eMarketing

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MARKETING IN A DIGITAL WORLD

5TH EDITION

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AND THE MINDS OF QUIRK

15
Social Media Strategy

What's inside: This chapter is an **expansion** on the previous chapter dealing with social media, the **different ways of creating** and then **engaging with a thriving community**, and how **social media has wiggled its wa**y into almost **every facet** of the **online world**. We discuss **guidelines when dealing with difficult customers**, and how to **map out a social media plan**. We then wrap it up with a **case study** showing how **communities and brands can come together** for the good of all involved.

15.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we introduced the concept of social media, and detailed some of the major social media channels and platforms. This chapter addresses how to use these spaces strategically. While the channels and platforms available may change, the foundations of a successful social media strategy won't. By planning and thinking strategically, while leaving room to be flexible and dynamic, you'll be able to make the most of what social networking has to offer.

Social media channels are communication channels that can be used to solve business, marketing and communication challenges. As more time is spent by consumers online, and that time is increasingly dominated by social media usage, organisations need to incorporate social media into their marketing strategies. The Pew Research Center's *Internet & American Life Project* shows that 67% of Internet users visit social networking sites (Center, 2013). The Nielsen and NM *Incite's Social Media Report* indicates that American computer users spend about 20% of their time online visiting social networks, while mobile users spend 30% of their time on these sites (Nielsen, 2012). This means more time is spent on social media than on any other category of sites.

In this chapter, you will learn:

- Several valuable strategic uses of social media
- The steps to creating a social media strategy
- Which documents and protocols you should have in place for social media success

15.2 Key terms and concepts

Term	Definition
Community guidelines	The rules and principle that community members must adhere to when communicating on a brand platform.
Key performance indicator (KPI)	A metric that shows whether an objective is being achieved.
Lead	A person who has shown interest in a brand, product or service and could be converted into a customer.
Objective	A desired outcome of a digital marketing campaign.
Online reputation management (ORM)	Understanding and influencing the perception of an entity online.
Search engine optimisation (SEO)	The process of improving website rankings in search engines.

Social media dashboard	A service that allows you to centralise management of your social media properties.
Social network	In the online sense, a type of website model where individual members become part of a broader virtual community.
URL shortener	A web tool that creates a shorter version of a full URL.

15.3 Using social media to solve business challenges

Social media can be used strategically in a number of marketing and communication challenges:

- Communication and outreach
- Community management
- Support and customer service
- Reputation management
- Advertising and awareness
- Sales and lead generation
- Search engine optimisation
- Insights and research

Figure 1. *Social media marketing can help with a number of business challenges.*

15.3.1 Communication and outreach

Unlike other options, social media offers brands an effective two-way communication and real-time broadcast channel. This bi-directional communication is what makes social communities so exciting (and challenging). Just as consumers can communicate with each other, and send messages to businesses and brands, so businesses and brands can use this medium to communicate with and reach out to the public. Increasingly, social media is becoming a highly effective public communications tool.

Businesses, governments and other organisations use Twitter and Facebook to broadcast timely messages, allowing interested parties to keep informed in real-time. This is fast becoming a vital aspect of newsworthy and breaking news events such as elections, disasters and global sports. Many organisations also use social media tools to broadcast service updates.

15.3.2 Community management

Social media platforms are built around communities, and are sometimes virtual representations of real-world networks and communities. This feature of social media can be used to build and maintain a community around, or supported by, your organisation.

'Community manager' is a role that has risen to prominence as more organisations start using social media, but it has always been an important role in any community – from groups that thrive on forums to communities run on platforms such as Facebook.

Creating, building and nurturing a community means that organisations don't just participate in conversations that are happening around and about them, but also actively lead and guide those conversations. These communities are generally made up of the organisation's biggest fans: brand evangelists who feel as if they have a big stake in that organisation. This creates an environment where those fans can interact directly with the organisation, and where the organisation can send messages directly to those fans and solicit their feedback.
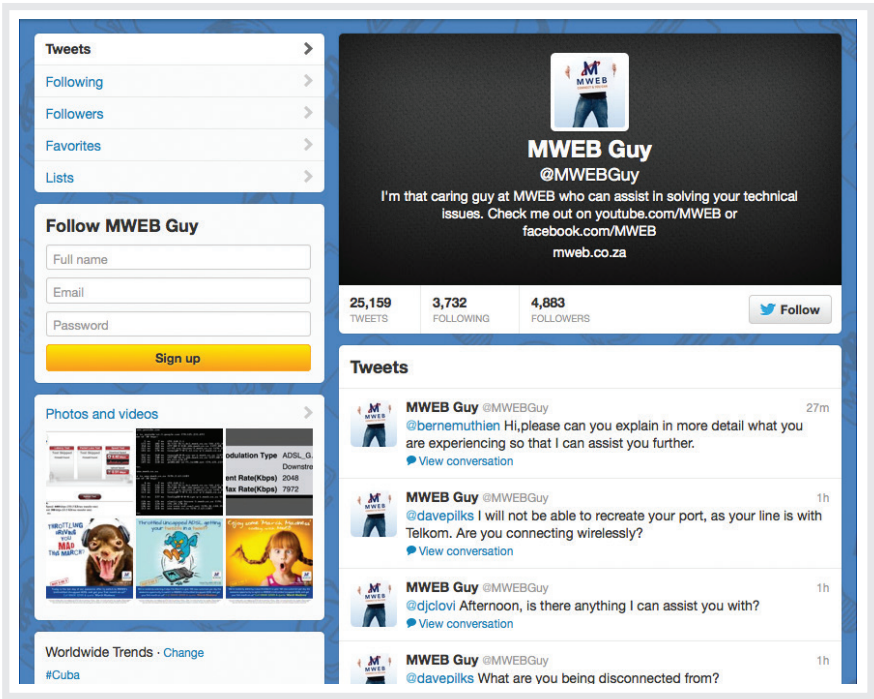

Figure 2. *MWEB responding to customer queries on Twitter.*

Building and maintaining a community is a long-term project. It starts with determining what the best platform is for that community: something that already exists (such as Facebook), or a brand new platform specifically created for it (either from scratch or using a service such as Ning – www.ning.com).

15.3.3 Support and customer service

Social media is becoming an additional customer service channel. As consumers are increasingly comfortable transacting online, there is an expectation that the businesses with which they transact will also respond to customer queries in the social space, as they would do through a call centre or email. Some customers have found that problems or questions on social media tend to be resolved more quickly, as brands are wary of having unresolved issues left out in public. For any organisation that runs a social community, customer service is often one of the channel's primary functions.
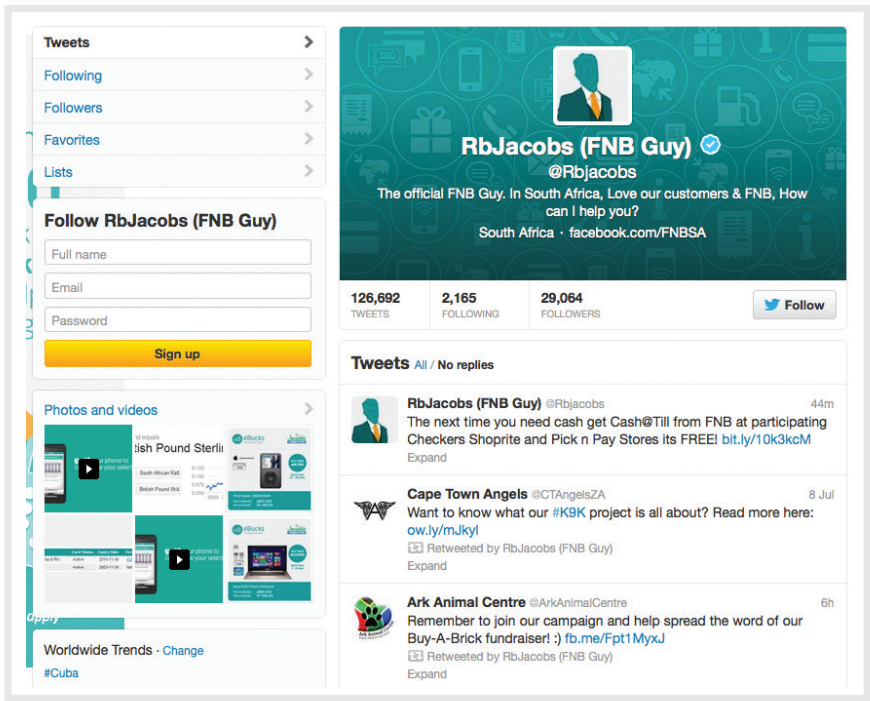
Figure 3. *FNB responding to customer queries on Twitter.*

Interestingly, customer service in social media channels starts to become collaborative, with customers assisting each other and, in doing so, reducing the reliance on the organisation for support. Collaborative support tools such as Get Satisfaction (www.getsatisfaction.com) are used to great effect. According to Get Satisfaction's website, over 70 000 communities use their service, including Microsoft and Intuit's Mint (Get Satisfaction, 2013). Even businesses that use social media channels such as Facebook for customer support can see other community members helping each other.

15.3.4 Reputation management

The need for online reputation management and monitoring is growing, and brands are now realising this. Through the combination of search and social media, all mentions of a brand or individual are only a quick search away, whether they are positive or negative. Social media are in one of the spaces where a brand or individual can easily respond to mentions, create a stir, or find ways to further their own agenda.

Brands can use social media in two ways to manage their online reputations – first, by monitoring what customers and fans are saying to identify issues proactively; and second, as a means of communicating and getting their side of the story out.

15.3.5 Advertising and awareness

Where there is an audience, there is advertising. The more time people spend in social media, the more brands want to advertise there. It's not just the time people spend on social networks that make them appealing to advertisers – it's also the rich demographic and psychographic targeting opportunities. Adverts can be targeted based on the profile information that individuals provide, either overtly or through their actions on the social network.

Most social networks offer advertising options that are accessible to both the small advertiser as well as the big spender. This is a dynamic space, as the networks experiment with different formats and models. The advertising opportunities for Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and LinkedIn are covered in full in the *Online Advertising* chapter.

> **NOTE**
>
> **Read more about this in the *Online Advertising* chapter.**

15.3.6 Sales and lead generation

Adding a social layer to a commercial transaction can create a richer experience for online consumers. These can be based overtly on social connections, or on inferred connections based on behaviour.

Levi's Friends Store (store.levi.com) is an example of the former. Visiting the website while signed in to Facebook allows you to see which of your friends like which styles. Levi's can then present this information with data that includes your friends' upcoming birthdays. This is useful feedback for you, as you can see which styles are more popular among your friends, as well as users in general. This provides insight for Levi's on which styles are more popular than others.

> **NOTE**
>
> **You can see how it works at http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ed5vJeaEuzA.**

An excellent example of the layer based on inferred connections is Amazon's collaborative filtering. If you've browsed on Amazon.com, you will no doubt have seen product information such as "People who bought this also bought that". In real time, based on consumer purchase behaviour, Amazon presents products that you are likely to have an interest in, based on people who browsed and purchased products that you like. Although you may not realise it, this is a social layer on the online shopping experience.

Social communities can also be lead generation or sales generation assets. Within Facebook, for example, applications on brand pages can allow eCommerce transactions or lead generation within the Facebook environment.

15.3.7 Search engine optimisation (SEO)

Social media plays an important role in SEO. It provides additional assets that can be optimised so that a brand 'owns' the results page for searches for their brand. A savvy SEO strategy will also make use of social media assets, links and likes for strengthening the position of other web assets in the search engine results pages.

Figure 4. *Branded social media platforms appearing in Google search results.*

With a little bit of planning and keyword research, a brand can use social assets effectively to own searches on their brand name. This ties back neatly to managing their online reputation, too.

15.3.8 Insight and research

Social media can be a very powerful insight and research asset, but the information needs to be judged in its proper context. When you are planning a campaign, social media can provide a rich source of data, both demographic and preference based.

You can use the information people share freely to understand more about your market, brand or product. ORM tools help you to track mentions and sentiment, giving you insight into how you are perceived. Using social network ad planners, such as Facebook or YouTube's offerings, can give you rich information about the size of your market, and things that they like. You can measure sentiment and the changing number of mentions to help you understand the impact of other campaigns. These can be offline or online campaigns.

Building your online community also gives you a group you can reach out to for information and feedback, creating an always-on online focus group. However, bear in mind that they are inherently biased just by the fact that they would join your social community.

Doing a Twitter search of branded keywords can reveal what users are saying about your brand. You could also use communities such as Flickr to see what people are sharing about their lives, without even realising. Head over to www.flickr.com and search for 'in my fridge' for a snapshot of this in action.

This social data can be very valuable, but must be treated correctly. It is qualitative and quantitative information, and is in many ways secondary research. For research purposes, it can and should be used to help form research questions for further evaluation.

15.4 Step-by-step guide to creating a social media strategy

Social media is a fast-moving channel, which means proper planning is vital to success. Effective social media strategies come from embracing the fact that social media is a two-way communication channel: organisations interacting in this space need the resources not only to push messages out, but to deal quickly with the messages coming in, too.

Planning is the foundation of success. Here is one method to approaching social media strategically.

1. Get buy-in

It's important that there is buy-in for your foray into social media. It may be seen as a free resource, but even if you are not paying for exposure, there is a time and resource investment required. A number of stakeholders will need to be aware of your social media plans, and these may be both internal and external. And, of course, you will need sign-off for any budgeting or additional resourcing requirements.

Addressing the various stakeholders will also force you to do the necessary research and planning to take the next steps.

2. Listen and understand the landscape

It's important to take a step back first. Social media is more than the social spaces you may interact with in your personal capacity. A good first step to understanding the landscape is to listen.

Some important questions to answer include:

- What conversation already exists around your brand, your industry and your competitors?

- Do they have the facts?

- Where does it take place?

- Who is doing most of the talking? What can you, as a brand, add to this conversation? Is it valuable?

Online monitoring tools such as BrandsEye (www.brandseye.com) or Radian6 (www.radian6.com) can help you with the listening part of your planning, but in the early stages you may want to start with free tools such as Google Alerts (www.google.com/alerts).

3. Analyse

Using all the data you have been gathering, analyse! Think critically about social media and your brand, as well as your brand's broader marketing, communication and business challenges. All of this should be looked at within the context of the information that you already know about your local marketing and business environment.

Your outcomes here should include:

- A list of the social channels and platforms your brand should be in. This is based on who your customers are, where they interact, and where they expect to interact with you.

- Non-official groups or communities that already exist, which may have been created by fans.

- An overview of the existing conversation (volume, frequency and sentiment), as well as any content or conversation themes that occur.

- An overview of what your competitors are doing in this space.

- A list of potential brand evangelists and influencers in your industry.

4. Set objectives

Your objectives are the desired outcome of your social media strategy. These should be based within the context of your marketing and business challenges.

Firstly, you need to address how you will use social media for your organisation. You then need to set objectives for each of those.

To make them tangible and measurable, establish key performance indicators (KPIs) for your objectives, with benchmarks and targets where appropriate.
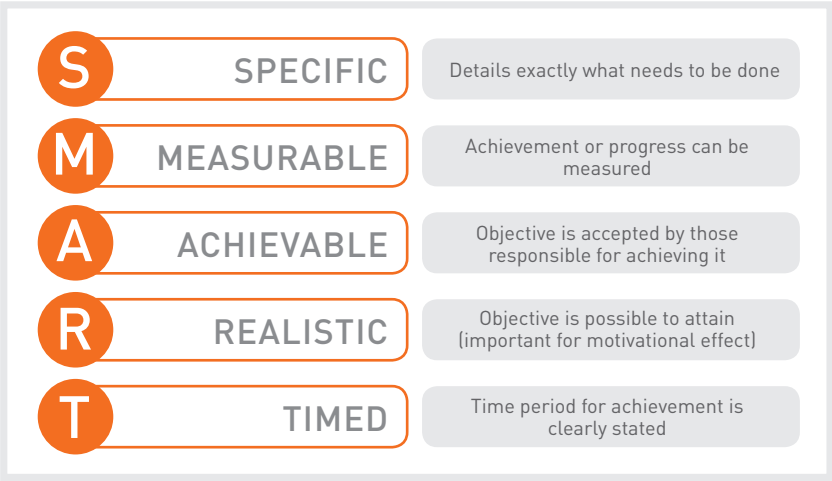
Determine SMART objectives:

S	SPECIFIC	Details exactly what needs to be done
M	MEASURABLE	Achievement or progress can be measured
A	ACHIEVABLE	Objective is accepted by those responsible for achieving it
R	REALISTIC	Objective is possible to attain (important for motivational effect)
T	TIMED	Time period for achievement is clearly stated

Figure 5. *The various elements of a SMART objective.*

For example, your objective could be to grow a community of fans around your brand in a particular country. Your KPI might therefore be fan numbers, and you could set a target of 5 000 Facebook fans over six months.

5. Create an action plan

Once you have a clear idea of what you want, you can begin compiling an action plan to get there.

This is where you need to make sure that you have created the necessary documents and processes that form the foundation of your plan.

You will need to:

- Decide on the roles and responsibilities of the project team and other stakeholders.

- Determine what social media tools you will make use of.

- Commit to a frequency and volume of activity, as well as how quickly you will respond.

- Develop a conversation plan.

- Create tone of voice guidelines, frequently asked questions, community guidelines and content plans.

6. Implement

This is the fun part! It's time to kick off your plans and put all that research and thought into action. Set up your platforms according to the guidelines they specify. Alert stakeholders that you are starting your engagement plans, and make sure you have tracking in place. Continue to monitor for mentions of your organisation, and responses to your messages. Keep to your general plan, but be prepared to adapt.

7. Track, analyse, optimise

The beautiful thing about digital marketing is that you can track every single user interaction and use this information to learn from and improve your efforts continually. You should track the success of your social media campaigns on an ongoing basis, and set milestones for your team at less frequent intervals (every couple of months or so), when you will sit down and do a more in-depth review.

There are several tools you can use for tracking social media. You will need to build a suite of tools to suit your measurement and reporting requirements.

Platform insights

Facebook, YouTube, and other social media platforms offer analytics and insights. These are a useful starting point for reporting on your social media efforts, from numbers of followers or fans, to interactions with the content you share.

Web analytics

If you are using social media channels to send traffic to your own website, you should tag the links so that you can segment that traffic in your website reports. In Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics), you would use campaign tracking parameters.

URL shorteners

URL shortening services such as bit.ly and ow.ly offer usage data that will tell you how many people click on links you share, when they click on them, and where in the world they are from.

Online monitoring software

Online monitoring software is an important measurement investment that you will need to make. It helps you to keep track of all mentions of your brand, and to understand the sentiment and influence of those mentions. You should be tracking your reputation for trends and changes over time.

Social media dashboards

There are a number of services that make it easier for you to centralise management of your social media properties, as well as making collaborative management easier. They also integrate analytics data from a number of sources, making reporting easier.

Some services include:

- HootSuite (www.hootsuite.com)
- Spredfast (www.spredfast.com)
- CoTweet (www.cotweet.com)
- Sprout Social (www.sproutsocial.com)
- Socialbakers (www.socialbakers.com)
- Tweetstats (www.tweetstats.com)

15.5 Documents and processes

Good documentation and processes are the foundations of social media success, especially as this dynamic space is likely to involve many stakeholders from across your organisation. To ensure that there is consistency across the various channels, processes and guidelines should be a part of your social media strategy, and should be created before you take any action on social media.

Start with the documentation and processes you already have in place for marketing and communication: for example, brand and tone of voice guidelines, or PR policies. Build on these to create a robust foundation that suits this spontaneous, dynamic space.

A social media checklist is a good starting point to make sure that you have everything in place. Examples of community guidelines, conversation calendars and escalation protocols are also included for you.

Item
Account logins: • Facebook • Twitter • YouTube • Blog

Item
Community Guidelines available online and linked to where appropriate
Social Media strategy and content strategy
Roles and responsibilities
Risks and escalation plan
Brand voice guidelines
Social media guidelines for agencies and employees
Monitoring and listening plan
Reporting: tracking and insights

Figure 6. *The social media checklist.*

15.5.1 Community guidelines

As well as a privacy policy and terms and conditions, it's a good idea to establish community guidelines for the communities you manage, especially when the community is on behalf of a brand. Community guidelines help to set the tone for the community, and are useful to refer to should community members behave in a way that is undesirable. They indicate what will, and will not, be tolerated, such as hate speech, profanity, discrimination and other inappropriate content. Of course, community guidelines don't prevent such behaviour, but are useful to fall back on should you need to remove comments or community members.

Guidelines should be friendly, with the tone in keeping with your community or brand. You can use the information here as a starting point, but customise it for your situation.

Figure 7. *Community guidelines on the Woolworths Facebook Page.*

15.5.2 Content plan

Content plans help you to plan your community conversations. More than that, they are also useful, centralised planning documents that ensure that various teams are all aware of each other's efforts, and that communications are integrated. For any kind of content and communication strategy, content plans are invaluable.

As you learnt in the *Content Marketing Strategy* chapter, reaching social audiences requires you to create content that truly resonates with them. Successful social content must be interesting, relevant, shareable and remarkable. It is especially useful to plan and create social content around your content pillars, since this gives you a solid structure and starting point to follow.

To start creating a conversation calendar, you should plot everything that is relevant to your community. This could include public events, dates and anniversaries, or events and communications already planned by your organisation.

You should also use your conversation calendar for reporting. Keeping track of interactions and responses to your planned posts will help you to determine what kind of posts your community responds to, what days are best for posting, and what frequency works best for your community.

Planning the conversation helps to keep momentum, especially in the early days of building a community. However, it should not replace spontaneity – this is a conversation, after all!

Date	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Theme							
Facebook							
Twitter							

Figure 8. *The conversation calendar.*

15.5.3 Communication and escalation protocol

An established communication and escalation protocol helps to ensure that all parties are aware of procedures for handling social messages, and can respond as appropriate. This is especially important for large organisations where several people might be interacting in social media on behalf of a brand, or where several departments or agencies have a stake in the organisation's social media presence.

A communication and escalation protocol should include:

- Anticipated messages, frequently asked questions and appropriate, standard responses (for both positive and negative situations).
- Guidelines for determining the sentiment and risk of messages, which includes a flagging system for comments that need more senior attention.
- The crisis management process to follow if a brand crisis erupts on social media.
- An escalation plan for messages that need signoff or further consideration.
- Contact details of relevant stakeholders.
- Guidelines for responding, including response rate, standard messages, brand voice and tone.
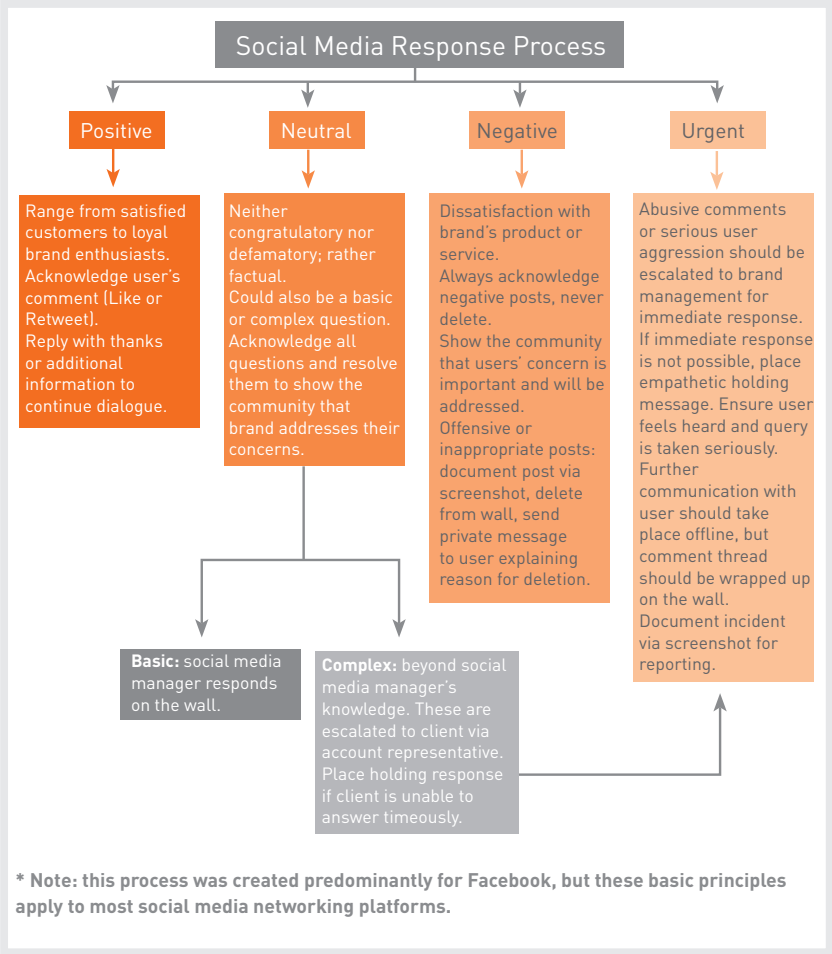
* Note: this process was created predominantly for Facebook, but these basic principles apply to most social media networking platforms.

Figure 9. *A decision flowchart is a useful way of disseminating information.*

15.6 Dealing with opportunities and threats

The use of social media has equipped consumers with a voice and a platform, and the ability to amplify their views and truly inform their decision making. The connected nature of the Internet makes these views easy to share, and the accessibility of social media tools makes it easy for other consumers to find these views, and respond and build on them. All of this contributes to the perception of the brand.

The best way to show that you are listening to customer comments, complaints and questions online is the same as with a normal conversation. Comment when it's appropriate, listen with interest, be polite, be respectful, and add value wherever possible. Brands should become active participants in the conversation.

Brands that are successful in communicating with their audiences are constantly on the lookout for opportunities to propel their brand forward, and are keeping their eyes peeled for risks that may threaten their reputation. In both situations, the power sits in how the brand responds. This response can range from a direct engagement to a full new marketing campaign. Ultimately it depends on how powerful the opportunity or risk is.

15.6.1 When to talk (and when not to)

When everything being said is nice

A fantastic position to be in is that every possible mention is overwhelmingly positive. Well done. However, that does not mean that there is nothing to do. During this time, the brand must do everything in its power to drive high volumes of conversation.

Stakeholders are being positive about the brand because their expectations are being exceeded. Unfortunately, expectations change. Brands need to stay on their toes and constantly be on the lookout for new and innovative ways to meet and develop their brand promise.

When everything being said is neutral

If this is the case, it sounds as if the company is very boring – not a good way to get attention. As Seth Godin puts it, "Safe is risky" (Godin, 2010). If a company is playing it so safe that no one can be bothered to send either praise or criticism its way, it's in danger of being forgotten. The next step is no one talking about the company at all.

When negative things are being said

Negative statements should be understood as broken brand promises. There is underperformance on expectation, and it must be dealt with as a matter of high priority. During this period, brands need to be very careful not to stir up any more conversation than is absolutely necessary. That said, it's certainly not all doom and gloom. If the conversation is broadly negative, it is normally because there is some underlying problem, and this information provides the business with focus to resolve it.

Complaints are from stakeholders who have had dealings with a company which hasn't met their expectations. By complaining, this customer is, often unwittingly, giving the company the opportunity to make things right, and is probably indicating where the company can improve. Usually, the skilled customer service department of a company should deal with these. They should also share insights with the business strategy department so that the underlying problems can be prioritised and resolved.

If a complaint is online, the resolution should be there as well, although you can try to have it taken offline first. Even though the customer service will likely take place either over email or by phone, posting a personalised comment in a blog post, for example, will demonstrate to the community that the company listens, responds, and serves the critical objective of actually resolving the underlying issues.

Criticism need not necessarily come from customers, but it is important to be aware of it. If a criticism involves false information, it should be corrected. And if the criticism is true, then it should be dealt with as such.

15.6.2 Responding

Responding involves recognising that consumers hold the upper hand in the relationship. They are better trusted, there are more of them and, in most cases, the barriers to exit from a brand are relatively low.

Customers dictate the channels of communication. An organisation needs to go to the consumer, not the other way around. Ignoring this will result in the business losing customers because they not willing to truly engage. This is why it is so important to research your audience and tailor your strategy to them – not vice versa.

When responding, be transparent, be honest, and treat the person as you would like to be treated. At all times, remember that you are engaged in conversation, not a dictation.

NOTE

In fact, resolving a serious complaint to the customer's satisfaction can gain you a loyal brand advocate - someone who has first-hand experience that your brand cares and goes the extra mile.

NOTE

Read more about this in the *Market Research* chapter.

15.7 Step-by-step guide for recovering from an online brand attack

These rules to recovery provide a practical approach for brands facing an online threat.

15.7.1 Step 1: Be prepared

No brand is immune from an online brand attack. The best brands have strategies in place to identify a reputation crisis immediately and respond to it quickly enough to stop the negative word of mouth spreading.

Keep your brand in front of consumers by engaging in the conversation. This can be done by making use of blogs, communicating with customers, and being as open and honest as possible. Engaging in, and leading, the conversation allows you to build an authentic voice. If a crisis hits, you will be well placed to respond in a way that is authentic.

15.7.2 Step 2: Act immediately!

The easiest way to solve most brand attacks is to respond quickly. A brand that shows it is listening and does indeed care will go far when it comes to ensuring a solid online reputation. Acknowledge what has been said and react accordingly.

15.7.3 Step 3: If what they're saying is false…

If the attack on your brand is factually incorrect, send the person evidence that they are wrong, and in a friendly tone, ask them to remove or retract the entry, and offer to keep them informed of future news. If the person doesn't react or respond, add a comment.

15.7.4 Step 4: If what they're saying is true…

If the mention is negative but true, send your side of the story and try as hard as you can to take the conversation offline. If appropriate, apologise and offer to make amends.

15.7.5 Step 5: Keep the negative pages out of the search engines

Keeping more people from reading negative things about your brand is imperative. Knock them off the first page of the results with basic SEO and some social media pages, such as Facebook, Twitter or blog posts. Keep adding pages and links until you've forced the offending pages out of sight.

15.8 Social media risks and challenges

Any social media strategy should account for the risks and challenges of interacting in this environment, and should incorporate a protocol for dealing with these risks. Mistakes on the web can take a long time to recover from.

Some of the common risks and challenges are listed below.

No one cares. Especially when building a community from scratch, it can be difficult in the beginning to get the traction you want. This is why understanding the landscape in the context of your organisation's market is so important. Make sure you are interacting in the spaces where your customers are, and where they are happy to hear from you.

The social media space is used by unhappy customers (who are free to post detractive comments). Even if the only feedback you are getting is negative, this is good feedback! Now you have an opportunity to do something about it.

It requires ongoing attention and monitoring. Social media channels may be free, but there is still a time and resource investment required to make your strategy a success. Understand what your objectives are for using social media, and budget the time required to meet those.

It can be difficult to measure the impact of the campaign. Social media can be difficult to measure, but that does not mean your campaigns are not successful. Don't expect to find a solution (or success) overnight. Start with measuring things that can be measured easily, and watch for case studies in this space that will help you to turn your social media investment into revenue for your organisation.

15.9 Case study – Super Bowl Social Media Command Center

15.9.1 One-line summary

The organisers behind the Super Bowl, the most watched sporting series in the world, used social media to monitor and manage massive crowds.

15.9.2 The problem

Social media monitoring isn't just for brands and products – it can be just as useful during live events. Take the Super Bowl, for example. It's one of the most watched sporting events in the world, with over 100 million viewers. It's also a massive real-world event, where 150 000 people crowd the city of Indianapolis for the day.

15.9.3 The solution

In order to monitor and manage these massive crowds, organisers came upon the idea of creating a 'Social Media Command Center', and hired a team from communications company Raidious to handle it. Working out of an office in the city centre, a big team of strategists, data analysts and volunteers monitored social media conversations for two weeks before and during the event. Their motto was 'monitor, moderate, publish'.

The command centre monitored around 300 keywords from Facebook, Foursquare, YouTube and a series of Twitter hashtags. They responded, gathered data, and kept track of sentiment and congestion, reaching about 49 000 people in the area. Through retweets and shares, they reached around 1 million impressions a day. In total, that translates to about $3.2 million in marketing value.

The team focused on responding to fans who needed advice or help while attending the event. For example, they sent out links to parking information to drivers stuck without a spot.

Figure 10. *A Tweet giving Super Bowl fans information on parking.*

They sent tweets about handy downloads for watching the game and also posted useful information about things such as open Wi-Fi networks in the stadium.

The team managed to identify and respond to several safety issues even before the official organisers knew about them. They were also ready with a crisis communication plan in case of a large-scale emergency.

15.9.4 The results

The overall campaign was a huge success. Sentiment about the Super Bowl had a positive to negative ratio of 3 : 1 (It's unusual to see one higher than 2 : 1). The Command Center also achieved a daily average of 3 500 retweets and 2 500 Twitter favourites or Facebook Likes. They even managed to beat the National Football League's Klout score!

The potential benefits of a system like this are great – from better public safety and smoother crowd management, to branding and social engagement.

Simply monitoring what people say can provide an incredible amount of useful, immediate feedback – something that's essential in this fast-paced digital world (Laird, 2012).

15.10 Summary

Social media can be used strategically in a number of marketing and communication challenges:

- Community management
- Support and customer service
- Reputation management
- Search engine optimisation
- Communication and outreach
- Advertising and awareness
- Sales and lead generation
- Insights and research

Creating a social media strategy requires careful planning, and a strong foundation that will allow you to be dynamic.

The steps to creating a social media strategy include:

- Get buy-in
- Understand the landscape
- Analyse
- Set objectives
- Create an action plan
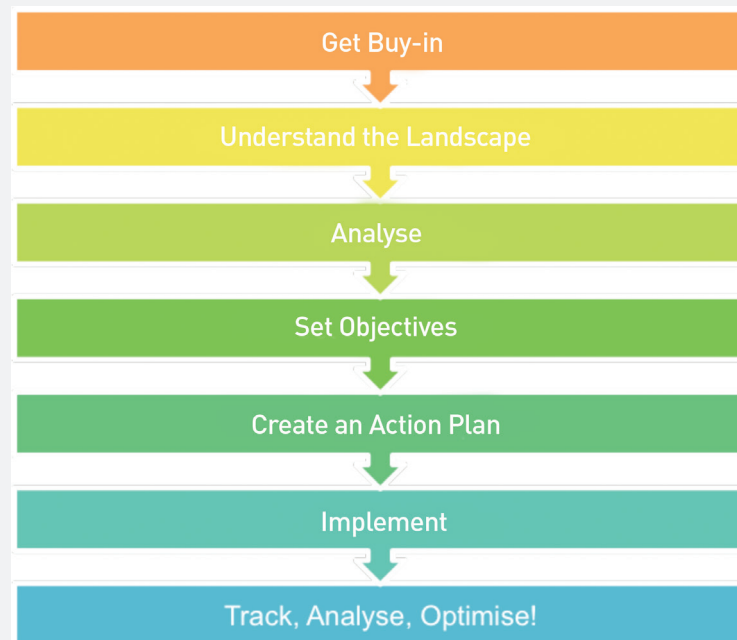- Implement
- Track, analyse, optimise!

Figure 11. *The steps involved in a social media strategy.*

Social media is a vital strategic consideration for any brand. Whether your organisation is actively involved in social media or not, your consumers are. If nothing else, this means that there is market data available to you, if you just take a little time to find it.

Organisations that make a considered move in the social media sphere will find it both challenging and rewarding. The rapid feedback loop can often change preconceptions or even marketing plans, as the voice of the customer is amplified through social media. However, the collaboration with passionate customer stakeholders is extremely rewarding.

15.11 Case study questions

1. How would you describe the link between social media strategy and the social customer?
2. How would you advise the strategists in the Social Media Command Center to respond to a very unhappy fan?
3. How would you define a keyword in this context?

15.12 Chapter questions

1. What are some of the pitfalls of engaging difficult customers on social media platforms?
2. What skills do you think are important for a great community manager to have?
3. Should all brands be active in social media spaces? What brands have less to gain from trying to create an online community?

15.13 Further reading

www.socialmediaexaminer.com – Social Media Examiner offers practical advice, tips and strategies for engaging on social media.

socialmediatoday.com – Social Media Today offers news, insights and analysis of social media trends.

15.14 References

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Reviews & Comments

The first thing that you should do is obsess about the terms in this book. Vocabulary is the first step to understanding, and if you don't know what something means, figure it out. Don't turn the page until you do.
SETH GODIN,
Author: Purple Cow, Lynchpin and Permission Marketing

My Quirk eMarketing textbook is a truly indispensable desk item. Since completing the e-course I have been able to help embed the correct terminology and appropriate digital focus with all colleagues from top down. This is essential if we, as a global business, wish to be seen as competent leaders and high quality adopters of digital marketing tactics and strategies. Behind every great digital marketer should be this great textbook!
SUNITA ANDERSON,
Group Marketing Knowledge Manager at SABMiller plc.

I found the textbook well-written, making what could be quite complex terms and definitions easy to understand. Having loads of practical examples scattered throughout the chapters, the theoretical concepts were well highlighted in practical, real-world application. Each chapter challenged me to apply my newly learnt skills through providing further readings and additional resources to explore.
ANDREW MARRIOTT,
Lecturer: Marketing, and Advertising & Sales Promotion at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University

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