

Social Media “Get It Right” Whitepaper



**Orange SMS
Consulting**
Helping You To Connect

Social Media “Get It Right”

So lately you can't turn a corner or look at a website without seeing or hearing something regarding Social Media Marketing, Social Media Networking, Social Media Strategy or Social Media this or that. So what does it all mean and more importantly what does it mean to you the business owner or executive? In this article we will give you some steps in which you will be able to start using Social Media right away but first let's talk about what it does not mean. It does not mean that you can go about doing business as normal and use social marketing or media as a venue to get your advertising message out. Or to tell people or businesses how great you are. There are other media outlets where this is still a viable way to get that message out but Social Media is not one of them. The other media venues like TV, radio, print or anything else outside of Social Media is based on one sound principle. You get to tell the reader or viewer or listener what you are about and why they should do business with you over the other guy. It is a one way communication with you telling them why you are great. Social media is a multi- way communication model and it is like nothing else that has ever existed. It is not the magic pill to make your business successful overnight. It takes time and planning and getting the right message out that adds value. We will go over this in this article. Social Media is going to change the way we do business and there is an entire generation that has been communicating this way for years but this is for another article to discuss. Let's talk about what Social Media is and how you can use it.

You might have heard lately that there is no data to support Social Media Marketing or Social Media Sites or Social Media There is also no way to measure the effectiveness of Social Media so why should you as a business use Social Media at all? Well let's take a short trip back in time. Oh let's say the late 70's this is when the development of Microsoft, the Internet and Home Computers really took off. When Bill Gates was first developing DOS (Disk Operating System) there was no data or measurement behind it and now most businesses would be hard pressed to continue doing business without the computer and the programs that you use daily. The point of this is that every single major accomplishment that moved business forward started without data and measurement so I personally do not understand the argument behind those stating these insignificant facts regarding Social Media. Digital Research turned down the DOS operating system and IBM awarded Microsoft the contract. Have you ever heard of Digital Research? You should Wikipedia them and find out the rest of the

story but my point is this if you are alive you have heard of IBM and Microsoft. So as a business shouldn't you be getting involved with Social Media?

Look at a Social Media Strategy like playing baseball. If you are playing baseball and you are the only one on the field it doesn't work. Let's say you are the pitcher. If you pitch the ball and no one is there to hit it or catch it the ball just goes over the plate, maybe, and hits the back of the wall. So let's add a batter. You pitch the ball (think of it as your message) the batter (think of them as your customer or potential customer) can then choose to hit the ball or watch it go by. He may or may not pick up the ball and throw it back. OK so now let's add the catcher. If you have ever watched or played baseball the catcher talks to the batter, good or bad, and also speaks to the pitcher. You throw the ball (your message) the batter (customer/prospect) hits the ball and it is a single because there is no one in the field to field the ball. The message is out there and there is no one to throw it back to the catcher or the pitcher to field the ball and tag the batter out. (Think of this as touching your customer or prospect) The first example of throwing the ball and hoping that it gets hit by the batter or there is someone to field it is the traditional model of getting your message out to the public. It is a single person sport. Social Media is a team sport. It takes more than just you the business to make it work. Your message has to add value to the game, the game being Social Media. You have to watch and listen to how the batter, the intended recipient of the message, reacts and you have to have fielders who can also comment on your business and let the customer or prospect know what your business is about. The fielders and the opposing team become a community. This community is where you need to be in order to strengthen the brand you are trying to portray for your business and play the game of Social Media so it works for you. So let's take it step by step.

First - You need to become a Trust Agent (See Chris Brogan's and Julien Smith's book Trust Agent's) in order to do this you need to understand about relationships, how to build them and how to keep them. You do this normally in your day to day life when you are talking to your friends and family. In order for a baseball team to work together they must have trust among each other. This is what you have to develop with your customers and prospects. You have to care what happens to them and that your product or service can add real value to their life and work place. If you don't believe this is the case then you can't sell them your business, period.

Second - You don't have to be a technology person to make social media work for you. You need to find the right person or company to partner with to help you develop your social media strategy online or you can go online and learn how to use social media free. A Google search for "Free Social Media Training" returns 47,500,000 entries. When all else fails and you think you can't figure this Social Media thing out ask your kids.

Third - You can't just sign up and think you are on social media. Social Media is a contact sport you have to understand it is a two way street you must be an active participant and committed to do the work. Fear not though as I stated before you can hire a company to help you develop your social media strategy and do the work for you or hire a college graduate that will have the skills and talent to know how to make Social Media work. Like everything else worth doing in life, Social Media does take work and commitment to make it pay off, but remember the train has already left and you have to work to catch up.

Fourth - You have to have a plan and a strategy. Like any other marketing activity or campaign you have to know what success looks like, you create your own metrics and know where you are going to talk to your customers. The Social Media Bible came up with a great approach called the POST approach.

People - Who do you, want to reach? Who is your audience?

Objectives - What do you want them to do? What is your call to action?

Strategy - What will be different when you are done? What will success look like?

Technology - Which is best for you? (**It may not be** Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn)*

*There are 100's of niche social media sites being developed every day.

Fifth - You need to make the time for social media and here is why. If you are not talking to your audience I guarantee your competition is. If you want to maintain, increase and insulate your business you need to participate in the game of social media. You also need to hear what others are saying about your business. Social Media can ultimately be a timesaver because it is changing the way people communicate and increasing the speed at which the messages are delivered. You might say you don't want to hear if people are saying bad things about your business. By using social media you can engage your detractors and convert them into fans. They expect you to do

nothing so when you react they are surprised and delighted. Just because you ignore it does not mean it is going away.

We could go on and on but I want to give you two more reasons to get started in Social Media.

Sixth - Some of you may be thinking that you are just one person or a small company and could never compete with the big guys. Social Media levels the playing field. Small companies or efforts can take on massive proportion via social media. By engaging and involving the audience you can have others do the work for you. There is a book called "Yes We Did" it talks about the Obama Campaign and is an inside look at how Social Media built the Obama brand. This book reveals how the combination of an unwavering strategic vision and collaborative technologies including blogs, social networks, twitter and SMS messaging, empowered a formidable online community to elect the world's first "digital" President. So you are never too small to take advantage of Social Media.

Seventh - The final reason for joining in this game of Social Media is Google. You have heard about SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and SEM (Search Engine Maximization) and how important it is to your website and brand. Well now Google and other search engines now index the social media sites. This means that Social Media is the most powerful SEO tool in the world. Use it to your advantage.

Social media is not a fad; it is not going away, so learn to use it to your advantage. It is a powerful way to do business that allows you to build relationships and strengthen your brand by engaging the audience you are looking to speak to. It is time to stop preaching to your customers and start talking to them. Help them with their daily lives by giving them information that is beyond your organizations latest greatest offering. By engaging your customer and prospects you can go from good to great as a company whether small or large.