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How to **Transform** Your Small Business With Social Media



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Introduction

Creating your social media presence as an SMB (small- or medium-sized business) has never been easier. Get ready, because this is one ebook that shows you how to get it done. We have lots of great ideas to help you get started. Read on to learn how to:

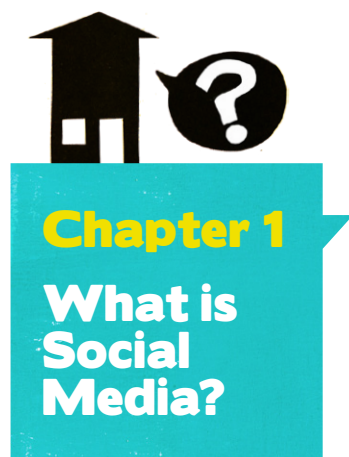
- *Avoid the “three Ds” that could cost you customers — or your job.*
- *Talk about yourself without driving away your customers.*
- *Gain valuable competitive intel with social media.*
- *Four simple phrases that can get you through nearly any difficult social media situation.*
- *Listen for the 5 things that deliver real business value in social media.*

Social media can be intimidating for SMBs, but don't let the challenge of time and resources hold you back. A solid social listening strategy will get you interacting with your customers and improving your product line. Your community is already talking about you, your competitors and your overall industry. Now it's up to you to tap into this incredible resource to understand how social media is changing the very nature of business.

Before we continue, ask yourself:

- *How are you already listening to and engaging in the social media conversations around your company or industry?*
- *What is your current social media strategy?*
- *What are some ways you can build off this strategy as the needs of your SMB and your customers change and evolve?*

Remember that just as your customers have their own individual needs, personalities, and agendas, your social media strategy will be unique to your business. No two are alike.



Where Did it Start?

Personal computers have drastically changed how SMBs and their customers interact. The web first empowered consumers with vast amounts of information. Now social media has given them something even more powerful: personal and professional connectivity.

Social media began as a way for friends and colleagues to communicate online. But companies quickly saw its game-changing advantages for marketing, advertising, and customer support.

The social web is changing how SMBs do business. It's shifted how they communicate within their own walls and how they communicate with customers. Customers now have a platform for feedback, opinion, discussion, and collaboration.

"Our market demographic is online," said Julie Cole, co-founder of a small Canadian business called, [Mabel's Labels](#). "They are there to shop, to work and to access social networks. It makes sense for us to be in that space. Social media has broken down any barriers between customer and business owner."

Where Do you Start?

Your company may already have a basic social media strategy. Perhaps it's just a listening ear. But now you, or the boss (which may be one and the same), have decided to get serious about social media. You're full of questions. What must you do to tie your company's social media activities to your bottom line objectives? How can you make sure your social media presence helps you reach your goals?

Step 1? Breathe! Let's begin your social media journey by introducing common social media platforms and the etiquette that goes along with them.



Chapter 2

How Do You Use Social Media Effectively?

Social media now covers a variety of sites and information with new avenues being created all the time. It can be a lot to take in, but basic rules of conduct apply to them all.

Social Etiquette

We all remember that big poster board from elementary school listing the rules for proper etiquette in the classroom:

"We say please and thank you."

"We use our inside voices."

"We treat others the way we would like to be treated."

We were referred to these rules whenever we squished scented markers on our neighbor's face or said something cruel by the swings. These old-fashioned rules haven't changed. Being polite and respectful is still Social Media Etiquette 101. Proper etiquette on the social web means being aware of your audience, understanding how they communicate and being a helpful, welcome and positive contributor to the community.

Memorize the 3 R's:

- **Reciprocation** - It's above give and take. Promote others more than you promote yourself. New York Times best-selling author of Trust Agents, [Chris Brogan](#), recommends promoting others 12 times for each time you promote yourself. This builds trust with your audience.
- **Respect** - Listen carefully, respond quickly, and share helpful information. People would rather trust their business to organizations that treat them with respect.
- **Reliability** - Your company Facebook and Twitter accounts carry the implicit promise that you are available to answer questions and deal with problems. It is better not to establish social media profiles at all than to fail to respond.

How do you live out these principles?

- Join conversations because you're interested in the subject matter or because you have something beneficial to add. Period. Don't push your agenda or aggressively shill your product.

- Introduce yourself and introduce others. Anytime you friend, follow or engage with strangers, let them know who you are.
- Say please and thank you. If someone has shared your content, thank them. Though you may not be able to respond to every comment on your blog or Facebook page, you can take a moment to respond to a few and then make a general statement thanking everyone who shared your content.
- If your social circle is large, it contains people you don't know well, if at all. Review your friends/follower lists frequently. Set some time aside each week to manage your following/follower ratio. Step outside your comfort zone and expand your horizons when it comes to connecting. Not everyone you connect with has to be like-minded. Diversity breeds inspiration.

The Three Ds

Saying the wrong thing on social media can be disastrous. Here are the three Ds to avoid:

- **Disclosure** - Steer clear of disclosing trade secrets or intellectual property. This could cost you your job and give your competitors an unfair advantage.
- **Defamation** - Do not make statements about someone that are false.
- **Discrimination** - It takes only one offensive tweet to damage your company beyond retrieval. Remember, the social web is a public place where your voice is amplified.

For a more detailed look at proper social media etiquette, check out these great posts:

[An Insider's Guide to Social Media Etiquette](#) by Chris Brogan

[The Ultimate Social Media Etiquette Handbook](#) by Tamera Weinberg

[Do we Need to Revisit our Settings for Trust and Transparency?](#) by Valeria Maltoni

Social Sites

Most of your networking will be done in several major sites. Here's how to use them.

Twitter

Twitter is more than just telling the world what you ate for breakfast. It is a place to share valuable information that helps build relationships.

Here are a few things to keep in mind if you're just getting started on Twitter:

- Use your real name and a profile picture, or include the real names of the team members who are tweeting behind your SMB's Twitter handle. It lets your followers know that there are real human beings behind the profile. Build your bio the way you'd introduce yourself or your company in person.

- You are building two different networks on Twitter at the same time. The first one includes the people you follow. You will see their updates in your Twitter feed. The second network is the people that follow you or your company. That is the group of people who see your updates.
- To get the ball rolling, search Twitter for people you know by entering their names. Follow them. You can also search for topics that interest you and see who's talking about them. Follow them too. Frequently when you follow someone on Twitter they will follow you back. As you get more followers, check out the people they're following. That's the most organic way to build your network.
- Treat Twitter like a conversation. Start with 30 minutes, twice a day. The best way to build relationships and a community on Twitter? Participate. Spend some time sitting back and listening, then join the conversation. Jump on in and share your thoughts.
- Don't just share your thoughts, but share those of others too through retweets. When you retweet someone's update you are sharing it with your followers. Many trade publications, industry blogs and thought leaders provide an easy means on their sites to share their posts and articles on Twitter.

LinkedIn

LinkedIn is the interactive version of that pile of business cards in your drawer. It's your online resume, but it's also a mechanism to demonstrate your expertise and benefit from other's knowledge, make business connections, and help connect others in your network.

So here are a handful of tips for LinkedIn.

- Use a real photo. The real you.
- Connect! Find connections, request them and watch your network grow.
- Ask for recommendations from those who know your work, and display them on your profile. Offer to write recommendations for those whose work you're familiar with.
- Join several relevant groups and start by listening to the discussions to get a sense of the group dynamics. Group members are looking for dialogue, interaction, and discussion. Share topics of interest to the group to make connections. Comment on other discussion topics.
- Join the conversation! Search the LinkedIn Answers section for opportunities to lend your expertise to questions in your field.

Facebook

There's no denying Facebook's reach and popularity. You, your friends and your family are likely all using it. Since you know the basics already, it's an easy place to learn how to use social media for business.

- Remember that social networks are searchable, and you just never know who might come knocking at your virtual door. Use a picture that you'd be proud to show off in public. Set

privacy settings to ensure the public sees only what you want shared publicly. But don't trust the privacy settings. If there is something you don't want your customers to see, don't post it on Facebook.

- Choose who you'd like to connect to. Some people prefer to keep their connections to people they know personally. You should check in once a day or so to catch up with what people are talking about.
- Create a business page to build a presence on Facebook for your SMB. Share interesting and remarkable content on the page so fans will like your page. The more engagement you get with your fans, the more likely they will see your updates in their Newsfeed. Most people never return to a business page after they like it, so you need to make sure your posts will stand out when sandwiched between the latest Kim Kardashian update and what downtown hangout is topping the list for a weekend gathering.

Blogging

Should your company blog? Yes. It allows your SMB to share thoughts, interests, ideas with customers and prospects. If you know the questions your customers and prospects are asking and you can write blog posts that answer those questions, using the same words they use, you can help improve your SMB search results. It is important to own the real estate where you drive customers and prospects. Social networks frequently change the rules on their platforms. Publishing remarkable content also gives you more information to share on your social media profiles.

Learn on the job. There's no better way to learn about blogging than to immerse yourself in it.

- Read like crazy. Read lots of blogs, both inside and outside your interest area. Pay special attention to things like tone, writing style, and how writers break up the content.
- Comment on blogs. Share your voice; the authors want to hear from you - it's part of their validation that they're writing something of interest.

Ready to start writing?

- Set a goal of one post a week. It doesn't have to be mammoth. Just get comfortable with the medium. Talk about what you know. Write to share something valuable with others in your community, and serve as a discussion hub and a resource.
- Get feedback and ideas from across your organization.
- Create a simple system to record all post ideas in one place. This can be a notebook or an app on your smartphone. Start post drafts and save them unfinished. You can always come back to them later when inspiration strikes. If you get a burst of writing done, schedule your posts in advance.
- Share. Ask questions. Get people talking. You're a conversation catalyst.
- Engage with comments on your blog. Commenters like to know that you're listening and paying attention. How often and how deeply you respond is up to you, but comments are an important part of the blog ecosystem, so find a way to engage.

- Link to the posts that inspired your writing. Point your readers to more resources.
- Disclose relationships you have that relate to your post topics. If you are compensated, with cash or free products, the law (in the US) requires you to disclose it. If you're including other people's work, attribute it.

Sean Wilson, founder and Chief Executive Optimist of [Fullsteam Brewery](#) learned about social media long before he started his brewery. He recounts the story in this [interview](#). "Our launch coincided nicely with the mainstream acceptance of social media, and we ended up telling a story of our build out, our process, our ideas, our trials and tribulations, and engaging the audience as we rolled out. Instead of being kind of cloak and dagger or being closed off and then opening the doors and saying here we are. We actually built an audience and some intrigue as we were in that year-long build out."

Fullsteam maintains a Twitter profile, Facebook page and a blog. "It's pretty important to diversify the audience and how people like to interact with you. Actually, that goes down to the tactical level where I won't just necessarily feed everything from Twitter into Facebook, but I'll tweak the message a little bit and change it. There's a lot of overlap, but I try to customize it for each sort of the customer experience. Twitter doesn't speak the same way as Facebook or our blog."

Once you're comfortable with social media, you'll be thinking of how you can transfer that knowledge to your staff. Let's dive in to training!



Chapter 3

How Do I Train My Staff For Social Media?

Training your staff on how to use social media can be daunting. Many people in the SMB world are still learning how they can best use the medium. You'll notice your staff can be classified as follows:

Digital Native:

They've grown up in a highly digital world and are totally at ease with using online platforms and learning new ones.

Savvy Technologist:

They feel comfortable using most online social platforms and digital tools. These people approach new platforms with gusto, but often let others scout things out before joining in.

Reluctant User:

They are aware of the digital world and social media but hesitate to explore the digital space. They do not think about or use digital tools more than necessary and generally resist incorporating those tools into their lives.

Digital Contrarian:

They fear and dislike the digital world. They sneer at social networking and use email only because they're forced to. They prefer phones and fax machines.

Digital Newbie:

Last spotted in 1997. Believed to be extinct.

Your challenge as a leader is to get all these people working together.

Training Program Prep and Framework

Involve your staff when you plan your training framework. Their input will make your program better.

Establish a few different things:

- Who is going to be using social media.
- If there will be a single point person to oversee social media activities or if everyone will have an even distribution of tasks.
- The social media comprehension levels of all team members (not just general use, but understanding of how social media can be applied in business settings, crossing various departments within your SMB).

Your findings should give you a clear view of the various user levels you must accommodate, what conversations have already happened around your company's social media initiatives, and how people are feeling about those plans.

The folks within your organization who are enthusiastic about social media and "get it" can help your training program take flight.

Social Media Training Team

Select a social media training lead that coordinates training, answers questions, and provides constructive feedback. They should tweak the training program as needed. Depending on the size of your SMB, your entire training program may entail your social media lead training their backup.

Make sure your training program includes:

- Clearly-stated purposes for why your company is adopting social media and why a training program is in place.
- Achievable goals and measurable objectives for each piece of the program.
- Different course levels to account for different levels of adoption, as well as multiple opportunities for achievement. Break the process into easily digestible mental bites.
- Tactical how-to training, conceptual training and example scenarios.
- Testing or benchmarking to gauge the progress of employees as they move through the program.
- A review process for assessing the effectiveness of the program.

Developing a successful team takes planning and training but in the end, you'll have a solid foundation and a dependable team to create great social strategies.

Now that your team is ready, you need a technology platform.



Chapter 4

What Does A Social Media Monitoring Platform Do?

Social media listening, tracking, monitoring and engagement tools allow SMBs to execute their social media strategy. This enables organizations to become socially-engaged enterprises, with strong insight into social media through metrics, measurement, sentiment and analytics reporting.

Social Media Monitoring

A social media monitoring and engagement platform, such as Radian6, lets you listen to conversations about your SMB and products in real time. You can glean information from your online conversations and share important reports with those who need them.

Social media monitoring not only discovers public sentiment surrounding your SMB, but can also be used to deal with crisis situations, to benchmark your competitors, to generate interest from new customers, and to sell your products and services. Social media monitoring helps you reach out to a whole new audience.

How Does this Sync Up with Social Media Marketing?

Social media marketing is changing how you interact with your customers. Take your messaging to where they're gathering – the social web.

Make the switch from traditional marketing to social media. Interact more with your customers; engage with them at their point of need. Don't automatically push your message; talk about what people on the social web care about at the moment. Monitor public sentiment to understand how your latest campaign is faring. The social web gives you options that are almost limitless.

Social Media Strategy

If you're seeking rewarding online relationships with your customers, you must develop a social media strategy that connects to your higher level business objectives. If one of your company goals is to improve customer satisfaction, your social media strategy can focus on ways social media can help meet that goal.

Your strategy will help guide how you will engage your community. From that you can develop plans that cover everything from how often you post, to how you handle complaints. It will help you connect with followers consistently and helpfully — and attract new fans to your company.

A social media monitoring platform will help you execute your strategy by:

- Scaling your mountain of content. These platforms cull through content based on a number of algorithms so you don't have to!
- Tracking trends. Over time, you'll start to see trends emerge as you view the data.
- Lightening your load when it comes to reporting. Platforms can aggregate your data so you can simply pull the information you need.
- Getting information to those who need it most. Log in and grab the data - it's that easy. You can often segment by different user settings or admin rights.

Social media monitoring platforms let you know your community inside and out. Once you understand their past preferences, you can give them a richer experience in the future. You'll also discover who is most influential in conversations surrounding your SMB. These loyal supporters will spread your message even more widely throughout the social web.

A strong social strategy has three components: listening, engaging, and measuring. Let us walk you through each one.



Chapter 5

How Do I Start Listening?

Listening – or social media monitoring – involves searching for online conversations about your SMB using key words and phrases.

Listening: The Ws

What to Listen For:

Monitoring social media can be overwhelming. So much information, so many sites, and all of it screaming by at the speed of light.

Start with a tiered system that takes you from company-centered listening, to competitive listening, to industry-wide listening (some more specifics on these are below).

Tag those conversations as:

- Complaints
- Compliments
- Questions
- Leads and Inquiries
- Opportunity Conversations

Where to listen:

Start by casting the net wide. You'll begin to see where people are talking. Pay attention to those forums.

Social media is bigger than Twitter and Facebook. For your SMB, it's wherever people are creating and sharing content. It could be anywhere — blogs, forums, message boards, LinkedIn, or niche online communities.

Who Should do it:

Who in your organization should be listening? Ask yourself:

- What's the central focus of our social media participation? Customer service? Marketing? Product development?
- Can we afford to have a dedicated person for this, or does it have to be part of an existing role?
- Is someone on our team already interested in this?

You might anoint a Chief Listener, but try to make listening pervasive throughout your organization. Since a wide array of people can benefit from social media intelligence, they should all be given the tools — and the encouragement — to listen.

Listening: The How

So, let's get down to brass tacks. What do we search for?

Company:

Concentrate your company searches around terms, words, and phrases that are directly related to your SMB. You can go broad or narrow, but in general, you'll want to develop a stack of keywords and phrases that reflect:

- Your company name
- Your product offerings, including generic terms and product categories
- Names of specialized services you offer such as rewards programs
- Names or terms around specific campaigns
- Key stakeholders in your organization
- Nicknames, abbreviations, or misspellings of any of the above

These terms will reveal if people are talking about your company. If they're not, that's intelligence in itself. If they are, you'll want to know if it's positive, negative, or neutral, as all of those things will frame your future strategy.

Industry:

Industry listening is proactive. It reveals the background conversation to your company. It's not about you, but how you might fit into the larger profile of your industry on the social web. Here, you might search for:

- Terms related to products and your industry that are not company-specific
- Phrases that define the markets you serve
- Wilder industry keywords or categories
- Professional organizations you belong to or that fit your business profile
- Names of thought leaders in the your industry

Listening will teach you about how people perceive your markets and your business. And you'll find conversations that aren't about your company, but where you can meet new people, share helpful expertise, and establish your online presence as a resource and authority without a focus on sales or marketing.

Competitors:

Competitive intelligence was once limited to expensive reports from business intelligence companies, or whatever fragments you could dredge up from your personal network.

The social web has opened up a wealth of competitive data. You can look for:

- Names of competitive companies, products, and services
- Stakeholders in those companies
- Buzz around competitive campaigns and promotions
- Nicknames and misspellings

People are talking online about your competition. Who they're hiring, who's recently left. What new product they're coming out with. Where the competition is missing the boat (which presents all sorts of opportunities for you). And they can pinpoint emerging crises or buzz swells that you might want to be aware of for your own purposes.

Your listening program will set the tone for the rest of your social media activities. Fine-tune each piece to ensure you're listening in the places and to the conversations that matter to your SMB. Once you've got this part of your strategy solidified, move on to tackle engagement.



Engagement is the Holy Grail of a listening and monitoring program. Engagement means gaining and holding the attention of customers and prospects through regular community interaction.

If someone engages with your messages, they'll buy what you're selling. And if you've done it right, they'll come back for seconds.

Engagement: The Ws

The social web has made it easy for people to share their opinions about everything on a mass scale, making it harder for SMBs to break through. Successful companies are stewarded by their loyal fans and long-time customers. But other SMBs may be losing business because people's negative opinions are deterring prospects from buying.

That could be avoided if the SMBs showed they care about their customers' and prospects' experiences with them. That can be done through interacting directly, acting on customer feedback collected either passively or actively, and making sure the purchasing cycle is painless.

What to Say:

"What do we say?" is often the hardest question to answer, largely due to the fear that letting people speak on behalf of your SMB could create problems like mixed messages, the spreading of inaccurate information, or even legal issues.

These simple responses can reassure people you're listening respectfully:

- How can we help?
- We're listening and we hear you.
- Thank you.
- We're sorry.

Calmly and openly addressing issues can turn sour customers into company fans.

Another good approach to engaging with your community is to use the content that your SMB has published on your blog. Answer questions and include links to posts. Share posts and ask questions to build engagement. Follow the advice of John Jantsch, small business consultant and author of [Duct Tape Marketing](#). "In the process of giving

away all that great information ask your prospects to tell you things, share things, rate things and help you make the world a better place for all who inhabit it.”

Where to Engage:

Don't waste your time on big social networks if your audience hangs out elsewhere. Do your research before you commit to engaging on a particular network. Your audience may not be on the same network as that of your competitors. Do your homework.

Who (internally) Should Engage and Who to Engage With:

Some of your workforce are already out there on the social web talking with your customers. Their initiative should be rewarded, not punished. Embrace their passion and insight. Work with them to create a more structured and effective engagement strategy.

You should also engage with:

- Customers with inquiries in need of support
- Evangelists
- Detractors
- Industry veterans and influencers

Start interacting with just one group to gauge what kind of time and resources your engagement strategy will require to succeed. Add more groups when you feel you're ready and able.

Engagement: The How

So how do we build a solid engagement strategy? How do we start talking?

Company:

When it comes to speaking on behalf of your company, the possibilities for engagement are seemingly endless. From saying thank you for a positive mention, to calming down an angry customer who's thinking of switching, the one thing to remember is there is no right, industry-standard way to engage. The right type of engagement for your company is defined by the goals you set for your social media program.

Don't leave your team hanging. Establish guidelines for engagement that give those on the front line enough freedom to be themselves, while still properly representing your SMB.

Industry:

Joining the conversation surrounding your industry will establish your company as not only a thought leader but also as a helpful company that truly cares about its community.

You're providing a service that solves customers' and prospects' problems, and sharing your knowledge about how to solve those problems – besides the hard selling of traditional marketing – will create trust.

Listen and interact with your community first, catching up with their direct mentions before delving into industry discussions. But when you're ready, creating and adding to conversation threads will provide a wealth of perspective to both your company and community.

Some conversations you might want to get involved in include:

- General questions about the services and special campaigns your SMB offers.
- Requests for opinions on subject matter where you have expertise.
- Detracting comments about why a service you provide is not useful.
- Conversations about specific professional roles, where team members can develop themselves.

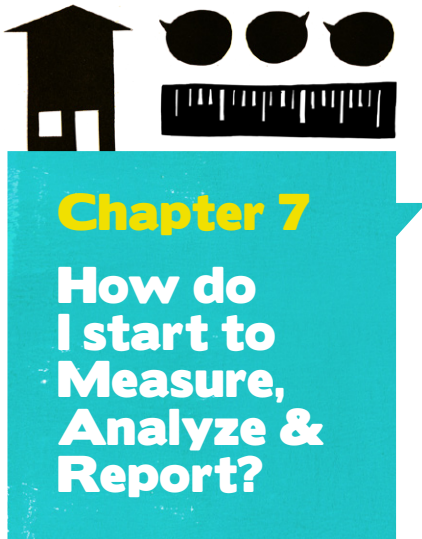
Competitors:

Competitive engagement doesn't mean elbowing rudely into conversations. It highlights points of differentiation and it allows you to reach out to people interested in products at the right time.

Competitive engagement can also be used to stay on top of industry happenings like mergers and acquisitions, as well as protect and build your SMB through ongoing interaction with people who mention you as well as your competitors.

Engagement is the most important aspect of a social media strategy. From market research to community assistance, engagement gets you tuned into what your market really needs, and allows you to build relationships that carry into repeat business and referrals.

Now that you're listening and engaging in conversations on the social web, you need to track what's being said. Although the idea of tracking millions of conversations can be daunting, the next chapter is here to help.



Measurement: The Ws

If you don't measure your social media efforts, you're just drifting with the tides. Take regular soundings to ensure you're still on course. You'll miss your goal if you don't measure.

What to Measure:

Pay attention to what you measure, because that's how you'll come to define success. Understand your company goals and your target markets in order to determine relevant metrics for your SMB. For the most complete picture, mix cold hard numbers with human insight.

Remember, you want to change people's attitudes and behaviors. Don't measure superficial things like number of fans or followers. Instead, choose some of the metrics that relate to your higher-level business goals.

How to Measure:

Form a hypothesis and test it. For instance, "An increase in blog subscribers over six months will correlate with an increase in online purchases," or, "Post activity on our help forum will decrease call center costs." These strong hypotheses will get you started with measuring and benchmarking.

Build your goals and objectives based on these hypotheses, and measure against them to see if you're on the right track. The beauty about setting a baseline with your hypotheses is that you have a roadmap to follow to keep you on track. You'll know exactly where you stand at all times. Course-correct in real-time as you track changes in the level of content and customer engagement.

Company:

Measuring engagement around your company can help you understand if your messages are resonating with your intended community, or whether there's a disconnect between how your company is presenting itself and how your community perceives you.

To gain insight on just how well your company is being reflected on the social web, begin measuring:

- **Reverberation:** The total volume of inbound linking and generations of retweeting of a post.
- **Repetition:** The average times per month a source inbound links/retweets your content.
- **Activation:** The monthly total of new sources that have shared your positive content.
- **Engagement:** The amount of repeat commenting and length of those comments.

Industry:

Keep your finger on the pulse of your industry to spot emerging trends and topics. These can drive content creation, as well as product and service improvements. You'll also find the key players and get early insights into the new voices in the industry. Apply these insights to help mold your outreach, engagement, and future business strategies.

To see which sorts of topics and issues are gaining traction in your industry, measure:

- **Exuberance:** The monthly count of testimonials and positive posts.
- **Attention Span:** The average span of time a post is commented on and retweeted, or shared on Twitter.
- **Resonance:** The total volume of conversation around an idea.
- **Potential:** The monthly comparison of declared need and estimated revenue from successful referrals.

Competitors:

Competitive intelligence will give you insights into your competitors' business moves, how their customers are perceiving them, and help you identify unmet needs of the crowds.

That information will also help you establish if you're ahead in the social media game, behind the curve, or somewhere in the middle. Benchmarking your competition on the social web can help you clarify how your social strategy should emerge and evolve, too.

To get a handle on how you're comparing in the competitive landscape, measure:

- **Conversation:** The total monthly relative share of conversation versus competitors.
- **Infatuation:** The score of the relative direction of inbound and outbound links/tweets between sources.
- **Bucket Volume:** The monthly count comparison of post types (i.e., complaints, referrals, etc.).

The metrics you select to track your progress must relate directly to your goals. The information we've shared here should get you started brainstorming which metrics make the most sense for tracking your social media program.

Analysis

Analysis takes time. Benefit from some others who are already doing great work in the space.

Share the Knowledge

We're not talking about exposing internally-sensitive or proprietary information here, but rather methods and metrics that have been found to work well in the social space. If we are sharing this information we can start to learn from each other in a collaborative environment. Collaboration can be done through conferences, white papers or councils. Perhaps you have an idea for a Twitter chat for collaborating ideas? Check first to see if it already exists, and if not, be the leader!

Try, Try Again

Some metrics will seem promising but don't get the job done. Don't get frustrated or defensive. Try something else.

If you want to see this in action, Google "What is Social Media ROI?" Just a few examples of articles discussing this topic are [Social Media ROI for Idiots](#), [2011 Trending Topic: Social Media ROI](#), and [How to Measure Social Media ROI](#).

Believe in the Integrity of the Data

Data doesn't lie, but it can be misinterpreted. Don't force the data to say anything that isn't there. Sometimes as much as we want 1+1 to equal 3, it just ain't meant to be.

Reporting

To succeed in social media, you need to regularly compile your results into a report that shows how your efforts are doing. From kindergarten to high school and beyond, we're all very used to seeing our grades in an easy-to-read, standard format. The point of a grading scale is to be able to compare your marks semester over semester, year after year. It also enables anyone familiar with the scales to jump right in and understand.

Labels

You would hate to confuse your English grade with your Math grade, which is why report cards have the great advantage of having very clear labels. These are essential to a good report. From the proper date, to time period, to the labeling of information, these are all a must to make sure nothing in your report is misunderstood.

Easy to Read

There is a reason report cards are short and sweet. In 5 minutes parents know exactly what's going on with their children's schoolwork. Give executives a report that's short, and hopefully sweet, and they'll love the 5 minute read they get.

The Shifts

Most report cards will show you how much you've improved or slipped, semester to semester. This is one of the most effective things to show on a report because these shifts are the bread and butter to seeing if you are meeting your objectives.

Teacher's Comments

"Johnny is progressing at an expected pace, but needs to pay more attention in class." Even though some of us might have cringed seeing paragraphs of writing on our report cards, teacher's comments were really analysis points highlighting what's working and what's not. Therefore, including comments like these on your reports will help to draw attention to what's working and what's not.

Pass or Fail

A part of the report most of us jumped right to the bottom to see: the pass or fail. This gave us a clear answer as to whether or not all the grades, notes and shifts meant we were moving on or giving it another go. Incorporating a clear manner to say whether or not your efforts and results line up with your business objectives is key to any report so that not only are you giving the "why" but also the next steps, whether they are to move on to the next grade or take a step back and try it all over again.



Chapter 8

What Are The Key Social Media Opportunities for SMBs?

Let's review the key uses of social media for your SMB:

- Customer service: directly responding to customer's questions, complaints and inquiries.
- Crisis management: having your finger on the pulse of an unfolding crisis and responding, assisting and diffusing quickly.
- Campaign or promotion management: the use of social media channels to spread word about a contest/sale/ exciting change that you want your community to hear and talk about.
- Customer loyalty: keeping your customers engaged and interested in the community you create and making it difficult for them to ever fall out of love with your SMB.
- Keeping tabs on the competition: understanding the successes and failures of rival companies, and using this intel to earn more loyalty points for your SMB.

Just as your customers don't jump into buying decisions, a great social media strategy should be implemented one thoughtful step at a time. Don't burn yourself out in the first week. One thing at a time. Always.

It's time to put some of what we've covered today to good use. We hope you enjoyed coming with us on this journey, and that you're on your way to finding the best fit for your social media strategy when it comes to your SMB. We can't wait to hear what exciting things are in store for you and your customers.

CASE STUDY:

Relish Burgers

A Small Business Uses Social Media to Think Big.

The Challenge

Relish Gourmet Burgers grew out of the idea that people like really good food, and they also like to be welcomed and treated like a friend when they make a purchase. And from this simple idea came the use of the word “relish” as a verb, the idea that they “relish” their customers and the chance to offer them a unique dining experience. When you walk into the restaurant you are greeted with friendly hellos, and when you place your order they take your name, because when you’re at Relish, you’re not just a number. “When someone comes to your home, you greet them, you welcome them into your home and let them know you are glad they came,” explains Rivers Corbett, Chief Experience Office for Relish, “I think this same idea should apply in terms of how a business treats their customers.”

The Approach

Armed with this unique concept for their business, the team at Relish wanted to start spreading their message but knew that traditional marketing and media would not give them the chance to share their enthusiasm and company culture with their potential customers. The team at Relish took to Twitter and Facebook to start spreading the word about their new location and sharing their passion for great customer service and burgers. By focusing on just two social media channels, and by making social media a part of their larger marketing strategy, they were able to make it work for them. “Social media is so cost effective and easy to do, it makes perfect sense for small businesses to embrace it in their marketing efforts,” says Rivers.

The Results

Relish opened the doors to their first location in January of 2010 and in the past 10 months they have added four new locations with another three set to open soon. With this growth, their online community has continued to expand and with the help of Radian6, Rivers sees great potential for using social media to help continue their growth, find new employees, and connect with those interested in franchise opportunities. For Relish, social media helps their small business achieve big success.

For More Information:

Find us on the web: www.radian6.com

Follow us on Twitter: www.twitter.com/radian6

Read the Blog: www.radian6.com/blog

Credits:

Contributors: Jeffrey L. Cohen, Amanda Nelson, Alyson Stone (Assistly.com)

Designer: Lise Hansen, Lindsay Vautour

SMB Social Media Transformation Checklist

We know your to-do-list for your small or medium business (SMB) is already overflowing with #1 priorities. So we've pulled out a list of key tasks, so you can transform your business with social media. **Print this, hang it on the wall and look at it each morning.**

SOCIAL MEDIA ETIQUETTE

- ☐ [Promote others](#) more than you promote yourself.
- ☐ [Listen carefully](#), respond quickly, and share helpful information.
- ☐ [Thank everyone](#) who shared your content.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA

- ☐ [Treat Twitter like a conversation](#) - listen, then join the conversation.
- ☐ On LinkedIn, [ask for recommendations](#) from those you know.
- ☐ [Create a business page](#) to build a presence on Facebook for your SMB.

BLOGGING

- ☐ [Read and comment](#) on lots of blogs, both inside and outside your interest area.
- ☐ [Write to share something valuable](#) with others in your community.
- ☐ [Engage](#) with comments on your blog.

SOCIAL MEDIA TRAINING

- ☐ [Determine who](#) is going to be using social media.
- ☐ [Select](#) a social media training lead.
- ☐ [Have a training program](#) that clearly states why your company is adopting social media.

SOCIAL MEDIA MONITORING

- ☐ [Use monitoring tools](#) to scale your mountain of content.
- ☐ [Monitor and track trends](#) and watch trends emerge as you view the data.
- ☐ [Aggregate your data](#) to simply pull the information you need.

SOCIAL MEDIA LISTENING

- ☐ [Search for terms](#), words, and phrases that are directly related to your SMB.
- ☐ [Use industry listening](#) to reveal how you might fit into the larger picture.
- ☐ [Listen for competitor conversations](#) to learn what they're doing and what's working.

SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT

- ☐ [Be helpful](#) to your community.
- ☐ [Share](#) your content and others' content.
- ☐ [Listen and interact](#) with your community first before delving into industry discussions.

SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

- ☐ [Mix cold hard numbers](#) with human insight.
- ☐ [Choose some of the metrics](#) that relate to your higher-level business goals.
- ☐ [Form a hypothesis](#).