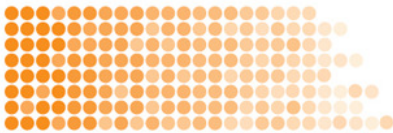


Harnessing the Power of Social Media

GUIDE

Department of Employment, Economic Development and Innovation



Improving your business

Harnessing the Power of Social Media

Tomorrow's Queensland: strong, green, smart, healthy and fair

An initiative of:
 Queensland Government

Presented By:


Yvette Adams, The Creative Collective

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Introduction

Welcome to the eBusiness Series, part of the Office of Small Business (OSB) Webinar Series.

Our aim is to help you gain valuable knowledge and skills related to eBusiness to assist you in creating a better business; or growing your existing business.

The eBusiness series consists of a series of four topics which are outlined below:

Harnessing the Power of Social Media

Topics:

- Introduction
- The social media landscape
- Defining your social media strategy
- Defining your social media policy
- Background on the major social networks
- Getting established on social media
- Social media monitoring
- Measuring your social media results
- Social media FAQs
- Social media resources

Cloud computing

Topics:

- Introduction
- The cloud computing landscape
- Benefits of cloud computing
- Defining your cloud computing needs
- Google Apps
- Storage, Backup, File Sharing cloud solutions
- Finance and accounting cloud solutions
- More possible cloud solutions
- Important considerations before moving to cloud
- Cloud computing FAQs
- Cloud computing resources

Local search marketing

Topics:

- Introduction
- The local search marketing landscape
- Defining your local search marketing strategy
- Google Places
- Google PPC
- Facebook PPC
- Foursquare, Facebook Places & Gowalla
- Measuring your local search marketing results
- Local search marketing FAQs
- Local search marketing resources

Search engine optimisation

Topics:

- Introduction
- Tools & benchmarking
- Competitor analysis
- Defining your search engine optimisation strategy
- Selecting your keywords and key phrases
- On page optimisation
- Off page optimisation
- Measuring your search engine optimisation results
- The future of search engine optimisation
- SEO FAQs
- SEO resources

Learning objectives

As with any learning of this nature, you will get out what you put in - that is, the more you involve yourself, the more you will achieve. By participating you can obtain a distinct advantage in the competitive world of business.

A practical approach has been emphasised throughout for you to take away actions and plans to put into practice immediately in your own business.

The desired learning objectives are:

- Become aware of the major players within social media and the size of the Australian social media market on the main social networks
- Understand the benefits of using social media networks on an individual and business basis;
- Be aware of the types of business objectives you may be able to fulfill through social media;
- To become familiar with the key features of Facebook profiles, Facebook Pages, LinkedIn Profiles, LinkedIn Companies and Twitter
- Become aware of important privacy and security settings within the social networks and how to access them.
- Important considerations when deciding to set up as an individual, or business, or both, in the various networks
- To understand the importance of listening, conversing and not just 'selling' on social media
- To become aware of the need for a social media policy
- To become aware of the tools which can assist you to be more effective with your social media activities and assist you to measure the impact of your social media activities.

Icons

The following icons are used in this document. Each has a separate function.



Case study

This icon indicates a case study is provided as an example.



Activity

This icon indicates that there is an activity to complete.



Key point

This icon indicates a key learning point and/or piece of information.



Think about it

This icon indicates questions for reflection.



Task list

This icon indicates a list of tasks that you need to complete.



Key question

This icon indicates key questions for your consideration.

SECTION 1:

The social media landscape

Social media is one of the biggest growth areas of online marketing. In short, it is technology that allows you to socialise for personal, business, or any other purposes you may wish, online. You may choose to connect and view other peoples content, and/or add your own content, graphics, articles, videos, articles etc.

Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube are the social media giants on the internet, especially in Australia, and all are offering to promote your business online *absolutely free*, with some paid opportunities too.

On a per capital basis Australia has one of the highest uptakes of social media in the world. Out of our population of 21 million, 14 million Australians are internet users and around nine million are social media users.¹

Facebook reports to have 9.2 million Australian users which are almost 66% of our internet population.

Nearly four in five (78%) of Australia's nine million social media users sent or shared a photo in the past year and nearly three quarters (74%) sent or shared a link. The biggest increases in social media usage were reading and posting on Twitter, reading wikis and engaging with brands and organisations via social media.²

As a result of Australia's uptake on social media many companies are generating great results from social media activities.

However whilst social media is huge and growing at a rapid rate, many business owners continue to bury their head in the sands with cries of "I just don't have the time!" or "I just can't get my head around it," or "I just don't understand how it can provide me with commercial returns."

These are natural concerns so let's first discuss the benefits which will hopefully mean you will at least consider experimenting with social media networks, if not actually start using them extensively for the benefit of your business.

¹ <http://www.socialmedianews.com.au/social-media-stats-in-australia-facebook-blogger-myspace/>

² <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/global/australia-getting-more-social-online-as-facebook-leads-and-twitter-grows/>

The Benefits of Social Media

Benefit 1 – More traffic to your website

The more people that visit your website, provided that it is well designed, functional and structured well, the more leads and/or the more money that a website can make. The first benefit of social media sites is therefore that they can help to generate more traffic to your website if you implement the right strategies.

Benefit 2 – Grow your ‘online community’

Social media is changing the way we communicate with one another. Once upon a time the focus was all on building a database. Having a large, relevant and active database is still important, and social media now offers us one of the easiest ways to establish a database in the form of an online community, to whom we can network and leverage from.

Benefit 3 – Instant Customer Service & Feedback

Social media is a conversation, and what we mean by that is unlike traditional broadcast and print mediums, which are often one-directional, social media is very much a two-way channel. Not only can businesses communicate with their customers, but their customers can communicate with them and with each other, as well. This type of communication is a good thing — businesses can form more personal relationships with customers and customers can become part of a community around the brands and businesses they want to support. However, when you open the conversation up to anyone, you can also potentially invite negative criticism that you need to be prepared to deal with.

Here’s three quick tips to dealing with negative feedback on social media:

1. Identify the Type of Feedback
2. Decide How to React
3. Respond appropriately and timely

Benefit 4 – No cost except your time?

Whilst you don't need the large marketing budgets the big brands have to participate in social media you will need to consider how much time and skill you realistically have to devote to get established, participate and monitor your social media activities on an ongoing basis. To get started in social media you need to choose a social media site or sites that best match your audience and your brand and begin to establish and nurture relationships. The main cost could easily be your time. You know how much your time costs so be efficient and disciplined in your approach.

Benefit 5 – The viral effect

With a well constructed, creative & clever campaign (and an established online community) you can set up a campaign and let your community do the rest as they forward, retweet and mention it to others. Talk about the compound effect!

Benefit 6 – Network your heart out

With social media you'll have the opportunity to interact and network with anyone you choose. Comment on their posts and tweets and participate in their social media conversations. Support them when they ask for support and they'll support you when you need them.

Benefit 7 - Build your profile and credibility

What others say about you is also key to your brand credibility and success. Use social media to establish a profile and create a positive perception about your brand. Your clients and prospects will believe what others say about your brand more than anything you can say about it yourself.

Benefit 8 – Search engine optimisation benefits

In December 2010, Google's Matt Cutts released a video confirming that Google looks at social sites like Twitter and Facebook to help determine ranking positions. Matt Cutts went on to say that not only was Google incorporating social networking

sites into their ranking algorithm, but that Google was also figuring out how to take into account the credibility and authority of the author behind a Tweet or Facebook post.

So now that we understand the benefits, let's get started with social media....!

Section 2:

Defining your social media strategy

OBJECTIVES

Before you start with social media (and if you already have, it's time to back track) you need to define the business objectives you are hoping to fulfil by being active on the social networks.

Tick the 3 objectives listed below which most suit your business and which you will seek to fulfil by being active in social media and then transfer them to the next page, expanding on why these objectives are relevant to your business.



Activity 2.1

My social media objectives are (tick those which apply to you):

TICK	OBJECTIVE
	To establish or build your organisation or individual profile
	To drive traffic to your blog or website
	To network with others in your niche or who can benefit your business
	To get valuable feedback
	To build a community/database
	To act as an alternative form of communication
	To hire people – be they volunteers or paid
	To update your community of news
	To promote events/product launches/updates/fund-raising drives
	To provide live coverage of an event – live stream, twitter updates + more

	To show a more personal side of yourself from your usual public persona
	To run occasional “social media only” discounts and specials



Activity 2.2

Further articulate your social media objectives here:

1. *e.g. to achieve '500' likes on my Facebook Business Page by December 2011*

2.

3.



Activity 2.3

If you are finding it hard to articulate your objectives, further consider what you are trying to achieve in business in general here:

*1. **What do you do?** If you have a broad offering, can you focus on one or two key services that are most in demand? List your specialities or niche areas.*

*2. **How do you do business?** Is there something special, unusual, or significant about the way you do business? What do you do which no-one else does? Do you offer 24 or 48 hour turnaround? Do you deliver for free?*

*3. **Who are your customers?** Look at their characteristics i.e. age, interests, location (local, interstate, international), stage of life, family situation, etc.*

*4. **What do your customers want?** Is it low-price, your personality, your location, your reputation, or something else that attracts customers to your business? List the benefits that customers derive from you. What can you do that matches or exceeds expectations? What do you do to make sure the customer gets what they want?*

*5. **How can this be made different from your competitors?***

TARGET MARKET

Once you know what you are trying to do, you need to decide who you are going to target through the social networks, that is, who is your target market? It is not possible after all to 'market' be it online or offline without a 'target market'!

It may be that you have more than one target market for different product or service offerings you have. If so, consider your different target audiences for each i.e. age, sex, marital status, educational level, lifestyle habits, employment status, aspirations etc. Also list any key points of difference/benefits of each area/buying motives. An example is given on the next page to get you started.



Activity 2.4

BUSINESS OFFERING	TARGET AUDIENCE/S	KEY POINTS OF DIFFERENCE/BENEFITS/BUYING MOTIVES
<i>E.g. Mufflers</i>	<i>Car drivers – esp. motor enthusiasts who like noisy ones!</i> <i>Fleet managers of corporate fleets</i> <i>People experiencing problems with their mufflers</i>	<i>Only place in our town</i> <i>Been in industry for 25 years</i> <i>Have wide range of options available from ones that 'look good' to those that are more budget focused and practical.</i>



Task list

1. From the information you've learnt in this section of the workbook continue the list of the tasks you need to undertake when you return to your business.
2. Record them into the table below.
3. List the tasks from most important to least important.

1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Section 3

Defining your social media policy

Setting some parameters around your social media activity:

To minimise risk related to your social media activities, it is important you give some consideration to defining a social media policy.

Take a moment to answer these key questions which will help you define your social media policy:

WHO will be allowed to post – Only you? Certain staff? Another company?
What if the usual person is away?

WHAT are they allowed to post? Random musings? Work related?

WHEN are they allowed to post? – *As often as they like? A few times a day? Daily? Weekly?*

HOW are they allowed to post? *Logged in to a certain persons profile, via a syndication tool (e.g. Hootsuite or ping.fm – see page 43 for more), as themselves?*

WHERE can they post to? Just Twitter? Facebook Page & Twitter? All networks?

What is the screening process? Free for all? None at all? Scheduled but approved?

Once you have completed this section, you are encouraged to prepare a social media policy which you formalise and distribute/communicate to all key personnel. It may be advantageous to involve a lawyer who specialises in social media in this process. To do this go to the Law Society of Queensland's website and find a lawyer near you or contact the Law Society. See: <http://www.qls.com.au>. A range of social media policies to gain inspiration from include:

- Telstra: <http://www.telstra.com.au/abouttelstra/download/document/social-media-company-policy-final-150409.pdf?red=/at/m/d/smcpf150409pdf>
- National Library of Australia: <http://www.nla.gov.au/policy/social-media.html>
- Deloitte: [http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-Australia/Local%20Assets/Documents/Services/Consulting/Deloitte Social Networking v6.pdf](http://www.deloitte.com/assets/Dcom-Australia/Local%20Assets/Documents/Services/Consulting/Deloitte_Social_Networking_v6.pdf)
- Public relations institute of Australia (PRIA): <http://www.pria.com.au/newsadvocacy/prias-social-media-policy>
- Thomson Reuters: <http://thomsonreuters.com/social-media-guidelines/>



Task list

1. From the information you've learnt in this section of the workbook continue the list of the tasks you need to undertake when you return to your business.
2. Record them into the table below.
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Section 4

Background on each of the major networks



Twitter is an information network made up of 140-character messages called Tweets. It's an easy way to discover the latest news (“what’s happening”) related to subjects you care about.

Twitter contains information you could find valuable. Messages from users you choose to follow will show up on your homepage for you to read. It’s like being delivered a newspaper whose headlines you’ll always find interesting – you can discover news as its happening; learn more about topics that are important to you, and get the inside scoop in real time.



Who better to explain Facebook to you than Facebook themselves? This excerpt comes direct from their website at the time of publishing:

Most of Facebook’s features depend on the idea that there are people in your life that you like to stay in touch and connect with. Whether these people are best friends, family, colleagues or acquaintances, once you connect to them, they are considered Facebook friends. We’ve created a few ways for you to easily find your friends. Without friends, Facebook can feel a bit empty.

Facebook helps you share information with your friends and the people you care about. Providing information about yourself helps your friends find and identify you in search, but we understand you may not want everyone to see certain things. We’ve created granular privacy settings intended to help you control your information so you can choose who can see what. You can decide to share certain information (such as your photos and work history) with everyone and other more sensitive information (such as your phone number) with just your friends.

You can set privacy for most of your information, as well as for the content you later post to Facebook. Certain basic information (your name, Profile picture, current city, gender, networks, friend list and Pages) is always available to

everyone, including apps. Learn more about how privacy works from <http://www.facebook.com/privacy/explanation.php>



LinkedIn operates the world's largest professional network on the Internet with more than 100 million members in over 200 countries and territories. LinkedIn connects you to your trusted contacts and helps you exchange knowledge, ideas, and opportunities with a broader network of professionals.

LinkedIn gives you the keys to controlling your online identity. Have you Googled yourself lately? You never know what may come up. LinkedIn Profiles rise to the top of search results, letting you control the first impression people get when searching for you online. In today's professional world, people change jobs and locations constantly. By connecting on LinkedIn, your address book will never go out of date. Your contacts update their profiles, keeping you current with their latest jobs, projects and contact info. You'll stay in closer contact with great tools to communicate and collaborate.

Getting established on social media

In case you are starting from scratch i.e. you have no existing accounts and no idea how to get going, we'll start with the very basics.

Please simply scroll through the steps below if you believe you have this step under control, until you identify tools, tips and strategies you are not currently aware of or have sufficiently implemented, then start there.



Activity 4.1

Identify a suitable social media name

Before you do anything, you need a user name for your social media accounts. Consider what name it would be the most advantageous to register a social media name in. Your personal name? Your company name? A brand or trademark? Something that speaks of your core business expertise or activity?

To find out if your desired username is available across the social media universe visit www.namechk.com. Simply type a potential username into the field and click the 'chk' button to see where your preferred user name is available. Ideally you will keep this unified across all sites. It is also a good idea from a brand protection perspective to secure any usernames you think you MIGHT want to use in the future, or even to prevent others from using them.



Activity 4.2

Create social media accounts



Create a Facebook Profile account (not a Facebook Business Page, but you will need a profile account in order to set up a business page)

From the front page of Facebook www.facebook.com provide Facebook with your full name, email address, desired password, gender, and date of birth.

After you complete the sign up form, you will be sent an email to the address you provided. Clicking on the confirmation link will complete the sign up process.

NOTE - Please note that Facebook offer different options for personal profiles and business profiles - there is information about Facebook business pages in Step 8.

For assistance see: <http://www.facebook.com/help/>

LinkedIn Create a LinkedIn Profile account

1. Go to www.linkedin.com. This will take you to the LinkedIn home page.
2. Type in your 'First Name', 'Last Name', 'Email' address, and a 'Password' you will use in the 'Join LinkedIn Today' box.
3. Click on the 'Join Now' button.
4. Complete additional steps as prompted.

For assistance see: <https://help.linkedin.com/>



Create a Twitter account.

1. Navigate to <http://twitter.com/> and click the **yellow button** on the right hand of your screen, or simply navigate to <https://twitter.com/signup>.
2. Fill in the first field with your **full name**.
3. Select a **username**. Try to pick something that describes you - whether it's a nickname, an interest or a hobby.
4. Enter a **password**. *Be tricky!* Make sure your password contains letters, numbers, and symbols.
5. Enter your **email address**.
6. Fill in the Captcha to prove you're human, not a machine!

NOTE - Twitter does not offer different options for personal and business so your Twitter Name will be the main way to show whether your profile is personal or business.



Activity 4.3

Get social on your mobile

You are more likely to participate in social media if you get a smart phone (that is one which allows you to browse the internet and download apps). Once you have a smart phone, visit BlackBerry® App World or the Apple® App Store to download

the Facebook app, the Twitter app, the LinkedIn app and the YouTube app. Some phones will come with these preinstalled on them.



Activity 4.4

Develop your profile/page

We may have already shown you how to set up a profile or a page on each of the social media networks at step 2, or perhaps you already have set your accounts up. Next you need to populate your profile or page to make it look like someone who means business! To do this:

1. Add a photo or logo to your profile or pages - some companies which have a certain person as the 'face' of the company prefer to use a personal picture, for instance personal trainers, real estate agents and car sales people. Some business people choose to use a professional looking photo while some prefer to use casual photos - perhaps on holiday or with family. It really comes down to personal choice & your objectives. Others prefer to use a consistent brand image which has been graphically designed to suit the space.
2. Think of your profile/page as your own web page – it most certainly is potentially a significant web presence. Add some personality.
3. Include as much as you're comfortable sharing – about your personal and professional life. Leaving questions blank can make you appear uninterested. The more you add, the better these tools can help you connect and the more memorable you'll be to your connections.
4. Filter yourself. There are some things colleagues and clients don't need to know so don't go overboard.
5. Include keywords, but don't get spammy. These pages get crawled by search engines, but too many keywords can put off real people.
6. Keep it current. Revisit your profile from time to time.



Activity 4.5

Make friends...

It's easy to develop your social media network just by connecting with people you already know. You might be surprised at how many people you know are already in the social media world once you start this process.

In Facebook...

Go to Facebook and search for your friends, family and work contacts by typing their full name into the search tab. Send them friend requests. If it is some time since you have been in contact with the person, or it is a relatively distant contact that may or may not remember you, include a personal message explaining how you knew each other.

Join Facebook groups: Search for groups and associations that you support offline and voice your online interest too.

Find more friends: Click on the Home tab on the top right. On the right hand column in here look under 'People You May Know' and click on 'see all'.

Invite your email contacts to join you on Facebook - Click on the Home tab on the top right. On the right hand column in here look under 'Get Connected'. Click on 'Invite them now'. You can import your contacts from yahoo, AOL, hotmail, Gmail. Note, if you do not have an account in one of these programs, you can set up a free account, export your outlook or outlook express account and import it into one of these accounts. You will then be able to invite people from your address book to be your Facebook friends.

Search for and find companies you like in Facebook. Once you find them, click on the 'like' button that you arrive to on Facebook Business and other Facebook pages.

Go to the home tab, on the left hand side click on groups. Search for and find groups you want in Facebook. Once you find them, click on the join button.

In LinkedIn...

Go to LinkedIn and in the top right search field, search for your friends, family and work contacts by typing their full name into the search tab. Note that the tab must have 'people' selected if you want to search for individuals and 'companies' if you want to search for companies. Send them invitations to connect.

Once you have friends, click on their profiles and request to connect with anyone within their network you may know.

Invite your email contacts to join you on LinkedIn - Click on the Contacts tab on the top left. Click on 'imported contacts'. Click on 'add more contacts'. You can import your contacts from yahoo, AOL, hotmail, Gmail. You can also type in any email addresses of people you wish to invite.

Go to the top right search field, change the drop down to 'groups' and search for groups you may want to join by typing keywords in. Keywords may relate to your industry, location and more.

On Twitter...

Sign into Twitter and click on the 'Find People' link on the top right. There you can find people, organisations, or companies you know that already have a Twitter account. Once you find them, follow them. They will generally follow you back and you will start to grow your network.

Finally, search for companies and colleagues to follow on Twitter. You can look within Twitter, on Twellow, the Twitter yellow pages site, or the WeFollow directory.

Create a WeFollow account (it takes no time at all) and tag yourself with at least three interests. It's easy – simply enter three or more topics you're likely to tweet about to help other people find and follow you. While you're at it, search the directory for five or ten others you'd like to follow, based on the topics they've listed.



Activity 4.6

STEP 6 - Create more presence in the social media world than just your individual profile

Now that you have a handle on building your individual profile, it's time to consider branching out to creating company and group pages on the social networks. Here are some suggested exercises.

Action those you think suit you and your business and associated business objectives.

Create a business page on Facebook for each brand or company you promote (go to the Facebook Sign up page and select 'create a business page').



Create a Facebook Business Page

If you are the official representative of an organisation, business, celebrity, or band, you can create a Page to represent your organization on Facebook here:

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>.

If you are a local business and will only ever be a local business, it would be wise to choose the 'local business' option when establishing the page. If you are a company, organisation or institution with a national presence, or are likely to have a national presence in the future, the 'company, organisation, institution' could be a good option. If your page is more intended to promote a specific brand or product, the next option 'brand or product' would be more advantageous.

In all cases business accounts are designed for individuals who only want to use the site to administer Pages and their ad campaigns. For this reason, business accounts do not have the same functionality as personal accounts. Business accounts have limited access to information on the site. An individual with a business account can view all the Pages and Social Ads that they have created, however they will not be able to view the profiles of users on the site or other content on the site that does not live on the Pages they administer. In addition, business accounts cannot be found in search and cannot send or receive friend requests.



Create a LinkedIn Company Page

1. A Company Page helps others learn more about your company's job opportunities, work culture, products, and services. You can create one from this page: <http://www.linkedin.com/company/add/show>. First, make sure you meet the requirements and that your current company doesn't already have one. The requirements are you're a current company employee and your position is on your [profile](#).
2. A company email address (e.g. john@companyname.com) is one of the confirmed [email addresses](#) on your LinkedIn account.
3. You [associate your profile with the right company](#). You must click on a name from the company name dropdown list when you edit or add a position on your profile.
4. Your company's email domain is unique to the company.

Note: Common email domains like yahoo.com, gmail.com, and hotmail.com can't be used when creating a company page because they're not unique to an individual company.

To add a Company Page:

1. Click **Companies** near the top of your home page.
2. Click the **Add a Company** link in the upper right area of the page.
3. Enter your company's official name and your work email address.
4. Click **Continue** and enter your company information.

If the work email address you provide is an **unconfirmed** email address on your LinkedIn account, a message will be sent to that address. Follow the instructions in the message to confirm your email address and then use the instructions above to add the Company Page.

A **red error message** may appear if you have [problems adding a Company Page](#). Currently, companies without their own distinct email domain (e.g. yourcompany.com) can't create a Company Page. In this case, you might [create a group](#) to promote your company instead.

LinkedIn Start a LinkedIn group

What need of your potential clients can you fill? For example, a trademark lawyer might start a group to give trademark information to new start-up businesses.

Think about your existing digital assets – do you have great images, articles or videos on file? Can you place these on YouTube (for videos), Flickr (for images) or a company blog? Consider video interviews, promotional clips, product photography – it can all have a home in social media.



Activity 4.7

Show the world you've got a handle on Social Media

Once you feel like you've got a handle on the activities above, it's time to start broadcasting your ties to social media. Here are some suggestions on how you can do this:

Add web addresses and links to your emails – even if it's just in the footer or signature.

Expand the bios for key personnel on your website to include any relevant social media contacts.

Add your social media links to your website in a prominent location via icons or actual call to action buttons reminding visitors to join your LinkedIn group, visit your Facebook fan page and follow you on Twitter.

Include ShareThis® and Tweetmeme retweet buttons to help visitors to your site or blog republish posts to their own Facebook, Twitter, MySpace® and other accounts.

Add a Twitter widget to a website or blog. This will add a continually updated feed to any page, making your sites more current and relevant to users.



Activity 4.8

Leverage off others

There are plenty of well established social media people online so take the time to reach out to people with the right message at the right time.

Start with one client or brand, so you can be sure you do it right. Here are some suggestions on how:

Find ten bloggers or microbloggers (tweeters), linked in profiles or Facebook pages in your industry or space.

Read through and jump around their blog archive & social media pages – don't just read the most recent posts.

Evaluate the information you've gathered and narrow your list down to the top five bloggers or microbloggers with whom you should develop new or stronger relationships.



Task list

1. From the information you've learnt in this section of the workbook continue the list of the tasks you need to undertake when you return to your business.
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3. List the tasks from most important to least important.

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Section 5

Social Media Monitoring – Managing Your Online Reputation

It is important to understand that whether you choose to participate in social media or not, there is a possibility that people will talk about you, your brand, your product, your service or your company online and quite possibly on the social networks.

With more and more people using social networks on their mobile phones, comments about your product, service, brand reviews which are good, bad and indifferent can be made anytime, anywhere.

So an essential part of your social media activity should be 'monitoring' what social media buzz does exist out there about you/your company/your brand, your competitors, your name, your staff and anything else you think might be useful to monitor. where appropriate.

First, 'tune in' by searching for information being posted by or about you, your clients or competitors. This is a process of both listening and monitoring posts, tweets, comments, photos, videos, blogs that relate to your specific niche of business.

Start at Twitter. Search your name, your company, your clients, your products and your industry. Start following the people who are posting about you, your clients, your industry and anything else you are interested in. Make sure you're tuned into anything being said by your company, co-workers and clients too. In addition to simply searching groups and brands you know about on Twitter®, search topics (such as social media) on the WeFollow directory. And check out Twitter lists at Listorious.

At Facebook, make sure you're getting updates on anything posted by your company or clients. To receive an update you must have joined the person/page as a friend or 'like'.

Do the same at LinkedIn. Join any groups created by your company or clients, as well as groups related to your clients' businesses.

Apart from doing it in this manual fashion, both free and paid social media monitoring tools and services also exist. Presuming you as a small business

owner are keen to experiment with the free ones first, here is a list to get you started:³

- **Google Alerts:** Set up multiple Google Alerts for your company, brand, products, leaders, etc. You can choose the types of alerts (news, blogs, video) and the alerts will get delivered directly to your email inbox at the frequency you indicate (e.g. daily or as they happen) and is a great way to help you track media coverage and mentions of your brand on the web on news sites, in blogs, etc.
- **Twitter:** Monitor mentions of your brand on Twitter with tools like Twitter Search or HootSuite. CoTweet is also a great tool to help manage multiple users on a corporate Twitter account and allows you to assign particular tweets to the appropriate team member for follow-up.
- **Google Reader and RSS Feeds:** Set up RSS feeds in Google Reader of searches of your brand in other popular social media sites such as Flickr, Digg, Delicious, etc. Scan the results in your reader daily for mentions.
- **Facebook Insights:** Stay on top of and participate in discussions occurring on your company's Facebook Fan Page. Use your Fan Page's Facebook Insights Dashboard (found in the left sidebar when you're on your page as an admin) to show you stats such as fan growth and page views to gauge your page's interaction and engagement.

Social media monitoring can also be extremely helpful in managing crisis communication. By staying on top of mentions of your company in social media, you'll be aware of any negative or potentially harmful conversations taking place about your brand. This will help you thwart any possibly reputation-damaging discussions in a more time-sensitive manner. Here are some helpful ways to stave off negative reactions about your company in social media during a crisis.

- **If you're in the wrong, admit it.** Keeping quiet has the potential to do more harm than good. If you notice something negative spreading about you on the web and/or in social media, its best to address it head on. To read some examples of how some companies have used social media for crisis management see: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-to-use-social-media-for-crisis-management/>
- **Update people early and often.** Whether it's something as small as a webinar malfunction or something as severe as a security breach, if the situation is happening in real time, continuously update the public on the status of the situation. Twitter and Facebook are great ways to release

3

updates in real time, but use your best judgment about the best way to get the word out to your affected audience.

- **Be transparent.** Tell people what happened. If you don't yet know what happened, say you're looking into the root of the problem, and always apologise for any inconvenience it may be causing the affected people. What people hate even more than a crisis is when a company doesn't take responsibility for that crisis. Once the actual crisis is over, write a blog article explaining everything – what happened, how you reacted, what you're doing to make things better in the future, and how you plan to keep it from happening again.

DON'T KNOW WHAT TOPICS TO MONITOR?

Here are nine items we recommend you monitor on the social media networks. Remember: Just because you are monitoring some information it does not mean that you need to participate in the conversation. It is a valid social media practice to listen and learn!

1. **Company name** - Obviously your company name is one of the most important things that you need to monitor. Any time your company or products are mentioned, you should know.
2. **Company URL** - It is also important to track your company URL for those times when someone links to your company but doesn't mention it by name. This happens a lot and is just another way to make sure you are covering all your bases.
3. **Public facing figures** - Track the names of any key employees in your company that are public facing figures. What is said about these people also reflects on your company and usually when these people are talked about your company is tied in with that.
4. **Product names** - Track any of your company's product or service names as well. What are people saying about your products and services?
5. **Product URLs** - For the same reasons that you need to specifically track your company's URL you should (if applicable) also be tracking your product URLs as well.
6. **The industry "hang outs"** - This includes blogs, message boards, important players, consumer review sites and anything else that's related to your industry. Many times the industry feedback that you can discover from the conversations at these "hang outs" can really help you improve your product or service. It is also a way for you to interact with your potential and existing customers.

7. Employee activity/blogs - Things your employees do online can affect your brand image. If you have employees that blog, it is smart to at least know about their MySpace accounts, Flickr accounts and personal blogs. I am not saying that you should spy on your employees but you do need to monitor these things just in case. It is not considered spying if they already make this information public. It is advisable to let your employees know that you monitor these things. The more well known your employees are, the more important this is, many times these employee bloggers turn into company ambassadors. I've heard stories before where employers know an employee is quitting before he or she tells them because they blogged about it or put it on MySpace.

8. Competitors - Track everything from 1-8 related to your competitors including: - company name, URLs, products, key employees, etc. Everything. You need to be ready to move when any opportunity comes up.



Activity 5.1

Write a list of all the keywords and terms you will set up social media alerts to manage your online reputation.

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OTHER PLACES TO MONITOR ONLINE 'BUZZ'

You can also review conversations that are taking outside of Facebook, Twitter and Linked In. Here are some suggestions:

1. Visit social bookmarking tools. Social Bookmarking networks are a great way to find out what websites are popular for particular topics. We have covered this in a previous lesson but if you need a reminder the definition of social bookmarking website is a platform where users share, organize, search, and manage bookmarks of web resources. The *resources* themselves aren't shared, merely bookmarks that *reference* them. If you do not have a social bookmarking account you can still use the search function. Go to <http://delicious.com/> and type in some keywords that are related to your niche to find out what some of the most popular websites are. You can find a list of other popular social bookmarking websites here - <http://www.ebizmba.com/articles/social-bookmarking-websites>.
2. Blog posts and comments - Depending on how 'in-depth' you would like to take your social media monitoring you can also review blog posts and blog comments. Tapping into new industry groups, associations and consumer advocacy groups, as well as niche bloggers, can be a good way to dig deeper into conversations about brands, issues and trends.
 - Go to Google and use the drop down panel on the left hand side to limit your search results to blogs only.
 - Try searching for blogs that are related to your area of interest via Technorati™ or BlogCatalog.

Social Media Management

It is not time effective to have multiple social media accounts to have to log into and check on regularly so thankfully there are tools for monitoring conversations and managing multiple accounts.

Do you need an advanced, fully-featured application that lets you manage multiple feeds separately? Need to allow several people to post from one account? Want the flexibility to schedule posts?

Check out these applications (in no particular order), to see if there's one that best meets your specific needs:

- **Seesmic** manages multiple Twitter accounts and Facebook® feeds, sorted by the categories you choose.

- **TweetDeck** also consolidates and sorts multiple feeds in a personal browser and manages Facebook and MySpace® conversations.
- **HootSuite** is a browser-based application for managing multiple users and Twitter accounts, while also offering some analytics and monitoring capabilities. It is currently free, but looking at moving to paid accounts.
- **CoTweet** is designed specifically for professional use, allowing multiple accounts and users. While it was still offered free as of April 2011, it may eventually start charging for its service.
- **Ping.fm** can syndicate to 39 networks i.e. you post here and it can go out to 39 networks.



Task list

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SECTION 6:

Measuring your results

In order to measure the ongoing performance of your social media activities you need to first take a snapshot of your current performance, as a benchmark to compare against in the future. To do this we will introduce you to a number of different benchmarking tools for you to run some initial diagnostics and then build your social media profiles/pages from there.

- <http://facebook.grader.com/>

Put out by internet marketing software company Hubspot, whilst some experts argue about its accuracy, from our point of view it provides a good benchmark. Simply go to this page and run the grader on a Facebook Page or yourself as a user. You may also run an analysis on your competitors. [Facebook Grader](#) serves up a grade out of 100 compared to all the other users of the service. The ranking is calculated using factors such as:

- The number of friends you have
- The power of this network of friends
- The completeness of your profile

- <http://twittergrader.com/>

Also put out by Hubspot, this tool provides a good benchmark on your Twitter account/s. Simply enter your twitter username and run the grader on yourself or competitors.

- <http://www.google.com/analytics/> and ensure you are tracking your site. If your site was created by someone else, they may be already tracking your site, and may be able to allocate you a user name and password so that you can see historical data, rather than starting from the day you install it (as will be the case). Please note, we do not provide technical assistance with installing Google Analytics as part of the lesson or program. Please either see the help files in Google or contact your web developer.

<http://www.google.com/support/googleanalytics/bin/answer.py?hl=en&answer=66983>

Whilst the accuracy is arguable, it's a good benchmark.

Some further tools you might consider for measuring your social media results:

- Social media measurement and analytics: Radian6, Sysomos, Lithium, RSearch.ly, Beevolve, Alterian SM2, Addict-o-matic, Social Media Tracking
- Twitter Analytics: HootSuite, Twitter Analyzer, TweetStats
- Web Analytics and Tracking: Hubspot, Google Analytics, Compete.com, WebTrends (paid), Omniture (paid)
- Blog Analytics: PostRank, Google Analytics (try the Social Media Metrics plugin, but it's not perfect by any means)
- URL Shorteners like Bit.ly, budurl.com
- Facebook Ad analytics and Facebook Lexicon



Activity 6.1

Identify all the key performance indicators you will track to measure the progress of your social media activities and commit to keep a track of these on a month to month basis to monitor your social media performance.

✓	THESE ARE THE METRICS I WILL TRACK
Twitter	
	Number of Twitter follower
	Number of Facebook Page 'likes'
	Number of Facebook friends
	Twitter Grade
	Twittergrader Rank
	Twitter Followers
	Tweets
Facebook	
	Facebook Grade
	Facebook Rank
	Business Page Likes
	Profile friends
YouTube	
	Video Uploads
	Total Views

	Channel Views
	Subscribers
	Favourites
LINKEDIN	
	Connections
	Recommendations
	Company followers
WEBSITE PERFORMANCE	
	Percentage traffic from Facebook
	Percentage traffic from LinkedIn
	Percentage traffic from Twitter
	Percentage traffic from YouTube



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Social Media FAQs

How much time should you spend on social media?

Like anything, the more you put in, the more you get back and it is likely you will have to invest more time in the outset and that as you start to find a rhythm, the amount of time you will need to spend each day will reduce. Of course the amount of time you should spend will vary depending on what your objectives are.

But a rough guide may be to spend 4 hours a week at the outset which reduces to 15 minutes to a ½ hour a day once you have found your rhythm.

It will likely take at least a month before you see any tangible results for your efforts.

The good news is that if you keep at it (and you must) your online exposure increases exponentially. Before you know it people who are interested in your product or service who may never otherwise have heard of you before, are following your Twitter posts, have become friends on your Facebook page and are viewing your YouTube videos.

The key to being effective with your time on social media is:

#1: Tackle One Platform Bite at a Time

Don't try and become a pro on Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook all at once. Choose one which suits your objectives and personality the most and get that platform up and running before you jump to the next.

#2: Respond to Your Fans

Many companies feel the need to talk first and respond later. This isn't going to work when it comes to social media. First, most people aren't listening to you. They're waiting for you to respond. Even though this might seem like a drag, the reality is that it's an opportunity for you to create an excellent experience and add to your company's profile and credibility. If you can make a difference with just one reply, then it's worth making the effort. Spend the most significant portion of your time responding to @'s, messages, wall posts, and most importantly... putting out any fires which may arise in relation to negative comments or feedback. This boils down to being an effective listener and having done a good job of setting up your online alert system, while simultaneously being ready and willing to respond appropriately and timely. Don't differentiate between customers and prospects, because anyone can become a promoter if you treat them right.

#3: Reach Out And Help People

Reach out and lend a hand to people who don't expect it.

Many times, this can be a random person in a Facebook group, or even someone tweeting a question about your particular industry or niche. Don't ask them to follow you and don't link a product. Simply seek out those who need help using searches and your networking skills, and give them what they need.

The goal is to get on people's radar, and get them talking about you. It's highly possible that the people needing your help the most don't actually know who you are, and just as you wouldn't shove a business card in someone's face at a conference (you wouldn't, right?), you shouldn't shove a link down a Twitter or Facebook user's throat. Just extend a helping hand so that they know who you are and how to find you. That's it.

Resources

Facebook:

- <http://www.facebook.com/help/> - The main Facebook page
- <http://blog.facebook.com> – Facebook’s official blog

Linkedin:

- <http://blog.linkedin.com/>
- <http://press.linkedin.com/>
- <http://www.linkedin.com/today/>
- <http://linkedintelligence.com/> - the unofficial site for all things LinkedIn

Twitter:

- <http://support.twitter.com/>
- <http://blog.twitter.com/>
- <http://support.twitter.com/articles/166337-the-twitter-glossary> - The Twitter Glossary contains lingo and vocabulary used frequently to talk about features and aspects of the Twitter service. Following each definition are links to related articles in our help center for further exploration of each term.

Australian social media sites:

- <http://socialmediadaily.com.au/>
- <http://www.socialmedianews.com.au/>

General industry sites

- <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com>
- Mashable.com
- Techcrunch.com
- Readwriteweb.com

Download these handy PDFs

- <http://thesocialmediaguide.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2009/11/Sample-Twitter-Cheat-Sheet1.jpg>
- <http://thesocialmediaguide.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2010/05/facebook-cheat-sheet-sample.jpg>

Want more?

The Interactive Advertising Bureau is made up of industry leaders seeking to outline best practices, develop standards and generate research. While you're browsing their site, be sure to read the best practices and metrics documents available from their Social Media Guidance page.

Conclusion

The key really is to focus on one or two actions per day, and leave the rest for another day. You don't have to reply to everything. Sometimes a blanket statement will do, while other times a tweet to a blog post will do. Lastly, don't underestimate the importance of just hanging out.

Marketing messages often go unnoticed on Twitter and Facebook. Let your actions tell the story and your interaction be the message.