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**Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses and Organizations
With an Emphasis on Facebook**

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Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses and Organizations

With an Emphasis on Facebook

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Report

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Social Media Marketing for Small Businesses and Organizations
With an Emphasis on Facebook

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ABSTRACT

Social media is the fastest growing communication medium in history. Integrating it into a company's marketing plan is becoming a necessity, regardless of the size of the company, for marketers to engage populations and promote their brands. This report is a comprehensive look into the implications of using these newer forms of communication for small businesses and organizations. In addition, there is an emphasis on using Facebook as a marketing tool because of its popularity and the capabilities it provides.

First, the author will define the parameters of social media and take a brief look at the various platforms that exist. The report will then cover a more extensive overview of digital channels of communication as compared to traditional outlets as well as types of online marketing and advertising. Next the author will write about what all these new channels of communication can do and how small businesses and organizations can properly execute their own social media plans successfully as a way to interact with current and prospective customers. We will look at several examples of how the digital space has been used by other businesses and organizations including The University of Texas' Advertising Department. The report will conclude with a look at criticisms, growing trends and the future of social media.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 1: Introduction.....	1
Definitions.....	3
Prominent Online Platforms.....	7
Why Facebook	9
Chapter 2: Channels of Communication.....	12
Changing Traditional Channels.....	13
The New Digital Channels	14
Online and Social Media Marketing and Advertising.....	17
Chapter 3: Implications for Small Businesses and Organization.....	20
Brand Awareness.....	26
Customer Attention and Retention.....	28
Monetize.....	29
Chapter 4: Implementing Facebook into Marketing Strategies.....	33
Research and Strategy.....	34
Content.....	38
Measurement.....	43
Chapter 5: Criticisms and Trends.....	47
Criticisms.....	47
Trends.....	49
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	55
The Future of Social Media.....	55
Appendix.....	58
Bibliography.....	63
Vita.....	70

Chapter 1: Introduction

There are many things that initially sparked my interest in the general topic of social media for this professional report. Not only because it is absolutely everywhere in today's society, but more importantly, because it is something I use currently and will use every day in my future career and will need to know in any job I will ever hold. I am amazed at the evolution of SM even since my time as an undergraduate a year and a half ago. As a public relations major at Slippery Rock University, we never even talked about using social media strategically or the implications of the massive communication tool on society (they have changed their curriculum since then).

Since starting my graduate work at The University of Texas (UT), social media has been part of every campaign in every class. I have been enthralled by numerous articles, many of which are included in this report, about how it is affecting the way people communicate and specifically the way people communicate with businesses and vice versa. While the current state of social media might look completely different than it will in five or ten years, it is imperative to learn the skills to use the various digital tools now in order to be able to adapt with the continuous and rapid changes in the field of communication.

Additionally, in the spring semester of 2010, I participated in a group with four others to research, plan, execute and measure the social media presence of UT's Advertising Department. Subsequently, this led me to think of how smaller organizations and businesses manage their social media. Many of the articles in major trade publications like *Advertising Age* are of examples of companies with top social media

rankings such as Starbucks with their millions of fans and followers. The U.S. web traffic to Facebook pages rarely exceeds six figures but DBMS has found 37 branded Facebook pages with at least a million fans (Neff, August 2009). While the number of fans is impressive and a great example of the scope of what social media can do, this is not a very accurate example of what the majority of companies are capable of with social media.

UT's Advertising Department will most likely never have anywhere close to a million users. Clearly there are different strategies to be employed by different types and sizes of groups. Each one is unique and each business and organization should have their own purposes, strategy and target audience. Many business know they should be there but just do not know how to get started. Others will create a profile but infrequently post status updates and pictures (Haynes, 2010) which is almost always considered bad practice and looked upon poorly by consumers. There is certainly a need for a guide to small business and organization social media usage.

Lastly, I chose to elaborate on only one social media network because incorporating all of the beneficial social networks would be too expansive for the purpose of this report. I dedicated this report of small business and organization practices and uses of the platform to be able to review Facebook in its entirety. I believe that if only one platform is to be chosen for a business or organization, it should be Facebook for its enormous number of users, its expansive influence and its vast capabilities for marketers, especially those of small businesses and organization. Facebook has changed the world of communication and I hope to convey its impact with this report.

Definitions

Social media (SM), simply put, is a means of personal communication (Stein, 2010). It is the evolution of the fundamental human urge to communicate and a transition in the way people talk to each other (Green, 2010). From a consumer perspective, SM is a way to keep in touch with or updated about family and friends, create online relationships with existing personal relationships, and way to share their lives with others through posting their thoughts or photos and sharing anything else they find relevant or interesting. They also use SM to get news, support and advice on anything (Green, 2010).

For advertisers, it has a bit of a different connotation. They see it as a way to directly reach target audiences with messages from businesses and brands to influence the influencers. Savvy digital marketers are using SM channels to connect to their biggest fans who will in turn distribute the messages or experiences to their connections (Stein, 2010). It is to the point where it is necessary for advertising, PR and marketing professionals to include SM in their marketing campaigns in order to keep them competitive (Ochman, 2010). It is changing the way institutions communicate with individuals (Bedell, n.d.).

There are many arguments of the specific start of SM's history. Some trace it back to the beginning of the commercial internet. Again, for the purpose of this report, the beginning of SM is when businesses took an active role in participating not only as advertisers but having an integrated presence on the sites alongside individuals. Facebook, the top network that will be emphasized throughout the report, was launched in 2004 from a Harvard University student. SM outlets are seemingly endless these days

with new ones for different niches popping up every day. The next section of this chapter will briefly cover several of the top outlets.

Because of its relatively new nature as a communication medium, marketers are scrambling to try to define every inch of the medium and how people interact with it. They talk about setting up strategic plans, engaging target audiences, expectations of sales, producing interactive content, measuring effectiveness and much more. All of these topics will be addressed in the following chapters.

Business to consumer (B2C) social media users will be referred to interchangeably for the purpose of this paper as marketers, businesses, companies, organizations and brands. Any terms used for non-consumer SM users are acceptable because the report is written from the prospective of business for other businesses and any other entity that uses SM from a B2C perspective that is promoting a product, service or concept.

Understanding SM is important because many think of it as “fast, easy and cheap” due to the fact that they do not participate in it themselves so they do not understand it (Ochman, 2010). What they need to realize is that it is not just a new addition their communication toolbox, but rather it is a way of thinking (Ochman, 2010). Distributing a message through SM is not like traditional advertising. If it comes off as commercial, it loses its appeal (Stein, 2010). Marketers have to be able to understand their audiences and respond to them in real time and in a relevant manner (Bedell, n.d.). It is a conversational medium where companies need to listen to customers (Ochman, 2010).

Audience transformation also needs to be understood by marketers so they may shape messages to appeal to the new way of thinking. Forrester created the Social Technographic Profile to analyze consumer's participation in social technologies and puts them into groups based on their participation in various behaviors (Appendix I) (Bernoff, 2009). Forrester uses the same categories each year in order to be able to compare the growth or decline. They found that in 2009, eighty percent of "online Americans are active in creating, participating in, or reading some form of social content at least once a month" (Bernoff, 2009). From the previous year the greatest category growth was in Joiners (fifty-one percent) and Spectators (seventy-three percent) due largely to the appeals of Facebook (Bernoff, 2009).

Bernoff warns that marketers are falling behind if they are not participating in social technology already. Forrester reports that only ten percent of online Americans under 35 years old are inactive on social networks. As for the 55 and over crowd, about two-thirds are participating (Bernoff, 2009).

Increased Usage has marketers no longer "testing" out digital campaigns. Businesses are quickly leaving behind the experimental stage and fully integrating social media into their marketing strategy (Williamson, 2010). They are looking more long-term in implementing this new platform as a strong medium to reach target markets (Ochman, 2010). A recent McKinsey Quarterly article said that marketers who are making smart digital investments are shifting "20-30 percent of their budgets out of paid media and into content creation" and will spend significantly less on marketing as a percentage of sales (Stein, 2010).

Strategic Planning is necessary because a digital presence cannot just be done by throwing it in somewhere, marketers need to understand why they are there. This new channel is most effective when it is part of an overall brand strategy (Flamberg, April 2010). SM is not a gimmick nor should it be considered a substitute for a complete marketing strategy (Ochman, 2010). Social platforms are no different than the basic marketing approach. One large appeal of SM is its impact on brand equity. There should be a single voice should be established across all media to deliver brand posture, positioning and personality. Just as in traditional marketing, a consistent and unified message on a company's website, Twitter feed, Facebook presence and other campaigns. Those efforts should consistently engage all audiences including consumers, prospects, media and investors (Flamberg, April 2010). With a presence in both traditional and digital mediums, marketers can reach various audiences and meet many brand objectives through an array of venues (Flamberg, April 2010).

User Generate Content is taking over marketing and advertising efforts, it is imperative for businesses to be able to maintain some level of control or at least contribution about what is being said about them. Forrester calls owned media "an understanding of how to effectively leverage brand objectives using social media to yield customer engagement, consistent messaging, brand portability and viral media" (Flamberg, April 2010). It is no longer just about putting a company's message out there to tell people what the company wants them to know. In order to reach their consumers most efficiently, they need to pay attention to the content they are providing and react to it in real time. Users have a large portion of control and have make B2C a two-way

conversation rather than mass communication. SM lets companies to get consumer insight, feedback and help create and improve their brands directly from consumers (Green, 2010).

Prominent Online Platforms

There are many ways to reach consumers online. Marketers need to know which platforms are best for which messages. They need to take into consideration what types of users are on each platform, how they use the platform and how they will interpret the messages there. Like traditional mediums, this needs to be analyzed and included in a brand's content and marketing strategy (Flamberg, April 2010).

Brand Website. First and foremost there is the brand website. This is a where the brand can educate and engage consumers, clients and employees. This is where a business should set the tone for all of their digital communication, which should also be consistent with the offline brand image. Along with including a variety of data, images and copy, the website should be optimized for organic search, or search engine optimization (SEO). SEO is when a website is strategically filled with topics and terms that will make it appear toward the top of a search in attempt to garner more traffic.

Facebook (FB). Facebook is a personal relationship management tool originally meant only for private purposes and restricted to college students only. Over the past six years it has grown to over 500 million users worldwide of every demographic. Brands are also welcome on the networking site as well. A FB presence is great for brand promotion and building awareness, not for sales. Creating a Fan Page is good for making

connections with consumers and giving followers deals and insight about brands. This is another extension to building a brand personality as well as adding more natural SEO by having a brand's name in more places (Flamberg, April 2010). This report will have more information about Facebook in a later in this chapter.

LinkedIn. This more professional version of social networking is also used for building a brand by creating a profile that is consistent with the communications strategy. Unlike Facebook, the primary use of LinkedIn is job-hunting and network building. Consumers use it to find out more about different companies or prepare for interviews. Users tend to be a bit older and create profiles of work history and skills rather than Facebook's more personal approach. There are also discussions and forums that marketers can use to have business focused "arguments or offers, solicit ideas and seek practical advice" (Flamberg, April 2010).

Wikipedia. It was once thought of as a spam filled online encyclopedia because of the ability for anyone to create and edit content. With the growth of user generated content, which is leading to the growth in trust of it, Wikipedia is becoming a great resource as an enormous knowledge bank on the Web. Wikipedia pages often appear toward the top of search pages and the most popular interaction from people is to "search, find, read, print, and exit." Companies have the ability to create their own Wiki page to, again, contribute to SEO and have yet another outlet to be found on. Although this is not a profile that has to be updated or maintained frequently, it should be well-written, up to date, through and checked occasional for third party edits.

Twitter. Twitter is one of the newer social media platforms that has sky-rocketed over the past year. Users are limited to 140 characters to use per post and it is mainly used for quick comments and info or link sharing. For companies, this is a way to express their point of view in short, fast-action/reaction way. As with Facebook, Twitter gives businesses the ability to listen and pay attention to what people are saying about their brand, gauge attitudes and talk directly to their target market in real-time.

YouTube. Currently the second biggest search engine next to Google, YouTube has many videos that answer questions to just about anything in the form of tutorials, educational and entertaining videos. While preferred by younger people, it is a great resource for brands to start a conversation and attract new customers. Even if video's do not "go viral" having the presence of a brand channel is essential to reach a target audience in a nontraditional, yet social way.

Why Facebook

Facebook is changing the communications profession (Bedell, n.d.). With more than 500 million active users, FB is a place for prospective customers to engage with big brands as well as for the small and niche brands (Haynes, 2010). Marketers are developing their 2011 budgets with a much larger emphasis on SM and branded FB pages. They are interested in how much action and interaction to expect (Williamson, 2010). It is becoming the biggest relationship-marketing provider for many brands. Many FB Fan Pages have become companies biggest web presence for many marketers, more than websites or email programs. As more social media usage increases, traditional web-

bases “owned media” is decreasing in value (Neff, August 2010). For example, Coca-Cola has more than 10.7 million fans but their website’s unique visitors fell more than 40% from last year (Neff, August 2010).

Some marketers believe that consumers are too busy to pay attention to brands because they are interacting with friends and are unsure about why they should spend time and money on FB (Haynes, 2010). Others believe that the “Like” button has changed that (Williamson, 2010). The Like button is a revolution of the previous button that performed the same function, “Become a Fan.” The less commitment term has made consumers more willing to interact with branded pages. Research from ExactTarget found that 38% of US internet users have followed at least one brand by clicking the Like button. But clicking the Like button still is not taking the place of interacting with friends. ROI Research and Performics reported that 25% of FB users visit company or product pages and 54% of users make comments on others posts (Williamson).

Consumers clicking the Like button are only a minor metric to watch in the coming year. Many people boast the number of Facebook Fans or Twitter Followers but the real question is what those consumer/fans do after the “Like” the brand. How do they actually interact and what is the effect of those interactions (Williamson, 2010)? Just because users choose to announce their affiliation with something does not attest to the strength of the customer. They could click the button and never think about the brand again or on the flip side, visit the page everyday checking for updates. Either way, for that second that the consumer considers and clicks the button, there is engagement enough for them to take the action (Williamson, 2010). By making that connection with

the branded page, the door opens that allows marketers to start sending information and messages to people's walls, news feed and inboxes and creates several opportunities for brands to encourage future engagement. Also, all of those Likes go into FB's database of info that is used for more effective ad targeting (Williamson, 2010).

Facebook is a great way to keep in touch with a company's target audience by going where they already are rather than expecting consumers to seek out the brand's website, which take additional steps some consumers will not make the effort to go to. Businesses can also get real time feedback on ideas and products, conduct contests, etc. to start conversations and encourage engagement with consumers. FB is meant to be a socializing platform rather than an outlet to make sales.

While early adopters are made up of college students and young professionals, adults ages 50 to 64 are the fastest growing demographic. Because they tend to have a higher disposable income, FB is becoming more profitable to advertisers (Lewis, August 2010). FB needs to start honing in on their strongest demographic especially when creating targeted FB ads (Lewis, August 2010). As FB grows they will need to take into consideration the variety of demographics despite their core audience of students and recent grads (Lewis, August 2010).

Facebook is causing the lines between PR and advertising to blur (Bistriz, 2010). When you look at Facebook Fan Pages, they acquire fans, communicate with them to establish and promote favorable relationship and intend to hopefully induce them to buy or use eventually. Advertising and PR are both critical components of a brand's survival and their building block are used hand in hand to create a successful SM presence.

Chapter 2: Channels of Communication

Traditional media is the rock upon which new media stands (Shapiro, 2010). Fact finding and creating credible news has not changed but the quality of what is produced has. The Pew Institute has reported that more than 99% of stories cited in blog posts are linked to traditional news outlet's websites. Old media focused on trustworthiness and quality. New media's main focus is a many to many interaction (Shapiro, 2010).

There are several key insights into creating new ways of monetizing the new business of traditional content. New sources are focused on the user rather than the content. In the past, information was produced by marketers and merely consumed. Now it is interactive where users can share and comment on it instantly. It is also focused on communities of interest meaning content is shared on multiple platforms to reach a wider and varied audience. But trust is still the king. People seek out sources that can reach them on a personal level that they relate to and eventually learn to trust. Finally, new media focuses on revenue opportunities. Instead of thinking of SM as cannibalizing traditional media, it should be seen as a new interactive distribution channels that can also be monetized (Shapiro, 2010).

Old, or traditional media is not dead, it is merely reinventing itself just as it has in the past only a more rapid rate than ever before. The businesses that can keep up with the changes while still maintaining the ability to create trusted, credible content and who let their audiences get involved will survive (Shapiro, 2010). "Media" is still connecting the information and the audience, regardless if it is traditional or social.

Changing Traditional Channels

Television has always been about friends and families sitting in the living room and talking about TV. The difference with now is that the real-time web is the new living room and the entire world is talking. Audiences are still talking about what is taking place in front of them (Dumenco, 2010) and there is now the “third screen” with smart phones.

There is clearly an increasing importance of being online in the evolving media landscape, especially as opposed to the print medium. The way America writes and digests information is no longer as it once was. Newspaper subscriptions are decreasing while television and the Internet are growing. Therefore, traditional long-form journalism is turning into shorter narratives that people can get through quickly to get the point. People do not have the attention span they used to so they need to be able to get the information quickly and easily. That is a big reason why the newspaper industry is diminishing. Another reason is the abundance of outlets and their at-your-fingertips convenience where people can get an overabundance of information from any source of their choosing compared to picking up a daily paper that has limited content (Afzali, 2010).

Even public relations professionals have gotten more serious about the limited writing space. Messages have to be concise and targeted with the right content and matching the right person. The quality of writing may have changed but people have to think more about what they are saying because they do not have the space to elaborate. Successful writing has come down to a detailed execution of articulating the value

proposition and anticipating questions and skepticisms before the content is even published (Afzali, 2010).

Like the old saying by Marshall McLuhan, “The medium is the message” meaning the medium in which the message is placed and where people encounter the content has a lot to do with how it will be perceived. Programs that used to be on computers are now on cell phones. The many social media outlets have the ability to put individualized content directly in front of people. Newspaper and broadcast channels are hiring SM experts to help them make their content more relevant to their audience. And more and more people are reading the morning paper online. The medium will always be the message but that medium is extremely different than ten years ago. No matter what the medium is, the message must still be compelling and relevant to reach consumers effectively (Whitcomb, 2010).

Some businesses have embraced the new channels successfully and are seeing the results of their adapted efforts. Other companies have no idea where to begin and are afraid of the “dangers.” Once this is clear, it is vital to know that Web 2.0, and what is coming next right around the corner, is going to be the most prominent medium and companies have to learn how to structure their messages within it in order to stay compelling and relevant (Whitcomb, 2010).

The New Digital Channels

The new channel for marketing may be digital but the fundamentals are the same as the traditional channels. Communicating and messages are still about shared

experiences. That is a basic human behavior that will never change. What is new about digital marketing is that it is about engagement and immersion rather than older passive models. The social internet has created a brand and consumer connectivity like nothing before and reshaped how brands market products to consumers (Kane, 2010).

It is apparent that consumers are online and in SM. Marketers not only need to be where they are but be active in the space. Unlike traditional media, it is no longer about broadcasting a message. Marketers need to create content that resonates with customer's lives to engage in conversation. Mass messages that filter down to consumers are a thing of the past. Today marketers are leveraging smaller crowds and influencers by using that audience to reach out to their connections to build their brand (Kane, 2010).

There are a plethora of new opportunities for brands to reach audiences with influence and reach. One way is with sponsored tweets and FB posts. They help relate the brand to a person, cause or message that people are already watching and leveraging partnerships, syndication and relationships to connect with audiences (Kane, 2010).

Digital channels have instantaneous metrics and measures such that you can see actual results immediately rather than waiting days, weeks and even months to see analyze the effectiveness of messages (Dumenco, 2010). SEO placement and management is imperative to let people know a business is out there and then also find out who saw it. Google is the most frequented website there is; by optimizing your information so that it appears on the top of Google search lists is utterly essential to reach the target audience. "When you are relevant and findable, you will be magnetic and

successful” (Russo, 2010). And there are tools out there that allow you to keep track of what works.

Not only have the channels changed from “traditional” to online but even in the past ten years the landscape of the commercial internet has come a long way. From tightly controlled content models of AOL and CompuServ, the web has become decentralized and social. Content creation powered by the people who use it is now the heart of the social web.

Social networking is more than having a website and SM is more than blasting out a press release. Brands must interact and join the conversation rather than crash it by being intrusive. Therefore brands have to understand why they are there and how to be accepted in the space so their messages will be heard. SM is there for people to observe, share experiences and connect with others. Brands are welcome to be part of that but in a way that users can utilize in their own way, not to be sold (Keane, 2010).

When brands do enter the space they have to do so strategically. Anyone can write, edit and promote but at the same time it is about being professional and objective. A brand’s SM presence is about an authentic voice and connectivity. The voice is key and an essential strength of SM to garner trust and familiarity from users (Keane, 2010). A community that interacts with the media raises the value of the content. The brands on Twitter that break triple digits in followers do so by pushing relative content, embracing contributions and encouraging engagement.

Ad buys were once the way to obtain value but now reaching audiences is relatively free and easily accessible. The challenge is to win over the audience with the

brand's voice and how it engages that audience. SM cannot be the only platform to reach audiences but it can be a distinct entity of a comprehensive media plan. It is also a challenge to adapt to having less control over what is being said about your brand. Push marketing has indefinitely been replaced by pull and for the most part a brand's name and reputation is in the hands of the consumer (Keane, 2010).

Online and Social Media Marketing and Advertising

The Internet has created an immense amount of marketing and advertising opportunities, especial with the rise in social media usage, from the traditional online advertising such as sponsored links and banner ads to today's advertisements on viral videos. Digital innovations have made it easier to reach potential customers directly and becoming computer savvy has become a necessity in the industry.

Among the top ways to promote a brand's online presence is incorporating SEO and SEM in a strategic plan. SEO skills are imperative to reach target audiences, extend the reach of communications, increase unsolicited media placements, and bypass third party channels to directly connect with consumers, optimize marketing goals, protect the brand and online reputation, and demonstrate value from communication efforts (Bedell, n.d.). By creating a web presence that is keyword rich, organic SEO efforts help put a company's name in the top of search results which will likely increase traffic. Search engine marketing (SEM) is another option that is similar in that the listing will appear at the top of the search page but it is a paid listing rather than organic (unpaid).

Communication plans have always been about a unified and relevant message to the right people at the right time. SM is now applicable for businesses because it helps to keep marketers up to speed with the best ways to reach the right parties, at the right place and time and with the right message (Cotrupe, 2010).

With SM in its relatively early stages, over or underestimating is still a reoccurring theme among businesses. Those who do not give SM enough credit are likely to be the companies who join without a clue or who think it is a fad. They do not comprehend the importance of it as a useful communication tool and at this time will hand it over to an intern as busy work rather than seeing its value or “realizing the ramifications of poorly planned social media. When SM is incorporated into a marketing campaign, it should be done deliberately and intentionally (Barton, 2010), and an appreciation for its impact will grow.

On the other hand, some give SM entirely too much credit by replacing their entire marketing plan with it. Even the best of SM experts cannot replace an integrated communications strategy with a simple SM outlet. It should definitely be incorporated into an overall marketing plan (Barton, 2010).

When implementing SM, at least part of the strategy must be to engage consumers in a dialogue. Without doing that then the purpose is lost. On the flip side, bombarding consumers with promotional messages, product information and generic messages will also have a negative effect with consumers (Barton, 2010).

SM is unlike traditional advertising where getting your brand’s image in front of the people was the challenge but as long as it was out there it is thought to be seen. SM

needs to become an integral part of marketing communications plans as a way to help with customer relationship management and satisfaction initiatives. It is also a good way to build relationships and start a dialogue.

Chapter 3: Implications for Small Businesses and Organizations

According to eMarketer, nonprofits are ahead of other industries in SM marketing. They spend more time on average, 25 hours per week, than for profit businesses and have goals beyond building awareness such as drive traffic to their website, raise money, mobilize people, and conduct cause marketing (Appendix II). Because of their heavy use they also have more sophisticated ways than other small organizations to measure success including keeping track of page views, paying attention to new visitors, retweets, bounce rates and leads (Appendix III). On the other side, non-heavy users care about the amount of community members, fans and followers they have. When marketers utilize and measure their effort better they have more successful SM marketing because they can see what works and what they need to improve. SM marketing is costly as a time investment that takes a lot of work but in the end the effort is worth the investment (Investing, 2010).

Marketers were quick to hire social media officers. Then they had to figure out what it is that SM officers do. SM requires a blend of departments including promotion and marketing, customer service and support. The first step when considering the implementation is to create an old-fashioned communications plan with goals, objectives, strategies, tactics and tools (FB in this case). This new communication specialty needs to have deliberate action and understanding. It all begins like any other communication plan: by listening and observing before figuring out how exactly the organization should use the communication tools for themselves. But in this more fast paced and interconnected world, consumers have the ability to also listen and react to a brand's

communication plan with comments and other interactions. An addition to the traditional marketing plan is to incorporate ways to combat the user interaction whether it be good or bad (Bedell, September 2010).

In the process of incorporating SM into a communications plan, there are several things to take into consideration. Establish *governance* by establishing the terms of service, community behavior and define appropriate behavior. Form rules for garnering *engagement* by setting up general community practice and culture of the community to create a trustworthy consistent voice, encouraging positive and discouraging negative activities by having a positive voice and addressing negative comments with solutions, and always have participation from the company to keep the conversation going (McKee, 2010).

Once the community and practices are established, businesses need to assign several people to constantly be reviewing the content in order to make sure the page is as efficient as possible at reaching goals. While negative feedback should be addressed directly and not ignored, inappropriate content, such as spam, needs to be deleted. Pages need to be positioned to provide a sense of security and safety. When reviewing, businesses must also take into consideration algorithms that will help them to discover and use patterns of tone, structure, users, response time, etc. This care is also beneficial for detecting potential problems and filter them before they concern others. Facebook is usually good about keeping unwanted spam and false information off of personal and business pages. Actively reporting abuse and identifying problems is important as well to assist FB in those efforts (McKee, 2010).

Maintaining the content and tone that was established by the company in the beginning of the plan, addressing negative comments, and reporting misuse all contribute to having a reputable FB presence. Consistency helps with community building. Watching for patterns help structure and evolve the presence toward the audiences obvious interests. There are many tools that have been designed to help SM stay consistent across platforms. The report will talk about those more in depth in the last chapter but for now, keep in mind that even with such tools problems and errors may occur and pages will still need to be looked at manually (McKee, 2010).

The point of SM is to get people together. That is why really successfully SM campaigns include an offline component. “People have an innate desire to connect, and while that can mean social media, it also means in person,” said Leslie Poston, founder of the consultancy Uptown Uncorked.

Technology allows for a lot of do-it-yourself marketing so that many businesses do not need believe they agencies as much. Some agencies are now offering lessons for business on how to do marketing themselves properly. It helps clients understand and use SM marketing tactics and tools. People want a one to one experience that is customized and personalized and businesses can provide that direct to consumer feel when they create their own marketing.

Some believe that small businesses should always do their own marketing because agencies cannot serve them. Others believe there will always be a need for agencies to help “craft, target and manage marketing.” DIY marketing allows businesses to express themselves and be real in the ever demanding and changing web media.

Agencies should welcome and embrace DIY marketing as part of their efforts or they will miss a great opportunity (Pollack & Bulik, 2010).

Technology gives people the ability to become graphic designers and producers of all sorts of things but they are mostly less than mediocre ones filling the space with terribly executed means of marketing such as boastful and non-audience centered copy, stretched or squashed logos and badly written sentences. Experts are necessary to align a proper image online with the company actual business. The most effective marketing is a dialogue not a monologue but most DIY marketers do not know how to do that. In order to ultimately achieve the end goal of sales, the company content creator has to know their customer and interact with them on a personal level (Pollack & Bulik, 2010).

Emarketer.com reports that according to the fall 2010 “Small Business Monitor” by American Express OPEN, a credit card for such businesses, small business owners have increase their SM marketing efforts over the last year (Social Media Increases, 2010). SM is a two way street for business owners to connect with customers. Thirty-nine percent of business owners indicated they used SM, compared to only ten percent from the previous year. Facebook was the clear leader with 27% participating with the platform. LinkedIn, Twitter and blogging followed. The main reason for using SM (Appendix IV) was for increased exposure. The most reported reasons for small businesses to not use SM are because owners feel it has nothing to offer or does not apply to their industry (Appendix V). Another study by ITZ Belden and American Press Institute found that forty percent of small businesses used SM marketing, and 20 percent of them said it was a leading source of new business (Social Media Increases, 2010).

The fascination with SM is because of its connection-building ability. The trouble with it seems to be creating the engagement beyond that connection. If a prospective customer becomes emotionally attached, the company is one step closer to that engagement. It is their job to create that emotional attachment element. SM is about helping and listening for many businesses. Content creators for small business SM need to be passionate about their business and figure out how to relate it with the online community. Even if a business gets to the point that their SM is getting the desired interaction the ultimate goal is to generate business. SM is good for making connections therefore it should be integrated into a marketing mix as such. Businesses cannot abandon traditional media because people are still using it. Value is added when SM and traditional media work together to rack up results.

SM is much more than another marketing tool. One way to make good use of the SM connect-ability is to draw the audience in with incentives or free offers. After they become Fans, businesses have the ability to message them directly. Businesses can also entice Fans to invite friends to join to build their audience size. Unlike traditional coupons that might be found in a newspaper or mailbox, SM offers can be forwarded, shared and talked about which will help gain new customers and Fans (Ogden, 2010).

It is said that successful marketers listen first and sell second. SM allows them to do just that. Consumers are taking control by being less observant and more active in the realm that was once only thought of as a marketer's territory. Consumers are writing and looking for peer recommendations on products and services. The companies that produce and provide those things should be part of the conversation. SM has the ability to

distribute information quickly between friends and peers, which creates a more efficient society. Successful SM marketers are less like traditional advertisers and more like entertainment companies, publishers and party planners. Consumers want to look cool with their SM participation so they seek out things that will allow them to brag or compete that they want to share with their networks. SM is transparent, meaning what users do is visible to everyone. Therefore businesses need to make their presences something that consumers will want other to know they are participating in.

Marketer's jobs have been transformed from creating and pushing to more consumer-centric practices of listening, engaging and reacting to the need of potential and current consumers. Making mistakes in SM is better than doing nothing at all. The mistakes may even make a company look real and more relatable to consumers. There are conversations going on about businesses big and small, from Yelp reviews to entire unofficial FB pages dedicated to companies – good or bad. If businesses are not talking about their brand online, someone else is. Contributing to that conversation with comments on positive posts, explanations on the negative feedback or creating content to give people something to talk about and interact with the company only puts a businesses name out there more.

The numbers are in and it is clear that more new businesses are using SM to relate to consumers and build their brands. WebProNews reports that thirty-five percent of US employers use SM to promote their company. Twenty-five percent use SM to connect with customers and find new business. Twenty-one percent use it to recruit and research potential employees. Thirteen percent use SM to improve their brands. The majority of

companies deploy their SM efforts through marketing, public relations or human resources departments. Twenty-five percent of businesses have one to three employees communicating via SM for their organization (Bedell, August 2010)..

To some, SM is becoming a corporate communication department in itself. It takes communication planning with goals, objectives, strategies and tactics to successfully use SM. That planning must begin with listening to consumers needs as well as contributing to the dialogue. One thing that marketers should not depend on SM for is to generate sales. It is a relational tool and should be treated as such. It takes the traditional roles of public relations for its relationship building, marketing for its ability to entice the participants to sites, and IT professional to keep the space updated with videos, pictures and other similar items (Bedell, August 2010).

People need to realize SM is not a fad and it will not go away. It is however, ever evolving so if businesses want to stay relevant they should learn SM while it is still somewhat new and commit to keeping pace with the changes. Electronic communication is very similar to the usual channels such as print and broadcast but it is a much faster way to communicate (Bedell, August 2010).

Brand Awareness

Facebook ads are most effective when a business already has at least a start to their Fan page and followers. A collaborative study from Nielsen Co. and Facebook states that ads that included mentions of friends who were brand fans saw an increase in recall of sixteen percent. The study included more than 800,000 FB users and 14 brands

ads from various categories. It showed an increase in ad recall, awareness and purchase intent when mentions of friends becoming fans of brands are shown within the ad. When the ads coincided with similar mentions in a users' news feed, such as "so and so likes this business," the recall went up to thirty percent. In short, paid media, a FB ad, is much more effective when it coincides with earned or organic media, someone likes a brand and others are notified through news feed (Neff, April 2010).

FB ads generated an average of a ten percent increase in ad recall, four percent increase in brand awareness and a two percent increase in purchase intent for those users who saw them in comparison with a control group that was not exposed to the ads. Earned and paid media have always worked best together but FB has heightened that by showing them so closely and being able to see the relative connection (Neff, April 2010).

Marketing Evolution CEO of analytics, Rex Briggs, has conducted in numerous studies on online advertising effectiveness and says the study on the FB ads and mentions are "unremarkable and in line with banner ads" but added that the impact of FB ads with organic mentions are very interesting. Riggs says that FB is doing what it intended with legitimizing their advertising and business model but mentions that the study does not cover what the results mean for an overall marketing plan. In the end it seems that businesses need to focus on winning over fans to increase their odds of success in FB advertising (Neff, April 2010).

With more than 18 million people being exposed to the ads in the study 130,000 engaged, or clicked on the ads which is less than one percent. About 40,000, four percent, users became Fans of a brand when they organically saw that friends had done so. There

is a higher click-through rate on the organic impressions than the paid impression, which proves even more the power of earned media on FB. Businesses with large e-mail database should encourage consumer in their e-mail programs to join their FB pages in hopes to reach the friends of current consumers (Neff, April 2010).

Customer Attention and Retention

As Walgreen's has found out, frequent and short updates work best, especially if they involve a question or something that promotes a response from users. FB has said that status updates should be the focus of marketer's efforts rather than creating the more time consuming applications that can be harder to get users to use. FB helps build brand communities by aggregating and propagating as a channel but they cannot be responsible for a brand's entire existence. There is still a need for strategy to maintain the presence.

FB is the place for companies to have conversations with current and potential consumers whereas company websites are more for promoting and supporting the brand, it's products, its people and news. FB is taking over websites standard "contact us" pages because it gives customers the opportunity to interact with the brand anywhere and anytime. FB allows growth of word of mouth about a company that others can see. Websites should contain the information that doesn't necessarily call for much interaction such as company history, staff profiles and contact info (Neff, August 2010).

Monetize

The more businesses try to be in front of people to sell their product, the less people want to participate (Stein, 2010). The times are changing more rapidly and people need to adapt to the new models if they want to survive. The biggest change is that sometimes forgoing revenue seeking is the best way to make money. It is easier to reach the masses more than ever and distribution is all about that reach. Marketing has become less about selling the product and more about which can be easily distributed. Technology has given the power back to the people so marketers have to work harder to think of effective ways to use the new paradigms of reach.

With consumers having more control they are able to contribute to a company's name more so the process of making a name and building a reputation is becoming more difficult. Companies have to take into account what others will say about them as well. This new model is about giving work away for free and distributing online. The good news is that online provides a much smaller cost than traditional promotions. If businesses can adapt to the new structure, they can benefit largely from using the Internet by showing off their products, having giveaways, contests and other attention-seeking methods to gain fans and finally then bring in some revenue (Bonano, 2010).

With so many companies rushing to build Fan pages, many wonder if there is any monetary value. Virtrue, a SM specialist company, has determined that fan base of 1 million has a value of about \$3.6 million in equivalent media over a year. These numbers are based on impressions generated in FB's news feed. Virtrue has analyzed FB data for million fans between several of their clients. They figure that marketers posting twice a

day can expect about 60 million impressions per month through news feed (Morrissey, 2010).

Businesses that take the time to build a Fan base need to leverage it. But every company is also different. Some companies in the study generate 44-cent impressions per fan while others saw 3.6-cent impressions. More attractive brands have more engaged connections and therefore more news feed action. There is no way to uniformly measure the value of Fan pages across the board. Just as SM is creating a more individualized and customized market place, measurement needs to be unique as well (Morrissey, 2010).

Virtrue breaks down the cost for marketers. The \$3.6 million value per 1 million Fans was figured by a \$5 CPM. Therefore 1 million fans equal \$300,000 in media value per month, or \$3.6 million per year. For example, Starbucks 6.5 million Fans would be worth \$23.4 million in media annually. These numbers help marketers justify what they are spending on acquiring a Fan base and engaging them. Although these numbers may put a price on each fan, it does not take into account the most powerful incentive which is social customer-relationship management. Marketers use FB primarily for informing fans of new products, services and promotions as well as listen to what they have to say about the company. When that worth is determined, Fan pages will look a lot more valuable (Morrissey, 2010).

A study on SM from Dell claimed that they increased sales by \$1 million over an 18-month period. The study showed a direct correlation between offering discounts on Twitter and the increase in sales. Call it a desirable outcome or goal but it is a great example of SM's capabilities (Lewis, May 2010).

Businesses should keep in mind that there is more to advertising than to meet the bottom line like creating awareness, building a reputation and generating interest in a company to build a loyal consumer base and win people over before they actually start spending money.

But there are several examples of increases in sales that cannot be attributed to anything except social media engagement. TKG advertising agency filed for bankruptcy in 2008 and in their last effort to bounce back, they bet it all on social media. Their plan was to mix SM with PR to build a following and increase sales. The pro bono client was a local restaurant and they set a goal of a ten percent increase in sales over a ten-week period. (Lewis, May 2010).

In another example, organic tea maker, Steaz Tea used search and social media to reach moms who buy the tea and are heavy SM users. They had limited time and a limited budget. They used SM monitoring sites to follow the action. Steaz had a party on Twitter that had organic choices. Pay-per-click search was used to drive consumers to a coupon on their website and FB ads helped increase their Fan base. The efforts resulted in 50,000 downloaded coupons, twenty percent of which were redeemed, 6,000 SM mentions, 3,000 new fans, and sales doubled. Clearly the campaign was an unmistakable success (Lewis, May 2010).

Finally, Italian Winemakers exports fell six percent due to the global recession. They started using SM to engage consumers in the global market when others in the field were not willing to change. The result of one winemaker's aggressive blogging and social media engagement plan doubled their sales.

These are just a few examples of how SM is capable of influencing the bottom line. Many may debate SM's validity but there are many positive cases out there (Lewis, May 2010).

Chapter 4: Implementing Facebook into Marketing Strategies

Facebook allows marketers to target discrete customer groups and desirable segments. It is said to be the best SM outlet because of its growth in members, daily use and search frequency. Even with its popularity, few companies have reported measurable results in awareness, preference or sales as a result of FB campaigns. Because the platform is relatively new, many campaigns are a test and learn experiment for marketers to integrate into their marketing strategy (Flamberg, July 007).

Creating a strategic social media campaign is much like using traditional mediums for campaigns but people think it should be a lot easier just because of how easy it is to set up. But setting up a fan page or buying an ad is only the beginning. Marketers still have to find, engage and develop a unique audience for their brand. They have to work to create the connections and traffic in order to energize brand interactions. Businesses have to first get users to connect voluntarily and make a good impression before the actual goal of real engagement and interaction can happen (Flamberg, July 2007).

In experimenting to create a FB following that is useful toward a marketing plan, businesses have come up with a few steps that have worked for them to create the optimum impact for their brand. Many marketers are becoming very comfortable with their FB practices and have lead the way with some great examples of what other companies should and should not do. There is a lot of decision making to be done before the FB page, or even entire SM plan, is even launched to make a smooth entrance into the FB world. Hopefully this report has covered a basic knowledge of what social media and

Facebook are as well as shown what they can do for companies. This chapter will go further in detail about the steps for small businesses to take in order to implement their own FB marketing plan into an overall strategic marketing plan. The author will use the example of The University of Texas's Advertising Department, which will be referred to as Texas AdGrad, to illustrate a successful SM integration.

Research and Strategy

Rosales (2010) advises in his article "10 Steps to Make your Facebook Page Shine" that the best way to increase your fan base is to start in the beginning with a great launch of a well-planned page. As with any advertising campaign, doing research and developing a strategy should be the first priority in setting up a Facebook Fan Page. The Texas AdGrad social media management team was formed in January 2010. The graduate advisor, Gary Wilcox, thought that because Texas had a top advertising program in the nation, then they should be leading the way with cutting edge technology to promote the "brand" as well. After the team was selected, the research began. The team of five first-year advertising graduate students set out to see what other schools of their caliber was doing in the space. They selected three schools they felt best exemplified the use of SM. After examining the successful usage, the team noted a few things that make those teams so successful. The first assignment of the group was to report to Dr. Wilcox the competitive analysis.

Each brand has a distinct personality that should be apparent in the execution and presented throughout the entire campaign. It is essential to develop a posture and a voice

that will be consistent for fans to relate to and come to expect from the company or organization. The Texas AdGrad group was familiar with the program as being current students but knew that there was more to the equation. After segmenting three target markets: prospective students, current students and alumni, they created a survey to find out what people were interested in hearing about. They also conducted about five in depth interviews via email to reach out directly to alumni and ask about their experience and what information they would like to see from their alma mater.

While FB does have options as to weather to choose a Group, Fan or Community page, each with their own capabilities, Fan pages seem to be the most prominent choice for businesses because of their ability to allow anyone to see their pages, fans or non-fans, and the flexibility it allows for marketers. Group pages have a more limited access and Community pages are directed toward actual physical communities like neighborhoods or towns (Flamberg, July 2007). Businesses also have the ability to create an actual profile as if they were an individual but there are a lot of limitations as well with messaging and having two-way friendship rather than others just becoming fans or clicking the “Like” button.

A benefit of creating a Fan Page rather than any other option is due to the ability to send invitations and bulk messages. After setting up the strategy and basic steps of the profile, the next step to build a fan base is to send an invitation to friends to join the new page by selecting “Suggest To Friends” underneath the profile picture. The initial invitation and a very occasional message to Fans is an important rule to abide by because

people are on FB mainly to socialize. Too much contact could annoy followers and they will un-Like the Fan Page if there are too many irrelevant messages (Rosales, 2010).

When thinking of the company's online presence the context is important. To be effective, FB has to fit the brand's online ecosystem. Companies should be able to intercept and interact with the most likely prospects and customers. Before creating the page, you need to determine what the page will link to and be linked from, what the messaging will be and what information will overlap. Marketers should assign objective and content specifically to FB in consideration of the larger marketing effort (Flamberg, July 2007).

Some questions to consider when developing a FB strategy are: What role will the company's website play? Where will email, text, mobile or banner campaigns direct the responders – FB or website? What content will you place on your different outlets, how will the content on each relate to the different audiences? What other outlets will you use to deliver and reinforce the message and brand? How do you intend on driving traffic to get the message to intended audiences? Will FB and other ads be used to build your fan base? These are only a few questions that need to be asked of a company before they begin their social media journey (Flamberg, July 2007).

After a company chooses its voice and selects one or a few people to communicate that voice on their SM, it is hard to transfer to other employees should the originators have to leave and let someone else take over. It is important for there to be an exit or transfer strategy included as part of initial planning. Not only will the established guidelines be of help to transferring the voice but also additional consideration must be

taken. There are three ways to handle such a situation. First, by simply handing the position over and finding someone to keep the same flow of what had been. Secondly there is the farewell, which works best for smaller companies that have intimate following or an actual name and face behind the brand presence. Shutting down the name and letting everyone know that someone else will be taking over is the best way to achieve this. Lastly, the springboard is similar to the farewell in that the company will let followers know that the SM team is changing so they might notice some differences in the voice (How to replace, 2010).

There are many challenges that people might not consider when starting their SM planning. First of all, it is not exactly a 9 to 5 job. If something comes up late in the evening, businesses need to expect that consumers will be online and looking for answers. It is also about transparency. A brand that consumers can trust will have better relationships and therefore be more successful. It is hard to disclose a lot of information that might not be the best but honesty in any relationship is the key, especially between brand and consumer on SM, which was not always the case with traditional media (Bedell, n.d).

Other challenges are that there are a lot of challenges. Marketers need to pick and choose which ones apply to them and not become overwhelmed with the ones that do not. They must make decisions about which platforms they will use and stick with them. One example is that there are a lot of new tools popping up every day. Marketers have to decide which ones will best reach their audience and accomplish their goals. Trying to

adopt all of the platforms into their marketing plan is not always the best way to have the widest exposure (Bedell, n.d.).

Many experts talk about the bottom line and any communication should be related to how it can make money for the company. Many other experts will say that SM is more about engaging than selling. Either way, a company has to establish their goals and objectives for being in the space. If they are not benefiting from the effort as expected, it might be time to reconsider and restructure original goals (Bedell, n.d.).

Lastly, to be successful, marketers should not get wrapped up in all of the tolls that SM provides but rather how people use technology (Appendix VI). By looking at the way a target audience interacts with different aspects of SM, marketers can leverage that knowledge to direct their message in a way that the audience is more likely to utilize it.

Content

Once those initial questions are answered and marketers have a general idea of what they want to convey about the brand through their FB message, then must then create content guidelines to follow in order to stay consistent with the messages and voice chosen. Social media is about entertainment, information, and interaction. Marketers need to fit their content to those criteria in order to reach the FB audience, which is already in that mindset when they sign on. The most effective tactics that have been found from others are contests, requests for user-generated content, games, widget/badge downloads, polls and surveys, special offers, coupon downloads and early or exclusive access to info or special pricing for Fans (Flamberg, July 2007).

Texas AdGrad established several general guidelines for their content. Almost every post was to fall in the categories of 1) Local advertising news, 2) National advertising news, 3) Jobs and Internship postings, 4) Upcoming advertising or program/university deadlines and events. This was established through the research done before the launch. The information was gathered by searching different places on the Internet, the advertising department website, and any other means necessary.

Another aspect that needs to be taken into account when creating a content strategy is how to react to outside comments. Companies should be prepared to answer questions, respond to comments about the brand and follow up on complaints or customer service issues. Texas had a few situations where users questioned why certain content was included or why some restrictions were set. Each time the group conferred and came up with a solution that was along the line that they discussed in initial preparations.

FB provides a lot of great tools to attract attention to a company's presence. A necessary first step is for small businesses to know what tools they have at their disposal. First, there is possibly the most recognizable online form of advertising, the banner ad. FB has their own version of banner ads that runs along the right hand side of the pages. These ads mostly appear on the "home-page" or where the news feed is located. FB ads give businesses the ability to micro-target and the flexibility to decide when they want their ads to be seen. The advertiser's page is very user friendly with a lot of easy to find, step-by-step instructions. Marketers can select specific criteria for the type of users they want to reach and FB will filter through the entire database to deliver the ad to the right profiles. During set up, there are several prompts to find out the exact demographic the

company is trying to reach whether it be age, sex, interests, or location. The location selection makes the ads great for small businesses and organizations because their ads will reach a local audience that will more likely find them relevant. FB ads are extremely low and they even provide the tools to help set a budget (Haynes, 2010).

FB advertising is very affordable and lets businesses set up campaigns of any size. The advertising pages allow them to control budgets and makes suggestions for budgets according to the target audience that the business selects (Rosales, 2010).

Research previously covered by FB and Nielson in this report shows that FB ads are much more effective when they are placed in conjunction with a FB Fan Page. Fan Pages are the most popular resource on FB for businesses and act as a home base for for all of their information sharing. They are usually created as an extension of a personal profile but not directly affiliated with the individual profile. Fan Pages are easy to create by following the FB prompts and links. The basic steps include selecting a Page name, uploading a profile picture or logo and adding some basic information about the business such as website, hours of operation or a brief history. The basic set up also comes with the standard tabs such as Wall, Info, Photos, and Discussion. The tabs can be customized for whatever the company is interested to doing with their page.

The first of the tabs and the home page for the company's Fan Page, the Wall, will be the page that Fans see the most. It contains a lot of the consumer interaction. This is where the company will post Status Update, which users can leave comments on, as well as where consumers can post questions and comments of their own. The FB Wall is also where users can see if the business has posted any updates about company

happening, if they are holding any contests or links that will redirect users to the main website or another website. For some companies, FB Fan Pages are taking over for websites and microsites as a business's main web presence. More advanced options for Fan Pages, but certainly not necessary, is the FBML applications which a markup language that have a lot more allowances for customization. All fan pages come with Insights, which as discussed earlier is a way to collect and report all users behaviors that can help identify the audience for which to tailor the companies message around (Haynes, 2010). Without the more advance FBML coding, there are not too many ways to make a FB page to look very different. Big profile pictures, using as much vertical as FB will allow on the top-left part of the screen is the best way to clearly brand the page (Rosales, 2010).

One minor feature of a FB Fan Page is the personalized URL. A page with more than 25 Likes is eligible for a username. This is represented by a unique web address which announces that the brand is doing business there. In the case of Texas AdGrad, once the 25 Like mark was hit, following the prompts found under setting, the URL went from www.facebook.com/dsijc8yu9dh to www.facebook.com/TexasAdGrad. The latter obviously being much more recognizable and adding relevant credibility to the brand. With the easier to find URL, even customers that do not participate on FB are able to find the page more easily through a search engine and can gather useful information from the alternative brand site (Haynes, 2010).

Like the more well-known name of the "iPhone App," FB also has Apps (applications), more than 550,000 active ones. These Apps enable customers to share

photos, videos and links. There are survey apps that help businesses with research and development, and contest apps that are used mostly to create a buzz about the brand.

Many small and niche businesses use apps to deepen the experience on their pseudo sites that make for engaging content for users to interact with (Haynes, 2010).

Lastly, one of FB's newest features is called Places. This is a geo-based application that allows people to check-in to actual places they are from their phone and it will announce their location to friends on FB, either everyone or select users. This application is of great benefit to small local and regional businesses because it is all about being local. They have the chance to tap into the promo-friendly mobile app by encouraging rewards or prizes for checking in, therefore pushing word of mouth exposure about the business to the FB friends of current customers. Businesses can also use Places to promote point of sale promotions, exclusive offers and loyalty program add-ons. These things work well for current customers who are already paying attention to the brand by enticing them to become more loyal customers. It also works well for potential customers. If people are in the vicinity of the store and they are checking-in to somewhere nearby, they might see that a business is having a special promotion only a few stores away which could persuade them to go to a business they otherwise would not (Haynes, 2010). The end of this report will cover more about geo-based applications in the last chapter about Trends in SM.

While this report's main focus is on how to properly use FB, other SM outlets should be included to attract a wider audience. Twitter is another rapidly growing network for individuals, professionals and businesses. On FB as well as several new third

party sources businesses have the ability to sync Fan Pages and Twitter statuses. This is good for messages that will transfer across both platforms. Some information should be kept strictly to FB or strictly to Twitter or at least the language may need to be changed. But other info can be sent out to both audiences (Rosales, 2010).

Measurement

After researching, establishing a strategy and creating content guidelines, the next step is to set measurable goals. When there are clear expectations, companies can see if they are getting the results they anticipated, or if they're better or worse than anticipated. A business needs to determine what is important to count: fans, downloads, comments, survey responses, etc. and the manner for which they will measure each (Flamberg, July 2007). Also, by watching and measuring what content is most reacted to the most will help companies tweak their "approach, the offer, or the content to better engage and mobilize" FB efforts. (Flamberg, July 2007).

A survey by Eventbrite on social connections showed that social sharing can be very valuable when it comes to their ticket sales. The survey determined that "Eventbrite nets an additional \$2.52 in sales when a user shares that they plan to attend an event on their wall" (Slutsky, 2010). The company sold \$200 million in tickets in 2010, twice as much as the year before. Social commerce is a new channel for e-commerce that drives measurable transactions.

Many may say that the true value of social media is engagement and cannot be equated in dollar and cents. Others say that engagement is precisely the "secret sauce"

that creates obsession and loyalty, which ultimately leads those positive mentions and increased revenue subsequently decreased marketing costs. Aside from engagement and a monetary value that can be calculated by social media, another benefit the company found of the impact that social posts have is for Organic SEO. The additional mentions often put the events on the first page of search pages, which holds a “significant value that can be calculated by the price tag being charged for placement (Slutsky, 2010).

Facebook allows for companies to easily measure everything happening on their Fan Pages with Insights, in-house analytics specifically for FB. It may not include an incredible amount of information it gives companies a chance to get to know their audiences better. They are able to see genders, age groups and some other things that help marketers to develop a strategy around the audience (Rosales, 2010).

The Internet has provided much better ways to tract consumer information than any other advertising channel in the past. Habit tracing and personal data is the key to better ROI because companies can target their messages directly to the audiences they seek. Direct marketers have been using data collection to reach people for years but now with the readily available CRM (consumer research marketing), geo-targeting and other such segment specifying technology, all marketers have the access to reach the niche markets they need. The biggest improvement with the new data collection is that it is much more impersonal than ever before. People do not like answering questions about their habits but being able to enter their information from the privacy of their own homes allows much more accurate data and its source so to target audiences better (Goldgeier, June 2010.)

Every business should sign up for the free services Google offers such as Google Analytics, which help marketers see what keywords people use to find their websites. They are also able to see where the traffic is coming from, aside from the key terms in search engines. Google Analytics help to show if marketing efforts are paying off by providing the web analytics needed to make an informed decision (Whalen, 2010).

With SM being such a relative new channel for communication, there are no set metrics on how to judge measurement as there has been for traditional media. Of course there are a lot of criteria that marketers will still judge the new medium by but there is no universal way of measurement established just yet. In an article by Berkowitz (2009), he gives “100 Way to Measure SM.” Again, none being an official way but all good attempts to convey how effective an effort or message is. Buzz is one of them. Berkowitz says that you can judge buzz by the number of impressions, consumer created posts about the brand, mainstream media the shift of buzz from one topic or brand and competitive buzz.

Another measurement is members of a company’s online community, whether it be Fans, Followers, or Friends as well as their growth rate. Some marketers will say that measuring members is not an effective way to know if the efforts are effective because they cannot determine the level of engagement from each user just because they choose to somehow affiliate themselves with a brand such as by liking one of FB or following one on Twitter. Beyond measuring just membership, it is even more important to look at interaction. A few ways to measure interaction are to assess popularity in comparison to other similar efforts, look at the “rate of viral” meaning how members pass the info

along, second degree reach (again, pass along rate), installs, downloads, uploads, user initiated views, comments and subscribers. These measurements can tell a lot more about how valuable SM efforts are rather than just clicking a like button (Berkowitz, 2009).

Finally, looking at how a company's SEO is affected is a great measure of online success. SEO will report the numbers of page views, effective CPM based on spend per impressions, and the companies change in search engine rankings which will increase in searches due to a lot of SM activity (Berkowitz, 2009).

Much of traditional advertising and communication outlets are about consumer trust. People choose what newspaper or news channel they like and can rely on the most. If consumers do not find the outlet to be trustworthy, they will discredit it and future messages. SM has reinforced the importance of trust. Users have the ability to accept who they allow in the networks and can change privacy setting to be selective who they share what information with online by blocking some content from some and allowing others to see more. In a sense, SM has also distorted the notion of trust because there is attractiveness to having a large number of friends and followers. The emphasis on having many connections also opens up a massive amount of data sharing. A recent study showed that the number of online connections is not necessarily an indicator of trust or influence. Most people will trust a SM resource more if they have more interactions with their large following (Appendix VII). The best source of trust is by word of mouth from friends and relatives. It would be smart for marketers to emulate that feeling of a tight community in order to be successful. They should focus on the quality of their social networks rather than the number or connection (Verna, 2010).

Chapter 5: Criticisms, Trends and the Future of Social Media

From the beginning of SM, there have always been issues with the new medium because of its unfamiliar nature. With its rapid growth, some issues are being cleared up along with more being uncovered. Some of which can be serious and detrimental to a brand while others are more of an annoyance. Privacy has always been atop the list of changes but that is in with the general issues of all technological advances, not just SM.

Regardless of the various reasons some people are staying away, there are millions more flocking to SM. As the fastest growing medium to date, its force is clearly unparalleled and unstoppable. Each day there are new social platforms and resources being created. This chapter will cover the complaints as well as the innovations that are coming about in the technology and SM realm.

Criticisms

Accountability - Marketers are not just making and releasing ads anymore. They are contributing to news and information in such a way that the lines are blurring between what is paid advertising and branded content such as news sites sponsored entirely by companies. Marketers are becoming sources of trust and authority. Brands are putting more authoritative voice out there with little real accountability for their quality or accuracy. But there aren't many rules to adhere to when a brand manufactures their own news. Advertising agencies are starting to get into the business of news info and content creating with their interactive and social campaigns which is much like traditional PR work (Goldgeir, July 2010).

Ownership - FB Fan Pages have done so much for small businesses and organizations by giving them an outlet to promote themselves online without having to spend the money to create an elaborate website. But marketers have to keep in mind that they do not own those pages. FB merely hosts them and provides analytics for free. There is a lot of changes going on with FB regulations and building speculation about marketers growing dependency on the network, especially because of the significant decrease in website traffic due to the increase in FB Fan Page traffic for many marketers. Businesses are building the rest of their communications plans around SM and sending traffic to Fan Pages and profiles rather than their websites. Fan pages are free for now but there is a possibility that FB could hone in on this valuable revenue opportunity (Neff, August 2010).

False Sense of Engagement - It seems to be a never-ending argument that too many people are counting the number of community members to measure their success. Pressing the Like button is not interaction, let alone engagement. In addition, offering free merchandise to get people to press the Like button is not engagement either. Some believe it actually cheapens the value of the audience by attracting people who are not interested in the brand, just the free stuff. Likes do not mean anything unless you can turn them into a sale or at the very least create an effective “call to action that will pull consumers into a platform where a relationship can be developed.” But for the most part the Like button will never drive revenue (Williamson, 2010).

Ineffective Advertisements - Article after article has given praise to FB ads and how they have the best targeting because of all the criteria businesses can input to reach

who they think will receive the message the best. An article from Goldeier says otherwise, “More information helps relevant ads find you but that doesn’t necessarily make them effective, especially if you’re not looking for what they’re offering.”

Privacy Issues - As society moves toward more leniencies on personal information sharing, privacy controls have been a huge topic of discussion. Younger generations are disclosing more information about themselves than their predecessors would ever consider. FB is able to target their ads because of the voluntary information they have in their database from the over 500 million users. They were in the news recently for lacking restraints on what third party companies had access to and since then have tightened their security on the information. But the problem mainly lies in the people that obviously do not care as much about sharing personal information, how it is being collected, and where exactly it goes. Not too many people read websites privacy policy or terms and conditions because they are usually hidden, inconvenient and confusing. Technology is advancing in a way that people have become comfortable about their information being protected enough but there are still possibilities for negative consequences such as identity theft that are serious problems (Goldgeier, 2010).

Trends

Social Media Management Software – There are many online social media management tools to help marketers and even individuals keep track of various profiles at once. They can install free programs off of websites, such as TweetDeck, that will house their news feeds, report all of their activity and anyone who has interacted with them.

There are also more high tech programs that cost money but do a lot more and are targeted toward businesses and organizations. One such program is Trendrr, a digital and social media tracking service that costs anywhere from \$499 to \$2500 per month. It is used as a research tool as well as a way for brands to explore different media avenues “culture” and conversations. Trendrr has the ability to track specific campaigns and brand performance. It allows marketers to listen, measure and respond by structuring and contextualizing large quantities of data that would otherwise be incomprehensible. The data is reported in relevant categories in real-time to be organized and deciphered by management dashboards that are simple, actionable and intelligent (Dumenco, 2010).

In the first semester that Texas AdGrad was in place, the management team used several free online sources such as TwitterCounter.com to evaluate the feedback they were receiving. Because the information was not always completely accurate, the data was also verified by keeping track of every single post and manually counting responses to see what messages were the most effective and engaging. Now, in the second semester of Texas AdGrad’s SM presence, they have upgraded to the Austin-based SM management software company, Spreadfast, on a trial basis. Spreadfast is a fairly new company that has clients such as Livestrong The Lance Armstrong Foundation, Home Away and Nokia. The upgrade has made the evaluation process much easier as well as the ability to see what is working and what needs to be changed or improved. Because the company is very state of the art and professional, there are no inaccuracies and reports can be streamlined easily.

Web Videos – YouTube has become the second biggest search engine behind Google in the five years since its inception according to ComScore. It has the most power of any social media to engage consumers. There have not been a large numbers of marketers that have seen much success with the channel just yet but it has the potential to be a great marketing platform. Videos are a great tool that is only becoming more common. Some of the reasons why are because it can target specific groups, filters related videos, allows users to forward videos they like to others and share them on individual's SM pages, has the ability to put links on companies websites, launching a personal channel is free, and marketers can buy ads on a cost-per-click and pay-per-view basis (Toole, 2010). Sixty-four percent of people will finish a 30 minute video clip versus twenty-four percent who will finish reading an article (Kabani, 2010).

Like other SM tactics that have been discussed in this report, it is essential to create a strategic plan that is integrated into the company's overall communications plan. SM through web video is very similar to creating a FB Fan page, from selecting a name for the YouTube channel that is keyword-rich and relevant so to garner more traffic from search results and related videos to capitalizing on YouTube's insights and analytics to find who precisely is tuning in to the company's channel. YouTube has immense potential as a marketing resource and early adopters with the right strategy and execution will reap the benefits (Toole, 2010).

Geo-targeting - Mobile is the absolute biggest trend in that it lets people be very social due to the growth of smart phones. The newest mobile movement is toward geo-targeting. As previously mentioned in the report, mobile and geo-targeting campaigns are

geared at a local audience because of the value of proximity. Individuals that participate in geo-location mobile applications are able to let their connections know where they are at, where there are deals and special, where they got bad service and where they believe has the best staff. Smart phones are having an incredible impact on instant feedback and word of mouth reviews in real time. There are several bigger companies that offer free services to businesses for promoting deals and free for users mainly for the game aspect of gaining points, badges and in some cases Mayorships but also so that they can find the deals. Much like web videos, there is huge potential for marketers that have not been tapped into nearly enough (Ismail).

The biggest name in the geo-targeting games is Foursquare with more than four million users. They leverage partnerships and have a loyal user base. The program also offers businesses a dashboard to track customer data and gives them the ability to create their own incentives in order to persuade customers to come back and pass the word along. Another geo-targeting feature recently introduced is FB's Places, which is gaining rapid popularity as its integrated SM outlet. Again with this program, marketers can use profile data to tailor their campaign strategies. These services again raise a privacy issue because of the information sharing it provides to businesses from the users. With the largest growing demographic being males 18 to 24, there is not much resistance from the info-sharing generation and will probably become less likely as kids are getting cell phones at younger ages each year (Ismail, 2010).

Group buying services – Another service that is gaining huge popularity because of its social-ability are group buying services. The leader in this category is Groupon

which has operations in just about every major market in the U.S. Copy-cats are popping up rapidly. Austin alone has at least fifteen different group buying services. Most common advertisers that participate are businesses that offer services rather than products but products are sometime featured as well. Newer group buying companies are trying to target niche markets rather than the general population by featuring “college deals” or “downtown deal” only.

How the service works is that an advertiser and the group buying company will come to an agreement on the amount of product to offer the public. The deals are usually around fifty percent off. Once the deal is set, it will be offered on the group buying company’s website exclusively for 24 hours. Each morning an email blast is sent out to all of the subscribers of the group buying website or individuals can check the site each day. Advertisers can set a limit as to how many offers they want to see and expiration dates or any other stipulation they want, but less stipulations are more appealing.

For example, a restaurant may offer \$20 worth of food for only \$10 to customers. Individuals will go onto the group buying website, pay \$10 and get a \$20 voucher. The group buying company will keep \$5 and the restaurant will get \$5. At first it might not seem like a very good deal to the restaurant because they are only getting a quarter of the actual value but marketers must keep in mind that this deal is about the social-ability. Every time someone buys a voucher they can spread the word about the great deal they got on their social networks creating an organic word of mouth campaign. They may also talk about it with their friends who will then go on and buy their own if it is enticing

enough or just might be intrigued enough to check out the group buying services website for future deals they might be interested.

For featuring a deal for one day, that business has gained more exposure than most month long advertising campaigns. Another way to set it up the deal is so that the value of the voucher is priced in a way that the buyer will most likely bring a friend to join them to spend the entire amount and possibly even more. The value of people sharing information within their networks is what makes all SM so valuable to marketers. It is not always about making a lot of money up front. SM is more about gaining exposure, building awareness and creating customer loyalty by making consumers happy to support the company because they are getting something in return from the relationship. Group buying services are a great example of the power of SM.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Throughout this report it is apparent that people are connecting and sharing more. Businesses and organizations are becoming more dependent on word of mouth to get their name out. As social media increases, people are getting product reviews from friends and families and traditional advertising and its messages that are directly from the advertisers or product is decreasing. There is a shift toward localized and personalized marketing efforts which is very beneficial for small businesses and organizations to relate to their current and potential customers. And Facebook is constantly becoming a stronger outlet that evolves and adapts to users' needs as well as becoming an excellent source for businesses to reach their target audiences more effectively.

The Future of Social Media

Over the past several years since the wide expansion and importance of SM, great improvements have been made to its monitoring and analytics so marketers can see how to use the space better. Measurement tools will only continue to get better as more and more people take an interest in the new communication channel that many once thought of as a fad.

It is predicted that social networks will be completely decentralized and a more portable experience. Rather than logging on to multiple sites, users will only log on to one site. They will still be able to keep their connections separate and have better control over who has access to what information. Content aggregators will streamline multiple profiles to help users manage and filter their content. As people are already extremely

more willing to share personal information, privacy expectations will continue to change. Sharing personal information will be the norm and marketers will have to create a personal experience to stay relevant in the new oversharing world of SM (Laker, 2010).

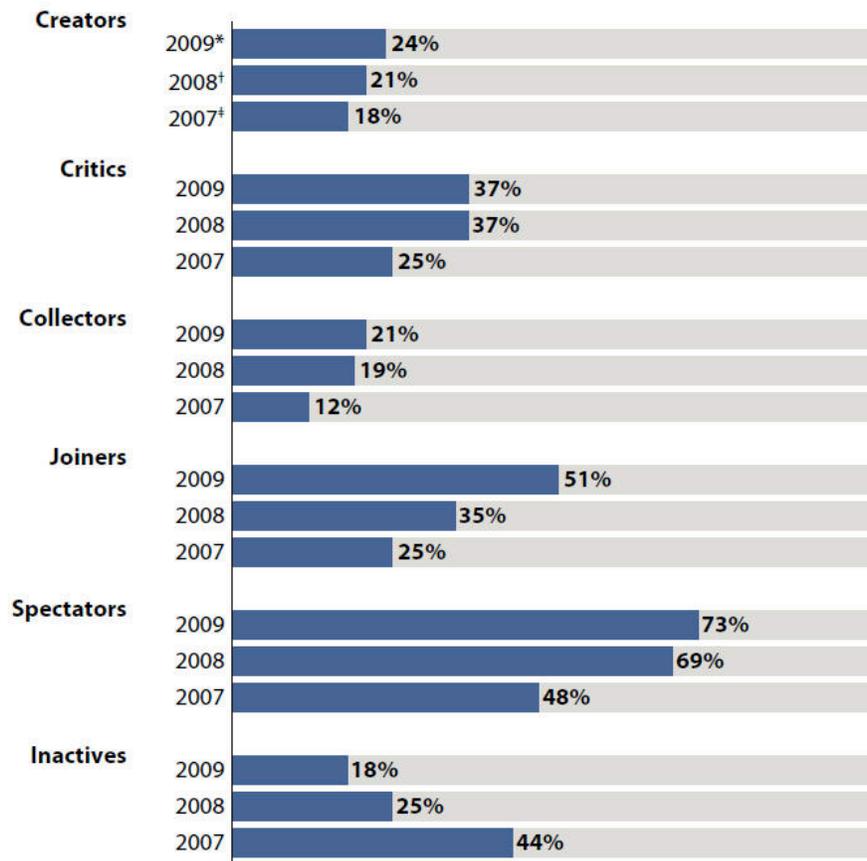
The biggest trend of 2009 was the increase emphasis on real-time searches and contributions. While that will continue to be a hot topic of marketer's discussion and continue to grow and expand, there are a few more predictions of what the future of SM will look like over the next few years. Ultimately share of voice, point of view and community influence will be a heavy indicator of marketing plans and how a brand represents itself. Marketers need to accept and adapt that consumers have a much larger part in shaping views than in the past when advertisers held all of the control (Laker, 2010). Digital-influencer marketing will increase significantly. As SM becomes more prominent, twitter, blog posts and user review will start appearing more in search results. Influencer marketing will change the way we interact with other channels like digital outdoor advertising and online TC. User ratings will become more frequent. For businesses to adapt to the user-centric society they will have to model their websites to feature open feedback and user ratings will be a part of most digital experiences.

Lastly the significant growth of smart phones will put an emphasis on local as well as "drive immediacy of consumer feedback and ratings." By 2010, mobile will be the number one way people in the US access the web (Laker, 2010). Most social interaction will be through mobile devices and search will be heavily dependent on voice, applications, camera views and specific proximity association.

A few years ago, Web 1.0 was all about being informed, much like traditional advertising. Web 2.0 brought upon interaction and conversation between people and brands and allowed for a much more social online environment. The trends that are emerging now are known as Web 3.0. that add a predictive intelligence to the current interaction that is going on. This new technology has huge implications for sales and marketing.

APPENDIX

Figure 2 More Than Four In Five US Online Adults Now Participate Socially



Base: US online adults

*Source: North American Technographics® Interactive Marketing Online Survey, Q2 2009 (US)

†Source: North American Technographics Media And Marketing Online Survey, Q2 2008

‡Source: North American Social Technographics Online Survey, Q2 2007

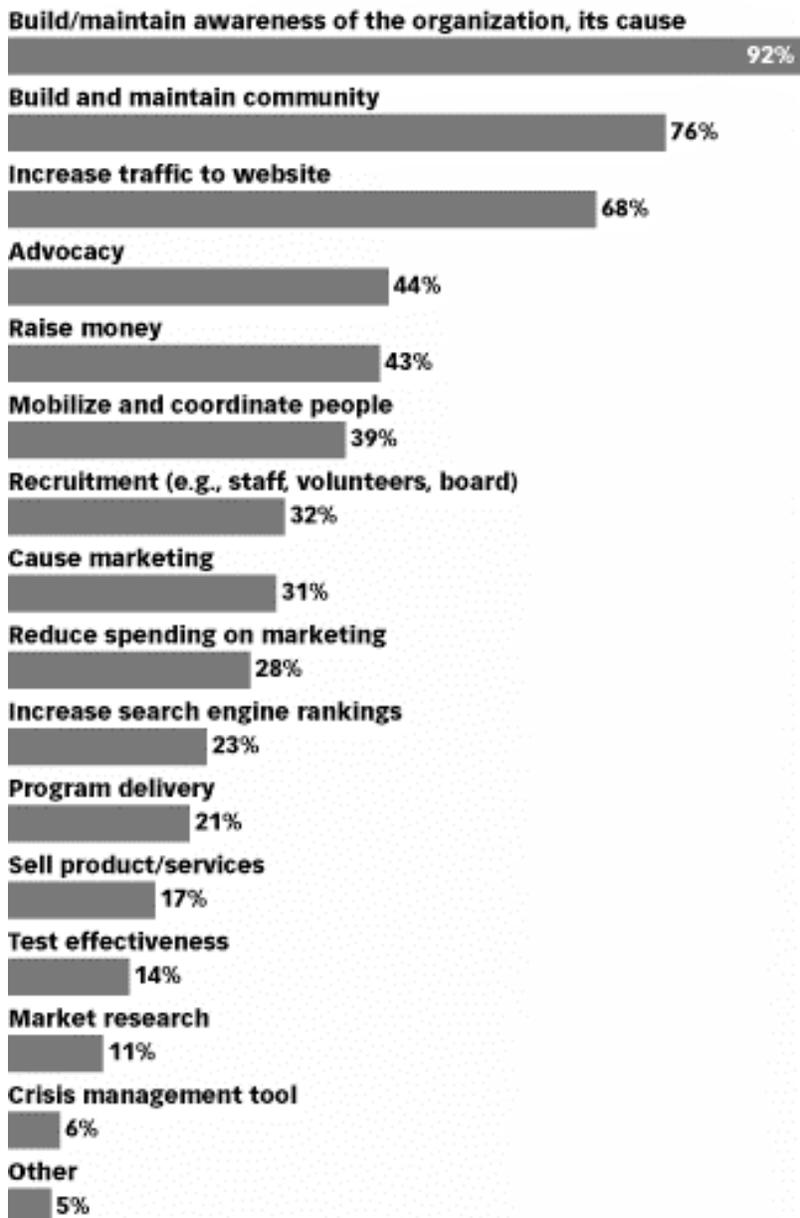
55132

Source: Forrester Research, Inc.

Appendix I: Bernoff's Social Technographic

Reasons that US Nonprofits Use Social Media, Aug 2010

% of respondents



Source: Ventureneer and Caliber, "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional," Oct 4, 2010

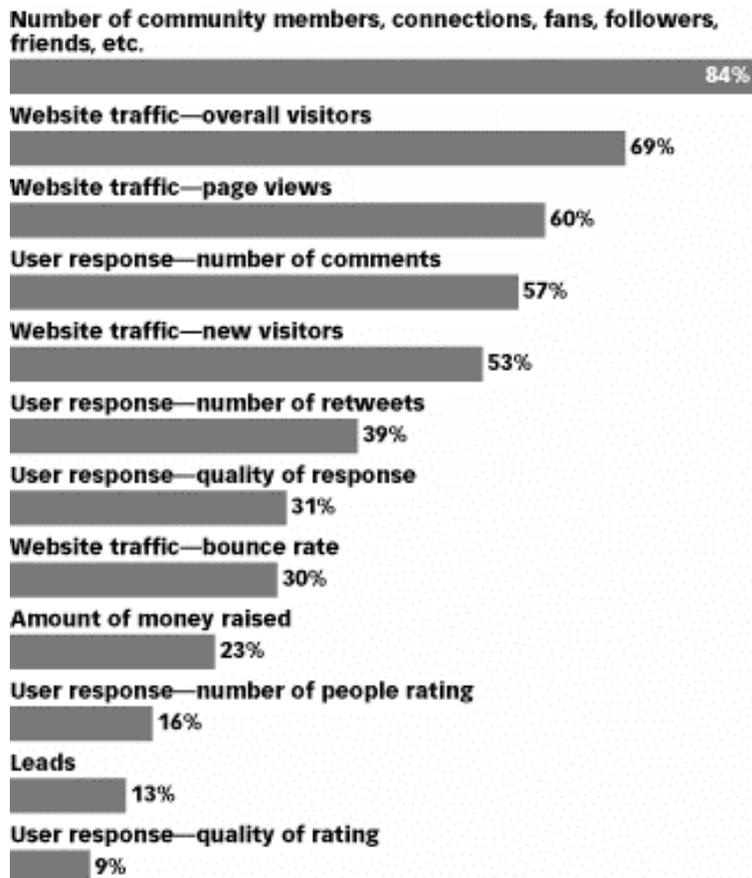
121062

www.eMarketer.com

Appendix II: Reasons that US nonprofits use Social Media, August 2010

Ways US Nonprofits Measure Social Media Effectiveness, Aug 2010

% of respondents



Source: Ventureneer and Caliber, "Nonprofits and Social Media: It Ain't Optional," Oct 4, 2010

121066

www.eMarketer.com

Appendix III: Ways US Nonprofits Measure Social Media Effectiveness, Aug 2010

**Leading Benefits of Using Social Media Tools
According to US Small Businesses, Sep 2010**

% of respondents



Note: among respondents who use social media tools
Source: American Express OPEN, "Small Business Monitor," provided to eMarketer, Oct 18, 2010

121016

www.eMarketer.com

Appendix IV: Leading Benefits of Using Social Media Tools According to US Small Businesses, September 2010

Biggest Challenge When Using Social Media Tools to Grow Their Business According to US Small Businesses, Sep 2010

% of respondents



Note: among respondents who do not use social media tools
Source: American Express OPEN, "Small Business Monitor," provided to eMarketer, Oct 18, 2010

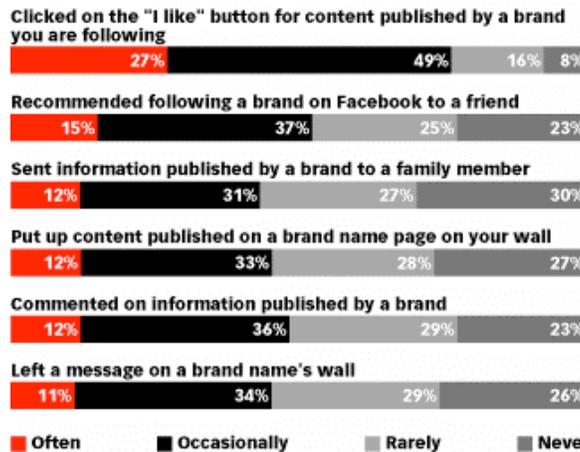
121015

www.eMarketer.com

Appendix V: Biggest Challenge when Using Social Media Tools to Grow Their Business According to US Small Businesses, September 2010

Ways that Facebook Brand Fans* Worldwide Interact with a Brand's Facebook Page, Sep 2010

% of respondents



Note: n=1,642 ages 18-60; *have "liked" a brand on Facebook
 Source: DDB Worldwide and Opinionway Research, "Facebook and Brands," Oct 11, 2010

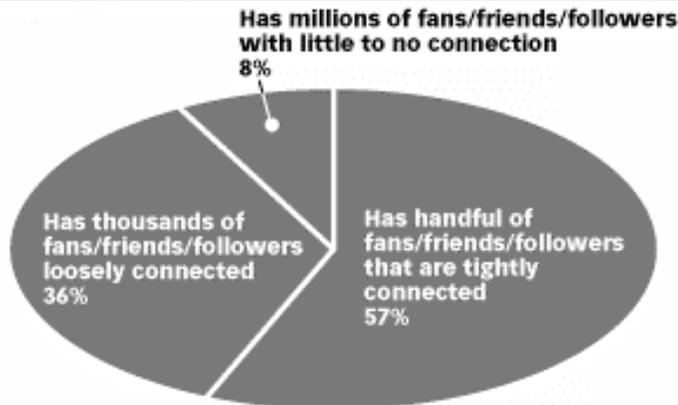
120691

www.eMarketer.com

Appendix VI: Ways that Facebook Brand Fans Worldwide Interact with Brand's Facebook Page, September 2010

Type of Person Who Is Most Influential in the Social Media Space, Sep 2010

% of marketers worldwide



Note: numbers may not add up to 100% due to rounding; respondents were asked "Which person do you feel would have a more measurable effect on an outcome?"

Source: Vocus and Brian Solis, "Influencer Grudge Match: Lady Gaga versus Bono!" Sep 29, 2010

120398

www.eMarketer.com

Appendix VII: Type of Person Who is Most Influential in the Social Media Space, September 2010

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