

Social Media for Business

We all know what social media is and you probably have at least one social media account. You probably know that social media connects people from all over the world and that it helps us meet new people and keep in touch with the ones that we already know.

However, there is more to social media than personal use. This module will give you an idea of how social media can be used by businesses and other organizations to sell more products, reach more customers, and ultimately become more successful.

OBJECTIVES

09_Obj01: Define Social Media

09_Obj02: Identify Social Media Lingo

09_Obj03: Identify ways how social media sites make money

09_Obj04: Identify steps in creating a social media marketing plan

09_Obj05: Identify the SMART Criteria

09_Obj06: Identify the processes of creating an ideal customer profile

Social Media Basics

Just so we're on the same page, here are some basic facts and figures about social media:

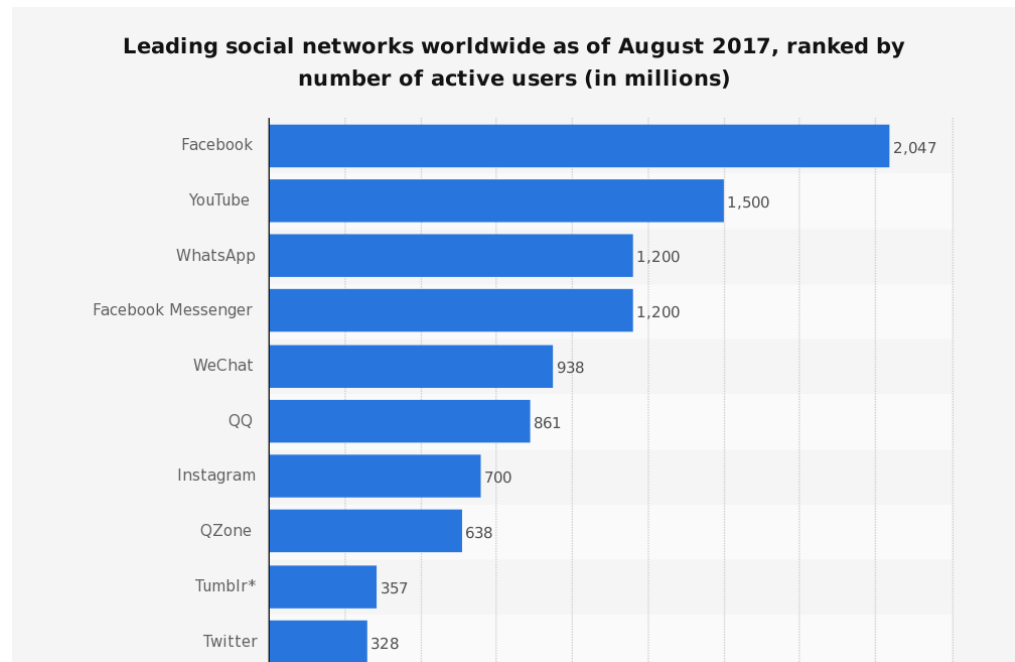
What is social media?

A social networking service or social media is an online platform used by people to build social networks or make social connections with other people.

How big is social media?

Social media is a worldwide phenomenon. In 2016 alone, the social media giant Facebook earned 26.9 billion U.S. dollars. There are currently 2.46 billion social media users worldwide. The following are

the most famous social networking sites as of August 2017 based on the number of active users:



Statista. (n.d.). Global social media ranking 2017 | Statistic. Retrieved August 30, 2017, from <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

Social media lingo

Social media is spawning a whole new generation of words and phrases. Here are some social media terms that you need to know:

Blog – (short for weblog) an online journal that’s updated on a regular basis with entries that appear in reverse chronological order

Crowdfunding – the practice of soliciting money usually through the Internet to support a cause or project.

Crowdsourcing – the practice of soliciting contributions in the form of ideas, content, and skills from Internet users to achieve a goal.

Feed – a data format used to provide frequently updated contents to users.

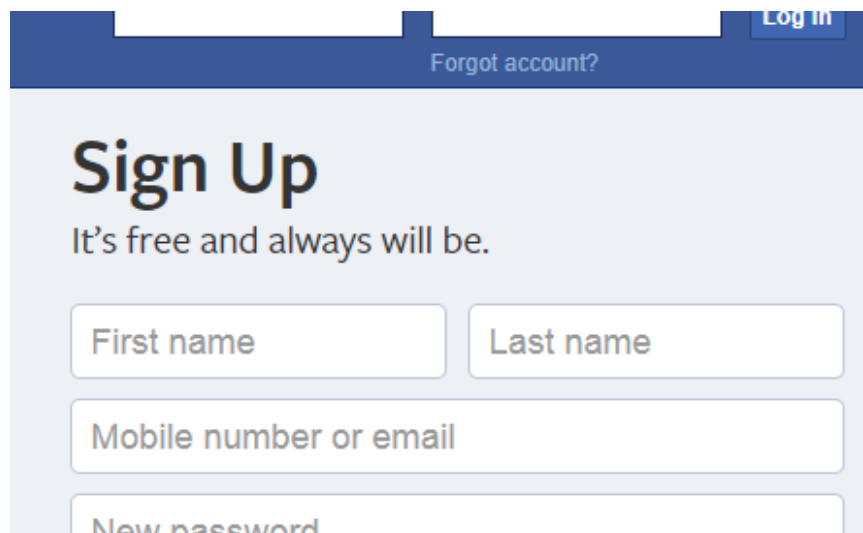
Hashtag - a metadata tag used to identify contents related to a specific topic.

Microblogging – the practice of sharing short messages in a web platform. E.g. Twitter.

Podcast – an audio file or a collection of audio files made available for download or playback through the Internet.

Live Streaming - the practice of broadcasting the audio and video of an event over the Internet as it happens.

How do social media sites make money?



The screenshot shows the Facebook 'Sign Up' page. At the top, there is a blue navigation bar with a 'Log in' button on the right and a 'Forgot account?' link in the center. Below the navigation bar, the main heading is 'Sign Up' in a large, bold, dark font. Underneath the heading is the text 'It's free and always will be.' in a smaller, grey font. The sign-up form consists of four input fields: 'First name' and 'Last name' are side-by-side, followed by 'Mobile number or email' on a new line, and 'New password' on the next line. The fields are white with light blue borders and rounded corners.

Screenshot Retrieved August 30, 2017, from www.facebook.com

Social media sites are mostly free to use. It's one of the main reasons why they are so popular. So how do they make billions of dollars if the vast majority of their users do not pay them anything?

Advertising

The main source of revenue for the biggest social media sites is advertising or ads. The sheer number of users makes social media a great place for businesses to reach out to customers. Because of this, businesses and other organizations spend a lot of money on social media advertising.

If you use social media or the Internet for that matter, you have probably encountered these ads. Normally, when you use Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, etc. you get feeds from your friends and favourite topics but, as you may already know, social media sites also include paid ads in your news feeds.



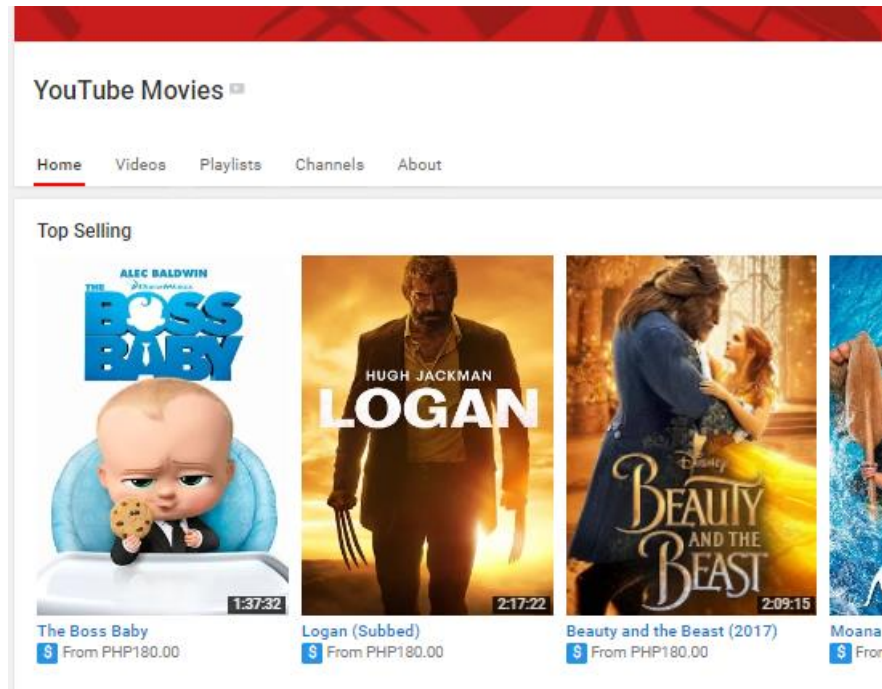
Screenshot from Instagram mobile app

Unlike TV commercials, social media ads aren't just broadcasted for everyone to see. Remember our lessons about machine learning and analytics. These and other techniques and technologies are used to optimize the effectiveness of ads.

When you create an account, you submit some personal details such as age, gender, locations, etc. As you keep using social media services you continue to provide information about yourself such as your interests and the places that you visit. Social media sites analyze all this data to gain insights about you. If you are an active user, they can have a pretty good idea of what products you may like and which

advertisements you are most likely to respond to. For example, if you like anime and you join online groups for anime fans or you frequently share contents from anime pages, eventually you will see anime related ads in your news feeds.

Freemium



Screenshot from

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCIgRkhTL3_hImCAmdLfDE4g

Freemium is a business model where users receive basic services for free but are required to pay for advanced services. This allows service providers to earn revenue from some of their users. For example, Youtube is mostly free but they also have exclusive videos and channels that are only available to paying customers.

Social Media Marketing

Marketing is the practice of promoting and selling products and services. It can be as simple as hanging a sign in front of your store or as complicated as organizing an event for thousands of people. Marketing can be costly and time consuming especially for start-ups or newly established businesses.

As we mentioned earlier, social media is mostly free and it's a great way to reach millions if not billions of people. These make social media a great tool for start-ups. Here are the basic steps in creating a social media marketing plan:

1. Set your goals

To begin, you need to know why you are doing this. Why do you want or need to use social media as a marketing tool? What do you expect to accomplish? Are you going to use social media just to advertise or are you going to use it to make direct sales? Are you going to use it as a platform to provide customer service? The answers to questions like these will serve as the basis for the next steps in this process.

You can use the **SMART criteria** as a guide in setting your goal. The ideal goal is one that matches each of these five criteria:

Specific - You need an exact objective, not an abstract idea of success.

Measurable - You need to have a way to measure success

Attainable - Your goal needs to be realistic. Do not set goals that exceed your capabilities.

Relevant - Does your goal match your overall business plan.

Time bound - What is your deadline? What do you hope to accomplish with the time that you have allotted to yourself?

2. Do some research

The next step is to gather information that you will need in order to accomplish our goal.

During this step, you need to define our audience. This is done by creating a customer profile which is a generalized description of a business' ideal customer. These are the people who are most

likely to buy your products or use your services. (Further discussion later)

You can also take this time to learn about our competition. What are the other businesses doing in social media? How many people do they reach? How often do they post content? Answering these questions can give you a competitive edge.

There are many other things that you may have to research. This is why having a clear goal is important. Our goal will help direct our research.

3. Choose your platforms

There are many social media services to choose from. During this step, you have to decide which ones suit your needs. At this point, you already know who your ideal customers are. Of course, you have to choose the platforms that are popular to them.

4. Evaluate your resources

Now that you know what you want to accomplish and what you need to do to accomplish it, it's time to evaluate your resources. What resources do you currently have and are they enough? If not, then what resources do you need to acquire? For example, you will have to assign personnel to handle your social media accounts. Can this job be done with one person or will you need a team? Do you need to hire someone to create content or can you just outsource it?

5. Publish content

This step is the culmination of your social media marketing venture. At this point, you already know what you want to achieve, who you want to reach, and where you can find them. It is now time to reach out. You can publish your own original content. Furthermore, you can integrate or feature contents from

other social media platforms. For example, you can share content from your Pinterest or Instagram accounts on Facebook.

You can also use syndication which is the practice of featuring other people's contents in your website or social media account. You can also have other pages and websites feature your original content. This way, you can both reach out to each other's followers.

6. Manage your social media presence

Social media marketing does not end with publishing content. At this point, you already have a social media presence which you have to manage or curate. A good practice is to create a schedule. This way, you can prepare content ahead of time and post them on a scheduled date. There are software tools that you can use to manage your social media accounts.

Creating an Ideal Customer Profile

Step 2 in creating a social media marketing plan is to define your ideal customer. Different sources offer different steps in doing this but basically, the process of creating an ideal customer profile can be divided into two:

Demographics

Demographics are the characteristics of people who belong in a particular group or population. These are the basic descriptions of a person. Demographic information includes the following:

- Age Group
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Education Level
- Occupation
- Location
- Physical characteristics (height, weight, etc.)

Psychographics

Psychographics refer to mental characteristics. This includes habits, beliefs, attitudes, and habits that define people. Here are some popular examples:

- Hobbies
- Interests
- Spending habits
- Political beliefs
- Favourite music, movies, TV shows, etc.

Glossary of Terms

SOCIAL MEDIA – is an online platform used by people to build social networks or make social connections with other people

BLOG – (short for weblog) an online journal that's updated on a regular basis with entries that appear in reverse chronological order

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CROWDSOURCING – the practice of soliciting contributions in the form of ideas, content, and skills from Internet users to achieve a goal.

FEED – a data format used to provide frequently updated contents to users.

HASHTAG - a metadata tag used to identify contents related to a specific topic.

MICROBLOGGING – the practice of sharing short messages in a web platform. E.g. Twitter.

MODULE OF INSTRUCTION

PODCAST – an audio file or a collection of audio files made available for download or playback through the Internet.

LIVE STREAMING - the practice of broadcasting the audio and video of an event over the Internet as it happens.

DEMOGRAPHICS – are the characteristics of people who belong in a particular group or population

PSYCHOGRAPHICS – refer to mental characteristics

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