



DATA-INSPIRED GUIDES TO SALES & MARKETING

SOCIAL MEDIA

dun & bradstreet



Introduction

There's a rumor going around that social media is not as beneficial to B2B organizations as it is to B2C. "But the numbers tell us a very different story. In fact, Facebook and Twitter are home to some of the largest and most engaged business audiences. Consider this:

- 50M small business pages exist on Facebook¹
- 85%+ of companies with 100+ employees use Facebook for marketing¹
- Facebook is the number one platform for B2B mobile ad effectiveness and the number two platform for lead generation and brand building.²
- Twitter has a growing user base in the US which is expected to increase by 35% to 71 million by 2020.³
- Twitter is an effective channel for B2B mobile marketing, with 90% of Twitter users accessing the platform via mobile.³

According to Jay Baer of Convince & Convert, "Social media can be more transformative for a B2B company than a B2C company. This is because B2B has a

smaller potential customer base, a higher average price point, and a customer decision funnel that is more influenced by word of mouth and reputation."⁴ In fact, 50% of marketers reduced marketing expenses by utilizing social media, 65% said it generated leads and 51% say it improved their sales.⁵

With stats like these, it's tempting to dive headfirst into tweeting and asking people to like your Facebook page. It's also tempting to blow your budget on growing your audiences. Yes, businesses need to start spending money to build and maintain audiences across these channels — but they need to spend wisely. They also need to start taking a data-focused approach to their strategy.

A balanced mix of paid, earned (influencer) and organic content across your channels will help maximize your impact and grow your audiences. This means that digital and demand generation marketers need a solid social media strategy, specifically as it pertains to paid advertising. Review these simple steps to optimize your strategy and secure a positive ROI on your social activities.

Data-Inspired Social Media Marketing

Divide and Conquer

You won't be successful on every channel all at once, nor should you necessarily have a presence on each one. Some will garner stronger results than others. For example, you may find that Instagram is a great way to recruit and promote company culture, but LinkedIn and Twitter may be better for promoting your content and driving demand generation efforts. Do some research and once you've decided which channels to prioritize, decide how each one will function.

No matter what channel you start with, work towards building a community and developing valuable conversations. Start by identifying your target audience and the key influencers in your space and be sure you're interacting with them regularly. Avoid sharing messages that are overtly promotional too frequently.

When you do share your content and solutions, frame them in a way that appeals to your audience's needs so that you position yourself as a go-to resource and thought leader within the space.

Gather Your Gladiators

Developing a team to help with your brand's social initiatives is key. You need:

- ✓ Skilled copywriters to craft posts that speak to your followers
- ✓ Content developers to create eBooks, blog posts, and whitepapers to share with your audience
- ✓ Talented graphic designers to bring impactful imagery to the table and style your channels
- ✓ Insightful analysts to identify opportunities that make your social media movement successful

If you don't have these in house, you can outsource certain aspects like content developers and design agencies.

You may also want to rely on individuals in your company that wear more than one hat. For example, if you want to tweet about an event that you're participating in, ask an event team member, who is also a solid writer, to live tweet on-site.



QUICK TIP

Just because someone tweets at home from a personal account, or takes some really beautiful Instagram images, doesn't mean they know how to navigate a promotional strategy for an organization. When building a social team, be sure they have experience executing a business strategy, as social advertising is critical for success.





Brand Your Channels

Social channels are a reflection of your organization as a whole. Brands like Intel, IBM and GE are doing some [cool things on Twitter](#) that break the mold of what you would typically expect from these organizations, but still stay true to their overall message. Basic elements like your header and profile photos and your company description should be consistent and on-brand across all channels. Even the filters on your photos and the type of content you share should create an authentic experience for your visitors.

At the end of the day however, visual elements aren't the only aspects of your social presence. Develop the right audience and drive conversions by showcasing your uniqueness through dynamic content and an engaging tone. The accounts you follow and interact with, and the tone you use when crafting your messaging, is a reflection of your organization and an essential part of a successful channel. Keep messaging professional, yet engaging.

Know Your Audience

Determining your ideal buyer persona before spending your budget on paid initiatives is the key to optimizing your ad dollars — and reaching the right prospects and customers. Why not use all available resources in order to identify your audience? Start with your own database ([just make sure it's clean](#)) to identify your best customers and then, look for more like them.

Just remember that targeting your buyers solely on basic demographic, interest or behavior-related segmentation can be quite challenging.

Without reliable, quality data to define audience segments by company profiles or professional personas, you'll often reach the wrong buyers and waste precious ad dollars on paid posts. Start by reaching out to your sales team and fellow marketing team members to gain an understanding of your customers and how they speak to them. Then, do a deeper dive into your database to see who you're working with and where the quality of your data stands.

Pay to Play

Newsfeeds change every second. Many organic posts never see the light of day. And, social channels are getting more granular with their audience criteria — especially in B2B. So even though a strong organic presence is essential to building a successful community on social, you won't be able to truly move the needle for your business through organic activity alone. In fact, by 2017, social network ad spending will reach \$35.98 BILLION, representing 16% of all digital ad spending globally.⁶

Once you've identified your target audience and established your social strategy, don't be afraid to spend a bit of your budget on them. Just make sure that the content you create for them is aligned to their roles and the types of companies they work for. Pieces like how-to guides and research studies are beneficial to business professionals and the more helpful you are, the more engagement you will see.



QUICK TIP

Put your money where your audience is. Dun & Bradstreet's 280 audience segments are available within several platforms — including Facebook and Twitter — allowing you to reach 30M+ business professionals.

Measure, Learn, Progress

You will spend hours developing your strategy, tons of creative energy whipping up some witty posts and thousands of dollars on ads. But, if you don't measure your progress, you could be missing some major signs when it comes to what is working and what is not. Every channel has its purpose and some content will perform better on one channel than it does on another. Measuring statistics such as new followers, engagement (i.e. likes and retweets), and top vs. bottom performing posts, gives you the ability to identify what is attributing to the growth of your channels and where you can improve.

By tracking the downloads and content you share, you'll be able to attribute leads and conversion to these channels. You'll also be able to see which platforms are best for your organization and where to delegate the most time and resources. This will help when budget season rolls around and you need some ad dollars in your budget. Check out Marketo's [Definitive Guide to Lead Generation](#) for helpful tips and tricks.



QUICK TIP

When it comes to reporting, know your audience. Community managers will want more detailed, campaign-level details; CMOs will want to tie social to revenue. Make sure you can tie your activities to the various outcomes you can track.

Listen Closely

Active social listening is a very important component to creating a successful and engaging channel. Researching what is trending and top-of-mind for your target audience, and among industry professionals, will help inspire new tweets and posts, as well as some new content. It's important to listen and engage on social, as opposed to constantly evangelizing your brand and your solutions. Social listening is also a great way to find out what your competitors are up to and what they believe is the next big area of focus. You can also use social to gauge brand reputation, public perception and even execute customer service outreach.

Mix it Up

Don't be afraid to have some fun on social. Having a mix of industry-focused content and trendy social material is what makes a dynamic channel. Get your team to participate in National Selfie Day or share helpful tips for staying physically fit while sitting at a desk for eight, nine — or sometimes even ten — hours a day. The more authentic and in-tune you are, the more engaging the content will be. At the end of the day, we are all people marketing to other people. Speak as honestly and intelligently as possible about your solutions while keeping your community active and wanting more.

Get on the Same Page

Marketing professionals share one goal: help generate revenue for the organization. It is critical that your teams work together on your strategy and execution. From the inception of a content plan all the way through to the promotional phase (i.e. social, email, display and nurture streams), the team should have one holistic strategy so that everyone is working towards the same objectives.

By aligning all marketing and sales groups more closely, you will have a more effective team, more successful campaigns and a higher ROI.

Next Steps

Now more than ever, businesses are competing for visitors, views, and most importantly, revenue. Cold calling and organic website traffic are not going to bring in the leads your company needs to surpass the competition. Your team must have a deep understanding of how both paid and organic social can contribute to your overall strategy.

Research best practices, explore management tools (i.e. Sprinklr, Sprout Social, and Hootsuite), and seek out talented professionals to elevate and optimize your activities. Do the work to make a case for paid social by developing quality communities, testing targeted ads and fueling your campaigns with clean and actionable data.

Don't get left behind. Realize the power of data-inspired social media marketing.

Sources:

1. "By the Numbers: 90 Amazing Facebook Page Statistics". DMR, August 2016.
2. "Annual Advertising and Marketing Study 2016: B2B Advertising". Outsell Inc, March 2016.
3. Williamson, Debra Aho. "US Social StatPack" eMarketer Inc., 2016.
4. Baer, Jay. "Crushing the Myth of B2B Social Media." Convince & Convert.
5. Tully, Keith. "The Potential of Social Media for B2B in 2016." Real Business Rescue. March 2016.
6. "Social Network Ad Spending to Hit \$23.68 Billion Worldwide in 2015." EMarketer, April 2015.

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