



Why struggle when you can innovate?

Social media marketing techniques

Using social media to promote yourself or your company

One critical tool is something to scrape the posts daily identifying the keywords you should be using in your posts to improve discoverability and also identifying opportunities to respond to suitable comments. There is also of course the important work of defending your reputation when something less than complimentary is said.

Many tools claim to do the job and it will come as no surprise that many of these tools will, for a price, do the whole thing including entering comments. Just in case you are in doubt I would caution strongly against any sort of automated activity.

1. The risk of doing harm is always a substantial factor when dealing with any form of PR and this is why the most successful have a PR agency and even surrender their twitter accounts. I'm sure you can think of one or two people immediately.
2. Although a PR agency will segment quite deeply, there is a simple division everyone can do, some call them the thoughtless and thoughtful, or "LESS" and "FULL". The Full are intelligent people like yourself who occasionally have an interesting thought and take part in a conversation and of course the PR, Journalism and Politics brigade. This sadly makes up a small portion of the whole. The remainder or the "LESS" are made up of the lazy, the half-wits, bots and all the other evils that constitute social media. To use a phrase from literature, "If you wrestle with a pig you end up filthy and the pig loves it". I hope you got the message. Stay away from the LESS and put your best foot forward with the FULL, but whatever you do don't treat them all the same. You must know who you are talking to and what their game is if any.
3. When someone else, a member of the FULL decides to engage with you, they will most likely assemble a sample of recent utterings and make a judgement on the basis of who you talked to and what you said. Do you really want this to look like a visit to the moshpit.
4. Potential customers, employees and employers frequently trawl Social Media before engaging with you for the first time. The majority have very powerful tools to do this work for them. You need to feel confident that anything unpleasant has been dealt with correctly and there is a selection of positive sentiment to support you.
Nothing has more impact on your appearance to others than the company you choose to keep.

What most people would settle for from social media.

Many sensible folk would settle for a blank page and it's not such a bad idea if you can afford that. For the majority of us we would like to see something that would not embarrass our mothers or

children depending where we are in the great journey.

For those of us wanting to gain from search engines we need one of the above plus a series of positive mentions by respected others and ideally accompanied at times by a link to one of our web pages that is contextually in keeping with the discussion where the link is placed. This latter is somewhat trickier and naturally there is more to it and there are rules you need to be aware of and these rules change without warning and there are penalties.

If you are hell bent on doing this yourself, there's plenty of tutorials around the web, but again I would advise that you to make sure it is very recent, build yourself a summary from reading quite a few and, these rules change on a weekly basis and some of these changes are significant, so be prepared to stay up to date. Furthermore, as you may have heard me say previously, the web is crammed full of how-to articles stolen and spun from somewhere else, often by Black Hat SEO or part-time affiliates and many are dangerously inaccurate.

Advertising on social media

Previously we talked about using social media more or less as intended i.e to talk to other people only the modern usage is plagued by spooks and voyeurs with large imaginations and small brains and as a result you have to measure what you say or do if you are in a career or business whereby you are likely to be stalked by the former and who isn't let's face it.

Today I am talking a much more powerful use of social media and that is advertising.

Two things make social media a more powerful place to advertise than any other and when I social, I do mean social, as opposed to LinkedIn which is business discussion in the process of morphing into a Job board, that's different.

1. Social media is a place that despite all we said previously is still viewed by most users as relaxation rather than PR or business. For this reason the normal barriers are at least relaxed. Regardless how subtle this may be and how quickly relaxed barriers can be re-erected, this does make a difference to how many peoples attention you are able to grab for just a second. Every advertiser knows exactly how important this is.
2. Social media networks, for now at least, know more about their membership than anyone else and in some cases it really is bordering on criminal if not over the border, but for the next few years at least, ethical business can make full use of this available customer profile data to segment accurately and target their messages at the right people at the right time with just the right content to achieve staggering results.

We have already seen much written and I promise there will be more about the impact of Military Contractors like Cambridge Analytica and Palantir weaponizing this data to place their man in the Whitehouse, begin the breakup of Europe and less well documented campaigns across the middle East and who knows how far. If you are in any doubt about the power of this media just look at how scared the US and UK authorities are about what Russia might be doing with it. I am not however condoning their behaviour or suggesting that you should join them, but I am pointing out that you can use this weapon for good and drive your business forward in an ethical way to achieve remarkable results.

3. Targeting opportunities that exist as a result of the above mentioned insight can be truly legendary.

We recently helped newly wed launch a wedding planning business. She knew all the

suppliers by first name and had an encyclopaedic knowledge of the products and services. We were able to place her message very cheaply indeed in front of everyone in her territory who had just announced their engagement on Facebook. Naturally she developed a lucrative flow of customers very quickly. There is no other platform that could have achieved this for her.

Profile data what to do with it

Each platform provides useful guidance on your responsibilities under GDPR when using their customer's data.

For further information, visit: <https://www.linkedin.com/help/linkedin/answer/87080>

For further information, visit: <https://gdpr.twitter.com>

For further information, visit: <https://www.facebook.com/business/gdpr>

The access to vast amounts of data is finished and even things like sexual preferences and political orientation are no longer available. You will get a name and email when someone uses Facebook to log into your account, but via advertising and boosting etc you will get an extraordinary degree of access to insight collected from all over the web by Facebook ad used to send you a targeted audience.

This particular practice is of course also carried out by Google and others and unlike profile information, it is not unique to Facebook. Anyone with like buttons, banners or adverts on other peoples websites can, through a flaw in browser legislation (my view) collect information about every visitor to that page. This effectively stalks users as they roam the internet and builds enormous data files.

Allowing the platform to analyse this and find you an audience is generally easier and less risky as well as more effective than trying to collect your own data.

Facebook data that can be pre-filled from the Facebook database in your forms includes:

Contact fields	Demographic questions	Work information
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email address (available for Instagram) • Full name (available for Instagram) • First name • Surname • Phone number (available for Instagram) • Street address • City • County/region • Country • Province • Postcode 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of birth • Gender (available for Instagram) • Marital status • Relationship status • Company name • Military status 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Job title • Work phone number • Work email address

Business pages

On Facebook, these relatively new pages are a bit confusing as are a lot of Facebook features. They don't really seem to fit into Facebook at all, but seem to be an assault on the likes of LinkedIn to try for the business market as far as I can see. Recent announcements suggests they may be hauling back on the use of business pages. What these pages do is, to provide a useful way of separating your business activities from your personal or social activities on Facebook. Personally I dropped social use of Facebook a long time ago to maintain my privacy but if you use both aspects, you need to be aware that your dodgy friend from University will also be seen by your new potential client viewing your business page.

LinkedIn uses a very similar technique though this is more sophisticated and useful for certain businesses, especially when combined with PPC advertising and sponsored posts.

Boosting or promoting posts

If you build a few thousand followers on Facebook for your business page you can then place posts which will turn up in the feeds of those followers and thus you will get a very nice inexpensive way of advertising, assuming of course that yours is a business where people lurk for a long time and then make a purchase. These are fewer than you might think and as a main strategy for marketing it is a major source of starvation for small business using it unwisely, so spend time on your strategy before committing budget and time to this approach.

There are however, other good reasons to build a good list of followers because a business page improves your SEO for your website and encouraging shares of your post in this way will give it a further boost.

Direct approaches

Making direct approaches is a common strategy on LinkedIn but like all social networks be very careful how you go about this and respect the social aspect of the network.

If you use a commercial emailing service to maintain mailing lists, you will find that being a LinkedIn connection does not constitute being opted in to your mailing list and you can still run into problems not to mention falling foul of GDPR.

Conversion rates

Facebook conversion rates are generally very much lower than other platforms like Google. One reason is that relaxed social users have less fear of clicking but stop short of making an enquiry and are generally a different group with a different dynamic and at a different place in the journey. I have never seen figure for this but instinctively and based on experience, I suggest it is still less common by some way for someone with transactional intent, i.e. (ready to buy) to head for Facebook as a first port of call.

It is important therefore to understand your customers user journey and their disposition towards advertising and adapt your approach to make the most of this.

LinkedIn produces a lower level of clicks through, but the quality of targeting is excellent. Few LinkedIn users will click an advert out of curiosity, therefore they are usually aware that they are making themselves available to be sold to and that is often because they are in the market and considered you a potential supplier. There is still a lot of work to be done, but marketing is mostly about starting the journey.

In Summary

There are substantial opportunities to use social media for intelligent marketing provided you take the time to research your won market and really understand your customers and then how these platforms work from a marketing viewpoint. The data can sometimes be superbly suited to your market and other times far less suited. The method of approach you select and the way you present your propositions to attract leads or visitors is paramount to your success.

I would strongly recommend developing a strategy, deciding which bits of it you are not sure about and then running low cost tests/pilots to get answers to your questions and enable you to refine that strategy until you can move forward with a little more confidence>

A key part of your advertising and marketing strategy must always be to keep measuring and analysing your efforts and returns and adjusting to changes.