

You may well have heard the terms ‘Social Media’ and ‘Social Networking’. But what do they mean and how should you get involved? Here are 5 tips to make your journey into Social Media more structured and therefore successful.

Five Tips to Make Social Media More Structured

1. Why should I bother?

It is important to understand why you want to get involved in Social Media.

Good Personal Reasons	Good Business Reasons
I like having the new piece of technology	I want to talk to my customers / colleagues/ business partners / etc.
All my mates are talking about it and I don't want to get left behind	I want to provide customer service using Social Networking
Everybody says I must get involved	I want to increase my internet presence
I want to follow the latest celebrity / sportsman /...	I want to build my brand
I want to talk to my friends and family	I want to extend my network of contacts

2. Who is my Audience?

It is really important that you identify who your audience will be and where they exist in the Social Media arena.

Your audience will include your past, current and potential customers, your suppliers, your business partners, your networking contacts, your competitors, the people who refer you, the people who are influential in your industry. Make a complete list of anybody you want to talk to - this should be similar to your audience for traditional marketing, but don't forget that Social Media gives us access to people that your normal marketing efforts might not reach.

3. How do my audience use social media?

Do spend some time researching what social media your audience currently use. Try to identify what they intend to use in the future. Find out what your competitors are doing and identify any possible gaps or opportunities. There are a number of tools to help you do this including Google Alerts, Twitter keywords and LinkedIn search.

4. What resources do I have?

Fortunately most of Social Media is (at the moment) free. However social media, like any marketing does take time. You need to allocate time to

- Decide on your strategy
- Setting up the social media sites
- Interact with your audience and keep your social media interactive.
- Measure and review your progress

It is important not to underestimate the amount of time that this will take to do properly. You may want to start small and grow - there is nothing worse than attracting an audience and then stopping.

5. What is the difference between the different forms of Social media?

There are many ways that you can exploit Social Media including video, podcasting, internet forums as well as the more talked about blogging and social networking (LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, etc.) Take the time to understand the difference between the sites and what they can do for you.

In Conclusion

Social media really does work; you just need to make sure that you take the time to understand how to make it work for your business. I know a number of businesses who have found Social Media to be a successful marketing tool. Examples include:

- A restaurant making 6 figures by using Twitter
- A dentist obtaining a 4 figure client through Twitter
- An accountant whose website hits have increased 100% by using Social Media
- A PR expert whose website hits have increased 50% through showing his fitness regime on YouTube
- A firm of Solicitors who have employed staff and found clients using LinkedIn
- An inventor who has used Twitter to get her product in front of people who would otherwise not have heard of her.
- A supplier of organic skincare products who is communicating with customers using Facebook.

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For more information and help with implementing Social Media in your business, do give me a call mary@concisetraining.net