

## Social media importance in Businesses

Social media networks were a novelty 5 years ago, but today their importance is no longer debated. Yes, businesses have definitely realized the power of social media and accepted that social media marketing has to be part of their marketing and PR mix.

In Social Media Examiner's 2013 End of Year Report, marketers now place very high value on social media marketing:

- 86% of marketers stated that social media is important for their business
- 89% of marketers stated that increased exposure was the number one benefit of social media marketing

These are the definitive benefits of social media marketing that are listed:

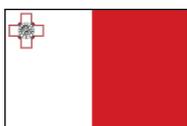
- Increased exposure
- Increased traffic
- Developed loyal fans
- Generated leads
- Improved search ranking
- Grew business partnerships
- Reduced marketing expenses
- Improved sales
- Provided marketplace insight

## Social Media is the Game Changer

It's obvious that social media will continue to have a significant impact in 2014 on marketers and business owners: They now have the ability to reach out and communicate on a personal level with their target audience on a daily basis. This is a game changer for businesses engaging in marketing, sales, customer service and other business activities. This is very powerful and has never been available with traditional marketing!

The success gap is widening between businesses that are using social media in an informal, ad hoc manner and those taking a more planned, strategic approach. This has significant implications:

- Businesses that use social media strategically are more satisfied with the results than ad hoc users, who are more skeptical about the value of social media.

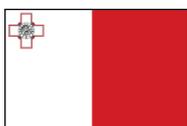


- Businesses that use social media as part of a planned corporate approach are 1.5 to 2 times more likely to anticipate revenue growth than ad hoc users.
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Much has changed over the last year in social media, and it will continue to change in 2014. Here are my Best Tips for Successful Social Media and Digital Marketing in 2014.

## Some Powerful Stats and Information from 2013

- Social is now the top Internet activity: Americans spend an average of 37 minutes daily on social media, a higher time-spend than any other major Internet activity, including email.
- Facebook is still the leading social media network and continues to grow. Here are the latest facts and figures:
  - Facebook now has 1.26 billion users
  - Facebook averages 1.23 billion monthly active users
  - There are 128 million daily active Facebook users in the US
  - Facebook averages 945 million monthly active mobile users
  - Facebook usage is highest in North America: Facebook has 59% of all Internet users in North America as active users. Google+ only achieves 15% and Twitter 25%.
- Google+ is now the second largest social network at just over 50%, with Facebook still dominating at 70%. Keep in mind that a Google+ account is mandatory whenever a person creates a new Gmail account. This is pushing up the account ownership stats. But no other social network has Google's web assets leverage. Read more on how important Google+ is for Your Business and how it has a major impact on search engine results for your biz.
- YouTube is more popular than cable television: YouTube reaches more adults than any cable network. In the United States, the number of people who watch television has fallen behind the number of people who watch YouTube on a regular basis. This makes it clear that televised content is undergoing a decline, online consumption of video is on the incline. Many companies have taken advantage of this by releasing their ads or marketing campaigns on YouTube first before they debut on TV. Take many of the 2014 Super Bowl XLVIII ads (like Budweiser) that were released on YouTube before the big game and were rewarded with triple YouTube views.



- LinkedIn is still the largest professional business network and continues to grow but not at the pace of Pinterest, Google+ or Twitter. Here are some numbers from Visual.ly.
- Pinterest is the fastest growing social network right now. The visual web is driving the rise of Pinterest and Tumblr with growth rates of 88% and 74% respectively over the last 12 months. Pinterest is also one of the leading referral sources for organic traffic, which is a good for high search rankings.
- Some social media networks have a more active user-base than others. Statistical research has revealed that more than 95% of Facebook users log into their account every day. That number for Twitter is 60% and for LinkedIn is 30%.
- Look at this useful information on demographics of key social networking platforms from Pew Internet Social Media Update 2013.

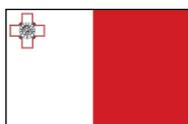
## What are 2 key factors driving the social web in 2013 and 2014?

According to the Global Web Index study it is:

- Mobile – the number of people accessing the Internet via a mobile phone increased by 60.3% to 818.4 million in the last 2 years. In the USA, there are now 101 million daily mobile users. Facebook's 101 million US daily mobile users make up a whopping 78% of its 128 million daily US users.
- Older user adoption – On Twitter the 55-64 year age bracket is the fastest growing demographic with 79% growth rate since 2012. The fastest growing demographic on Facebook's and Google+'s networks are the 45 to 54 year age bracket at 46% and 56% respectively. So maybe that's the reason your parents and grandparents aren't visiting that much anymore — they are too busy on Facebook and Twitter!

The top challenges businesses have in using social media are:

- Lack of time
- Inability to measure value
- Difficulty integrating social media with other business activities



Operational Programme II – Cohesion Policy 2007-2013  
*Empowering People for more Jobs and a Better Quality of Life*  
This project is part-financed by the European Union  
European Social Fund (ESF)  
Co-financing rate: 85% EU Funds; 15% National Funds



- Lack of budget

I absolutely agree with this, and hear it first hand from many of my clients. But these challenges can be overcome, if social media is planned and done strategically!

## Social Media Channels – Which One to Choose??

Business owners should pay attention to which social platforms help them reach their goals with relevant audiences, whether that's generating sales or greater visibility. Part of my job is helping business owners decide which networks are best for their business.

Here are the most popular ones:

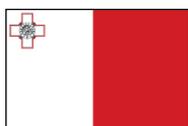
- Facebook
- Twitter
- YouTube
- LinkedIn
- Google+
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- StumbleUpon and Digg social bookmarking
- Slideshare presentation sharing

And of course, blogging is key! Here are some tips to generating great online content to feed your social media networks!

## Integrate!

Social media is not an end unto itself. It **MUST** be integrated and work hand-in-hand with all your other marketing and PR initiatives which should be continued to reach all your marketing touch points and your ultimate success. These can include:

- Email Marketing and growing your email list
- Search engine optimization
- Event marketing (speaking and networking)
- Direct Mail
- Online ads (Google Adwords)
- Print display ads
- Sponsorships
- Mobile Marketing
- Radio/TV Ads



## Sharing is Caring!

I know this sounds basic, but make sure your website, blog and email newsletter include social “share” buttons for people to easily share your content on ALL their social networks.

Add your social network links on your email signature.

## So, What Will Social Media Do For Your Business?

Making social media a priority for your business will allow your business to:

- Be found!
- Establish a stronger brand
- Boost sales
- Share expertise and knowledge
- Tap into the wisdom of customers
- Interact and receive valuable customer feedback
- Free advertising: satisfied customers talk about your company, this is the strongest word-of-mouth-marketing
- Build a community

Read more at <http://www.business2community.com/social-media/social-media-important-business-2014-0773321#1wejfuCvkuHAH2x.99>

