

## CHAPTER

# 1

# The Role of Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing (SMM) has emerged as a vital business force offering vibrant career options. It offers important benefits to marketers but some aspects

are still not widely understood. SMM has experienced dramatic growth in recent years and is poised for substantial growth and change in years to come.

Social media is growing by leaps and bounds. It is estimated that by 2016 there will be around 2.13 *billion* social media users around the world. That is up from 1.4 billion in 2012 and it represents over 63% all Internet users.<sup>1</sup> Marketers are working hard to reach this huge social media audience. This book is intended to help both students and businesses understand the social media landscape and the changes that are taking place and to learn and how to approach it strategically.

Many businesses struggle with social media because they lack a definite plan. They start with an end in mind instead of creating a strategy and objectives. A company might start a Twitter account or a Facebook page, but it is not likely to see results unless there is a clear understanding of its marketing objectives. Like any form of marketing, a strong strategic plan for social media is required for success. This book contains chapters on establishing strategic goals and objectives and monitoring plan achievement as well as a chapter on the SMM plan itself and a sample SMM plan.

The advent of social media has also posed a challenge to traditional marketing methodologies. Marketing budgets are increasingly focused on digital, and the jobs of marketing professionals have changed as a result.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter, students will be able to:

- Explain why social media is important to businesses around the world
- Define SMM
- Explain the seven myths of SMM
- Relate a brief history of SMM
- Explain characteristics of SMM and ways in which it differs from traditional offline marketing
- Describe typical positions that are available in SMM

(Continued)

# Not For Sale

- Discuss the characteristics of a successful social media marketer
- Identify best practices for SMM

Advertising has increasingly moved to the Internet and to the mobile web, with even long-time print magazines such as *The Atlantic* shifting to a largely digital-based revenue strategy.<sup>2</sup> For many firms, the focus is now online, which makes knowledge of SMM especially valuable for students and/or soon-to-be job-seekers.

This book is organized into two core sections: the first four chapters will lay the foundation for engaging in social media, including marketing strategy and objectives, targeting specific audiences, and the background rules of social media. The remainder of the book will encompass more detailed elements of SMM and how to adapt the strategy to specific platforms and international audiences. By creating a solid marketing plan and choosing the right tools, a business can expediently and successfully navigate to its marketing goals and objectives.

## What Is SMM?

There are many definitions of SMM. This one from technology marketing site Mashable is straightforward and covers most of the important issues:

*Social media marketing refers to the process of gaining website traffic or attention through social media sites.*

*Social media marketing programs usually center on efforts to create content that attracts attention and encourages readers to share it with their social networks. A corporate message spreads from user to user and presumably resonates because it appears to come from a trusted, third-party source, as opposed to the brand or company itself. Hence, this form of marketing is driven by word-of-mouth, meaning it results in earned media rather than paid media.<sup>3</sup>*

SMM has a number of important aspects:

**1.** *Creating buzz or newsworthy events, videos, tweets, or blog entries that attract attention and have the potential to become viral in nature. Buzz is what makes SMM work. It replicates a message through user to user contact, rather than the traditional method of purchasing an ad or promoting a press release. It emulates word of mouth (WOM) in the physical world and consequently can have a great deal of impact.*

*A classic example, one that alerted many marketers to the power of social media, is “United Breaks Guitars.” It all started when musician Dave Carroll’s guitar was damaged on a United Airlines flight (Figure 1.1). He spent the next 9 months trying to recover the \$1,200 it cost to have the guitar repaired. As he tells the story, phoning and emailing only got him the run around. So he, with the help of musician friends, created a video at the cost of \$150. On July 6, 2009, he posted it on YouTube. Within 24 hours the video had over 150,000 views; 24 days later it had over a million views and major news organizations as well as social media users had picked it up.*

*United contacted him agreeing to pay the repair costs and offered \$1,200 in flight vouchers, which he declined. Two years later he estimated that his message had reached as many as 100 million people, courtesy of all the media mentions. All this created a storm of negative publicity for United.<sup>4</sup>*

*It is important to point out that no one can control, or even do a good job predicting, when a social media post will go viral. But marketers understand that they need to pay attention, perhaps even to improve their customer service.*



AP Images / The Canadian Press / Andrew Vaughan

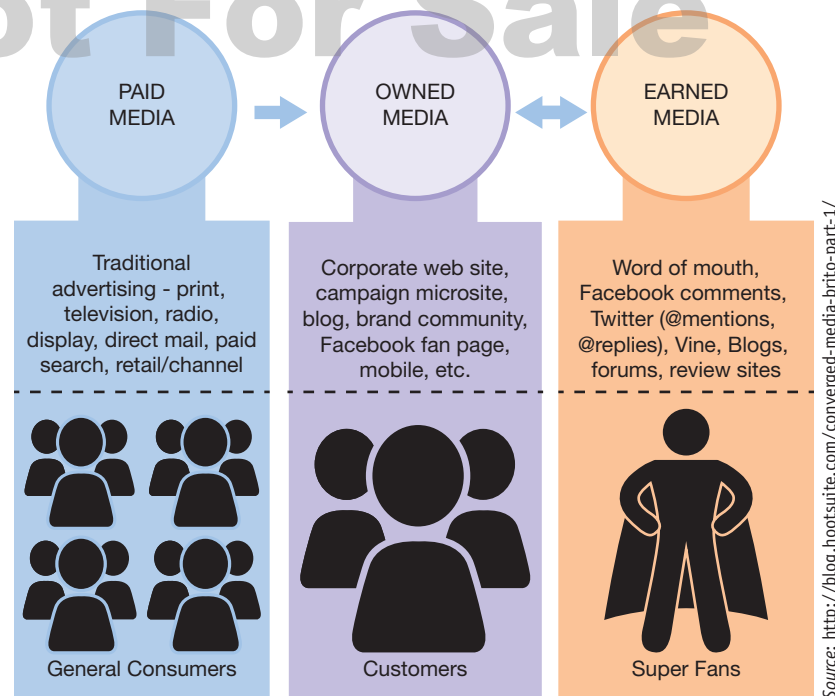
**Figure 1.1** Dave Carroll with His Guitar

2. Building ways that enable fans of a brand or company to promote a message themselves in multiple online social media venues. Corporations or brands can create pages on major social platforms where they can offer followers information and promotions like coupons. They can reach huge audiences on these platforms as will be shown in the next section of this chapter. As we will discuss in Chapter 3, these huge audiences can be segmented using profile data and behavioral data from the platform to reach targeted audiences or to attract paid advertising.
3. It is based around online conversations. SMM is not controlled by the organization. Instead it encourages user participation and dialog. A badly designed SMM campaign can potentially backfire on the organization that created it. To be successful SMM campaigns must fully engage and respect the users. Each type of platform, as discussed in Chapter 5, has its own way of engaging followers. How to conduct SMM in ways that bring positive response instead of public backlash is the subject of Chapter 4.
4. Social media is part of a larger media ecosystem of owned, paid, and earned media, which represents a way for marketers to leverage their own brand efforts. These media are defined in Figure 1.2.

As you can see, paid media describes the traditional print and broadcast media, which are now joined by paid advertising on social media platforms and blogs. Paid advertising on social platforms is not a major focus of this book, although it will be discussed briefly in Chapter 4.

The Internet gives brands the opportunity to own their own media outlets ranging from their websites to their Facebook and LinkedIn pages. It has made each brand its own publisher, responsible for content of many kinds and for its dissemination. Much of the focus of this book is on creating content and marketing campaigns on different types of social platforms. Only the marketer's owned platforms are within her direct control.

The most valuable media of all in this ecosystem is earned media. When people begin talking about a brand and its content, they spread the word with no additional effort on the part of the marketer. Even more important, this digital WOM confers much credibility on the brand, especially if recognized experts or influentials are talking on Twitter, Facebook, their blogs, and other channels. Like traditional public



**Figure 1.2** Paid, Owned, and Earned Media

relations, the brand cannot control the nature of this conversation but positive WOM in earned media can give the brand a significant boost.<sup>5</sup>

The combined impact of these aspects of SMM makes it quite different from traditional marketing in the offline media. As a result a number of myths have grown up around SMM, which help to explain both misconceptions and challenges of the discipline.

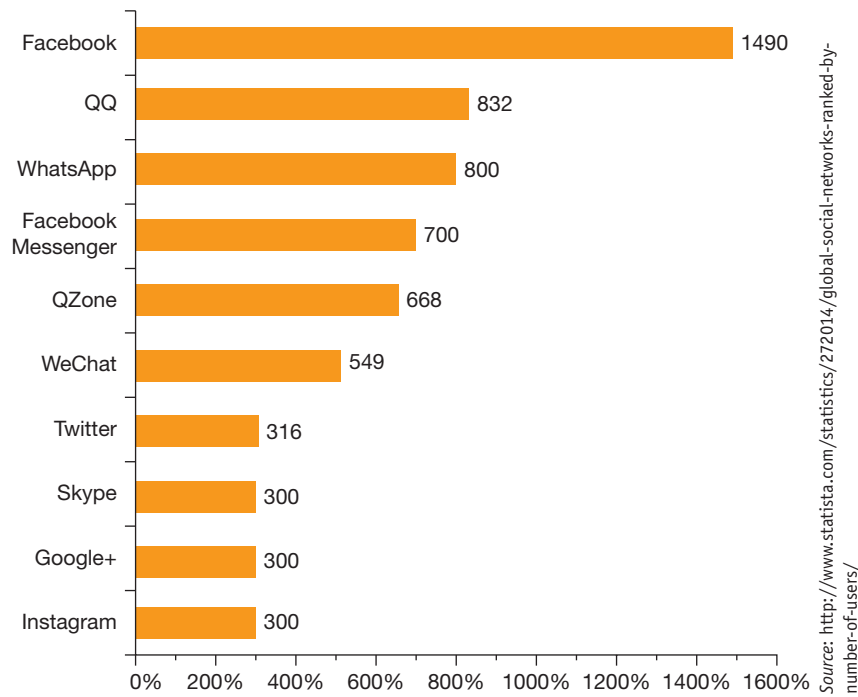
## The Seven Myths of SMM

SMM is one of the best ways that businesses can drive sales, build relationships, and satisfy their customers. Although social media has increased in popularity over the years as a marketing tool, there remain some common misconceptions about SMM. The following are seven of the most common myths that business professionals have regarding SMM.

### SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #1: SOCIAL MEDIA IS JUST A FAD

**WRONG** Social media continues to grow by virtually any measure you use. Figure 1.3 shows the number of active accounts for the world's 10 largest social media networks as of August 2015. The chart shows Facebook in the lead with almost a billion and a half active users. It also shows huge user bases for a number of messaging apps that are not widely used in the United States like the Chinese platform Tencent QQ. Twitter, Skype, and Google+ all made the top 10. Most surprising is Instagram in tenth place. Over 300 million active users is not bad for a platform founded in 2009!<sup>6</sup>

Businesses want to invest their time and energy in marketing tools that will be useful in the long term, versus wasting limited resources on a flash-in-the-pan technology or a fad. Some business professionals question whether social media will remain a powerful marketing and communications tool or if it will eventually fall by the wayside. To resolve



**Figure 1.3** Number of Active Users of Global Social Media Platforms as of August 2015

this issue, it is helpful to look at the foundations of social media, which are built on age-old concepts of community, socialization, and WOM marketing.

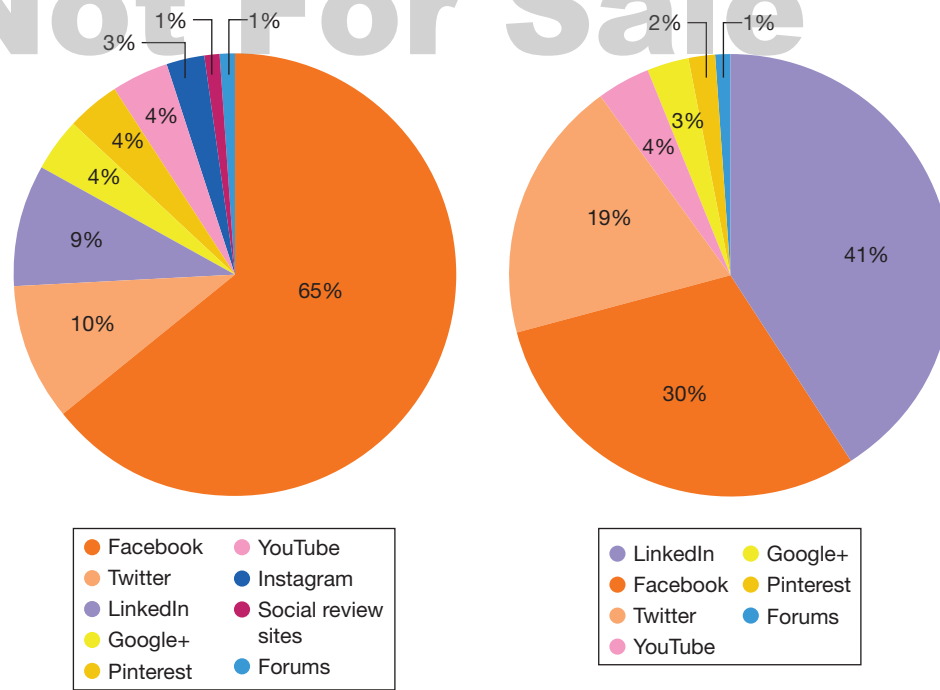
The “social” component of social media has been part of human interactions since the dawn of time. People are inherently social creatures to some extent. What has changed is the media by which people are able to express social impulses. As technology has advanced, so have the media available for social behavior. Initially, social interactions were limited to in-person meetings, then mail and letters, then telephones, then email, and now social media, or web-based social interactions.

The underlying premise of social media—that people are social and want to connect with other people—has been stable over time. The difference is that people are now able to connect with each other in a more efficient and scalable way. Facebook allows users to see what friends from high school are up to without ever speaking to them. Photos of friends and family from across the world can be viewed on photo sharing sites. In these and many other ways, social media allows people to keep up to speed with many connections in quick and efficient ways.

Like the Internet, social media is not a flash in the pan because of the human desire to socialize and because the media of the Internet continue to evolve at a rapid rate, providing new and attractive means for people to interact. Although social media will only expand in the foreseeable future, specific social media platforms (technologies or platforms such as Facebook and Twitter) change considerably over time and other platforms rise and fall in popularity. The social media marketer must be alert to ongoing changes in the social media environment.

In the face of all this change, marketers will focus on the platforms most used by their target audiences. Figure 1.4 shows an interesting contrast between the platforms used by B2C marketers, with Facebook in the lead, and B2B marketers, where LinkedIn holds first place. This reflects the different audiences for B2C and B2B marketing. Notice, however, that Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are the top three platforms in both market spaces,<sup>7</sup> just in a different order.

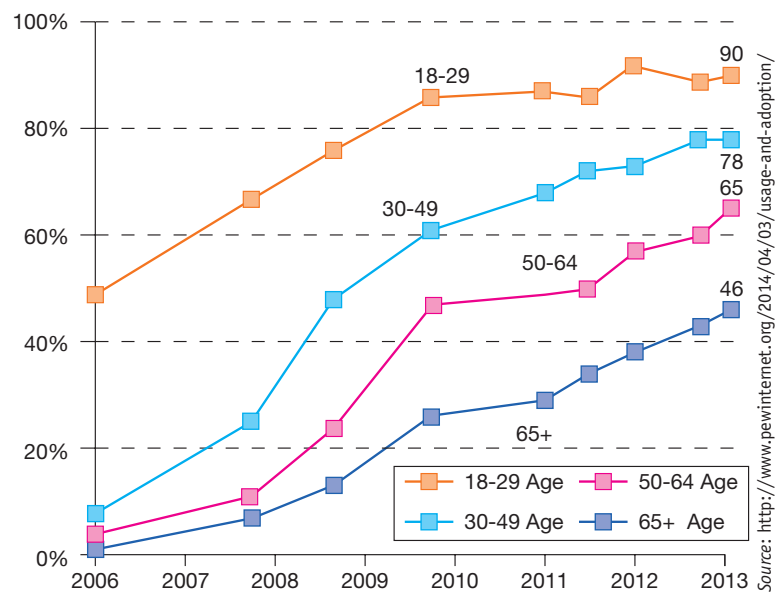




**Figure 1.4** Social Media Platforms Used by B2C and B2B Marketers

## SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #2: SOCIAL MEDIA IS JUST FOR THE YOUNG

**WRONG** Many social media skeptics still think that social media is a tool primarily for the young: kids, teenagers, and college students. The reality is that older users are among the fastest growing demographics on most social media sites. Pew reports that in 2012 it found for the first time that over half of all adults age 65 and older were Internet users and that 46% of them used Facebook. Older adults are more likely to own a tablet or an e-book reader or both while only 13% owned a smartphone in 2014.



**Figure 1.5** Social Media Use by Age Group

The age disparity in social media use continues to exist as shown in Figure 1.5. Young adults are still the most likely to be social media users, but use among older adults, especially those in the 50–64 age group, has grown rapidly in recent years.<sup>8</sup>

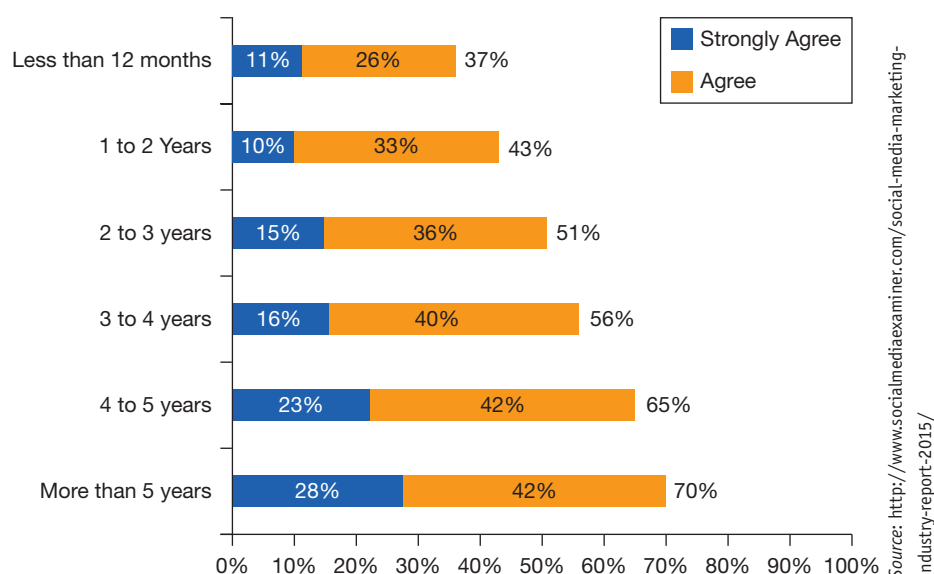
The growth in social media usage rates among older adults carries over into the mobile sphere according to comScore. The young are still the heaviest users of mobile social media as well as the fastest growing group of users. However, among tablet mobile social media users, adults aged 55 and over represent the fastest growing group.<sup>9</sup>

Social networks are increasingly being adopted by older populations and are becoming incredibly diverse, with users spanning all age and income brackets. This diversity means that most businesses, if they are willing to look, can find their target consumers on social media sites. It also means that they should not simply try to appeal to a large, heterogeneous audience. They need to hone targeting skills for their own messaging and for paid advertising.

### SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #3: THERE IS NO RETURN ON SMM

**WRONG** But that's not to say that measuring the return on SMM is easy. It requires careful planning, careful execution, consistent monitoring, and the discipline to analyze and gain business insights from monitoring data. This textbook has a chapter dedicated to planning and one to social media monitoring that shows how the two marketing elements work together to make it possible to measure social media return on investment (ROI).

Although ROI is a specific monetary value determined by an established method, social media return is measured in a variety of different ways and is not always as clear-cut as financial ROI. Figure 1.6 indicates that 70% of marketers surveyed in 2014 agreed or strongly agreed that SMM helps them improve sales. Those who have been using SMM the longest are most likely to support the statement with agreement becoming stronger the longer they have been social media marketers.<sup>10</sup> Sales are the ultimate measure of marketing achievement, so this data makes a powerful case for SMM. That being said, there are many ways of measuring success that stop short of return on monetary investment.



**Figure 1.6** Marketers Who Agree or Strongly Agree that SMM Helped Them Improve Sales

There are a lot of lists of “best” or “favorite” social media campaigns. *CIO* magazine published its own list of the best of 2014, and just 3 examples of the 12 listed show the many ways in which social media marketers measure success. Selected examples are:

- At or near the top of everyone’s list of the best of 2014 is the Ice Bucket Challenge. The challenge was started by a single victim of ALS, simply to raise awareness of this devastating disease. Celebrities took it up and the ice bucket videos quickly went viral. The ALS Association took it up as an official fund-raising activity and reported that *\$220 million was raised*. Most of that money went to research and a year later researchers were identifying gains already made.<sup>11</sup> Another measure of success is that the challenge was repeated in the summer of 2015. Sequels are rarely as successful as originals, but the renewal of the challenge was itself newsworthy.
- Coke’s Share, a Coke campaign, was started in Australia and had expanded to over 50 countries by the time it went viral in the United States in the summer of 2014. Names replaced the Coke logo on soda cans and consumers were invited to visit *Shareacoke.com*, personalize virtual Coke bottles, and share them with their friends on social media. The campaign reported over *125,000 posts* on various social media platforms with 96% of the consumer sentiment either positive or neutral.
- Taco Bell began its campaign for a Taco emoji during the winter of 2014. It petitioned the Unicode Consortium, which regulates emojis. A petition on *Change.org* gathered over 30,000 signatures. “This campaign was an attention grabber because it pulled cleverly from two culturally relevant tech trends: emojis and community activism,” says Wire Stone’s [senior strategist Lily] Croll. The campaign kept the chain’s core *product in the social media conversation* and received mainstream press attention.<sup>12</sup> In June 2015, the consortium released code for a taco emoji, seemingly guaranteeing it a spot on the emoji keyboard.<sup>13</sup>

While there are many ways to measure marketing achievement and various metrics may be appropriate based on the objectives of a given campaign, in the end sales represent the definitive accomplishment for marketers.

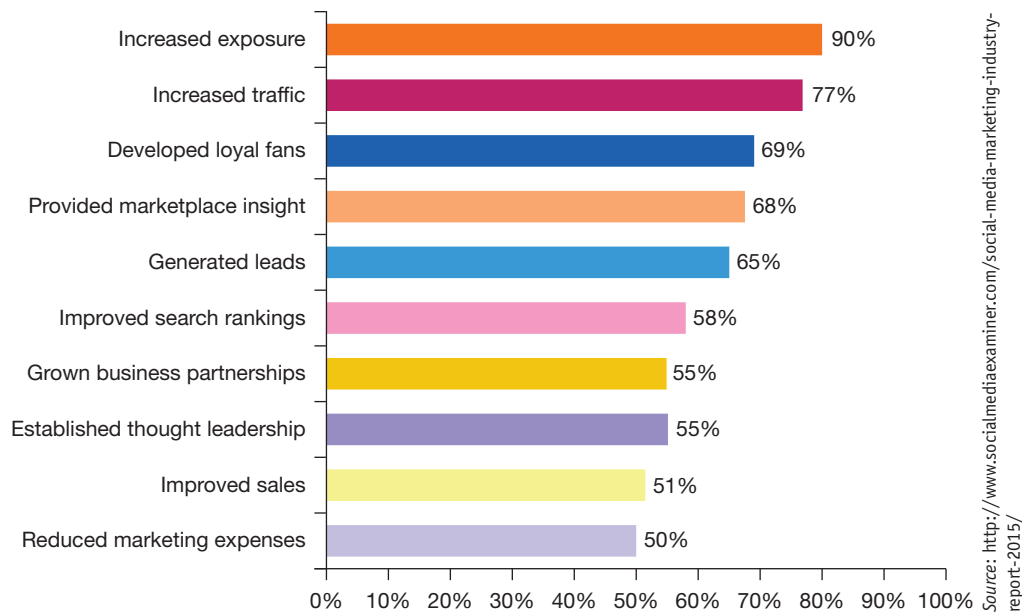
## SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #4: SMM ISN’T RIGHT FOR THIS BUSINESS

**WRONG** Figure 1.4 has already shown that both B2C and B2B marketers use social media. The same is true of businesses in all economic sectors, although there are issues in sectors like financial services where both disclosure and security issues affect the ways in which social media can be used. Likewise, businesses both large and small use social media. Since most social media platforms are free, SMM has a special attraction for small businesses, including local retailers and services businesses.

Figure 1.7 shows that for all marketers the top benefits of SMM are increasing exposure, increasing traffic, creating loyal fans, and generating business intelligence. Each of those benefits applies equally to B2C and B2B. The fifth benefit, generating sales leads tends to be a more formal process in B2B but B2C marketers are also interested in identifying potential purchasers. Likewise, *thought leadership* is a term more commonly used in B2B but all marketers want to be known for their product quality and expertise. Improved search rankings and strong business partnerships are important to all marketers. Notice that, important as they clearly are, increasing sales and decreasing marketing expenditures rank at the bottom of this list of benefits of SMM.<sup>14</sup> The greatest benefits tend to occur early in the sales cycle, not at the point where purchases are being made or sales are being closed.

Given the power that social media endows consumers with, it is little wonder that users are increasingly screening out traditional advertising media and focusing their attention toward social media where they control the content. Many businesses have





**Figure 1.7** Benefits of SMM

based their success on marketing through television, radio, newspapers, yellow pages, or direct mail. However, these methods are losing their power in the marketplace. People are watching less traditional TV and are instead viewing videos and television online. Radio is being replaced by online streaming music on sites such as Pandora.com and Spotify. Newspapers are in dramatic decline, while blogs such as the Huffington Post are growing in popularity. The printed Yellow Pages are more likely to be used to hold up a computer monitor than to locate a business, with the abundance of online white page and yellow page directories. Direct mail coupons end up in the garbage because the same coupons can be found online and on mobile sites. To keep up with their changing audiences, marketers find it necessary to join the social media tsunami.

In some instances, social media can have a powerful impact in an industry or in a situation where it seems unlikely to be useful or both. In addition, it will probably take time for the full impact of SMM to be felt. Such was the case with JetBlue Airlines that operates in an industry known for being near the bottom in customer satisfaction rankings.

In February 2007, JetBlue's corporate image was dealt a serious blow when weather and "...a shoestring communications system that left pilots and flight attendants in the dark, and an undersized reservation system," caused about 1,000 flight cancellations within 5 days, stranding thousands of passengers on Valentine's Day.<sup>15</sup>

In an effort to reach out to customers, CEO Neeleman appeared in an unscripted YouTube video, apologizing for the airline's mistakes and announcing a "Customer Bill of Rights," which outlined steps the airline would take in response to service interruptions. The airline's apology was disseminated on traditional offline media as well as on social media, with the whole incident receiving considerable attention in the news media. The admission of complete responsibility for the incident and an acknowledgement of the pain it caused passengers, coupled with a credible promise to fix it, amounted "to the perfect business apology—in fact, it is likely to become a generally accepted standard for how business errors should be handled."<sup>16</sup> As a consequence, the video apology received a significant number of comments, most of which were positive because it felt authentic and genuine.<sup>17</sup> Recognizing the power of social media to connect with the traveling public, JetBlue set out to develop a full-fledged SMM strategy.

The centerpiece of that social media strategy has become JetBlue's Twitter account, which grew from a mere 700 followers, as of March 7, 2008, to approximately 1.1 million

followers by August of 2009<sup>18</sup> and almost 1.96 million in the late summer of 2015.<sup>19</sup> This kind of growth is nothing short of phenomenal and can be directly attributed to the company's social media strategy of first using Twitter to see what people were saying about them, then responding to questions, and finally engaging in full blown conversations with their customer base.<sup>20</sup>

More important than sheer number of Twitter followers is the impact on the airline's corporate image. J.D. Powers 2015 study of airline customer satisfaction found that "JetBlue Airways ranks highest in the low-cost carrier segment for a 10th consecutive year."<sup>21</sup> In addition, the 2015 Temkin Customer Experience Survey announced that "JetBlue took the top spot [in the airline industry] with a rating of 75%, placing it 52<sup>nd</sup> overall out of 293 companies across 20 industries." The airline industry itself ranked twelfth of the 20 industries covered in the survey.<sup>22</sup>

The HubSpot blog explained that there are three teams who tweet from the @JetBlue account—the marketing team, the corporate communications team, and Laurie Meacham's customer commitment team. According to her, "employees don't feel pressured to hit a response goal by sending quick responses to every single tweet that comes in. We want our employees to engage *smartly*, and for the conversations to be organic and natural. We look for opportunities to add value and connect with our customers, not just respond to every single mention that comes our way." With some 2,500 mentions on Twitter each day, it behooves JetBlue to use its social media resources wisely in pursuit of their corporate goals.<sup>23</sup>

## SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #5: SMM IS NEW

**THE TECHNOLOGY IS NEW BUT THE PRINCIPLE IS NOT** SMM is not really new. Most of the marketing principles, based on social, behavioral, and economic concepts, have been around for many years, but new technology and media are changing the role those concepts play in modern marketing efforts. For example, brands are very excited about the potential to harness online conversations on blogs, Twitter, and social networks. The behavior—talking about brands and businesses— isn't new and is more generally called WOM marketing. The difference is that these conversations are now public, online, and viewable for the indefinite future.

The newest aspect of social media is the technology that enables open and transparent online conversations. Some companies don't want to "get on" social media because they are afraid of what consumers might say about them. The reality is that consumers are already on social sites, talking about businesses on their Facebook pages, blogs, and Twitter accounts, whether a business acknowledges this or not.

## SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #6: SOCIAL MEDIA IS TOO TIME-CONSUMING

**SOCIAL MEDIA DOES REQUIRE A CONSISTENT TIME COMMITMENT** One of the biggest business concerns about using SMM is the amount of time and resources it will take. The time and the human and technology resources required to manage SMM depends on the size of the business. Large companies that have thousands of online mentions a day will have to dedicate more resources to social media than a small business. However, large businesses can devote more technology to social media efficiency, like the Cisco listening center described in Chapter 2. The time commitment required to manage social media will also depend on the specific social media strategy and approach used.

Most of the concern about time and resources comes from small- and medium-sized businesses. After the initial setup and strategy, these businesses should be able to manage their social media programs effectively with only a few hours per week. Social media doesn't have to be time consuming when done right. The problem is that many people log on to Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn and become addicted to checking out what

friends are up to, exchanging messages, or generally spending far more time than necessary for business promotion.

There are three key ways to limit the time investment in SMM. The first is to look for underutilized employees who can spend some of their time on SMM. For example, a receptionist may not be busy the entire day, and many retail stores and restaurants have downtimes during which human resources are not fully utilized.

The second opportunity is to leverage efficiency tools. There are a number of sites, such as Hootsuite, TweetDeck, and CoTweet, which make managing social media easier. By using these tools, social media efforts can be streamlined. We will discuss these tools in detail in Chapter 14.

Finally, using mobile devices is a key way to boost efficiency in SMM. This is especially helpful for publishing multimedia content. Smartphones (a Blackberry, an iPhone, or an Android phone) can take a picture or video and instantly post it onto Facebook, Twitter, or a blog in only a minute. This speed makes managing SMM even easier and less time consuming. The importance of mobile in SMM will be discussed in Chapter 12.

## **SOCIAL MEDIA MYTH #7: SOCIAL MEDIA IS FREE**

**WRONG** Many businesses are excited about social media because the media itself is free. Nevertheless, while most sites do not have a fee for usage, social media isn't really free. First, there is the cost in terms of personnel time and technology resources, as well as the fee of using consultants or agencies involved in building and executing the social media strategy. Social media takes time, as indicated in the previous section, and that alone means it is not free.

Second, similar to other media and advertising, in addition to costs from posting content, there are also costs to producing and creating content. Imagine if it were free to run TV commercials. Companies would run lots of commercials, including more bad ones that drive fewer sales. Free access means no barrier to entry and greater competition for consumer attention. Good commercials would still have costs for creativity and production in order to produce a sequence memorable enough to be recognized and remembered. In a similar way, strong social media strategies may entail costs for top-quality creative or development efforts, depending on their scale.

Finally, many businesses engaging in social media invest in a guide or consultant to help them through the process. Consultants can help businesses get off to a quicker start and avoid common pitfalls, as well as save time and money.

Regardless of whether or not there are actual out-of-pocket expenses associated with social media, the resource and time costs should not be forgotten. As time spent on social media is not free, it must be allocated wisely in order to generate maximum results. Hopefully, this text will provide the tools necessary to get the most impact out of time spent on SMM.

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## **The History of SMM**

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Currently, social media is said to have reached critical mass with 73% of adults in the United States having a profile on a social network.<sup>24</sup> Still, this trend emerged from humble beginnings, as illustrated by the social media timeline in Figure 1.8. Using a loose interpretation, one could say that the first social media existed as soon as the first postal service was created, which allowed people to communicate across great distances instead of just face-to-face. However, SMM in the most relevant sense for this book became viable with the development of the Internet in the late 1960s. The early Internet

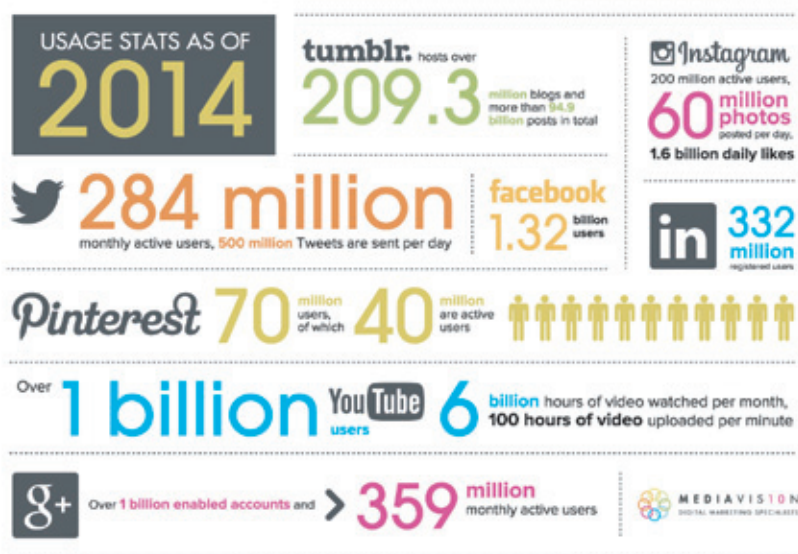
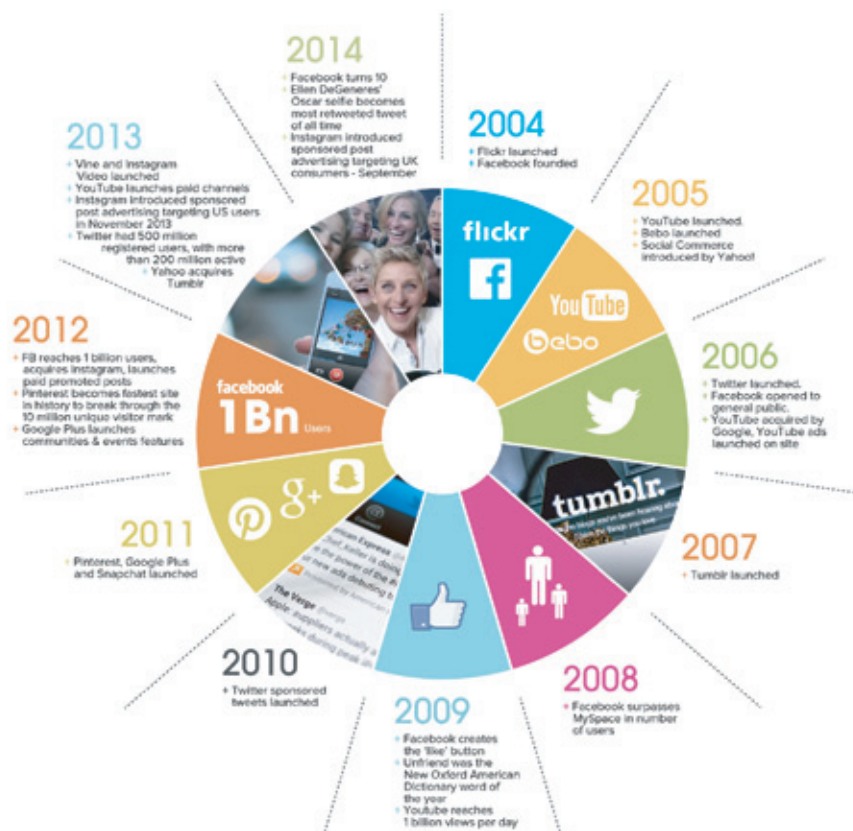
# Not For Sale



**MEDIAVIZION**  
DIGITAL MARKETING SPECIALISTS

**10** CELEBRATING YEARS

## EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL 2004 - 2014



**Figure 1.8** A Social Media Timeline

Source: <http://www.adweek.com/socialtimes/evolution-social-media/503697>

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was created for the use of professors and researchers working for the Department of Defense. Those researchers began using the ARPANET (the Advanced Research Projects Agency Network, a core of what would become the Internet) resources for nonwork purposes, and usage quickly began to grow. Early online marketing efforts would soon follow; the first *spam* email message was sent in 1978!<sup>†</sup>

The earliest ancestor of today's diverse social media platforms is most likely USENET, developed by Duke University graduate students Jim Ellis and Tom Truscott in 1979. Users can post articles, which are organized into *newsgroups* depending on the topic. Other users can subscribe to newsgroups they find interesting; often some post responses to an article they read, forming a *thread*. Unlike bulletin boards or online forums that have an administrator or central hub, USENET is a conglomeration of separate servers run by different organizations or Internet service providers (ISPs), which exchange articles and threads with each other. In this way, articles posted by one user can reach many others eventually, and people can comment and have their voices heard. These are the core principles of social media.

Following USENET, there was an explosion of different web-based services designed for people with common interests to share information. The WELL (Whole Earth 'Lectronic Link) was created in 1985, starting out as a dial-up bulletin board system (BBS). This quickly developed into a dial-up ISP in the early 1990s, dramatically expanding its user base. Its online forums are still hosting discussions today. Other dial-up BBS systems like CompuServe and Prodigy were fulfilling a similar function by hosting user-driven discussions about various topics.

The growth of social media paralleled the increasing development of computing and Internet transfer technology. While in the 1990s most Internet users were on dial-up connections with speeds under 56 kilobytes per second, within 10 years broadband technology such as DSL and cable Internet became available, increasing transfer speeds by thousands of times. As more data was transferred quickly, social media networks became more advanced and included elements other than just plain text. In 1999 Napster was developed, allowing users to quickly share media files such as music and video with each other. *Wikipedia* was established in 2001 and continues to be a leading source of relevant user-contributed information.

Figure 1.8 chronicles the development of major social media platforms. The years 2003 and 2004 were highly significant for social media with the creation of MySpace, Delicious, Second Life, and Facebook. The photo-sharing site Flickr was created in 2004 and YouTube for sharing videos in 2005. Twitter came along in 2006. Some of the original platforms have gone into serious decline during this brief period and do not even show in Figure 1.8. New platforms continue to arise, each seeking to draw in more online participants and develop its own market share. As a result, the history of social media platforms is still being written.

The groundbreaking texts for social media as a serious academic and marketing field were also being written during that same time period. The possibilities for brand-related online social interaction and community were being explored. Since the mid-2000s, a slew of instructional books have been published, focused on specific areas of SMM, search engine optimization, and other web-based marketing tactics. Some experts have made their careers out of this developing field; Guy Kawasaki, Chris Brogan, and

<sup>†</sup>The first mass email message was sent to 393 people out of the 2,600 ARPANET users at the time in order to advertise a new computer model created by Digital Equipment Corporation. It was sent by Gary Turk. For more information, see: NPR News (2008, May 3), "At 30, Spam Going Nowhere Soon," hosted by Andrea Seabrook (transcript online, retrieved September 8, 2011, from <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=90160617>); Tom Abate (2008, May 3), "A Very Unhappy Birthday to Spam, Age 30," *San Francisco Chronicle*. Retrieved September 8, 2011, from [http://articles.sfgate.com/2008-05-03/business/17155925\\_1\\_spam-e-mail-world-wide-web](http://articles.sfgate.com/2008-05-03/business/17155925_1_spam-e-mail-world-wide-web)



David Meerman Scott, to name just a few, have become household names in SMM. Obviously, this is a rapidly evolving field and it has corresponding job opportunities to be discussed in the final sections of this chapter.

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## Why SMM Is Different

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A common misconception is that SMM just means using new online social media sites to do traditional marketing, but this is often not the case. The traditional marketing approach, emphasizing the four Ps (product, price, place, and promotion), has become second nature to many professionals. While the traditional marketing perspective still has important lessons for future marketers, in the new terrain of social media, it has to be adapted or in some areas changed completely.

Several aspects distinguish SMM from so-called traditional marketing. The first is control vs. contributions. Traditional marketing seeks to control the content seen by the audience. Old school marketers attempt to dominate the territory and try to exclude their competitors' messages. On the Internet, and in social media especially, control over content consumed is in the hands of consumers and marketers ignore that truth to their detriment.

SMM emphasizes audience contribution and relinquishes control over large parts of the content. Effective social media marketers can sometimes influence what participants say and think about their brand, but rarely can they control the conversation entirely. Indeed, the very nature of social media can make controlling the conversation seem rude and domineering. Avoiding this pitfall makes knowledge of social media important even for persons engaged in traditional marketing.

The second important distinction between traditional and SMM is trust building. Firms cannot fully control the content that users will create, so to build their image, companies must develop trusting relationships with their audience. Unlike traditional advertisements in which consumers expect some exaggeration or spin to be applied to the product's image, on social media it is important to be earnest and down-to-earth. All communication must be authentic, in tone and in context.

The importance of trust emerges from how social media messages are consumed. In traditional marketing, the signal is one-way: from the firm to potential customers. However, social media involves many-to-many communication with brands being only one participant. The audience's attention cannot be taken for granted; deliver boring, inaccurate, or irrelevant information and they will look elsewhere. Unlike an advertising campaign with a set beginning and end, social media is an ongoing conversation. Companies that bend the truth will be eventually held accountable and have to explain their actions. This pattern appears in numerous case studies throughout the book. On social media, trust is slow to earn but very easy to lose. Successful social media marketers consider building trust with the audience to be of paramount importance.

SMM is a unique combination of marketing creativity and technology. We see examples of creative use of marketing technology on an almost-daily basis. The TV commercial pictured in Figure 1.9 is only one example.

In just 30 short seconds, the TV spot shows celebrities ordering pizza using a variety of technologies.<sup>25</sup> Richard Sherman Tweets, Eva Longoria uses her TV remote, Sarah Hyland shows how she uses a pizza emoji to text her order, and Clark Gregg orders his with a tap on his smartwatch. Domino's calls it "AnyWare."<sup>26</sup> These various online technologies are being featured in a commercial on traditional TV. That is another key theme of this book. SMM does not exist in a vacuum; it is part of digital marketing, which, in turn, is part of the overall marketing effort.



**Figure 1.9** Richard Sherman Tweets to Order a Domino's Pizza

The Domino's pizza ordering system is only one innovative use of technology from one brand. There are new and different SMM efforts visible on an almost-daily basis. The pervasive and ever-evolving nature of social media means that SMM offers an interesting set of career options.

## Careers in SMM

Throughout this chapter, we have documented the phenomenal growth of social media and the accompanying growth of SMM. From virtually nothing in 2003, social media has grown to be measured in billions—from billions of users to billions of dollars in sales influenced by social media. Clearly that growth has not occurred without growth in the number of jobs in the field. Numbers are hard to come by because many social media marketers have transitioned from other jobs in their company and because many marketers work only part time on social media, but one has only to look at the online job boards to verify that a talent hunt is ongoing.

### Developing Your Personal Brand Online

"We are CEOs of our own companies: Me Inc. To be in business today, our most important job is to be head marketer for the brand called You."<sup>1</sup> So says famed strategy consultant Tom Peters, author of a book entitled *The Brand Called You*. In this book, published in 1997, he makes a powerful argument for personal branding and marketing. Peters continues to update his views on personal branding on his personal website. The website links to his blog, which has a category Brand You.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Martinuzzi, Bruna (July 9, 2014). "How to Build an Unforgettable Personal Brand." Retrieved on March 27, 2015, from <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/how-to-build-an-unforgettable-personal-brand/>

<sup>2</sup> (n.d.), [tompeters.com/](http://tompeters.com/)

Any person taking this course probably already has some kind of an online presence. How widespread that presence is, how positive it is, and how helpful it will be to your ongoing career development are all important questions. We will explore the topic of personal branding in topic boxes in almost all the chapters in this book. Each will focus on the role of the chapter's content in your own personal branding process.

We will use the basic model popularized by Dan Schawbel in his books, website, and blogs and in his writing for *Forbes* and other business publications. Having only recently attained the age of 30, Dan has made himself into a successful business using the personal branding techniques he espouses.

His model has four stages:

**Step #1 Discover.** In the first step, you will learn about yourself and the distinctive characteristics that will make your brand unique. This is a journey of personal discovery and self-assessment, and it should be an honest evaluation of your strengths and weaknesses and the career-related skills you possess or need to develop. As you go through this process, you may want to develop a personal value statement that succinctly describes who you are and what you have to offer.

**Step #2 Create.** In the second step, you will create a personal marketing portfolio to support your brand. The portfolio should include your resume in both offline and online formats. It also includes supporting documentation like cover letters and recommendations. The portfolio must have a home, preferably one that can easily be found by hiring managers. Creating a personal website is an excellent approach. Both Wix<sup>3</sup> and Weebly<sup>4</sup> are free and easy to use and allow you to develop a site that will be a good home for the content you create in this and other classes. You may also want to create a blog or use another Internet platform to create and disseminate content that reinforces your brand image.

**Step #3 Communicate.** By the time you reach the third step, you have developed your personal characteristics and skills and you possess a portfolio of content that supports your brand. You have identified the audience(s) you need to reach with your brand message and where and how they consume content. Now you are ready to distribute and promote this content to the important stakeholders in your career space.

**Step #4. Maintain.** In the final step, you will continue to create and disseminate content that supports your brand. You will put tools in place and develop a routine for using them to monitor the development of your brand and to ensure its security on the web and in whatever offline environments it resides.

Each of these stages will be discussed from various perspectives as we move through the book.

It is important to remember that social media is not the only foundation on which your personal brand rests. This model is from *Me 2.0*. You can see that it encompasses offline tools like public relations and networking as well as online tools like search engine optimization in addition to social media.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.wix.com/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.weebly.com/>

## Dan Schawbel's Octopus Model of Relevancy



Source: Schawbel, Dan (n.d.). *Me 2.0* Revised and Updated Edition, Kindle Edition, Loc 715.

There are numerous writers who deal with the topic of developing and taking advantage of a personal brand. We will reference many of them as the personal branding discussion continues. One who concentrates on personal branding and related subjects is Professor Denny McCorkle. His website is Digital Self Marketing Advantage, and you might want to follow him on one of the channels listed on the site. Another is Professor Theresa Clarke who publishes The Marketing Career Info Weekly on content curation site Paper.li. You can find the link to subscribe @TheresaBClarke.

The largest job sites give considerable reassurance that SMM is a fertile discipline for job seekers. There are many types of social media jobs, whether at the entry level<sup>27</sup> or more advanced positions.<sup>28</sup> There are many jobs available at any given time on a wide variety of general job sites like Monster.com and specialized sites like MarketingHire.com. In addition, many marketing news sites accept job postings. Early in your job search register with one or more of the recruiting sites so you can follow the types of jobs that are being listed, where they are located, and what skills they require. Make this part of your required reading list.

In this book, we place emphasis on developing your own personal brand. Most chapters have a box like the one in this chapter that give specific advice and resources for developing your personal brand. You should consider this an essential step for obtaining a position in SMM. For one thing, developing a personal brand online requires many of the skills companies are looking for when they hire people for social media positions.

There are many types of positions available in SMM. These are only a few selected job titles from a much longer list on a career site:

- Blogger
- Community Manager
- Digital Media Manager
- Director, Social Media Marketing
- Engagement Manager
- Interactive Media Associate
- Social Media Account Executive<sup>29</sup>
- and many more

Each of these positions requires certain specific skills, but there are some general characteristics that can foster success as a social media marketer.

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## What Are the Characteristics of a Successful Social Media Marketer?

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Being a successful social media marketer requires a combination of personal and technical characteristics. The personal are arguably the most important and focus on good communications skills—everything from being able to engage successfully with diverse groups of people to being a good listener. Good writing skills are necessary for most social media jobs. The technical skills required center around a working knowledge of computers and the Internet. Programming is not a requirement for most social media positions. However, some knowledge of search marketing is desirable. It probably goes without saying that proficiency on at least the three leading social platforms—Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn—is essential.

British website WeAreSocialMedia has a set of suggestions that would benefit all job seekers. They are:

- **Stay on top of social media trends.** Subscribing to a few leading newsletters in the field will help you keep up to date.
- **Be prepared to think and act quickly.** Social media marketers must react swiftly and well to events that impact their brand. Unfortunately, this often includes nights and weekends.
- **Be comfortable with analytics.** The monitoring chapter in this book establishes a knowledge base in social media analytics that all social media marketers need.
- **Learn to write for social media.** Basic writing skills come first, but then the social media marketer must learn to engage others in 140 characters or less (Twitter), to communicate in short videos (Vine), and even to deliver brand messages in ephemeral media (Snapchat).
- **Establish and maintain your social media presence**—a portfolio or even better, a full-fledged personal brand.
- **In all you do, show yourself to be an effective user of social media.** Post relevant and engaging content and be consistent in the way you deal with social media. Avoid anything that will reflect negatively on you. Interact regularly and positively on all your social media platforms.<sup>30,31</sup>



This is not only good advice for people who wish to work in SMM but also for those who wish to work in some other aspect of marketing. That could be anything from search engine marketing in a digital agency to product management for a consumer products company to sales representative in a B2B services enterprise. The importance of a personal brand applies whether the field is digital or traditional, B2B or B2C, product or services. The importance of skills like good communications does not vary, nor does the desirability of at least a moderate level of technological proficiency.

All this advice may sound like common sense, and it probably is. However, many people make damaging mistakes on social media and those mistakes can come back to haunt them for a long time.

The characteristics for success as a social media marketer may not sound very rare or difficult to develop. Arguably, large parts of the population have the skills to do social media; indeed, as shown by the enormous growth of sites like Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, much of the population already is “doing” social media! Platform proficiency is essential, but being an effective social media marketer requires more. *It requires being able to translate business or marketing goals and objectives into the execution of social media strategy.* Developing the skills and knowledge emphasized in this book will help a person compete against others in the growing field of SMM and to rise to the top in this dynamic area.

Understanding best practices for the various aspects of SMM will assist you on your journey. Each chapter has its own set of subject-specific best practices. Here are some general SMM best practices to get you started.

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## Best Practices for SMM

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1. Begin with a strategy backed by a SMM plan. Random or inconsistent use of social media will not produce any benefits.
2. Be honest and transparent in all your social media efforts. Attempts to misinform or deceive will soon be “outed” to the detriment of the brand and the marketer. Building trust will be amply repaid in the long run.
3. Identify your target audience and understand its media behavior before you begin. There are many ways to engage on social media and different audience will respond to different kinds of communications.
4. Welcome participation and feedback from your audience. Remember, the audience controls the communications, not the marketer.
5. Remember that what you know today may not be valid tomorrow. SMM changes with the evolution of technologies and of audiences and the social media marketer must be vigilant and nimble to keep up with the changes.<sup>32</sup>

This book has knowledge and resources that will help you begin the exciting journey as a social media marketer or as a professional in a related field. Welcome to the journey and best wishes!

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## Notes

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