

How to start using Social Media for business – Part 1

September 7th, 2009 Lee Smallwood

Why use Social Media?

When looking at Social Media it can be a little daunting to understand why, how, when and where to start. And not knowing this can make it difficult when trying to explain to your boss that your company should at least be evaluating the use of Social Media.

But is your company/business ready to get involved in Social Media? If it is, there's a structured process that can be used that ensures all the boxes are ticked before embarking on engaging your audience using Social Media.

Over the next few posts I'll be looking at how an organisation goes about writing a social media policy and what it needs to do to engage people authentically online.

What today's post covers:

1. What do you want to achieve using Social Media?
2. What is your current relationship like with your customers/clients?
3. How can Social Media help?
4. What tools are available to help?

What do you want to achieve using Social Media?

Before you embark on your Social Media journey – ask yourself what do you want to achieve? Are you wanting to have:

- Greater awareness
- Greater sales
- Greater loyalty

All of them did I hear you say? Well let's just focus on one for the time being – it stops any confusion, plus generating more of one will generally have a positive affect on the other two 😊
So write it down now, yes, WRITE IT DOWN – I'll come back to it in a little while...

Current relationship with your customers/clients

Something that may change that answer is what is current relationship like with your customers? What I mean is, what do people know about you – your business or you as a personal brand? Because if you decide that you want to have more sales but from the list below you select A – People know nothing about what you do – You're going to need to create Awareness first... So, from the list below write down which statements is currently true:

- A. People know nothing about you or what you do
- B. People are aware of you, but they currently don't buy
- C. People purchase your products/services but not repeatedly
- D. People purchase repeatedly and talk enthusiastically about you, your products/services
- E. People are your business advocates

Once you know which statement best represents the majority of your customers, you have an understanding of what the 'next' stage is e.g. if you chose C, then your focus needs to be on how you can get your customers/clients to get to a D- Which means you need to create loyalty.

NOTE: you can't leapfrog these stages. There is really no quick route from A – E

How can Social Media help?

How can Social Media help you achieve this? Well, it's all about understanding the types of individuals within the communities and their level of involvement. So, let's first look at how people use Social Media. [Forrester researcher](#) identified that there are six types of people in

Creators
Critics
Collectors
Joiners
Spectators
Inactives

relation to 'content', these are:

1. Creators – Publish blogs, web pages, upload videos, upload audio and write articles/stories and publish them
2. Critics – Post ratings/reviews of products/services. They comment on someone else's blog, contribute to online forums and contribute to and/or edit articles in wiki's
3. Collectors – Use RSS/Atom feeds, add 'tags' web pages or photo's and vote for websites online
4. Joiners – Maintain profile on a social networking site and visit other social networking sites
5. Spectators – Read blogs, watch videos created by other users, listen to podcasts, read online forum's and read customer ratings/reviews

