

# Social Media Marketing How-to Guide

## Introduction:

The communication and purchasing behavior of today's consumer and/or business has shifted rapidly in the last few years. People are getting important information via increasingly interactive mediums such as social networking sites (e.g. Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter) and mobile messages. This transformation in how people obtain information requires a shift in the way marketers message and interact with their target audiences. One-way communication (or "push" marketing) is now only one piece of a marketer's toolset. Two-way mediums such as social media marketing (SMM) are experiencing explosive adoption because they encourage meaningful interaction between marketers and their audience. But marketers are struggling to identify the best way to get started with SMM, and how to integrate it with other interactive tools such as email.

This guide provides background on how social media marketing is being used by marketers today as well as simple, practical ways you can start folding social media marketing into your own marketing mix effectively.

We'll take you through four key steps:

1. Definition of new mediums
2. Assessing your own need
3. Planning programs
  - a. General programs
  - b. Email programs: Integrating email and social media marketing
  - c. Search engine marketing (SEM) and search engine optimization (SEO) programs
4. Measuring success

## Step one: Definition of new mediums

The most commonly-used social media marketing sites and mediums are Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook, and general blogging. A brief definition of each follows:

**Twitter:** Twitter is a free micro-blogging service that enables its users to post, read and share the updates and messages of other users. These posts are referred to as *Tweets*. Tweets are text-based posts of up to 140 characters in length which are displayed on a user's profile page and visible to other users who have subscribed to them (known as *followers*). Senders can restrict delivery to those in their circle of followers or, allow anybody to access them. Users can send and receive Tweets via the Twitter Website, Short Message Service (SMS) or external applications. The service is free for use over the Internet, but use of SMS text messaging may incur phone service provider fees.

**LinkedIn:** LinkedIn is a business-oriented social networking site founded in December 2002 and launched in May 2003. It is mainly used for professional networking. It allows you to connect with current and former colleagues or friends in your personal professional network. Then by extension, you are connected to the "colleagues of your colleagues" which expands your personal network. As of February 2009, it had more than 35 million registered users, spanning 170 industries.

**Facebook:** Facebook is a free social networking site that is operated by Facebook, Inc. Users can join networks organized in a multitude of ways such as by interest area, by school, by location, or by company. Users create a personal profile and then add friends and send messages to interact with others.

**Blogs:** A blog is simply an online location through which people interact and express their opinions to each other. It's a forum for personal expression and communication around a topic area of interest to that particular group. There are hundreds of thousands of blogs that focus on every topic imaginable.

## Step two: Assessing your own need

### Define your objectives

There is enough hype around social marketing that marketers can get caught up in “must have” mode, instead of really stopping and asking themselves “why?” Because “everyone else is using social media marketing” you may feel you have to as well. Instead, take a moment to determine whether and how social media marketing may help you attain the goals of your organization.

For instance, are you looking for a better way to gather customer feedback and engage with your target audience? Do you need a fresh way to extend customer service and loyalty, to improve search engine optimization (SEO), to build brand awareness and buzz, or to drive Website traffic? It is important to understand *how* social media marketing can provide value to your particular company so you can set a defined social networking course that aligns with your key objectives and business initiatives.

### Determine resource needs (costs and technology)

One of the benefits of social mediums is that they are relatively inexpensive in terms of technology costs. If you have a computer and an Internet connection, you can leverage

social media. But for marketers it is essential to carefully weigh the human or time costs associated with social networks.

Successful social engagement is not a one-hit wonder, but rather a commitment to build and sustain relationships with your customers and to build a trusted dialogue over time. Important questions to ask before jumping into the social waters include:

- What exactly is required for set up? Who will be responsible for managing the initial set up?
- Who (or what team) will be responsible for ongoing updates and maintenance of social media accounts? With what cadence will you monitor and post to social media sites to make your investment in this medium scale appropriately?
- Who will manage target audience responses, and what is the process for engaging?
- Who will manage customer inquiries/issues that need to be addressed quickly? What is your standard with regard to response time?
- Who is responsible for content creation? What is the criteria or standard for the type of content that your company will and will not post? Do you have an editorial guide for this? If not, what would it take to create one?

At Lyriss, we manage the company's Web 2.0 program on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [Twitter](#), through a collection of cross-functional “team” members who each contribute a few hours per week. This team includes representatives from corporate communications, product management, sales, marketing, client services and executive staff. After the roles and parameters of the effort have been defined, you don't need a lot of resources to make social media marketing work for you – all you need is a good plan that is executed well and maintained with consistency.

For more information on how Lyriss got started and how we are managing the process, send us a message on one of these

channels or read this recent article on LyrisHQ.com, [“The Lyris Team’s First 100 Days on Twitter - Plus: 10 Twitter Tips”](#).

### Step three: Planning programs

As with any marketing program, you’ll want to identify the strategy, target audience and mediums that best serve your specific objectives. To get you started, below are some ideas about how you may want to plan social media marketing programs yourself.

#### a.) General programs

Before you plan email marketing or Website-related programs that incorporate social media marketing, you’ll want to start by defining your target.

Find out where your target is: The key to a good social media marketing plan starts like any other marketing plan – *define* your target and find out where they are. For social media marketing you’ll need to do a little sleuthing to find out where your target is “hanging out” online. Once you determine where they spend time, listen to what they are saying and find out what interests them. One of the greatest benefits of social media is that it allows you to *listen* and learn from conversations. Think of it as a big cocktail party filled with your prospects and customers – there are lots of interesting and relevant conversations happening all around your market, brand, etc.

Start by searching keywords and/or topics that your target may search – as they relate to your product or service. Look for blogs as well as other social sites. Then spend some time perusing those sites, to see how your target uses them.

For instance, if you’re in the business of selling computer hardware, you might search “computer prices” or “computer prices blog” to find blogs in that particular area. Or, if you know the demographics of your target, you can search social network sites accordingly. If you sell minivans and your demographic

includes parents with more than two children under the age of 10, you can search for social sites (or “groups” within them) that cater to that specific audience. Or simply ask your existing customers which social networking sites they frequent via a survey. If your target is pretty broad (i.e. men aged 20-30), chances are a general interest site such as Facebook will reach them.

You can also monitor and search Twitter directly from within certain online marketing tools that include integrated social media functionality, such as Lyris HQ. These tools allow you to look, listen and learn about social media before dipping your toe in the waters.

After you have defined your target, you’ll want to get started in a few “starter” programs. Here are some starter programs (and tips) you might also want to consider:

Start with LinkedIn: If you do business-to-business marketing, you may want to start with LinkedIn. LinkedIn is a widely-utilized professional networking site and it’s a solid starting point for most any business-related social media marketing. Most LinkedIn members are looking for business-specific connections or content, so they will likely be more receptive to your business invitations and Discussions than those on less business-oriented sites. As with any other social medium, your network will grow on its own as long as you consistently circulate content that is meaningful and relevant to your target audience.

- a. Set-up a Group account on LinkedIn
- b. Then, invite people to join the Group, and post relevant Discussions

Set up an account for your company on Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter: Once you have firmly identified your target audience and their characteristics, [LinkedIn](#), [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#) may be a good next step for you in the social marketing world.

- a. Start by setting up your own personal (and completely business-focused) account, plus accounts for your internal thought leaders
- b. Then create a Group that will be relevant to your target audience
- c. Make sure each of your internal thought leaders joins the Group
- d. Post information that will provoke discussion within the Group, staying away from anything completely self-serving until you can build rapport, trust and value around that topic

Keep in mind that in order for these sites to be relevant to your target, you will need to tend each of these properties like you would a garden - with consistent care.

Link across existing programs: You should take every opportunity to post links to your social networking pages on your Website, corporate email signatures, marketing materials, etc. The easier it is for customers and prospects to find you online, the more potential you have to turn them into fans or followers.

At a minimum, include linked icons to each of your company's social networking pages in your company's email signature and in the footer on your Web pages like this:

**John Doe**

Director of Marketing

Tel: 510.555.1212

Fax: 510.844.1598

Email: [lyristeam@lyris.com](mailto:lyristeam@lyris.com)

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Emeryville, CA 94608

[www.lyris.com](http://www.lyris.com)

Join conversations and make connections with Lyris on [LyrisHQ.com](http://LyrisHQ.com) | [Twitter](#) | [Facebook](#) | [LinkedIn](#)



Contribute to an existing blog: Develop and post relevant and engaging content/comments on social media sites, such as an existing blog that invites participation. Create a conversation about a topic of interest to your target.

For instance, if you are in the mortgage business you may want to develop a very brief abstract on why first-time home buyers should take advantage of the current economic conditions and buy a home now. Then ask people to contribute their opinions and personal experiences. Be careful not to just post a blatant advertisement highlighting the low rates you can offer first-time home buyers -- that is the kind of content that backfires in the social networking world.

Start a blog on your own domain: Start a blog that lives on a portion of your existing Website. Post engaging content daily and provide a forum for feedback. Link the blog to your social networking pages (and vice versa) to drive more interaction, attract new participants and, ultimately, to establish your company as a trusted advisor and thought leader within your industry or area of specialization.

Set up automatic posts: Use an email marketing solution that allows you to automatically post content from your email messages to social networks. This allows you to create relevant content one time and deliver it to multiple locations. It's a simple, time-efficient way to generate and share content.

With [Lyris HQ](#), for example, marketers are able to leverage their email marketing campaigns and messaging so that recipients can share and discuss news and relevant topics with colleagues, fans and friends on popular social networking sites including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and MySpace. Marketers can also analyze how well social media is performing in terms of reach, interaction and ROI on social networking and originating sites, with no extra integration or technical know-how needed. This functionality helps marketers better understand, segment and report inbound engagement from many social networking sites.

Set up a formal customer feedback loop or customer panel: *Listening*, as we mentioned earlier, is a critical component of social engagement, be it online or offline. So use social mediums as one way to listen to your customers. For instance, you may want to establish a formal customer feedback loop and/or initiate a Customer Experience Council that engages



with you via a Group on Facebook, or via some other social network. This can be a fast and cost-efficient way to listen to your key customers.

Get the message right: Though marketing communication channels have changed, one thing has not: a relevant message is essential. Today, the message is even more important, as it will likely be shared with thousands of people with the click of a button. Your messages are being distributed and accessed via email, social and mobile channels – whether you know it or not. So make your messages relevant, thought-provoking and inviting so others will engage and share.

### **b.) Email programs: Integrate email and social media marketing**

Email marketing is no longer a one-way messaging vehicle. Email now offers new options for recipients to share and “tag” newsletters and offers – allowing your message to spread virally with little to no additional investment on your part. Used together, email and social marketing offer better opportunities for measurement. For instance, you can easily measure the number of people who forwarded your message or posted it to their social networking pages. Or you can determine what percentage of your new email newsletter subscriptions come from Twitter.

Email marketing used in conjunction with social networking is a powerful combination that allows you to not only reach more customers, but also to engage them in more meaningful dialogue. Once connected with you via social networking, your “friends” or “followers” communicate in an interactive way and become engaged. This engagement can result in faster conversions and higher ROI of your email marketing campaigns. And, because these customers may also be sharing your content with their own “friends” or “followers,” you have the potential to increase Web traffic and Search Engine Marketing results as well.

A recent example from Lyris’ own experience is our use of SMM to expand the reach and interest around several

Webinars. Lyris wanted to generate meaningful content for some of our Webinar presentations and drive a specific number of registrations as well. We sent out email invitations to our database, and also started discussion threads on social media sites where we have “followers” and/or “fans”. Not only were we able to get real-world input on the questions to address in the Webinars, but we were also able to create organic interest in the topics via SMM — which resulted in more registrants.

Before you can start tracking social media influence and engagement, you’ll need to make sure that your information is easily spread to those channels. There are a lot of [free social media widgets available](#) that allow you to incorporate “shareability” functionality into company newsletters, your blog site and more. Below is an example of how Lyris has incorporated this functionality into its monthly email newsletter.



In addition, you can extend the lifecycle, value and response to your email campaigns by:

- Posting/Tweeting about your relevant email marketing content across your social networks
- Encouraging your fans/followers to Re-Tweet (reposting Tweets on their own Twitter feed) and Re-Post (post to their Facebook or LinkedIn)
- Starting a dialogue around email content

As example, here is a recent Tweet and a post Lyris put up on Twitter and Facebook, respectively, regarding our monthly newsletter.



March issue of Inside Lyris HQ newsletter; great tips. [Erick]:

<http://tinyurl.com/deocg7>



Lyris, Inc. The new Inside Lyris HQ newsletter. Good marketing tips and best practices to know and share. Thoughts and ideas? <http://tinyurl.com/c265dm>

### c.) Search engine marketing (SEM) and search engine optimization (SEO) programs

Search and Search Engine Marketing (SEM) remain the key ways your customers find you online. But gone are the days when you can optimize just your Website and achieve the intended search results. Why? Search engines love social networking sites and media because they contain the type of content they are looking for. By adding social media marketing into the mix, you can improve your company's SEO and SEM results, as well as your email marketing results.

Sophisticated search engines are searching the Internet looking for blogs, wikis, social networks, photo sharing sites, Tweets and more. In fact, in a recent [Social Media Marketing survey](#), more than half of participants noted that a rise in search engine rankings was an unexpected benefit of their social media marketing efforts. Where once a company's Website would have been the first result found, it could now easily be the same company's blog, Twitter feed or Facebook page. So, it is essential that you proactively develop an integrated strategy across multiple traditional and social channels to improve online search results. A good place to start is to:

1. Select a few keywords that have performed well for your company.

2. Include those same keywords in your profile and bio on social networking sites.
3. Optimize keywords across all of your online properties – such as a Wikipedia page, Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter feed, Flickr photo site or others. Use your keywords as often as possible in your posts and discussions, where appropriate.
4. Link keywords to appropriate product/Website pages – this will also help SEO. Be careful not to over-link, however, or your messages might be seen as spam. A good rule of thumb is about one link for every hundred words.

### Step Four: Measuring success

Once these programs get underway, it is critical to measure the impact so that you can focus on the mediums with the highest ROI going forward. Tight integration between online campaigns and a Web analytics solution will help you measure the effectiveness of your programs.

Once your messages start making their way through email, social and even mobile channels, it is important to track their reach. Using Web analytics, you can track who is coming to your site from different points of entry, and more importantly, what they are doing once they get there. Measuring the impact can start as a gradual process that gets more sophisticated and robust over time, but for starters you should measure:

1. Number of follower/fans
2. Number of people going to your Website from social networking sites
3. The relative popularity of different content
4. Whether people are re-Tweeting or re-posting your content.

