

Module 2. Develop social media roles for your communications and marketing mix

Introduction

Social media is everywhere. Individuals and businesses of all sizes and types use it. It's a critical resource for engaging with fans and the interested audience, getting feedback and expanding sports organization visibility.

An effective social strategy can enhance an organization's reputation and build trust and awareness among a growing network of connections. While some are more tailored to B2B promotion, no platforms are off limits.

Upon the definition of the goals and the definition of the target groups, the selection of the platforms relevant for your communication follows. The individual social media channels have specific characteristics, their own dynamics in user communication and different ranges in the target groups. The form in which you want to communicate which content in the future depends, in turn, on the choice of platform.

Differentiation according to function or possible application

It makes sense to differentiate between the various platforms according to their functions for the user, the needs that are met and the purpose for which companies can use the social media channel.

- Video platform (e.g. YouTube, TikTok, Vimeo or MyVideo): emotional presentation of content, personal presentation of the company, experience reports and how-to videos, as well as increase and relevance in search engines through networking (SEO).
- Social networking platforms (e.g. Facebook or LinkedIn): contact, lead generation, customer and reader loyalty through interaction, organization of complaint management.
- Social games (e.g. SIMS, Farmville or Angry Birds): entertainment, e-learning, customer and reader loyalty.
- Advice (e.g. GuteFrage.de or WerWeissWas.de): build up expert status, representation as a competent contact person.

- Special interest (e.g. fourfourtwo.com, bleachers.com): building up or increase in awareness, image building and expert reputation.
- Blogs: maintaining of contacts and networking with multipliers and opinion leaders.
- Social commerce portals (e.g. Spreadshirt.net, Dawanda.de or Etsy.com): recommendation marketing, development of additional sales channels.
- Review platforms (e.g. Yelp, HolidayCheck): increase and relevance in search engines through networking.
- Content sharing (e.g. Slideshare, Scribbr, Flickr, Pinterest or Instagram): increase of the added value of existing content (content marketing), presentation of competence, service through further information offers, SEO.
- Wikis (e.g. Wikipedia): representation of competence, knowledge management, SEO.
- Social bookmarking (e.g. MyPocket or Del.icio.us): knowledge management, service through further information offers.
- Microblogging (e.g. Twitter, Telegram, Tumblr): maintaining of contact with multipliers and opinion leaders, networking, building reputation.
- Messenger services (e.g. WhatsApp, Snapchat): direct communication and target group approach, placement of messages, personal customer service.

Practical tip no.1

A look at the competition helps: Which social media platform are your competitors on? What channel does your competition use to offer customers dialog, information, assistance, or pure information? Analyse the social media activities of your competitors and deduce from this whether you want to take a similar approach or use other channels.

Choosing the right social media platform

You have set your corporate goals, identified your target group, and considered a selection of social media channels. Now it's important to carefully check again:

- Do you find my target group on the selected channels? How does it act there?
- What offers does the target group expect, and how do you contact the company?
- Can you convey your topics and brand via the selected channel?

Practical tip no.2

Before you decide on a specific social media channel, think carefully about which resources are available to you for processing and what your media budget will be. On Facebook in particular, it's very difficult today to achieve reach without the use of paid ads or sponsored posts. Are these budgets available in your company? Clarify these questions before your social media engagement.

Recommended action: sharpen your target focus and establish measurability.

Formulate a communication goal for each selected social media channel. This can range from pure brand awareness to recruiting, as well as sales support or service processing.

Assign measurable key figures with which you can measure the success of your communication goal. Examples:

- Brand awareness: number of mentions of the brand on the Internet, search for your brand in search engines (measurable for example via the Google Search Console, Google Trends or a branding campaign in AdWords or Bing Ads), reach of your own postings (there are various metrics here from analytics data from websites and social media channels).
- Brand loyalty: determination of the interaction of fans with the brand, consideration of the tonality towards the brand, recommendation rate.
- Customer loyalty: number of contacts per customer (inquiries, orders).

In addition, suitable measures must be defined for each channel with which your goal is to be achieved. The description of the measures includes the planned frequency of posting, the approach and tone towards the target group, the desired reaction of the target group, and a description of the content and topics, for example:

- pictures from the organization;
- links to the blog;
- facts about products;
- current affairs (e.g. European Football Championship);
- events.

Think about the degree of objectivity or emotionality of the content that you want to convey later. Here's how to categorize content that you'll post later. This also creates the basis for an editorial plan for your social media channel.

Always ask yourself what the goal of each individual action is and how you can later check whether you have achieved your goal. Examples of target definition of measures and the associated measurable key figures include the following:

- Fans' likes, comments, or shares of your posts (engagement rate)
- At least one video post per week (number of video posts per week)
- Complaints responded to within 4 hours (response time)

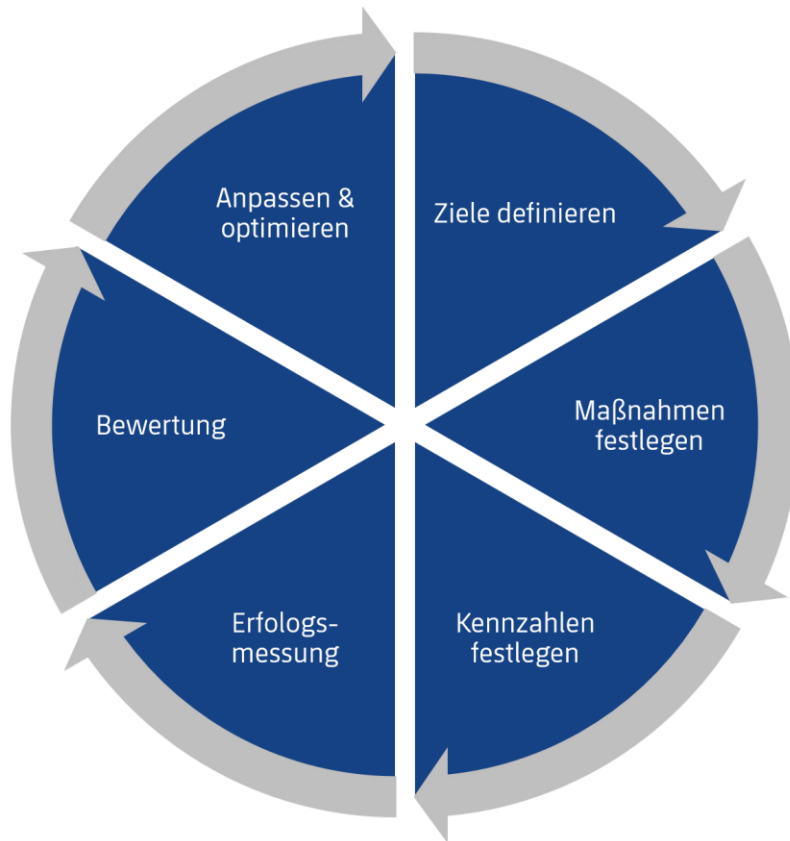
The success of your social media activity can only be measured with the goals and measures you have defined and backed up with key figures. Don't just let the numbers speak for themselves: consider also the trappings, such as the agility of your fans / followers or other topics that are currently determining the social media world.

Practical tip no.3

Make a note of your goals, the measures you have taken, and the key figures for each channel that have been set for measuring success. This is the starting point for your controlling. In addition, you can also formulate other control questions, for example: What makes the encounter with your brand a unique experience? Have you been able to increase your level of awareness in the last year? How is your brand image compared to the competition? Ask yourself these questions regularly and use them to continuously review your strategy.

Figure 1: Social media marketing process

Social-Media-Marketing-Prozess



Adapted from Doc Player, by Lawson, G. 2020. <https://docplayer.net/198423075-United-nations-organization-introduction.html>

Social-Media-Marketing-Prozess	Social media marketing process
Anpassen & optimieren	Adapt & optimise
Bewertung	Evaluation
Erfolgs-messung	Erfolgs measurement
Ziele definieren	Define goals

Maßnahmen festlegen	Define measures
Kennzahlen festlegen	Define key figures

Communication in social media

Basically, especially at the beginning, just try it out! Every community reacts differently. And by building fans, followers and subscribers, you create your own community that shows interest in your brand, your company, and your topics, and meets you with certain ideas. Therefore, you test different content and dialogue strategies and then evaluate what worked best. With this in mind, continue your social media activities.

In the beginning, stick to general best practice tips for social media communication. This helps to avoid mistakes.

Practical tip no.4

An editorial plan, social media management tools, and social media monitoring tools will help you with your social media marketing tasks.

1. Platform selection becomes key

With the large selection of social media platforms, a sports organization is apparently spoiled for choice when it comes to reaching potential customers or fans. However, it isn't worth investing your energy indiscriminately in any social media channel. It's better to find out the best social media platform for your own target group, your own company, and your own industry in order to be particularly successful.

How do you find the right channel for your company?

In order to find the right channel for your company's social media activities, you should ask yourself the following questions:

- What does your company have to offer its customers?
- Who is interested in the company's offer?
- Which social media platform is the intended target group on?
- How much time and know-how are available for social media marketing?
- Would the company like to provide pictures, videos, or texts?

After you have answered all the questions, you can start looking for a suitable platform. We present the five most important social media channels below.

1. Instagram – great pictures and videos for the younger target group

Instagram has now become the darling of social media. It mainly shares pictures and videos. Since users decide within seconds whether they find something appealing, a lot of creativity is required to attract attention on Instagram. The users tend to belong to the younger generation up to the age of 30, who prefer to consume the content quickly. That is why Instagram is particularly recommended if your company can provide a lot of appealing image material and, above all, wants to appeal to a younger target group. Suitable industries are, for example, beauty, fashion, travel, and lifestyle. Instagram is also ideal for working with an influencer. Instagram also offers the option of placing paid ads and setting up an Instagram shop through which customers can shop directly.

- Contents: pictures and videos
- User: mainly between 14 and 30 years of age
- Important industries: beauty, fashion, travel, and lifestyle

2. Facebook – diverse content for the older target group

Facebook is the classic when it comes to social media marketing. Increasingly, however, only the middle-aged and older generation cavort here; younger people under 30 now prefer other channels. Texts, photos, and videos can be distributed via Facebook, so the selection of possible material is particularly large. It's important to post as much and valuable content as possible and also to place advertisements, because the posts are pre-sorted to Facebook users according to relevance. Above all, freelancers and entrepreneurs in the service sector can open groups on Facebook and build their own community very well.

- Contents: texts, pictures, and videos
- Users: increasingly middle-aged and older age groups
- Important industries: all

3. YouTube – longer videos for all audiences

For many, YouTube is just an entertainment channel. However, high reach can also be achieved with this social media channel, since YouTube is not just a video platform, but also a perfect search engine. Companies can publish product presentations, tutorials, interviews or advice videos on YouTube, for example, and thereby attract potential customers. So, YouTube is best for companies that have a lot to say. Almost all age groups and industries are

on YouTube. It should be remembered that more equipment, time, and know-how are required for regular video production than for populating other social media channels with photos and texts.

- Content: videos
- Users: all ages
- Important industries: all industries that can provide good video material

4. Pinterest – inspiring images for the female target group

Pinterest is like a large pin board and a visual search engine. The mainly female users of all age groups should collect their inspirations and ideas on their pin boards and make their pin boards available to other users. To get attention on Pinterest, a company needs to be able to present visual content. That is why sectors such as handicrafts, fashion, travel, living, beauty, and gastronomy are in good hands here, which can effectively showcase their products. If you want to sell your products directly on Pinterest, you can do so using so-called shoppable pins, ideal for online shops.

- Contents: pictures
- Users: female target group of all ages
- Important industries: craft, fashion, travel, living, beauty, and gastronomy

4. TikTok – entertaining videos for teens

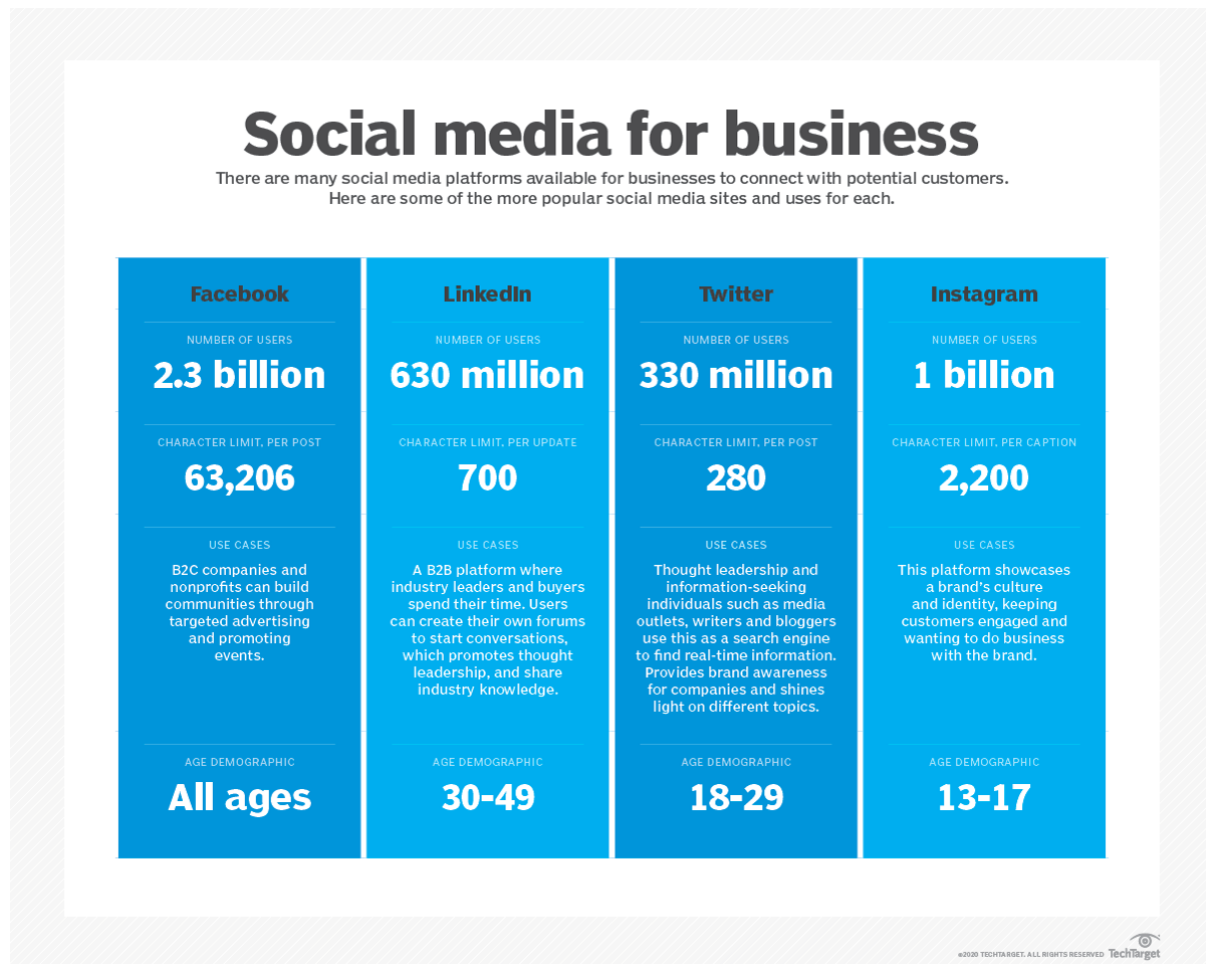
TikTok is a relatively new social media channel, which is gaining more and more followers, namely in the younger target group between 14 and 24 years. At TikTok, fun entertainment through short videos is clearly in the foreground. Challenges are often started, with which companies can also generate attention very well. However, the trends are very fast-paced, so you have to have a knack for currently hot challenges in order to be able to jump on the bandwagon.

- Contents: short videos
- User: majority between 14 and 30 years of age
- Important industries: start-ups and companies that want to target teens

On the one hand, the right social media channel for your environment and sports organization is the one on which your target group can be found most frequently. On the other hand, the channel must also fit your industry and the possible content that your company can create

and publish. Because social media marketing requires staying power and content that matches, the platform must be published regularly in order to be successful in the long term.

Figure 2: Social media platform to connect with potential customers



Adapted from *Social Media*, by B. Lutkevich, 2020. TechTarget. <https://whatis.techtarget.com/definition/social-media>

New trends affected communication recently, modifying the basic aspects and attitudes of firms and consumers. Many companies believe that their existence on social media platforms is the key ingredient to a successful way of activity in the web 2.0 era. However, these new tendencies entail a myopia in strategy for companies who do not integrate these tools. Nevertheless, implicating social media elements globally is quite complex. An important and significant problem is that business actors can barely distinguish the different types of these tools. In the extensive construct of social media, there are multitudinous main categories, for example, social networks, microblogs, virtual worlds, sharing surfaces, etcetera.

Social media has a growing effect in many perspectives: from one standpoint, it reverses how and why users communicate with each other; from another standpoint, it permits the extension of marketing communication opportunities both in a business-to-business (B2B) and a business-to-consumer (B2C) aspect. Social media supports firms to rethink the traditional one-way communication flow of their marketing messages. Consequently, business actors have to incorporate a new, interactive communication flow into their marketing strategy. In such an environment, users are able to create, modify, share, and discuss a significant part of contents on the web.

Therefore, social media has much more to offer; it consists of platforms with key instruments and tools to achieve a much higher objective, combining communication and marketing aspects in a single strategy.

Such tools are: identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation, and groups.

- Identity delineates the way how consumers reveal themselves on a social media platform.
- Conversations describe how they communicate, including their motivations, frequency and content.
- Sharing reveals the rate of content exchange process between the different actors.
- Presence describes the reachability of the users on the social media platforms.
- Relationships characterize the ties between the participants.
- Reputation is the measure of identifying themselves, mainly relating to others in the community.
- Groups are the communities, which are the grounding elements of social media phenomenon.

We hypothesize that these functional blocks can be treated as contributions to the companies' marketing strategy. In our literature review, we would like to lay the foundations of our theoretical implications in an interdisciplinary way, which can help firms to better understand the nature of the online social platforms, thus to answer the following main questions: on what social media platforms should the firms be present? and how they should apply them as strategic tools?

What does social media involve?

One thing to understand is the difference between social media and social networking: the first it is defined as a platform while the latter is defined as a way of communicating through the different social media platforms.

Sarah Hartshorn (2010), in Social Media Today website, gives two good definitions to distinguish between the two:

Social media is a way to transmit, or share information with a broad audience. Everyone has the opportunity to create and distribute. (...) On the other hand, social networking is an act of engagement. Groups of people with common interests, or like-minds, associate together on social networking sites and build relationships through community. (para. 1-2)

When looking at how to be successful on social media, social networking plays a huge part. The whole point of using social media is to be social and actually interact with your audience through exchanging information and putting a face to the name for most sports organizations.

Social platforms have dramatically changed the way in which we share content with each other and the way we interact with our audiences. They provide an instant form of communication, which is great for creating a personality for a brand.

When considering how much of your digital marketing effort should be focused on social channels, a strategy should be developed for the audience you are looking to attract while keeping in mind the content you are able to generate.

Depending on the audience and overall digital marketing objectives, the use of the social channels will differ between brands. Engaging with your audience using social media can be a quick and (sometimes) cost-effective form of digital marketing. A social strategy, however, should only form one part of a wider digital marketing mix which should be completed alongside social campaigns to bring in even better results.

2. Understanding the essence and challenges of social media

This mindset brings us to the essence of social media and social media marketing. More important than all the tools and platforms that exist are the ways businesses can use social media to increase the efficiency of existing marketing programs, offer new and relevant marketing opportunities, serve and understand their customers better, become more valuable and trustworthy partners, and improve their interactions.

To be able to do this, business needs to understand what the essence of social media marketing is and how to strategically deploy social media in function of their customers, ecosystem of partners, and the social media influence sphere. Social media has brought significant changes upon people and companies, especially in the way we interact, seek information, and communicate. However, it would be wrong to attribute all these changes only to social media. Many of the below described essential phenomena to understand about social media and to know what truly matters already existed or started before social networks such as Facebook even existed.

What social media did do, however, is increase the speed at which these socio-economical shifts that were already happening, further evolved. We'll now look at some of the changes and challenges, and provide some short answers. So, what is the essence of social media and what are the main challenges?

1. The explosion of opinions and word-of-mouth

People have always talked about businesses, products, and customer experiences. It's the essence of word-of-mouth. Since the arrival of the Internet, these discussions, opinions, and mentions got a more public character.

With the arrival of social media, however, they have grown at an explosive rate and they get shared in an instant. Reputation, comments, opinions, messages, and stories travel faster than ever before. Word-of-mouth has found fertile ground in social media to grow exponentially. What people say and share on social media regarding products and customer experiences can have a tremendous impact. Understanding this, responding to it, and being more transparent is a must for brands that want to be respected. Not listening and simply letting things "happen" without at least being present and active is a recipe for distrust and criticism.

2. Buyers find vendors more often than vice versa

For most businesses, their website, online forms, interactive communication channels, etcetera, these days are mission-critical and key in their marketing and sales processes.

The increasing role of online properties in the way we do business is related to the nature of online media themselves (measurability, speed, etc.), but, obviously, also to the fast adoption of the Internet as an information medium for people and thus buyers. Being found online and converting people that find us to prospects and eventually customers is what we aim to do. Main tactics to being found, reaching out to people online, and converting them into buyers include content marketing, e-mail, search engine optimization, among other elements. However, social media has offered many more ways for people to gather information prior to a purchase, consult peer reviews, ask advice, and pull the control over the pre-sales cycles and even actual sales towards themselves. People are prepared before they buy; they want to find the information and decide for themselves, because they have the tools and channels with social media. And they do use them! This has led to an increase in the pace of the already ongoing shift from selling to buying.

3. Customer satisfaction equals or leads customer acquisition

In the previous two points, we saw how fast customer experiences travel, both "positive" and "negative", and how they call upon social media and advice of peers and experts to make an educated buying decision. The combination of word-of-mouth, the viral reach of social media,

and the use of reviews and socially shared opinions force businesses to completely focus on their customers and prospects throughout their whole organization.

The old saying that a satisfied customer equals two isn't valid in a social media world. When a satisfied customer spreads the word about his experiences or becomes a fan of your brand, he equals much more than two. As a marketing expert and author, Joseph Jaffe puts it: "retention is the new acquisition" (Jaffe, 2010). Excellent customer service is key in improving the word-of-mouth and perception regarding your business. The result are new customers. Your most satisfied customers will become brand advocates, and some of them will become real influencers in the buying decisions of others. Even more important is the role of the end-to-end customer experience, each interaction and direct or indirect 'touch' with your brand matters. Everything has an impression and brand impact. The same goes for social and certainly one dimension: social customer service as part of the overall customer service or contact center experience.

4. Content and context rule in a world of sharing

One of the main aspects of social media is the interconnection between various platforms and services, enabling people to share content, bookmarks, opinions etcetera, over several networks and with different people.

What they share over all these platforms gets shared by others on their favorite networks or where they have found, thus potentially resulting in a snowball effect whereby one piece of content can show up on several media and in unexpected ways. Sharing and the use of sharing tools that technically allow people to do so is one of the keys of social media and of the 'distribution' aspect in content marketing. Obviously, offering sharing possibilities is not enough. People only share things they find on Twitter, blogs, etcetera, over their social networks if they think those things –we call them 'content' and they can take any form– are share-worthy in their eyes. The decision to share content –or not– is determined by various psychological and other motivations. To be shared, content must at least be relevant in the context of how people use it. The context in which content exists is defined by the life cycle, needs, interaction channels, etcetera, of the (potential customer). Content and context are the king and queen of social media, just as they have always been in lead generation, email marketing, etcetera. If content, whether it's written or audiovisual, is extremely relevant, it can become a story that gets spread fast via word-of-mouth. Note that the content people create can be just as valuable –and sometimes more– for your business. Content is about getting found, sharing, but also engaging in what we call "conversations".

5. Dialogue prevails over monologue when people have control

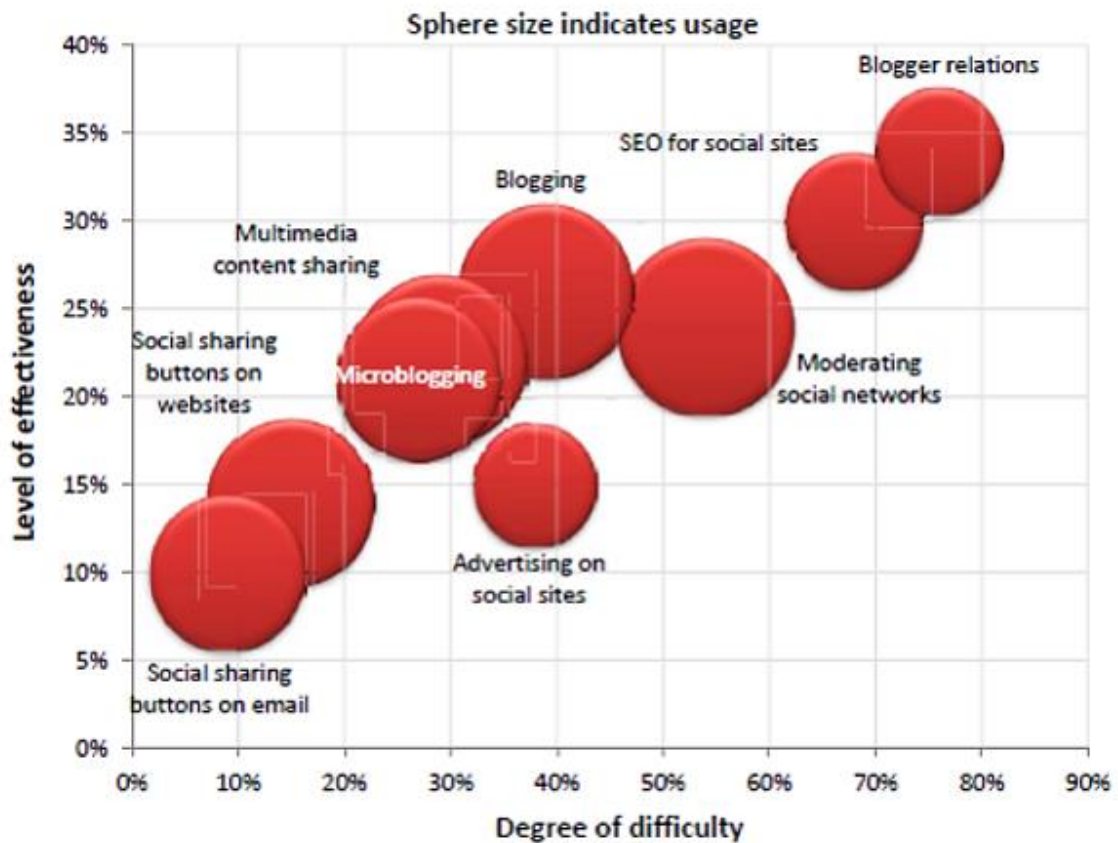
Marketing and communication have long been sitting in a one-way mass broadcasting sphere, among many others, driven by the focus on reach, mass consumption, and mass media. Social

media marketing is strongly built on the so-called “long tail”, micro-communities, and platforms and personal dialogue.

On top of that, mass media are increasingly losing power in a world where people control the interaction and a certain fatigue and disbelief regarding broadcasting and traditional advertising exists. Communication is, per definition, based on a two-way interaction, and it used to be like that. Businesses forgot it in the mass media era and are now forced to change again. Sending out marketing messages obviously still works but only if relevant and personalized. In email marketing, for instance, the focus is increasingly on the recipient and his personal needs. Businesses start looking at the people behind their email addresses. People have more control, and, thus, businesses should engage on dialogues instead of monologues. Social media marketing is strongly based upon this although, in reality, it’s not a black and white matter, as we will see further. Social media is not by definition the end of broadcasting and certainly not of direct marketing. It’s the end of irrelevant broadcasting without taking into account the recipient, and the end of monologues. Listening and responding is key as is social media risk management in the sense of a pro-active and open (non-defensive) approach.

Figure 3: A three-dimensional view of social media marketing tactics

Chart: Three-dimensional view of social marketing tactics



Source: ©2011 MarketingSherpa Social Marketing Benchmark Survey
Methodology: Fielded February 2011, N=3,342

Adapted from *Chart: three-dimensional view of social media marketing tactics*, by A. Sutton, 2011. Marketing Sherpa. <https://sherpablog.marketingsherpa.com/research-and-measurement/social-media-marketing-tactics-ranked/>

Social media in the marketing mix

Social media marketing is a broad term that covers a rich range of many different networks, media, evolutions, and tools. That diversity is also reflected in the marketing purposes that social media can serve. It is, therefore, wrong to categorize social media marketing as a specific form of marketing that is limited to one or a few goals, like many people do.

A simple example can illustrate this: What are you really doing if you are monitoring and identifying trends on social media networks to send a topical email or to find new keywords for your search engine marketing strategy, based on real-time trending: social media marketing or trying to improve your email marketing or search engine marketing?

Since one of the characteristics of social media marketing is being customer-centric and listening closely to the needs of people, social media marketing, by definition, is part of your

global cross-channel marketing strategy. On top of that, the combination of social media with, for instance, email has proven to be effective for the overall results of email marketing campaigns.

Before looking more in-depth at the ways social media can be used to improve cross-channel interactions, have a better view on the customer and even improve direct marketing strategies. Below is a non-exhaustive list of common marketing purposes that are being served with social media:

- trend identification and research;
- market gathering, customer and competitor insights;
- customer service via specific accounts;
- brand awareness raising and a more “human” brand positioning;
- search engine optimization and traffic building;
- viral marketing, word-of-mouth, and influencer marketing;
- reputation management;
- information in pre-sales cycles;
- lead generation and nurturing;
- customer acquisition;
- customer retention, loyalty, and community building;
- one-to-one, one-to-many, and many-to-many conversations; and
- public relations.

When looking at the above mentioned uses of social media marketing, it’s immediately clear that the main advantages of social media for businesses occur in gaining a better knowledge about their reputation, target groups, markets, and competitors, in providing a better customer experience, new interaction, and information channels, in acquiring leads and prospects through word-of-mouth and personal interactions, and, finally, in inbound marketing techniques such as search engine optimization, link building, and traffic generation.

The main question is the following: How does all of this fit in a cross-channel data-driven and integrated marketing approach? And this is where the true power of social media surfaces: in

the interaction with other channels and communication tactics, and in a holistic and personalized interactive CRM and communication strategy.

The integrated CRM and interaction perspective

Social media provides enormous (customer) insights to businesses who systematically monitor what is being said. In order to be able to do that, they need a systematic approach and the proper tools.

The data that are gathered from social media can be used to improve all your customer interactions and even your CRM:

- Identifying the social media accounts enables you to gain additional information about your customers that can be used for existing interactive CRM and marketing programs.
- Knowing what people talk about regarding your product and brand and what people have most influence on other social media users enables you to identify influencers and brand advocates that should be treated as your most loyal customers, since they are powerful sources for word-of-mouth marketing.
- Identifying trends and keywords on social media enables you to improve the efficiency of your email marketing by tapping into these trends and to improve your search engine marketing by including the keywords and trends about your business, market, and competitors.
- Analyzing what social media your target groups and customers use enables you to offer them information and interaction possibilities via the channels, content formats, and tools they use. Furthermore, it helps you in selecting sharing tools that you can use in existing marketing channels, such as email, your website, and your blog.
- Monitoring via which social channels and content your prospects find your online properties and enter the marketing funnel enables you to better segment them and provide them personalized information in function of their needs.
- Sharing links to online content and pages via social bookmarking services, microblogging, and other social networks leads to traffic in both the short and long term to that content. Traffic and being found is the condition *sine qua non* to generate new leads.

These are just a few examples on how social media can be used in optimizing your cross-channel communication strategy, improving your brand awareness, and offering more interaction possibilities to your customers in function of their actions.

When social media gets combined with other marketing strategies, the cross-fertilization strengthens the impact and efficiency of the overall programs. Let's take email and social as an example:

- Adding social sharing tools to your emails and focusing on share-worthy and relevant content increases the reach of your emails.
- Social media presences such as Facebook pages and private social networks can be used to have new subscribers for your newsletters, gain leads via white papers, and so on via embeddable forms.
- Professional networks such as LinkedIn offer you the possibility to send mails to your communities.
- When launching a blog, you can launch at the same time an extra newsletter that includes the posts on your blog and enables you to reach new audiences.
- When you offer other interaction channels than email, you can provide inactive email subscribers or email recipients that wish to unsubscribe, another communication alternative via social media.

The use of social media in your global marketing strategy offers a vast range of new opportunities. When properly planned, managed, measured, connected, and integrated, social media marketing offers nothing but benefits.

Social media marketing starts with defining a clear strategy, implementing a cross-divisional approach, defining the right key performance indicators, educating and involving your staff and even employees, and, finally, with monitoring and listening to what is being said about you and your market.

The next step is participating, being open for personal interaction, measuring and improving both your social media marketing strategy and other communication activities, in function of the feedback you get.

When being a relevant and valuable partner in the social media sphere, you will not only be able to identify influencers and generate word-of-mouth, but you will also become an influencer yourself. Obviously, there are always people who will say things you don't like. But they do it anyway. And it's better to know it, respond to it, learn from it, and improve as you go along.

In a landscape with competition, more content, and networks than ever, a succinct strategy gives you the focus needed to say "no" to efforts that don't serve your goals.

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