



# Inner Success Circle Special Training Report

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MARKETING BASICS SERIES: LESSON 3

## Social Media Marketing

### *Socialize with your fans and followers*

**S**ocial media marketing involves using social media sites as part of your online marketing strategy. Social media sites include Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Digg, Technorati, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+ and other sites where people create profiles and interact with friends and colleagues.

These sites are huge and they offer a great way to reach your target market, deliver your marketing message, and find out what your fans like.

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

The other method is to place ads on social media sites using their ad networks. But that is a topic all to itself, and is beyond the scope of just a written report. If you're going to dive into Facebook advertising — or any social media advertising for that matter — you need to go into it with your eyes wide open and knowing what you're doing. You can lose a lot of money in a short amount of time if you don't.

### **What is Social Media Marketing Best Used for?**

Any business, no matter what you're offering, can benefit from social media marketing, especially local businesses. Geographic features on social media sites make it particularly easy for people in your area to find your profile through searches.

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

## The Advantages of Social Media Marketing

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

You have to always remember, though, that the operative word in social media is *social*. It's a place to build friendships and relationships. Buying and selling then become a natural byproduct of creating those relationships.

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

Because your customers can contact you easily through social media sites, you can get valuable feedback and learn more about your target market. And that kind of feedback can happen instantly. No waiting around to track trends or get reports. You can look at your fans' profiles and find out what they're interested in. This is the kind of data that marketing firms have paid huge sums of money for in years past.

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

**Just a quick note about Google+...** A lot of folks will tell you that Google+ is a waste of time because "no one" is posting or reading anything on Google+ but those folks are wrong. While it is not as popular as some of the other social media sites, you probably should know by now that Google always favors its *own* stuff over anything else.

So while it may not get the reach to real people that, say, Facebook or Twitter might, a post on Google+ gets favored status in Google searches simply because it's Google's thing.

For SEO purposes alone you may find it valuable to post on Google+ along with your other postings. Make it part of your plan and it should only take a few extra seconds to post there, too.

## The Disadvantages of Social Media

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

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

media sites. And the social media site owners can do that with impunity. Often never telling you why you're being banned or penalized.

Another drawback is that you don't have total control of your content. If someone leaves a nasty comment or insult in your blog comments, you can delete it. But you can't do this on your Twitter feed. So whether true or not, those comments stay out there forever.

And speaking of content, not only can you *not* control it once it's out there, you don't really *own it any longer* once you've posted it. Facebook and other sites lay claim to your photos, graphics, and other content and can do with them whatever they please; without having to ask you since you agreed to that in the fine print when you accepted the terms and conditions of using the site.

## **How to Get the Most out of Social Media Marketing**

Now, having said all of that, it may sound like a lot of work babysitting your profiles, but it's still well worth it. Many businesses find that it's a fun and enjoyable daily task, so long as it doesn't become all-consuming.

### **Here are some tips for how you can make social media marketing work for you:**

- Although it may seem like a chore, sign up for each new social media site that pops up that may be appealing to your target market. You never know which one might be the next Facebook.
- Focus on interactivity and engagement. Try to get your fans and followers engaged in your profile as much as possible.
- Use tools like widgets and plug-ins to make profile management easier and foster interactivity. There are plug-ins available for your Wordpress site that allow for automatically posting anything from your blog directly to your Facebook feed without you having to touch it again.
- Connect all of your social media sites by linking them together. Include your site and blog as well.
- Use a program like Hootsuite that let's you post to various social media at once and allows for scheduling content throughout the day or night when you may not be physically present.

**Something else to keep in mind, though...** Social media, of course, has a worldwide reach. And there are many different time zones across this globe. If you are going to schedule content to go out while you are sleeping, you run the risk of alienating followers who might be in another part of the world, reading your post and thinking you are up and at 'em.

If you post something on social media, you need to stick around so that you can respond when people interact with you. If a query goes unanswered for too long — in the world of social media the expectation of *immediate response* is far greater than with email — you run the risk of angering someone who might put nasty comments out there about you if you don't respond fast enough. Totally unjustified but it happens all the time.

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

And your active involvement expands the reach you get for your own postings. Facebook tends to favor folks who are active in liking and commenting on other people's posts.

Pay attention to the Reach numbers you are getting. Content that contains images, photos, graphics, videos and the like get far more attention and love from Facebook and Twitter than just plain text comments.

And if you're going to post videos, especially your own, you don't want to just copy the share link from YouTube to put in your feed. Download your video and then upload it to Facebook or Twitter as an actual video, just like you would a photo, not just a link.

Facebook sees that as original content and not just a rehash of something. You'll expand your reach a whole lot by doing this. More people will actually see your video this way.

The important thing is that you need to approach social media with a strategy and a plan. Otherwise, it becomes a time sink that can distract rather than attract.

Social Media definitely has a place among your marketing strategies, but it should never be the *only* strategy you use, nor should it be your number one strategy.

In reality, the data is not yet there to support social media as a great marketing medium. So use it deliberately and with caution. It is just as easy to get in "trouble" on social media as it is to post.

While your opinions are valuable, you need to weigh the potential fallout and negative consequences *to your business* even if you are speaking on your personal timelines. So think carefully before wading into the worlds of politics, religion, and sex. At least as far as the health of your business is concerned.

While quite valuable, social media can be unforgiving and it never forgets.

*Next week: Mobile and SMS Marketing – Profiting from the Mobile Revolution*