

A Clark Marketing Ltd White Paper



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**Successfully using social media marketing
To give your business the buzz!**

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Introduction

Social media is the online phenomenon that helps you connect and interact. The Social Media Platforms offer many opportunities for free or inexpensive business promotion.

But Business Owners can have a tough time getting results.

This White Paper shows how to best use Social Media Marketing for results.

Problem Statement

Social Media Marketing is full of prizes and pitfalls. Visible results do exist but have been few and far between. At least three surveys have cast doubt on its effectiveness. However, in the right instance, and used the best way, it certainly can bring strong results. As ever with marketing, it is about selecting the right approach.

Previous Options

Previous methods of promotion remain the Web, eMarketing, and blogging.

Clark Marketing Solution

This White Paper discusses where Social Media Marketing does work, and what type of organization can definitely benefit, and those that do not benefit at the moment.

Summary

At the end of the paper, readers will know how to decide if Social Media is for them, and how to develop their Social Media Marketing Activities.

1) Introduction

Social media is the online phenomenon that helps you connect and stay in touch, prod, and poke and interact with real and virtual friends, swap images, upload and display photos, and a million other ways to share fun, events and news.

But from a London Business Owner's perspective, Social Media Marketing is full of prizes and pitfalls. But from a London Business Owner's perspective, Social Media Marketing is full of prizes and pitfalls.

Beware – there is a huge amount of hype along with the usual Get-Rich-Quick schemes out there. Avoid getting caught up.

Social Media unquestionably brings brand awareness, aids thought leadership, and builds personal credibility, but the evidence is that it brings in enquiries and sales only in quite specific situations, though admittedly rather well for the lucky recipients.

Social Media unquestionably brings brand awareness, aids thought leadership, and builds personal credibility, but the evidence is that it brings in enquiries and sales only in quite specific situations.

In the right instance, as the overfull to heaving membership (70+) of the newly created (April 2010) St Pancras Oyster Club can testify, used the best way, it can bring strong results. As ever with marketing, it is about selecting the right approach.

This chapter will show you how to identify where Social Media Marketing works, and how to:

- i. *invest reliably in Social Media Marketing*
- ii. *when and how to use Social Media Marketing*

in the way that is right for you, you're future clients, and your business.

What we will cover

1) *Describe the Social Media Marketing phenomenon*

2) *If you don't use Social Media Marketing, will you lose your business?*

2) *Understand how much "effort" you need to put into social media marketing*

3) *Answer the first big question*

4) *Identify the right social media tools and tactics for you*

5) *Understand personal privacy when working with Social Media*

6) *Seven steps to build your visibility*

2) If you don't do Social Media Marketing, will you lose your business?

In the majority of circumstances, if you are already successful, and decide Social Media Marketing is simply not for you (some people do feel like this), then nothing negative will happen overnight. However, there will be at least some effect on new client conversions over time if you do not at least make use of the Business Networking tools LinkedIn and eCademy, and there would be some loss of ground to competitors, and you should be aware that younger people make much more use of Social Media.

However if you are in events, publishing and media, the effect would be severe from the word 'go'.

3) The Social Media Marketing phenomenon

Social media marketing is simply using the advertising and promotion facilities of Social Media tools such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn eCademy and more to promote your business, manage your reputation online, or engage a community interested in what you offer.

Other vital tools include WordPress and blogs, Twitter, other business online networks such as LinkedIn, eCademy, Online Press Release services, and video networks such as Youtube. They are all designed to attract visitors, help them engage, and in the process, offer space for advertising and subscription services to make money from advertisers and user.

Many people know of the apparently magical things marketing with these tools can do. For example, blogging and twittering swept a President into the White House. These tools helped Barack Obama create a personal connection to millions of followers, ensuring heavy media pickup of a whole range of his campaign activities, (far beyond the Republicans' abilities to achieve the same effect.

These same tools brought protesters onto the streets in Iran by bypassing Iranian State censorship, and helped Dell sell more computers, by encouraging more comment and conversation about the machines.

More locally Hillingdon Council, near London, successfully used Twitter two years running to get visitors to their outside ice rink, simply by getting followers to click on the Council website and view/comment about the event, whilst the BBC's Robert Peston's blog was highly influential and one of the most followed when Northern Rock failed and, during the subsequent financial crash.

And in late May, Unite's Joint General Secretary Derek Simpson's tweets about the BA/Unite

negotiations caused ACAS to be raided by The Socialist Workers Party.

Yes social media really has got the power to move nations! But here is a note of caution. Our experience shows it is not the universal marketing answer to success and financial independence, though some practitioners would have you believe otherwise.

How you use it successfully needs to fit in with the type of business you have, and with other marketing activities you are running. You will need to know in advance how your future clients make use of the many different ways to engage with you to select the most appropriate tools.

4) Understanding the case for investing in Social Media Marketing

This White Paper will illustrate what kind of businesses will and will not benefit from Social Media Marketing at this time, and who should invest time and effort. Note this will almost certainly change in coming years.

The purpose is to give you:

- a) dependable knowledge of what business styles will be successful with types of Social Media
- b) how to position social media marketing correctly amongst other online marketing tools/methods
- c) how much effort (time, % of money, or both) you should invest on average

The benefits will be to:

- i) Eliminate much time if you know what types of Social Media Marketing is not right for your business style
- ii) Select dependable social media marketing strategy from the outset

iii) Measure your effort, as Social Media is a very hungry and demanding entity indeed

5) How much effort should you put into social media marketing?

Before answering this, for virtually all businesses, it is essential to have in place and working:

- i. *your (reasonably well) search-optimised website*
- ii. *your eMarketing campaign*
- iii. *your blog*

Without these, your social media marketing will struggle. Plus they should already be generating some level of enquiries otherwise there is a problem with your message.

After this, aim to spend no more than 20% of your total promotional time, money, or both on social media marketing, and measure your results regularly.

Be disciplined! Social Media Marketing is Highly Addictive..!

A rare few businesses claim to produce good incomes just with social media marketing, but they do have a highly specific focus and do not appear durable over time.

4) The first big question

Does the Internet want to hear from you?

Knowing the answer to this in advance can save you an awful lot of time!

If we assume from above you already know your new business is interesting to future clients, then you also know they will listen to you wherever your name and service appears – in places where they go for interactions and answers. If your current methods do not produce results, Social Media Marketing is

unlikely to either. Let's focus on improving what already works.

Demographics are most important, for example the Generation X age group, 35 to 55 years old tend only to dip into social media. They respond better to promotion in e-mail marketing. Generation Y, typically 18 to 35-year-olds, have minds wired to wider connections, are seemingly do several things at once better, and use social media extensively. However e-mail marketing also remains important to this group.

Next consider your type of business. Will your future clients use social media to decide if they want to search for answers, or work with you?

The client will already know they have a need for something. Do you know they use Social Media already to satisfy it? Or find out more and decide if you are for them? How you show you meet this need depends on the different stages of their thinking, what you and your competitors say in the different parts of your sales cycle.

As you already know, here are the stages of sales cycle. Your prospects think in different ways according to where they are in their buying decision:

- *identifying a pain*
- *"newness" of your concept*
- *alternatives that fit the need*
- *degree of risk in purchase*
- *opinion of previous clients (getting more and more important, often gained via Social Media)*
- *purchase decision*
- *post purchase opinion*

There are three online ways they will find out about you:

- i) they will stumble across your website, Google ad, blog, or tweets. At this point they are

usually not ready to buy. In fact they may not be aware of what their pain is, but will recognise it if they see an article that helps them identify it.

- ii) they will follow your blog and tweets to learn more about the pain, the solution, and about you.
- iii) they will look for more information about you, usually from your eCademy and LinkedIn network entries.

6) What are the right Social Media Tools and Tactics for you?

Based on 6 years experience, the table shows what kind of promotion method or tool and in the recommended order you will successfully use to connect with them. Notice how very different they are by type of business! For example the B2B business compared to Events/Networking.

Type of Business	Top 3 Online Promotion methods	Extra mile methods
B2B (Accountants, Office Furniture, Manufacturing, Business Services)	1. Web 2. Google Pay per Click/SEO 3. Email	4. Blogging
Events/Networking (NRG, St Pancras Oyster Club)	1. Web/ Email 2. Twitter 3. Blogging	4. SEO 5. Google Pay per Click/SEO
B2C Health/Beauty	1. Web/PR 2. Facebook 3. Email	4. Blogging 5. Twitter
B2C Retail (shoes, skirts, wine, holidays)	1. Web 2. Google Pay per Click/SEO 3. Online Portals/Shopping sites	4. Possibly Twitter
Publishing (usually for this group they'll likely go for everything!)	1. Web 2. Email 3. Article Sites/YouTube	4. News sharing platforms 5. Blogging 6. Twitter

Now you know how your future clients will want to be influenced by you, this next section deals with selecting your social media Toolkit.

There are two distinct partitions in the networks, Business and Social. Whilst in the communities, there is blurring of the boundaries, it is wise for you to have crystal clear policies on this for your business.

Online Business Networks	Online Social Networks
LinkedIn	Twitter
eCademy	Facebook
Plaxo	MySpace
News Sharing Platforms	Instant Messaging Services
Other minor/specialist players	and more...

There are other tools/services in both sectors which serve other purpose, i.e. Skype, and the fact they are not here does not cast doubt on their usefulness.

The Online Business Networks

What is an Online Business Network? Put simply, these are websites that allow you to comprehensively enter all sorts of details about your professional life.

Today, prospective clients do make a point of looking for you on these sites, and it is really important that you create a powerful professional profile for yourself.

They are easy to sign up, though quite demanding in the amount of information. It is worth taking care to do this well.

Business to business people need to create first rate LinkedIn and eCademy profiles.

LinkedIn has both a free, then graded memberships, from \$24.95 to \$49.95, whilst eCademy has three options of free, £4.99+VAT per month for Pownetworker, or £39.99+VAT a month for Blackstar. Free usually isn't worth having except to help you become familiar with the systems. Whether you are a business owner or key member of the team, business membership of these networks is highly desirable.

Go to LinkedIn.com and eCademy.com to sign up. Follow the instructions carefully, and in particular when doing your truly great profile, remember to cover these five steps:

- i. *review how people typically "write" their profiles in your business*
- ii. *describe yourself in professional terms*
- iii. *present an example of work you have done from a client, the impact it had, and what they said about the results you got for them*
- iv. *bring out a personal side to you, share a personal interest (but remember privacy)*
- v. *invite clients and prospects to contact you, but don't be overly "salesy"*

Remember to complete your entries fully, add good quality photographs, and ensure that key words and tags are properly completed.

Set up your eCademy and linked in profiles to access your Twitter and blog accounts.

Blogging

What is a blog (or web-log? It is simply a way of writing your thoughts in a public diary, viewable on the internet, in a way that others can find it using Google/Bing Search. The more thoughts you have, the more presence you also generate for yourself and your website in the search engines.

To increase the effectiveness, you will need to use the blog tagging facilities to win more coverage, and read up on the comprehensive internet based advice sources on how to promote your blog. (Remembering the rule to spend your time wisely.)

There is a wide choice of blogging platforms. The blog market leader, with notably clean presentation of your vital information, is WordPress, popular alternatives are Typepad, Bloglines and Movable Type. A number of website systems also include blogging facilities.

There is an ongoing discussion about whether your blogging platform should be part of your website, or "owned" on the public blogging platform itself.

Unless you are going for extreme SEO visibility and strong branding, important for publishers politicians and media, where making blogging part of the website is recommended, most people will opt for a quiet life, and use the public platforms for their blog.

Branding is important, and if you use a public blog platform such as Wordpress.com, you do have limited access for branding such as a top banner.

Twitter

Twitter is remarkably easy to set up. Simply go to Twitter.com and open up an account, and start tweeting! There are a number of online courses that help you get the best out of Twitter, and several labour saving tools to automate sending out your tweets, and responding to new followers.

Facebook

When working with Generation Y clients, a quality Facebook entry is vital. Simply go to Facebook.com, and sign up. Do not be tempted to use your personal Facebook account for your business! When setting the privacy on

Facebook, make sure you only put information on display you will be happy for your customers to read (for example, mentioning the 3 years you spent for embezzlement in Wandsworth prison could be unhelpful if you are going into business as an Independent Financial Advisor).

MySpace

This is an earlier version of Facebook, and whilst in decline, has become the home of musical performers. So if you're in a band, that's the place to sign up and upload your music and videos!

News sharing platforms



How often have you seen these tiny icons on online newspaper articles? These are news sharing tools to help share your articles and events that have already been published.

Beloved by PR companies, and easy to use, some of these including Yahoo! Buzz, Digg, and Fark. The platforms allow interested readers to vote your story up or down, getting you more rankings and coverage. Persistence pays in terms of web visits, brand awareness and coverage (remembering your 20% time focus!).

Have a look at how the Daily Telegraph, and The Independent use these tools to get coverage of their articles, and copy the techniques.

Social media and privacy

The social media engines are extremely good at sharing your information, and you need to decide in advance, what you're prepared to share, and what stays private. Once an unwanted comment escapes into the internet it is always there.

7) Seven steps to take to keep you safe online

1. If you are creating business entries, ensure you use business contact details only, and avoid specific references to personal information. However where you are the spokesperson for your business, it is good to let some of your social side in general terms come through.
2. Trust your instincts about what looks wrong or right. They seldom let you down.
3. Where you have options to create privacy settings, normally on Skype, Facebook and my space, take time to understand the implication of the settings so you can decide what gets seen.
4. When people request links to you, or want to follow you (Twitter), investigate them before accepting. It is easy to build an unwanted following if you accept without checking.
5. Every now and then, search and your company name and your name, to ensure there are no detrimental remarks appearing in various parts of the Internet. It is surprising how often this is not done with very powerful effects.
6. In particular take care to hide year of birth, mothers maiden name, name of first school, as these are commonly used as password reminders, and of course change your passwords regularly to avoid any hacks. And be particularly careful about twittering your movements if you have a home address on your website.
7. Don't be afraid to remove a 'friend', and keep an eye on those friends in cases any inappropriate behaviour. Then you'll stay safe online.

8) The 7 dependable steps to build your visibility in the Right Corner of Cyberspace for You

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This is the best bit. Building from your website, e-mailing, and blogging and with your social media tools all set up, now is the time to go into action. Coherent regular messaging is king!

The 7 Simple Steps to substantially build your visibility

- i. *write a calendar of planned topics, and add to your calendar. Most people aim for two to four per month*
- ii. *create a publishing timetable, be realistic*
- iii. *at the top of each topic, write 2-4 short tweets. Is writing wearing you out? Consider hiring a ghost writer to work with you.*
- iv. *write a 15 to 20 word summary of the topic for placement on the news sharing platforms, Digg, Reddit, Yahoo: Buzz and more.*
- v. *publish your blog, write and send your e-mail.*
- vi. *with your e-mail, if you have an online version (many eMarketing platforms do), make sure you include the link in the tweets, and do the same with your blog. Publish the 15 to 20 word summaries to Digg, Reddit, Yahoo: Buzz etc.*

9) Do's and Don'ts for your Social Media Marketing Journey

Do's

If your business style does come up as being one where Social Media will work well for you, then with your eye firmly fixed on sales or enquiry outcomes, read up and distil all the ways Social Media Marketing can work for

you, and assess which of those, as a business person, you will run with. But maintain your discipline and time allocation -

Don'ts

If your business style falls outside one where Social Media Marketing will yield good results, then limit yourself (firmly) to completing good quality LinkedIn and eCademy profiles, and call it a day. Web, eMail marketing, SEO, Pay per Click Ads, are the way to go.

And especially...

Take the greatest care as a business to intelligently manage your time with Social Media Marketing. Remember....

Repeating the Health Warning – Do remember Social Media is Highly Addictive. Control your time, don't let the medium control you!

10) Summary – What is the learning?

If this White Paper has achieved its objectives you will now know:

- i. The essentials to have in place before you start – web, email, and blog, AND generating business
- ii. that you need to be sure people want to hear about you in the Socially connected world before you spend huge amounts of effort with Social Media Marketing
- iii. how much importance you should place in Social Media Marketing for your business
- iv. about the tools to use, and when to use them. Remember, the techniques vary hugely for different business types

v. the importance of keeping your business and private lives firmly separated online, and 7 ways to protect your privacy

vi. 7 Dependable Steps to build your Social Media visibility

vii. And the Do's and Don'ts of Social Media Marketing

Commercial Break

If you would like to discuss this chapter, you need more information, or need assistance to plan your Social Media Marketing Campaign, please get in touch with us at campaign@clarkmarketing.co.uk, or phone 0207 183 7111. We are here to take the stress out of your Social Media Marketing campaign.

About Chris Clark

Chris Clark is MD of Clark Marketing Ltd, a Central London digital marketing company focussing on keeping clients' shops full, getting the Hillingdon Mayor to see two of our success stories for herself, and turning £5-figure e-commerce site sales to £6 figure, and more. Chris has just completed his Diploma in Interactive and Direct Marketing for the Institute of Direct Marketing at Kings College, London, and gained Fellowship of the Institute of Direct Marketing in 2009.

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11) Acknowledgements

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