosting Web site where community members can share and comment on media

As a PR tool, Flickr gives company-sponsored events a pictorial home that can be more professional and better organized than on other social image-sharing sites (including Facebook).

Flickr's improved search rankings and integration with other social sites makes it the high-quality image posting service of choice. Bulk images should go on Facebook. Quality images should go on Flickr.

Even if you get tens of thousands of visits to a photo with your URL hyperlinked below, the click-through rates are among the lowest around. All links are "nofollow."

Flickr is very much indexed in search engines and passes links and page rank. It is also a major part of Google's and Bing's social search component—photos liked by individuals can be seen more prevalently in their friends' searches.

## Linked in

A social-networking site for business professionals

Not the primary focus, but you can potentially engage customers by encouraging employees to answer industry-related questions people post and become known as an expert in the field.

LinkedIn is great for personal branding and showing the professional prowess in your organization. Encourage employees to maintain complete profiles to show off your solid team.

LinkedIn continues to improve its standing in traffic generation by encouraging sharing through every new feature it has rolled out during the past year. It isn't as consistent as Facebook or as viral as Digg, but it's getting better.

Very high page rank, almost guaranteed to be a ranking on the first page of search results, especially for your individual employee names. High SEO value for vanity search for your name, but that is about it.

## YouTube

A video-sharing Web site where users can share and upload new videos

Whether you seek to entertain, inform, or both, video is a powerful channel for quickly responding to customer complaints and showing your social-media savvy. It is also the best venue for reputation "repair" if things go wrong.

Your YouTube branding is second only to Facebook when people are researching your company. Be certain that the messages are frequent and that they align with what you want as your perceived company persona.

YouTube is growing in the traffic-generation segment, particularly through in-video messaging through annotations and URL branding. Clicks on content links are still minimal, but even those numbers have seen a recent rise.

Very good for building links back to your site because the videos rank very well. YouTube channels are a tried-and-true way to send some really good exposure and SEO back to your brand.

## digg

A social-news site where users can discover and share content

Customer interaction is nonexistent on Digg, but the intrinsic value of exposure that is possible through a Digg front page story can highlight other sites where customer communication is strong (such as your blog).

Brands have an opportunity to gain mass exposure on Digg, particularly through the most interesting stories posted about your company. It is a venue for content discovery—brands that do well on Digg can do well anywhere.

Digg went through a rough spot in 2010, but seems poised for a rebound in 2011. Even with the decrease in traffic, it is still the most consistent viral-traffic generation site that can send tens of thousands of visitors to individual posts.

Very good in that even if your story doesn't become popular, it will still get your page indexed very quickly. Also, if your story does become popular, this is likely the best site in terms of getting the attention of bloggers who will link to you.

## StumbleUpon

A social-news community where members discover and share Web pages

StumbleUpon is not a tool that is useful for customer communications. There is a random chance of getting a message to your current customers and the user base is growing, but it's still very slim in comparison to other social sites.

The paid campaign can be good for brand awareness, especially after you have attempted getting free, organic traffic to your home page. You can target very accurately, but keep in mind you are paying \$.05 per visit (\$50 CPM).

StumbleUpon is the social media equivalent of a traffic Grand Slam—it doesn't happen often, but when it does, it's huge. Keep discoveries diverse. You never know when you'll get hundreds of thousands, even millions of visitors from StumbleUpon.

Very good if your story makes it to the top page for its tag. Due to StumbleUpon's large user base, many people can find your stories and link to them. For vanity searches, your profile page ranks well, too.

## reddit

A social-news community where users post links to the site's home page

Only the extremely adept can use Reddit as a customer communication tool. Any time you open your company up to the growing masses at Reddit, there is a chance it can backfire. Occasionally, everything goes better than expected.

Attempting to build your brand on Reddit is like trying to sell whale meat to Greenpeace. It won't happen, and it's likely to turn very ugly if you try.

Reddit has emerged in the past year as the best social news traffic-generation site on the Internet. Quality and originality are paramount—if your message isn't viral, Reddit will not approve.

If you make the front page, a lot of sites will pick up your story, generating valuable back links. Many of these stories are picked up by reputable sites, giving more trust to your site.

## tumblr

A social-networking site where users can ask and answer questions

The growing segment of Tumblr users and the ability to ask and answer questions makes the site a potential darling for customer communications. As the site's exponential growth continues, expect it to rival Twitter as a top-2 communication tool.

Tumblr's simple platform and extreme ability to have content shared on it make it a viable branding tool. GenY is migrating to Tumblr to share opinions—if that demographic is important to your business, your Tumblr presence must be strong.

Images can get traffic. Otherwise, there is no real traffic potential yet. In the coming months, it may expand, but currently almost all activity happens directly on Tumblr itself.

The blogging nature of Tumblr allows for extremely high potential from a link-building perspective. The sites themselves also rank very well in the search engines.



of your products or events. This also helps track how many people are signing up as customers from your social media efforts.”

The best part about using social media as a marketing tool is that the cost is minimal. So, now that I've shared some compelling ROI numbers you're probably asking how you get started and where you need to be when it comes to having a social presence.



