

INTRODUCTION TO SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AND ITS BASICS

Social media marketing (SMM) is a form of Internet marketing that utilizes **social networking** websites as a **marketing tool**. The goal of SMM is to **produce content** that users will **share** with their **social network** to help a company increase **brand exposure** and broaden **customer reach**.

Social media marketing campaigns usually centre around:

- Establishing a social media presence on major platforms
- Creating shareable content
- Cultivating customer relationships

Social media marketing covers a wide gamut of activities targeted at growing one's online influence. It can be anything from starting a blog, participating in an online forum, to online community management of Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, and Pinterest boards.

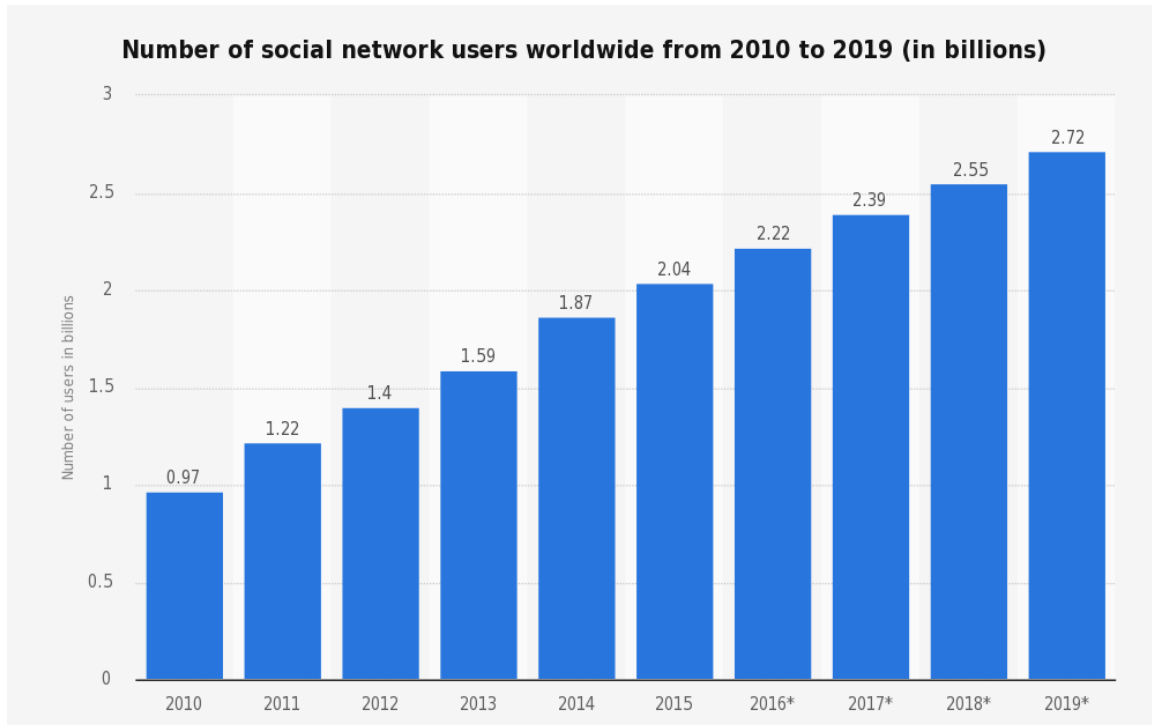
In the past, social media marketing was driven by word-of-mouth methods. In other words, it results in earned media rather than paid media. These days, however, advertising on social networks like Facebook appears to be a must for brands to gain visibility amongst their target audiences.

A subset of social media marketing involves working with [online Influencers](#). Also known as Influencer Marketing (see [ABCs of Influencer Marketing](#)), it includes partnering bloggers, YouTubers, Instagrammers, and other "influential" content producers on social media channels to raise brand awareness or trigger sales.



Everybody is Going Social

The fastest growing part of the digital world is social media. According to Statista's projections, there are some 2.22 billion users on social networks around the world. This is greater than the populations of either China or India, and is projected to grow further in the next few years.



Source: <http://www.statista.com/statistics/278414/number-of-worldwide-social-network-users/>

Understanding Content Marketing

You've probably heard the popular saying that content is king. However, what does content marketing actually mean?

According to the Content Marketing Institute, Content Marketing can be defined as follows:

“Content Marketing is a marketing technique of creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and acquire a clearly defined audience – with the objective of driving profitable customer action.”

When we think of online content, virtually anything can qualify:

- Blog articles
- Videos
- Photos
- Infographics
- Slides
- E-books
- Tweets
- Status updates
- Stories
- Apps
- Websites

Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

Search Engine Optimization or SEO is defined as the process of affecting the visibility of a website or a web page in a search engine's "natural" or un-paid ("organic") search results. SEO's ultimate goal is to get on page one of Google, Bing or Yahoo's Search Engine Results Page (SERP).

When we talk about SEO, we try to guess a couple of things:

1. The algorithm of search engines and how they work;
2. The search terms or keywords that your potential customers use (ie keyword research);
3. The competition of your niche;
4. How your websites are structured and categorised by Google and other search engines; and
5. How well your content (text, image, video, etc) would rank on search engines.

Pay Per Click (PPC) Advertising

One of the oldest modes of digital marketing, Pay Per Click or PPC advertising is named this way because advertisers will pay a fee each time their ads are clicked. Also known as paid digital marketing, it allows you to quickly drive traffic to your website, social media posts, or other channels in a targeted fashion.

There are various modes of PPC advertising commonly used:

Paid Search Marketing

One of the most common forms of PPC advertising, paid search marketing is normally offered as Google AdWords or Bing Network ads. Such ads can be found on the Search Engines themselves, and are used to show your ad to users with specific keywords. You can set your campaigns by writing ad copy, selecting relevant keywords and incorporating a landing page for your ads.

Display Ads

These could be banner, image or text advertisements that appear on different websites, targeted for specific audiences. You can place a link from the ad to your website or a specific landing page. While such ads may return a lower click-through rate than search ads, they are useful for building brand awareness.

Social Media Advertising

All social media networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube offer advertising options. Often, PPC advertising on these platforms can achieve higher click-through rates and brand awareness. They can also be highly targeted to specific demographics, location, interests, and behaviours.

Retargeting PPC advertising

Also called remarketing, retargeting allows you to show a user an ad based on his or her previous online actions. They are done by placing a cookie (an online tag) on the user's browsers, and can be effective in driving warm traffic back to a conversion or purchase.

Email Marketing

Email is probably the least sexy of all digital marketing strategies. After all, many of us have written, read and replied to tens of thousands of emails during our lifetimes.

However, it is probably the most direct and effective way to communicate with your leads, nurture them, and turn them into your customers.

In its broadest sense, email marketing involves sending a commercial message, typically to a group of people, using email. Every email which you send to a potential or a current customer could be considered as a form of email marketing.

How Different Digital Channels Work Together

In the majority of cases, content, social media, PPC and SEO techniques are used to seek to drive traffic towards a landing page either on a website, a dedicated lead page (like a microsite to sign up participants or subscribers), or a social media lead ad (using Facebook or LinkedIn.)

Once the leads are “captured” through the landing page, the goal is to then nurture them through a series of emails before the purchase event occurs.

It is also possible to directly drive traffic from an ad, social media post, or search page directly to a purchase. These options are shown in the infographic below.



As a digital marketer, your key goal is to see how you can work with all these different digital marketing strategies such that they could help you to drive the right kinds of traffic and leads to your “funnel” in order to convert them into customers.

6-STEP SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PROCESS

One of the first things you need to understand about social media marketing is that it is a journey rather than a destination.

The most successful social media marketers in the world know this. This is why they are relentless in continuing to push out great content, share interesting information with their communities, and refine their social advertising strategy with ever targeted messages.

Unlike traditional marketing efforts on television, newspapers or radio, social media activities need to stretch beyond campaigns to include daily and weekly practices. It is a continuous learning cycle of constant analysis, measurement and refinement.

To guide you along, I have developed a 6-step social media marketing process as follows:



#1 Discover – Know Where You Stand

The first step in social media marketing involves understanding where you currently stand.

By now, virtually every small or large brand would have some social media and online presence. However, few of them would know how successful they've been, who they seek to serve, or how they compare with other players in the market.

There are three things you need to do here:

a) Customer Avatar Building

You need to understand who you wish to target. Describe the demographics (age, education, income, etc), psychographics (interests, lifestyles, and attitudes) and online behaviours of your target customers. Identify what their pain points and how you can solve them. Zoom in on how they search for content online, and determine what keywords they use.

c) Competitor Analysis

Identify which brands your company competes against, and measure how you square against them online. Using tools like [Fanpage Karma](#) or [Buzzsumo](#), you can track the frequency of your competitor's social media posts, engagement of each posts, as well as their most shared content.

#2 Define – Zoom In On Objectives

Next, you need to establish what your goals and objectives for social media are, as well as how your customers search for, locate, engage with and transact with you.

a) Marketing Problem, Objectives and Metrics

With the analysis you have done earlier, you can identify where your current gaps, establish social media marketing goals and objectives, and layer on with suitable metrics to determine success. There are normally three main types of objectives and KPIs here:

- Awareness: Total number of views, impressions (served through ads), reach, and visitors
- Engagement: Likes, comments, shares, and retweets
- Conversion: No of sign-ups, eBooks downloaded, and purchases
- Loyalty/Advocacy: No of shares, repeat customers

b) Map to Digital Marketing Funnel

Part of defining also involves zooming on your customer journey and where they “land” on your website. You need to understand the role which social media plays in attracting visitors, generating leads and converting them to become your customers.

#3 Develop – Searchable, Snackable and Shareable Content

Now that you know where you're going, you need to determine how you can trigger social sharing amongst your targeted communities.

a) Making Your Content “Contagious”

According to Joshua Berger, author of the [best-selling book “Contagious”](#), there are 6 STEPPS to triggering virality and sharing:

- Social Currency: Remarkable facts or news, game mechanics, and making people feel like insiders.
- Triggers: Specific days, seasons, phrases, or contexts of use.
- Emotion: High arousal emotions like awe, excitement and amusement (or even anger).
- Public: Creating a monkey see monkey do effect.
- Practical Value: Offering listicles, tips, guides, and FAQs that help your customers.
- Stories: Using the power of storytelling, you'll learn how to transmit your ideas using them as a “Trojan Horse”.

Beyond the above, you should also learn how to place your ideas into a narrative framework. In our social media marketing course, we introduce the StoryBrand Plot structure as a way to peg your customer intents to your offering.

b) Creating and Curating Content for Social Channels

Once you've got your basic content framework and storytelling plot in place, you need to repackage and fit them into the different social media channels and formats. These are the ones that we'll focus on:

- [Blog](#): How to blog like an influencer.
- [Facebook](#): Killing it on the world's largest social network.
- [LinkedIn](#): Curating content for the largest professional social network.
- [Instagram](#): For consumer brands, Instagram works best. See how you can rule here.

#4 Deliver – Monetize through Promotions and Ads

Once you've accomplished some social sharing through contagious content and built supportive communities of raving fans, you need to start monetising. There are two main ways to do so.

a) Create Social Promotions and Lead Magnets

These are promotional mechanics like contests, freebies and discounts which are aimed at triggering participation, sign-ups and even purchase.

b) Develop a Landing Page

Build a digital landing page as a place where you can house your lead magnets/ promotions, and use it to acquire leads or members.

c) Social Media Advertising

To get the word out there, you may wish to invest in [native advertising](#) channels like [Facebook Ads](#), sponsored posts, or [influencer marketing](#) activities. A hot tip here is to ensure that whatever forms of advertising you do is trackable and measurable. This could include embedding a trackable URL, using tools like [Google's URL Builder](#).

#5 Measure – Track Success and Social Media ROI

You cannot manage what you do not measure. With superior analytics embedded into all things social, there really is no excuse for you not to know what your ROI is.

a) Know Your Metrics

Remember the social media KPIs which we have established earlier? Beyond these indicators, you may wish to also assess the effectiveness of your advertising investments using metrics like Cost Per Thousand (CPM), Cost Per Click (CPC), and Click Through Rate (CTR).

b) Calculate Social Media ROI

To evaluate what your social media ROI is, you need to know a few things:

- The costs of running your social channels
- Conversion rates for each social channel
- The value of each conversion (for example 10,000 web visitors could translate to 100 eBooks downloaded, out of which 50 of those downloaders become your customers)
- The estimated spend of each customer (you can use your Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) as a gauge)

You can read more about social media marketing ROI in [my comprehensive post here](#).

#6 Manage – Keeping Your House in Order

Finally, you need to manage and sustain your social media marketing activities by incorporating the right resources, policies and procedures to keep things running smoothly. There are four key areas to consider here:

a) Social Media Policies

Are there guidelines for your employees on how they should use social media? What about your Facebook fans? Consider crafting them to minimise ambiguity in managing your social media channels.

b) Community Management and Content Calendar

If content is king, community must be queen. Here, you need to craft out your social media community management tactics to recruit online members, engage them, sustain your communities, and develop advocacy amongst your members.

c) Influencer Marketing

Finally, you'll need to learn how to engage with and work with appropriate influencers to improve your campaign reach and effectiveness. Learn the techniques needed to work with them, and develop an event or campaign idea.

