

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

A STRATEGIC APPROACH
Second Edition



BARKER | BARKER | BORMANN | ROBERTS | ZAHAY

The background is a vibrant blue with a complex pattern of overlapping, colorful shapes. These include circles of various sizes and colors (yellow, orange, red, pink, light blue, teal), some with concentric rings. There are also flowing, ribbon-like lines in shades of blue, orange, and pink that swirl and curve across the space. The overall effect is dynamic and modern.

Social Media Marketing

A STRATEGIC
APPROACH

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Melissa S. Barker
Donald I. Barker
Nicolas F. Bormann
Mary Lou Roberts
Debra Zahay



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Social Media Marketing: A Strategic Approach, Second Edition

Melissa S. Barker, Donald I. Barker
Nicolas F. Bormann, Mary Lou Roberts,
Debra Zahay

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Art and Cover Direction, Production Management,
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Analyst: Diane Garrity

Project Manager: Betsy Hathaway

Manufacturing Planner: Ron Montgomery

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Social Media Marketing: A Strategic Approach is built upon an eight-step planning cycle that helps ensure the development of a winning SMM plan. This model incorporates the conceptual foundation and practical techniques necessary for creating a comprehensive and effective SMM plan. The model also provides a framework for developing a personal brand, a subject given chapter-by-chapter coverage in the second edition.

This planning cycle begins with observing an organization's current goals, presence and competition on the social web, followed by the establishment of SMART social media objectives and effective strategies to achieve them. The next step is to define an organization's target markets and campaign-specific audiences on the social web. This process makes it possible for a company to identify the social media platforms with the highest concentrations of its target audiences and determine how they are participating on those platforms, which enables the organization to select the optimal social media platforms for reaching its target audiences.

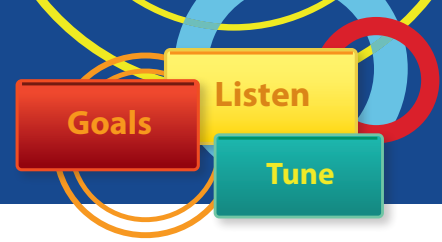
Interaction on the social web is guided by informal rules of engagement and general principles of appropriate behavior (social media ethics). Marketers must be aware of these precepts before attempting to participate in social media or risk alienating the very market segments they hope to connect with and influence.

With these guidelines in mind, as well as the company's social media goals, strategies, target audiences, and prime social media platforms, marketers can craft actionable platform-specific marketing tactics. The execution of these tactics allows an organization to implement its social media strategies across multiple platforms and realize the company's marketing goals. The bulk of this textbook is dedicated to learning how to create and deploy specific marketing tactics using online platforms and the mobile web.

Social media tools that make the process more efficient as well as more effective are given detailed coverage. In addition, extensive consideration is given to monitoring and measuring the progress made in reaching social media objectives and demonstrating return on investment. Feedback, both qualitative and quantitative, provides the means to continuously adjust and improve the elements of an SMM plan to maximize the chances of success.

The final chapter draws upon all the preceding material in the textbook to demonstrate and explain how to develop a formal SMM plan with multiple references and illustrations from a real world sample plan (presented in its entirety in the Appendix). Hence, this textbook provides a rich and robust cumulative learning experience with deep contextual relevance that endows the reader with an enduring understanding of the process of effective SMM planning. This process provides the social media marketer with a strong foundation for dealing with the ever-changing audiences, platforms and technologies of the social web.

About the Authors



Melissa S. Barker

Melissa S. Barker is a digital marketing consultant and public speaker, currently working with Jive Software, Puppet Labs, and Gates NextGen Open Source Courseware Grant. She has coauthored five textbooks, including the best-selling *Internet Research Illustrated*. In 2010, she created the first accredited social media marketing certificate in Washington State. She teaches search and social media marketing, as well as other related courses at Spokane Falls Community College. Melissa holds a B.A. in public relations and advertising from Gonzaga University, and an M.B.A. from Willamette University (expected in 2016). She has held key roles in digital marketing management at Siber Systems, Own Point of Sale, Integra Telecom, Jive Software, and Oregon Public Broadcasting. Melissa has become a recognized authority on LinkedIn, and a sought-after speaker at conferences, such as InnoTech and ITEXPO. For more information, visit: www.linkedin.com/in/melissasbarker

Donald I. Barker

Donald I. Barker has authored, coauthored, and contributed to forty cutting-edge and best-selling textbooks on subjects ranging from computer operating systems and expert systems to Internet research and social media marketing. He holds an M.B.A. from Eastern Washington University. As an assistant professor of information systems at Gonzaga University, he won the Best Theoretical Paper Award at the International Business Schools Computer Users Group's Annual North American Conference. In addition, he received several Jepson Scholarship Awards for notable publications in the field of artificial intelligence. As a senior editor of *PC AI Magazine*, he wrote the popular *Secret Agent Man* column. For more information, visit: www.linkedin.com/in/donaldibarker.

Debra Zahay

Debra Zahay is professor of marketing and chair of marketing, entrepreneurship and digital media management at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. She holds her PhD in marketing from the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, an MBA from Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois, a JD from Loyola University, Chicago, Illinois, and an AB from Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. Dr. Zahay is also the president of Zahay, Inc., a digital marketing strategy and education consulting firm.

Dr. Zahay has been teaching internet marketing, search and social media marketing, data management, and related topics at the university level since 1999 and has taught full-time at Aurora University in Aurora, Illinois, Northern Illinois University in DeKalb, Illinois, North Carolina State University in Raleigh, North Carolina, and DePaul University in Chicago, Illinois.

Dr. Zahay researches how firms can use customer information to increase firm performance. Some journals in which she has published include *Journal*

of *Interactive Marketing* (Best Paper 2014), *Journal of Product Innovation Management*, *Decision Sciences*, and *Industrial Marketing Management*. She co-authored the third edition of the Cengage textbook *Internet Marketing: Integrating Online and Offline Strategies* with Mary Lou Roberts, solo-authored a book with Business Expert Press, *Digital Marketing Management: A Handbook for the Current (or Future) CEO*. Active in her profession, she is a long-standing member of both the American Marketing Association and the Academy of Marketing Science, where she has served as track chair. She has served as conference co-chair for the Direct/Interactive Research Summit. She serves on the editorial board of the both the *Journal of Marketing Analytics* and *Industrial Marketing Management* and is editor-in-chief of the *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*.

Mary Lou Roberts

Mary Lou Roberts is professor emeritus of management and marketing at the University of Massachusetts Boston. She holds a PhD in marketing from the University of Michigan. After retiring from full-time teaching, she continued to teach Internet marketing and social media marketing at the Harvard University Extension School for a number of years.

Other books include *Internet Marketing: Integrating Online and Offline Strategies* (third edition with Debra Zahay, 2013), *Direct Marketing Management* (second edition with Paul D. Berger, 1999), and *Marketing to the Changing Household* (with Lawrence H. Wortzel, 1984). In addition, she has published over fifty papers and conference proceedings in the United States and internationally. Her research has received awards including a Robert B. Clarke Best Paper award and a Dean's Award for Distinguished Research.

She has served as a convener, chair, and reviewer for many US and international journals and conferences as well as serving on the boards of directors of professional and nonprofit organizations, including the American Marketing Association and Mass Audubon. She has consulted and provided training sessions for corporations, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations

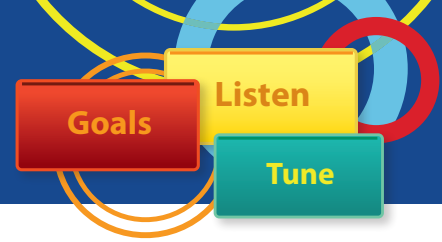
Dr. Roberts is active on social media. In addition to the Google+ and Facebook sites that support both students and instructors in Internet marketing and social media marketing, she has several Pinterest boards and personal accounts on other sites, including Instagram. She posts professional updates on LinkedIn and SlideShare and tweets on a regular basis.

Janna M. Parker

Janna Parker is assistant professor of marketing at James Madison University where she teaches strategic Internet marketing. She holds a DBA in marketing from Louisiana Tech University. Her previous academic appointment was at Georgia College and State University where she taught integrated marketing communications, social media, and other related topics in undergraduate and graduate courses.

Dr. Parker's research interests are retailing, advertising, and social media. She has published in *Journal of Business Ethics* and *Journal of Consumer Marketing*. She is active in many professional organizations and has served as a reviewer and track chair. She is the director of social media for the Academy of Marketing Science.

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Professors Barker and Barker, Zahay, Roberts, and Parker have been teaching Social Media Marketing since its early days as a marketing and communications discipline. Being in the forefront of a rapidly evolving discipline has its challenges, as well as its rewards. Our students have contributed important knowledge and insights about the working of social platforms, and the activities of social media users. Busy practitioners have given generously of their time and expertise to assist us and our students in understanding the real-world practices that make successful social media marketing a reality. For all these sources of information and inspiration, we express our profound gratitude, and our best wishes for a productive social media journey together.

Dedication



To our families for enduring the hassles of living with an author; to our students for their enthusiasm and insights; to the many practitioners who have been supportive. MSB/
DIB/NFB/MLR/DZ/JP

The Role of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a vital business force offering vibrant career options. It offers important benefits to marketers but some aspects

are still not widely understood. SMM has experienced dramatic growth in recent years and is poised for substantial growth and change in years to come.



Social media is growing by leaps and bounds. It is estimated that by 2016 there will be around 2.13 *billion* social media users around the world. That is up from 1.4 billion in 2012 and it represents over 63% all Internet users.¹ Marketers are working hard to reach this huge social media audience. This book is intended to help both students and businesses understand the social media landscape and the changes that are taking place and to learn and how to approach it strategically.

Many businesses struggle with social media because they lack a definite plan. They start with an end in mind instead of creating a strategy and objectives. A company might start a Twitter account or a Facebook page, but it is not likely to see results unless there is a clear understanding of its marketing objectives. Like any form of marketing, a strong strategic plan for social media is required for success. This book contains chapters on establishing strategic goals and objectives and monitoring plan achievement as well as a chapter on the SMM plan itself and a sample SMM plan.

The advent of social media has also posed a challenge to traditional marketing methodologies. Marketing budgets are increasingly focused on digital, and the jobs of marketing professionals have changed as a result.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Explain why social media is important to businesses around the world
- Define SMM
- Explain the seven myths of SMM
- Relate a brief history of SMM
- Explain characteristics of SMM and ways in which it differs from traditional offline marketing
- Describe typical positions that are available in SMM

(Continued)

- Discuss the characteristics of a successful social media marketer
- Identify best practices for SMM

Advertising has increasingly moved to the Internet and to the mobile web, with even long-time print magazines such as *The Atlantic* shifting to a largely digital-based revenue strategy.² For many firms, the focus is now online, which makes knowledge of SMM especially valuable for students and/or soon-to-be job-seekers.

This book is organized into two core sections: the first four chapters will lay the foundation for engaging in social media, including marketing strategy and objectives, targeting specific audiences, and the background rules of social media. The remainder of the book will encompass more detailed elements of SMM and how to adapt the strategy to specific platforms and international audiences. By creating a solid marketing plan and choosing the right tools, a business can expediently and successfully navigate to its marketing goals and objectives.

What Is SMM?

There are many definitions of SMM. This one from technology marketing site Mashable is straightforward and covers most of the important issues:

Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites.

Social media marketing programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A corporate message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media.³

SMM has a number of important aspects:

1. *Creating buzz or newsworthy events, videos, tweets, or blog entries that attract attention and have the potential to become viral in nature. Buzz is what makes SMM work. It replicates a message through user to user contact, rather than the traditional method of purchasing an ad or promoting a press release. It emulates word of mouth (WOM) in the physical world and consequently can have a great deal of impact.*

A classic example, one that alerted many marketers to the power of social media, is “United Breaks Guitars.” It all started when musician Dave Carroll’s guitar was damaged on a United Airlines flight (Figure 1.1). He spent the next 9 months trying to recover the \$1,200 it cost to have the guitar repaired. As he tells the story, phoning and emailing only got him the run around. So he, with the help of musician friends, created a video at the cost of \$150. On July 6, 2009, he posted it on YouTube. Within 24 hours the video had over 150,000 views; 24 days later it had over a million views and major news organizations as well as social media users had picked it up.

United contacted him agreeing to pay the repair costs and offered \$1,200 in flight vouchers, which he declined. Two years later he estimated that his message had reached as many as 100 million people, courtesy of all the media mentions. All this created a storm of negative publicity for United.⁴

It is important to point out that no one can control, or even do a good job predicting, when a social media post will go viral. But marketers understand that they need to pay attention, perhaps even to improve their customer service.



AP Images / The Canadian Press / Andrew Vaughan

Figure 1.1 Dave Carroll with His Guitar

- 2.** *Building ways that enable fans of a brand or company to promote a message themselves in multiple online social media venues. Corporations or brands can create pages on major social platforms where they can offer followers information and promotions like coupons. They can reach huge audiences on these platforms as will be shown in the next section of this chapter. As we will discuss in Chapter 3, these huge audiences can be segmented using profile data and behavioral data from the platform to reach targeted audiences or to attract paid advertising.*
- 3.** *It is based around online conversations. SMM is not controlled by the organization. Instead it encourages user participation and dialog. A badly designed SMM campaign can potentially backfire on the organization that created it. To be successful SMM campaigns must fully engage and respect the users. Each type of platform, as discussed in Chapter 5, has its own way of engaging followers. How to conduct SMM in ways that bring positive response instead of public backlash is the subject of Chapter 4.*
- 4.** *Social media is part of a larger media ecosystem of owned, paid, and earned media, which represents a way for marketers to leverage their own brand efforts. These media are defined in Figure 1.2.*

As you can see, paid media describes the traditional print and broadcast media, which are now joined by paid advertising on social media platforms and blogs. Paid advertising on social platforms is not a major focus of this book, although it will be discussed briefly in Chapter 4.

The Internet gives brands the opportunity to own their own media outlets ranging from their websites to their Facebook and LinkedIn pages. It has made each brand its own publisher, responsible for content of many kinds and for its dissemination. Much of the focus of this book is on creating content and marketing campaigns on different types of social platforms. Only the marketer's owned platforms are within her direct control.

The most valuable media of all in this ecosystem is earned media. When people begin talking about a brand and its content, they spread the word with no additional effort on the part of the marketer. Even more important, this digital WOM confers much credibility on the brand, especially if recognized experts or influentials are talking on Twitter, Facebook, their blogs, and other channels. Like traditional public

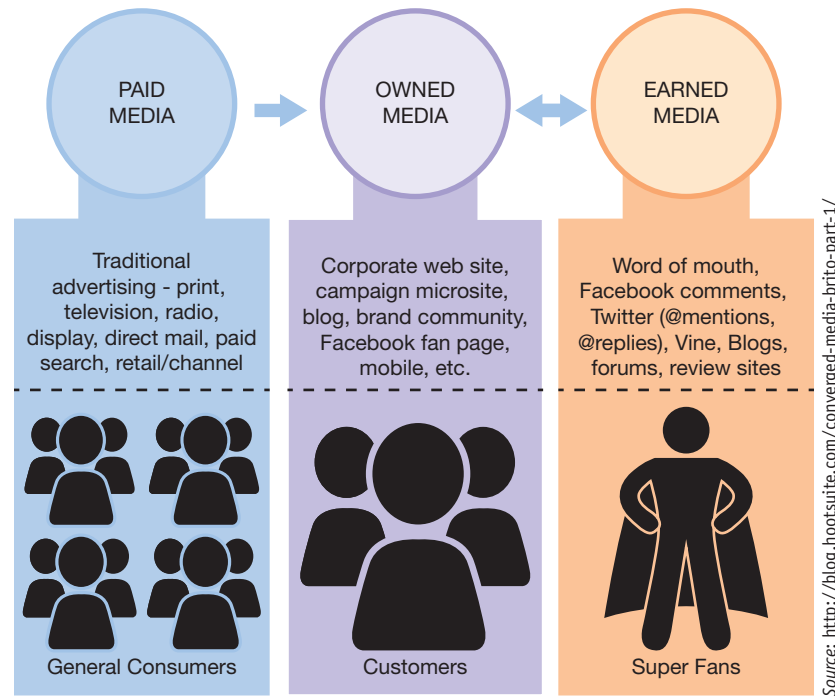


Figure 1.2 Paid, Owned, and Earned Media

Source: <http://blog.hootsuite.com/converged-media-brito-part-1/>

relations, the brand cannot control the nature of this conversation but positive WOM in earned media can give the brand a significant boost.⁵

The combined impact of these aspects of SMM makes it quite different from traditional marketing in the offline media. As a result a number of myths have grown up around SMM, which help to explain both misconceptions and challenges of the discipline.

The Seven Myths of SMM

SMM is one of the best ways that businesses can drive sales, build relationships, and satisfy their customers. Although social media has increased in popularity over the years as a marketing tool, there remain some common misconceptions about SMM. The following are seven of the most common myths that business professionals have regarding SMM.

SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #1: SOCIAL MEDIA IS JUST A FAD

WRONG Social media continues to grow by virtually any measure you use. Figure 1.3 shows the number of active accounts for the world’s 10 largest social media networks as of August 2015. The chart shows Facebook in the lead with almost a billion and a half active users. It also shows huge user bases for a number of messaging apps that are not widely used in the United States like the Chinese platform Tencent QQ. Twitter, Skype, and Google+ all made the top 10. Most surprising is Instagram in tenth place. Over 300 million active users is not bad for a platform founded in 2009!⁶

Businesses want to invest their time and energy in marketing tools that will be useful in the long term, versus wasting limited resources on a flash-in-the-pan technology or a fad. Some business professionals question whether social media will remain a powerful marketing and communications tool or if it will eventually fall by the wayside. To resolve

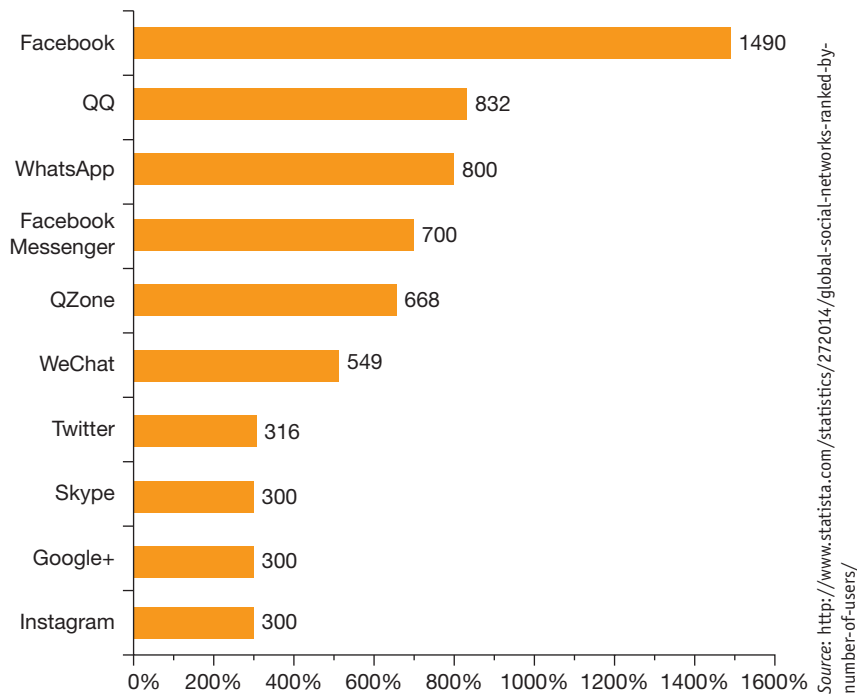


Figure 1.3 Number of Active Users of Global Social Media Platforms as of August 2015

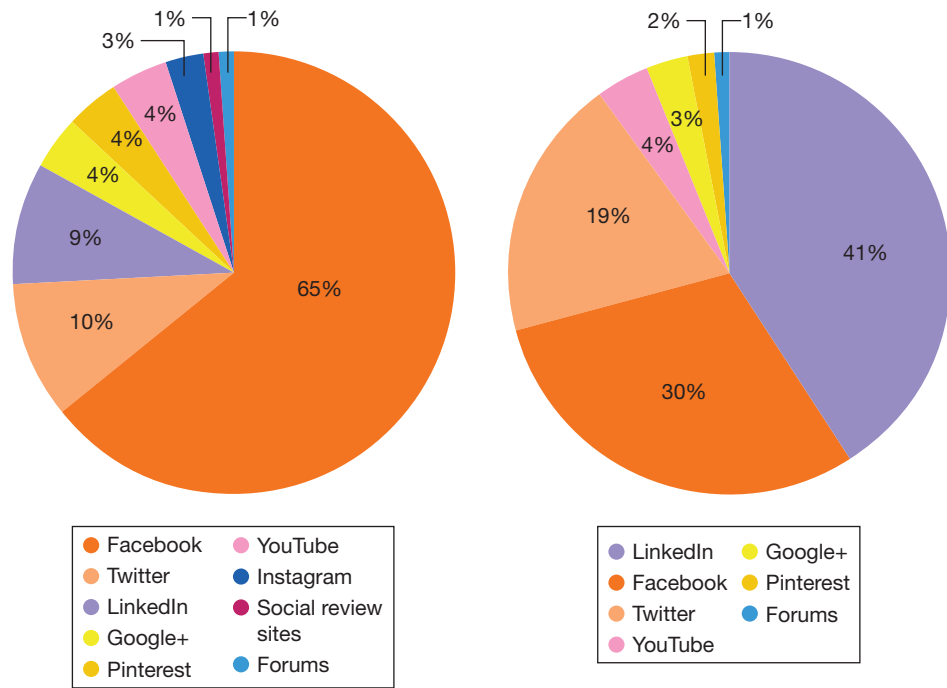
this issue, it is helpful to look at the foundations of social media, which are built on age-old concepts of community, socialization, and WOM marketing.

The “social” component of social media has been part of human interactions since the dawn of time. People are inherently social creatures to some extent. What has changed is the media by which people are able to express social impulses. As technology has advanced, so have the media available for social behavior. Initially, social interactions were limited to in-person meetings, then mail and letters, then telephones, then email, and now social media, or web-based social interactions.

The underlying premise of social media—that people are social and want to connect with other people—has been stable over time. The difference is that people are now able to connect with each other in a more efficient and scalable way. Facebook allows users to see what friends from high school are up to without ever speaking to them. Photos of friends and family from across the world can be viewed on photo sharing sites. In these and many other ways, social media allows people to keep up to speed with many connections in quick and efficient ways.

Like the Internet, social media is not a flash in the pan because of the human desire to socialize and because the media of the Internet continue to evolve at a rapid rate, providing new and attractive means for people to interact. Although social media will only expand in the foreseeable future, specific social media platforms (technologies or platforms such as Facebook and Twitter) change considerably over time and other platforms rise and fall in popularity. The social media marketer must be alert to ongoing changes in the social media environment.

In the face of all this change, marketers will focus on the platforms most used by their target audiences. Figure 1.4 shows an interesting contrast between the platforms used by B2C marketers, with Facebook in the lead, and B2B marketers, where LinkedIn holds first place. This reflects the different audiences for B2C and B2B marketing. Notice, however, that Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are the top three platforms in both market spaces,⁷ just in a different order.



Source: <http://www.socialmediaexamined.com/social-media-marketing-industry-report-2015/>

Figure 1.4 Social Media Platforms Used by B2C and B2B Marketers

SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #2: SOCIAL MEDIA IS JUST FOR THE YOUNG

WRONG Many social media skeptics still think that social media is a tool primarily for the young: kids, teenagers, and college students. The reality is that older users are among the fastest growing demographics on most social media sites. Pew reports that in 2012 it found for the first time that over half of all adults age 65 and older were Internet users and that 46% of them used Facebook. Older adults are more likely to own a tablet or an e-book reader or both while only 13% owned a smartphone in 2014.

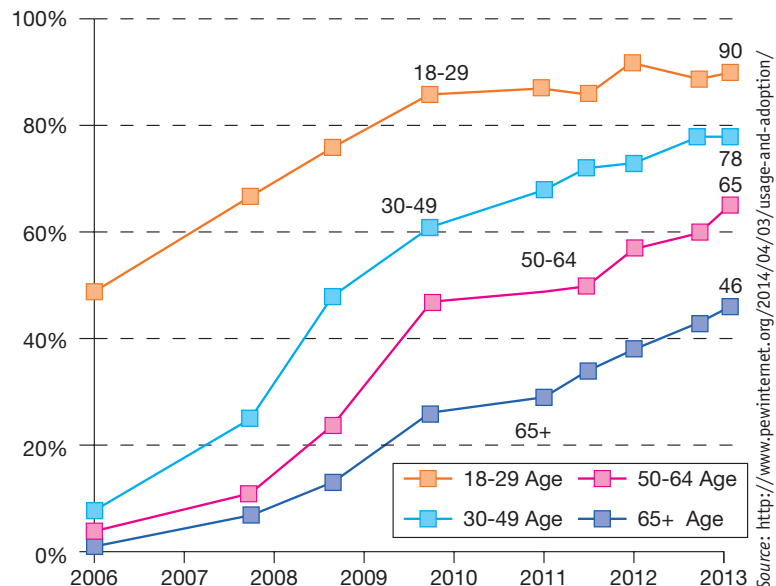


Figure 1.5 Social Media Use by Age Group

Source: <http://www.pewintemet.org/2014/04/03/usage-and-adoption/>

The age disparity in social media use continues to exist as shown in Figure 1.5. Young adults are still the most likely to be social media users, but use among older adults, especially those in the 50–64 age group, has grown rapidly in recent years.⁸

The growth in social media usage rates among older adults carries over into the mobile sphere according to comScore. The young are still the heaviest users of mobile social media as well as the fastest growing group of users. However, among tablet mobile social media users, adults aged 55 and over represent the fastest growing group.⁹

Social networks are increasingly being adopted by older populations and are becoming incredibly diverse, with users spanning all age and income brackets. This diversity means that most businesses, if they are willing to look, can find their target consumers on social media sites. It also means that they should not simply try to appeal to a large, heterogeneous audience. They need to hone targeting skills for their own messaging and for paid advertising.

SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #3: THERE IS NO RETURN ON SMM

WRONG But that’s not to say that measuring the return on SMM is easy. It requires careful planning, careful execution, consistent monitoring, and the discipline to analyze and gain business insights from monitoring data. This textbook has a chapter dedicated to planning and one to social media monitoring that shows how the two marketing elements work together to make it possible to measure social media return on investment (ROI).

Although ROI is a specific monetary value determined by an established method, social media return is measured in a variety of different ways and is not always as clear-cut as financial ROI. Figure 1.6 indicates that 70% of marketers surveyed in 2014 agreed or strongly agreed that SMM helps them improve sales. Those who have been using SMM the longest are most likely to support the statement with agreement becoming stronger the longer they have been social media marketers.¹⁰ Sales are the ultimate measure of marketing achievement, so this data makes a powerful case for SMM. That being said, there are many ways of measuring success that stop short of return on monetary investment.

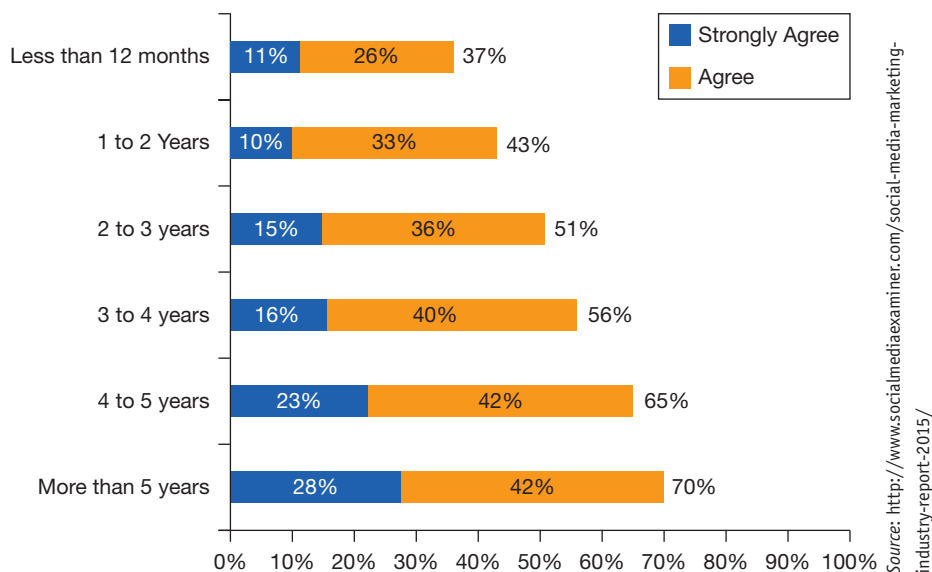


Figure 1.6 Marketers Who Agree or Strongly Agree that SMM Helped Them Improve Sales

There are a lot of lists of “best” or “favorite” social media campaigns. *CIO* magazine published its own list of the best of 2014, and just 3 examples of the 12 listed show the many ways in which social media marketers measure success. Selected examples are:

- At or near the top of everyone’s list of the best of 2014 is the Ice Bucket Challenge. The challenge was started by a single victim of ALS, simply to raise awareness of this devastating disease. Celebrities took it up and the ice bucket videos quickly went viral. The ALS Association took it up as an official fund-raising activity and reported that *\$220 million was raised*. Most of that money went to research and a year later researchers were identifying gains already made.¹¹ Another measure of success is that the challenge was repeated in the summer of 2015. Sequels are rarely as successful as originals, but the renewal of the challenge was itself newsworthy.
- Coke’s Share, a Coke campaign, was started in Australia and had expanded to over 50 countries by the time it went viral in the United States in the summer of 2014. Names replaced the Coke logo on soda cans and consumers were invited to visit *Shareacoke.com*, personalize virtual Coke bottles, and share them with their friends on social media. The campaign reported over *125,000 posts* on various social media platforms with 96% of the consumer sentiment either positive or neutral.
- Taco Bell began its campaign for a Taco emoji during the winter of 2014. It petitioned the Unicode Consortium, which regulates emojis. A petition on *Change.org* gathered over 30,000 signatures. “This campaign was an attention grabber because it pulled cleverly from two culturally relevant tech trends: emojis and community activism,” says Wire Stone’s [senior strategist Lily] Croll. The campaign kept the chain’s core *product in the social media conversation* and received mainstream press attention.¹² In June 2015, the consortium released code for a taco emoji, seemingly guaranteeing it a spot on the emoji keyboard.¹³

While there are many ways to measure marketing achievement and various metrics may be appropriate based on the objectives of a given campaign, in the end sales represent the definitive accomplishment for marketers.

SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #4: SMM ISN’T RIGHT FOR THIS BUSINESS

WRONG Figure 1.4 has already shown that both B2C and B2B marketers use social media. The same is true of businesses in all economic sectors, although there are issues in sectors like financial services where both disclosure and security issues affect the ways in which social media can be used. Likewise, businesses both large and small use social media. Since most social media platforms are free, SMM has a special attraction for small businesses, including local retailers and services businesses.

Figure 1.7 shows that for all marketers the top benefits of SMM are increasing exposure, increasing traffic, creating loyal fans, and generating business intelligence. Each of those benefits applies equally to B2C and B2B. The fifth benefit, generating sales leads tends to be a more formal process in B2B but B2C marketers are also interested in identifying potential purchasers. Likewise, *thought leadership* is a term more commonly used in B2B but all marketers want to be known for their product quality and expertise. Improved search rankings and strong business partnerships are important to all marketers. Notice that, important as they clearly are, increasing sales and decreasing marketing expenditures rank at the bottom of this list of benefits of SMM.¹⁴ The greatest benefits tend to occur early in the sales cycle, not at the point where purchases are being made or sales are being closed.

Given the power that social media endows consumers with, it is little wonder that users are increasingly screening out traditional advertising media and focusing their attention toward social media where they control the content. Many businesses have

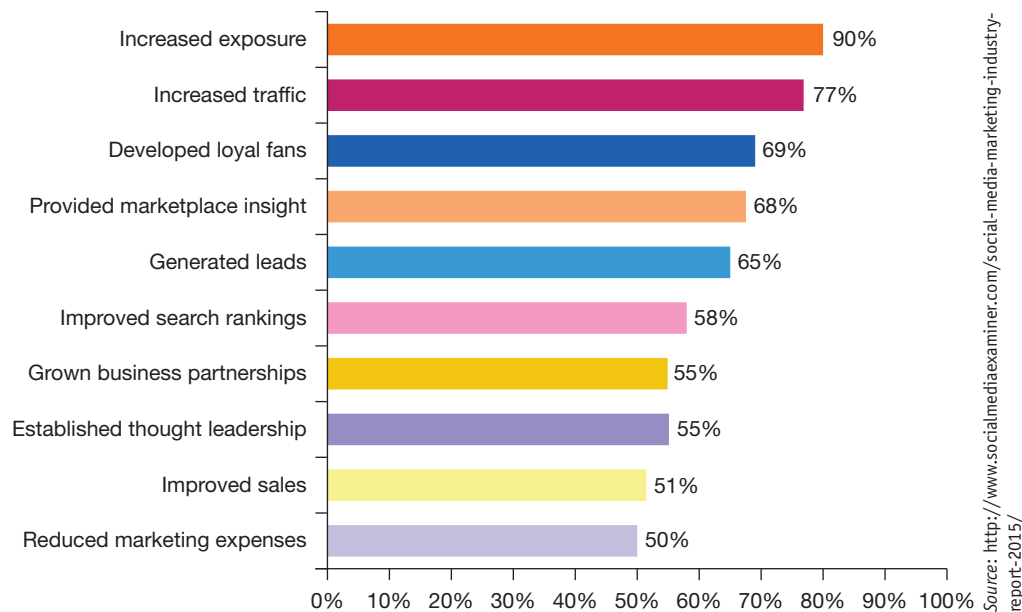


Figure 1.7 Benefits of SMM

based their success on marketing through television, radio, newspapers, yellow pages, or direct mail. However, these methods are losing their power in the marketplace. People are watching less traditional TV and are instead viewing videos and television online. Radio is being replaced by online streaming music on sites such as Pandora.com and Spotify. Newspapers are in dramatic decline, while blogs such as the Huffington Post are growing in popularity. The printed Yellow Pages are more likely to be used to hold up a computer monitor than to locate a business, with the abundance of online white page and yellow page directories. Direct mail coupons end up in the garbage because the same coupons can be found online and on mobile sites. To keep up with their changing audiences, marketers find it necessary to join the social media tsunami.

In some instances, social media can have a powerful impact in an industry or in a situation where it seems unlikely to be useful or both. In addition, it will probably take time for the full impact of SMM to be felt. Such was the case with JetBlue Airlines that operates in an industry known for being near the bottom in customer satisfaction rankings.

In February 2007, JetBlue’s corporate image was dealt a serious blow when weather and “...a shoestring communications system that left pilots and flight attendants in the dark, and an undersized reservation system,” caused about 1,000 flight cancellations within 5 days, stranding thousands of passengers on Valentine’s Day.¹⁵

In an effort to reach out to customers, CEO Neeleman appeared in an unscripted YouTube video, apologizing for the airline’s mistakes and announcing a “Customer Bill of Rights,” which outlined steps the airline would take in response to service interruptions. The airline’s apology was disseminated on traditional offline media as well as on social media, with the whole incident receiving considerable attention in the news media. The admission of complete responsibility for the incident and an acknowledgement of the pain it caused passengers, coupled with a credible promise to fix it, amounted “to the perfect business apology—in fact, it is likely to become a generally accepted standard for how business errors should be handled.”¹⁶As a consequence, the video apology received a significant number of comments, most of which were positive because it felt authentic and genuine.¹⁷ Recognizing the power of social media to connect with the traveling public, JetBlue set out to develop a full-fledged SMM strategy.

The centerpiece of that social media strategy has become JetBlue’s Twitter account, which grew from a mere 700 followers, as of March 7, 2008, to approximately 1.1 million