

Social Media Marketing – Socialize with Your Fans and Followers

Social media marketing involves using social media sites as part of your online marketing strategy. Social media sites include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Digg, Technorati, YouTube, Google+ and other sites where people create profiles and interact with friends. These sites are huge and they offer a great way to reach your target market, deliver your marketing message, and find out what your fans like.

There are two popular ways to use social media sites in your marketing. One is to post content or links to content on your social media profile. This content could be blog posts, pictures, videos or any other media. The other method is to place ads on social media sites using their ad networks.

What is Social Media Marketing Best Used for?

Any business whatsoever can benefit from social media marketing, especially local businesses. Geographic features on social media sites make it particularly easy for people in your area to find your profile through searches.

You can offer deals and promotions through your profile that are exclusive to your fans. In this way, your profile is similar to your email list. You can increase their loyalty to your brand by offering these exclusive bonuses.

The Advantages of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing allows you to interact directly with your customers. It adds a personal aspect to online communications that's unrivaled by other online marketing methods. When people feel like they can interact with you in a more direct way, it engenders loyalty and trust.

Using social media sites also allows you to reach a wider audience. You have access to not only your fans but your fans' friends. On sites like Facebook, whenever your fans interact with you, their friends see that interaction as well.

Because your customers can contact you easily through social media sites, you

can get valuable feedback and learn more about your target market. You can look at your fans' profiles and find out what they're interested in. This is the kind of data that marketing firms have paid huge sums of money for in years past.

You also get SEO benefits by using these popular social sites. Your profile appears in searches. They give you a ready-made platform that already has millions of users.

The Disadvantages of Social Media

To use social media effectively requires constant maintenance. For each page or profile that you make, you'll need to set aside time for updating and interacting with your fans. For many small businesses, this quickly becomes a bit much to keep up with.

Since your social media profile isn't actually your own site, you have to abide by somebody else's rules. There are certain actions that can get you penalized or banned from social media sites.

Another drawback is that you don't have total control of your content. If someone leaves a nasty comment or insult in your blog comments, you can delete it. You can't do this on your Twitter feed.

How to Get the Most out of Social Media Marketing

It may sound like a lot of work babysitting your profiles, but it's well worth it. Many businesses find that it's a fun and enjoyable daily task. Here's how you can make social media marketing work for you:

- Although it may seem like a chore, sign up for each new social media site that pops up that may be appealing to your target market. You never know which might be the next Facebook.
- Focus on interactivity and engagement. Try to get your fans and followers engaged in your profile as much as possible.
- Use tools like widgets and plug-ins to make profile management easier and foster interactivity.
- Connect all of your social media sites by linking them together. Include your site and blog as well.

The real key to success is to keep your involvement social. Don't create your profile and content and then wait for the fans and comments to roll in. Be proactive. Get out there and make friends. Comment on other people's profiles and join groups for increased visibility. This brands you as a friendly person with your own distinct personality that people will want to get to know better.