**What Is Social Networking?**

Social networking is the use of Internet-based social media sites to stay connected with friends, family, colleagues, customers, or clients. Social networking can have a social purpose, a business purpose, or both, through sites like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram. Social networking has become a significant base for marketers seeking to engage customers.

**How Social Networking Works**

Social networking involves the development and maintenance of personal and business relationships using technology. This is done through the use of social networking sites, such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These sites allow people and corporations to connect with one another so they can develop relationships and so they can share information, ideas, and messages.3﻿﻿

Family members who are far apart may remain connected through personal social networking sites like Facebook. They can share photos and updates on things that are going on in their lives. People can also connect with others (notably, strangers) who share the same interests. Individuals can find each other through groups, lists, and the use of hashtags.

Social networking is commonly used by marketers so they can increase brand recognition and encouraging brand loyalty. Since it makes a company more accessible to new customers and more recognizable for existing customers, social media marketing helps promote a brand’s voice and content.﻿

For example, a frequent Twitter user may hear of a company for the first time through a news feed and decide to buy a product or service. The more exposed people are to a company’s brand, the greater the company's chances of finding and retaining new customers.

Marketers use social networking as a way to improve conversion rates. Building a following provides access to and interaction with new, recent, and old customers. Sharing blog posts, images, videos, or comments on social media allows followers to react, visit the company’s website, and become customers.

**Advantages and Disadvantages of Social Networking**

Social networking has the ability to affect both individuals and corporations—both positively and negatively. That's why it's important to weigh out both the advantages and disadvantages of using these social media sites.

**Advantages**

As mentioned above, social networking allows individuals to keep in contact with family and friends they would otherwise not be able to connect with because of distance or because they simply lost touch. People can also connect with other individuals who share the same interests and develop new relationships.

Social networking also allows companies to connect with new and existing clients. They can also use social media to create, promote, and increase brand awareness. They also rely on reviews and comments made by their clientele. The more customers post about a company, the more valuable the brand authority becomes. This leads to more sales and a higher ranking in search engines. Social networking can, therefore, help establish a brand as legitimate, credible, and trustworthy.

A company may use social networking to demonstrate its customer service level and enrich its relationships with consumers. For example, if a customer complains about a product or service on Twitter, the company may address the issue immediately, apologize, and take action to make it right.

**Disadvantages**

Social networking can have a big impact on the spread of misinformation. And it can spread like wildfire. This became increasingly prevalent after 2012. This information starts as rumors, which spread faster than facts. One study found that misinformation is 70% more likely to be shared than factual information on Twitter.5﻿﻿

Networking on social media can have just as much of a detrimental impact on companies. Criticism of a brand can spread very quickly on social media. This can create a virtual headache for a company's public relations department.

Although social networking itself is free, building and maintaining a company profile takes hours each week. Costs for those hours add up quickly. In addition, businesses need many followers before a social media marketing campaign starts generating a positive return on investment (ROI). For example, submitting a post to 15 followers does not have the same effect as submitting the post to 15,000 followers.

**Pros**

1. People can use social media to connect with others, including friends, family, and those with the same interests.
2. Companies can use social networks to reach new and existing clients, and to build and improve their brand name.
3. Corporations that use social media can connect with their clients and demonstrate the level of their customer service.

**Cons**

1. Social media helps spread misinformation.
2. Criticism of companies can spread quickly, causing problems for their public relations departments.
3. Advertising and maintaining a corporate profile on social media can be costly.

**What is the purpose of social networking?**

Social networking serves as a way to connect individuals with other people and businesses to share information, ideas, and messages. Companies also use social networks to create and increase brand recognition, promote products and services, and to answer customer queries and concerns.

**Why are social networks important?**

Social networks are important because they allow people to develop relationships with others with whom they might not otherwise be able to connect. It also helps boost business productivity when used for public relations, marketing, and advertising purposes.