

# *Social* BOOM!

## How to Master Business Social Media

to Brand Yourself, Sell Yourself, Sell Your Product, Dominate Your Industry Market, Save Your Butt, Rake in the Cash, and Grind Your Competition into the Dirt – by the Global Authority on Sales, Attitude, Trust, and Loyalty



**JEFFREY  ITOMER**





**Business  
social media  
is the new  
cold call.**

*JEFFREY GITOMER*



**Social media is  
not just freedom  
of speech.**

**Social media is  
freedom of thought  
and freedom of  
expression.**

*JEFFREY GITOMER*





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**JEFFREY  ITOMER**

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## **Jeffrey Gitomer's Social BOOM!**

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# The Opportunity of Business Social Media.

Social media has become a phenomenon beyond words. Hundreds of millions of people all over the world have joined the party. In a millisecond, millions of people can know everything about everything and everyone.

You knew it couldn't be long before business got involved. Small business, big business, your business.

I'm 65-years-young. I've seen a lot of opportunities come and go. I have also seen the complete evolution of the computer, and the complete evolution of the Internet. But never have I seen, or could I have imagined, an opportunity so great as business social media. And the best part is, it's just beginning.

Now is your time to take full advantage of this low-cost (often no-cost), global, and local opportunity.

When companies like Procter & Gamble, Dell, Apple, IBM, Microsoft, Zappos, and Amazon dive head first into the process, you can be certain there is plenty of opportunity and plenty of room for you to do the same.

**BUSINESS SOCIAL MEDIA REQUIRES AN INVESTMENT:** Your time.

You must be willing to allocate an hour a day to build your network. When you do, and do it right, the rewards will be beyond your ability to measure. You will reconnect with business associates and you'll attract people and prospective customers to connect with you a thousand times faster and 10 thousand times better than making the 100-year-old cold call.



Business social media is the new cold call.

You'll make sales, you'll create loyal customers, and you will profit from your ability to expose yourself, your thoughts, your experiences, your interactions, and your value to your market around the corner, and your market around the world.

**CAUTION:** After you begin to see results, you'll curse yourself for not starting sooner. Turn that energy into action. Business social media is still young. There is still plenty of time. Commit to involve, decide to do it with value, intend to stick at it until you win, and reap the rewards both in reputation and in profit.

Get ready to ride the social media wave. It's a big one. Perhaps the biggest ever.

**NOTE:** I'm not writing this book alone. *Far from it.* I have enlisted the wisdom of others. Specifically: Sally Hogshead, Mitch Joel, Richard Brasser, Joe Soto, Noah Rickun, Mike O'Neil and Lori Ruff, Sandy Carter, Mark Schaefer, Chris Hamilton, Julien Smith, Andy Sernovitz, and Shar Govindan. I want to acknowledge them and thank them.

The world-class leader and expert of business social media has yet to emerge. Certainly it is not me. BUT I am proving to be quite successful at the process, and that's why I am sharing my strategies and what I believe to be true with you.



# This is Not a Book.

Okay, okay, this *is* a book. BUT... *Social BOOM!* is also a “how to” and “what to” implement for and into your LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube presence to develop a total business social media game plan.

This is a step-by-step, insight-by-insight guide that looks at the four main social media platforms in a new way – from big picture to implementable ideas and strategies that will build your attraction, your engagement, and your connections with valuable business customers, prospects, and contacts.

*Social BOOM!* reveals elements that create social attraction and business attraction by describing all aspects of building and executing a total market outreach. Each of these elements will be outlined in a way that makes understanding how your blog, email magazine (e-zine), personal website, articles, speeches, and other acts of value create energy and attraction back to your business social media outlets.

*Social BOOM!* inspires you to build your brand, your Google ranking, and your reputation as a person of value and a business of value.

**KEY OPPORTUNITY:** Create your own Social BOOM! by attracting customers and building your personal and business brand.

**KEY UNDERSTANDING:** LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are not options. They must ALL be used or BOOM! will never happen, much less meet your expectations.

**KEY INGREDIENT:** Your hard work and time allocation of ONE HOUR A DAY, *once you get your presence set up.*



# What's So Social About Social Media? How Social Are You?

It started like a small bunch of rustling leaves. A little Facebook here and there – a blog or two. And then the wind picked up. LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube. Growing from a windstorm to a firestorm, social media is now a tornado running wild over the Internet plains.

How social are you?

How serious are you about social media?

**REALITY:** You can't ignore it. Hundreds of millions of people are involved so far, and it's just a few years old.

I tried to ignore it for a while, but it soon became apparent that this was the new, new wave – about two years ago I became a player.

I admit I have an edge.

I have a lot of readers and followers who are interested in what I have to say and want to know what my immediate thinking is. That's two of the advantages of social media. It is immediate and it is informative.



It's also fun! That's why Facebook and YouTube are worth BILLIONS.

*The major networks in social media are growing quickly:*

- **Social networking for the growing and grown set is Facebook – worth billions.**
- **To get connected and network with businesspeople, it's LinkedIn – worth billions.**
- **If you want to say a few words, 140 characters sent to thousands in a second, it's Twitter – worth billions.**
- **For videos, it's YouTube – worth billions.**
- **For posting photos, it's Flickr – worth billions.**
- **And for that private message, there's texting – it's easy for me – I have an iPhone (priceless).**

*And that is just a partial picture. There's more...*

- **For individual expressions, there are blogs – where people you attract can subscribe to and link to your other social media pages.**
- **For chronologging it's Wikipedia – worth billions.**
- **And of course, there are your personal website and business website. Priceless.**

All of these media are, or try to be, socially engaging – sticky if you will. All of them are, or try to be, passed on to others – viral if you will. Better stated, if you tweet, are you good enough or bad enough to be retweeted?

**HERE'S THE GOOD NEWS:** Everything you do in social media is documented on Google. And those documentations affect your ranking in a positive way.



I have made a serious commitment to “socialize” by exposing more of my personal self, and my business self, through social media. I maintain my value-based philosophy, but with business social media, I can personalize it, and humanize it, to a point that others are attracted to it, benefit from it, and want to pass it on to others.

I am business social and viral at the same time.

So, what does this mean to you?  
What’s the opportunity to you and for you?  
Why should you get involved?

Social media is an opportunity, a new frontier, a space in cyberspace that gives you an individual place to play, builds awareness of you and for you, brands yourself, and from which you can potentially profit.

*You have to ask yourself...*

**Where’s the beef?**

**Where’s the fun?**

**What’s the value? Both to others and yourself.**

**And how – if desired – do you monetize it?**

**UNFORTUNATE NEWS:** Unless you’re one of the few people in an ownership or founding position of these social media, your monetizing opportunities are at the moment limited – in spite of various claims by “experts.”



*So here's what I recommend to get going and get positioned, so that your opportunity – either in social, business, fun, or money – can be realized:*

- **Sign on.**
- **Establish an account on each of the major sites.**
- **Post something.**
- **Tweet something.**
- **Connect with someone.**
- **Do it yourself.**
- **Do it every day.**

*And learn by updating as much as you can on your own.*

Social media is fluid – it moves and changes daily. It's text, audio, photo, and video. It's every media and it's every second. It's current and it's constant.

Ever see a section of a website labeled “latest news,” and when you click it, the last update is from 2004? Not good.

The Internet is instant.  
Social media is instant.  
And you have to be ready  
to participate consistently,  
and in a meaningful way,  
if you want to win.

Please don't wait.





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# **BOOM OPPORTUNITY!**



# The Social Media BOOM Is Here and You're a Bust!

*Every time I'm in front of an audience I ask two questions:*

- 1. How many of you have some social media involvement?  
(Almost everyone raises their hands.)**
- 2. How many of you wish you were better at it?  
(Almost everyone raises their hands.)**

Keep in mind that these responses are from a (supposedly) sophisticated group of people.

They all have smartphones; most of them get Facebook updates on their phones, but for one reason or another they have chosen not to enter the world of *business* social media. Many are on LinkedIn and have a few connections, almost none of them tweet, and even fewer have their own YouTube channel.

**REALITY:** Some HUGE companies have gone all out in social media, whereas others have their heads buried in the sand or are playing ME TOO, because they woke up one morning and found their competition gaining ground through a prominent and active social media presence. Still others are claiming “regulations” are keeping them from engaging.

*Here are a few examples of big companies taking BIG advantage of business social media:*

- **Starbucks asks for customers' opinions and solicits customers' ideas. (Where do you think the idea for that little green splash-stopper stick came from?)**



- **Burger King continues to let customers “have it their way” online with information and coupons.**
- **IBM utilizes every aspect of social media and has plans to double its effort in 2011 by trusting and encouraging its employees to become involved on a personal-business level with customers.**
- **Proctor & Gamble is all about Facebook and substitutes TV ads for social media presence. (WOW!)**
- **Ford uses social media as a PR communication device and consumer sounding board and feedback opportunity.**
- **Comcast tweets individualized customer service help messages.**
- **Zappos (as if they weren’t customer service dominant enough) tweets their service response, and as a result receives THOUSANDS of positive retweets.**

All these companies, B2B or B2C, emphasize the same word in their philosophy and their outreach: COMMUNITY.

They all recognize that their customers have a voice, and, by listening and responding to them, they’re discovering benefit and profit.

These are NOT isolated examples – they are typical examples of how big companies are using the power of social media to inform, communicate, serve, and sell.

How are you doing? What’s your “community” strategy? Who are you listening to? Who are you responding to?

Or are you still answering your phone and “serving me better” with nine options? Pathetic.



*Here are 6.5 TOUGH questions designed to make you think, plan, and act:*

1. **What are you doing about the social media opportunity?**
2. **How are you attracting customers and prospects?**
3. **What's your value message beyond product offerings?**
4. **How are you engaging customers and prospects?**
5. **How are you connecting with the people you engage?**
6. **What's your social media doubling plan?**
- 6.5. **What policies, trust issues, and lawyers are holding you back? Get rid of them!**

Those are painful questions that need answering.

**REALITY:** And while you sit around strategizing and legalizing a plan, your competition is laughing at you, hoping you'll delay even more.

*I tweeted this quote last night:*

“The more you hold your people back from using social media at work, the more your competition will kick your ass.”

**TWEET POWER:** Less than one hour after it hit the Internet, more than 50 people had retweeted it, and more than 100,000 were exposed to the message. And me. FOR FREE.



*People have made the following statements, or asked me the following questions, over and over:*

- **How can I use social media to attract new customers?**
- **Isn't social media for kids?**
- **I have never tweeted.**
- **I tried social media and didn't get any results.**
- **My boss won't let us use Facebook at work.**

*And this is my response:*

Individuals (like you) can safely set up their own value-based, value-messaging BUSINESS Facebook page INSIDE the parameters of whatever guidelines their business has. And they can do the same with LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube.

**PROBLEM:** It requires hard work and consistent posting.

**OPPORTUNITY:** You can be recognized by your customers, prospects, vendors, industry, and community as a leader and value provider.

**MAJOR CLUE:** Start today!



**Business social media is a huge NOW opportunity. Your ability to attract people to your presence is enhanced by the relationships of value that you have established over the tenure of your business career.**

***JEFFREY GITOMER***



# The Social Revolution and Your Evolution.

The social revolution has changed the way you sell and serve forever. Only problem is, most salespeople have no idea of that – YET!

As business social media evolves and matures, all salespeople, executives, and entrepreneurs will expose themselves for who they are and who they aren't... **WAY BEFORE** a sales call or sales meeting of any kind takes place.

*Think about the impact of that...*

- **I'm gonna Google YOU.**
- **I'm gonna Facebook YOU.**
- **I'm gonna find you on LinkedIn.**
- **I'm gonna look you up on Twitter.**
- **I'm gonna search you on YouTube.**

And you can't stop me.

I'm gonna find out EXACTLY who you are – the same way you're trying to find out stuff about me.



Two years ago, it wouldn't have happened that way. At least on the social media side. Maybe five years ago for Google.

Today, ALL systems of selling are preceded, and sometimes precluded, by your online reputation. Before I ever call you, before you ever call me, before you ever meet with me – I already know everything I need to about you.

Or I can look you up in 10 seconds WHILE you are on the phone or waiting to enter my office.

*Here are the NEW standards by which you'll be evaluated, granted appointment time, decided upon, measured, branded, and talked about (whew!):*

**Your Google presence and ranking**

**Your online reputation**

**Your business social media presence**

**Your personal website (present or absent)**

**Your blog (present or absent)**

**Your Facebook presence**

**Your LinkedIn connections and recommendations**

**Your Twitter followers and tweets**

**Your YouTube presence**



Feel a little overwhelmed? That's because you've been asleep at the wheel waiting for the economy to "rebound." That's because you think the Internet is about your company, not you. That's because you're waiting for your attorneys to figure out a "corporate plan" for social media.

Wake up and smell the Internet, Sparky!

*Here are a few things you should do, and can do – that if you don't do, you'll be "doo doo:"*


- **Look at what your competition and their people are doing on the Internet.** Study their online presence and their social media presence.
- **Talk to your customers IN DEPTH.** Find out what they would consider valuable to know, and make a plan to deliver that information, whether it pertains to your sales or not. HINT: If you provide valuable information, it directly pertains to your relationship, and their loyalty to you.
- **Allocate more of your time to learning what you don't know about "online."** At least an hour a day. If you're behind by your competition's standards, that's one issue; but if you're behind by your customer's needs, that's THE issue. If you don't know what to do, start studying, and start getting involved.
- **Set achievable goals and measure your results.** Start with LinkedIn. Get 200 connections and expand your network from there. Create a few testimonial videos on YouTube that feature your customers talking about how great you are.
- **Communicate value messages, not product offerings.** The purpose of your online presence (especially on social media) is not to sell, it's to attract people who want to buy.



- **Seek professional help. BUT BEWARE.** Get personal references BEFORE you spend a dime. There are a lot of people who can help you. There are many more who CLAIM they can help you, but cannot.
- **Waiting is more expensive than starting.** Whatever your budget for online and/or social media presence is, it's cheap compared to doing nothing while others pass you by.

Social media is not going away. My bet is that your business social media presence is lacking. And there is not one good reason for it, other than your foresight is limited by your insight.

It is my hope that the strategies and ideas in this book can help you kick-start what you're doing online – especially your social media participation – so you'll have no regrets (also known as hindsight).

**Free GitBit...**  Want to know three tips to live without regret? Go to <http://www.gitomer.com> and enter the word REGRET in the GitBit box.



# Social Media – The New Cold Call. Wanna Play?

People are quite polarized about the social media craze.

It's an Internet tug-of-war between the believers and the nonbelievers. And one by one, the believers (the users) are dragging the nonbelievers (the nonusers) across the line.

Which one are you?  
Still making cold calls?

**REALITY:** Millions of businesses have social media logos on the front page of their website. How many businesses have your logo on their front page? Who wants to connect to your people? OUCH!

*Here are 5.5 major business implications – to help you convert from cold calling to attracting new customers – that are afforded through this new online phenomena:*

**1. Facebook.** You have found your old high school or college friends – or better – they found you. That's your "social" page. Do you have a business page where people can "Like" you? A business page is the way to give value and attract new friends and customers. If you post something of VALUE about your market, your industry, or your product, you could actually ATTRACT prospects.

**REALITY BYTES:** Facebook was recently valued at \$9.5 billion. It was founded by a couple of 24-year-olds that have changed the Internet forever in less than six years. Rock the house.



**2. LinkedIn.** All business, all opportunity, all connections. But it's just a giant leads club until you figure out what your value proposition is, and how to deliver it. The key right now is to build a base of connections and consistently deliver value messages to attract more.

**3. Twitter.** The newest of these social media, it's gibberish to some, money to others, and mystery to most. I tweet one value message every day. I tweet my own thoughts and words. And I recommend you do the same. If your tweets hit home, someone will tell someone else, thereby increasing your exposure and attraction.

**4. YouTube.** If it's a video world, why are you without your HD Flip video camera? As you know from MTV, video killed the radio star. I have a dedicated YouTube channel where I post sales tips and random rants about attitude, trust, loyalty and other business value points. How are *you* taking advantage of YouTube? Where are your customer video testimonials when you need them?

**5. Flickr.** Photos to post and photos to find. In a 10-year space of time, one-hour photo shops have gone from boom to bust. Digital images and photo printers have killed the radio star. Look at photos of others to learn about them; post pictures of family so they can learn about you. Attach your photos to emails. Use them in presentation slides. Post them on Facebook. It's fun, and it's a great way to build understanding and relationships.

**5.5 is YOU.** The most important element of social media *is you*. It's all about what you write, what you do, what you post, what you tweet, what you shoot, what you record, how you participate, and your dedication to make your personal message and your personal brand attractive.



There are key words to consider as you try to build your social media world: connections, attract, video, value, consistent, fan, relevance, write, allocate, monetize.

**HERE'S THE BIG SECRET:** How you position and promote yourself in the NON-social media world is critical to your success in the social media world.

Your writing, your website, your blog, your e-zine, your personal brand, your reputation in your marketplace, your perceived value in your marketplace, and your Google rank are elements of attraction that affect your social media status – and surely your success.

And then there are the charlatans, and those trying to take unfair advantage of others. Like anything else in business there will always be a small percentage of idiots and zealots doing the wrong thing. Ignore them. Don't let the actions of a few spoil your outlook to advance and grow.

**REALITY:** The cold call has been part of the selling world for more than 100 years. And it's over. Technology, guards, gatekeepers, voicemail, and the overall sophistication of buyers and executives, have forever changed that landscape. This is GREAT news!

**GET SOCIAL:** By implementing the free opportunities afforded on Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr and ESPECIALLY LinkedIn, you have an incredible opportunity to attract and connect with prospective buyers.

There are billions of dollars of new business being generated by making social media connections. How much of it will you get? Maybe you need to get a bit more serious about being a bit more social, and a bit more attractive.





# Are You in the Social Media World? Or Standing on the Sidelines Waiting?

Social media has changed the world. Let me clarify that statement. Social media has changed YOUR world.

Whatever you're doing online, whether it's Facebooking, LinkedIning, tweeting, or YouTubing, social media has changed your way of communicating one-on-one, one-on-customer base, and one-to-the-world.

**FACEBOOK IS THE EASIEST PHENOMENON TO UNDERSTAND.** It has changed the way you communicate with your friends and your family, and has opened the freedom door to anyone that you come in contact with, either business or personal.

On Facebook, you have found old friends, schoolmates, and co-workers – and they have found you. In the same way, you can find customers and prospective customers – and they can find you.

Because of social media and the Internet, big companies no longer have a big advantage.

Anyone can create a news blog that can immediately attempt to compete with *The New York Times*. The music industry has been leveled by groups performing their own songs and selling them on iTunes, and groups are creating free videos on YouTube. They're doing it far more efficiently, at far less cost than records or CDs since they have been invented.



**LINKEDIN HAS CREATED A NEW WAY TO COLD CALL AND A MUCH MORE SOPHISTICATED WAY FOR BUSINESSES TO CONNECT.** You can go on LinkedIn and search by job title and find prospective customers at no cost. It's also the employment agency of the future.

**TWITTER ENABLES YOU TO GAIN A FOLLOWING OF PEOPLE INTERESTED IN YOUR THOUGHTS, YOUR INFORMATION, OR THE INFORMATION OF OTHERS THAT THEY PERCEIVE AS VALUABLE.**

**YOUTUBE IS THE NEW MOVIE THEATER AND YOU HAVE ABOUT ONE BILLION VIDEOS TO CHOOSE FROM.** Millions of new movies are added every day. If you have heard the expression, "To the cloud," YouTube currently occupies half of heaven.

People interviewing for a job completely expose themselves through their presence on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and YouTube the same way a company is exposed in social media. And yet there are people who discount social media, avoid it, and even bad mouth it. Those people are fools and you know some of them.

**REALITY:** Social media and business social media have created new sales, new marketing, new exposure, new branding, new communication, new networking, and new business opportunities – the likes of which have never been seen or known before.

The revolution is just starting, and most businesses, business people, business executives, and salespeople are still social media inept.

**NOTE WELL:** There are few things or actions, and there are few people or circumstances that can change the rules of the game. Social media has changed all four.



People, circumstances, things, and actions have all been changed forever as a result of posting, tweeting, linking, and connecting. And the people that have taken advantage of it have changed their outreach in a way that has all their traditional competitors shaking in their boots.

*Think about your social media place as you plan your marketing outreach for the next 10 years, and ask yourself these questions:*

- 1. What's my current position in my marketplace?**
- 2. How do my customers perceive me?**
- 3. Can my customers access my company 24/7 to leave comments and tell stories?**
- 4. Do I really know what my competition is thinking and saying?**
- 5. How attractive am I to my customers?**
- 6. What's my value proposition that favors my customers and how do I let them know it, day after day, without simply repeating it?**

I have only been actively involved in social media for three years. This year I am going all out to attract, engage, and connect. I have hired a consulting firm to help me. I have three people on staff posting events, monitoring my accounts, and helping me.

**AUTHENTICITY:** I do my own tweets, either dictate or post my updates on Facebook, and I am active (accepting invitations, and responding or corresponding) on LinkedIn. I believe that staying personally involved keeps my message true to my philosophy, and helps me learn.

**There is an unspoken strategy for businesses to employ and that strategy focuses around the word *value*.**

**The more you offer, the more attractive you will become.**

**The less you offer, the more anonymous you will remain.**

***JEFFREY GITOMER***



# Converting Personal Social Media to Business Social Media.

How are you using and profiting from social media?

**HERE'S THE PROBABLE ANSWER:** You're using it but not profiting from it.

*And that's because...*

- Your Facebook page has photos of Sunday's picnic, 15 comments from close friends and relatives, and nothing about business.
- You have a Twitter account that tells your audience of 75 you're in your pajamas and going to bed. (Even more insulting that you call your followers "tweeps" or "tweeple.")
- Your LinkedIn account (if you even have one) has under 100 connections, and none of them have ever received a value message from you.
- You do not have your own YouTube channel.

Ouch.

**REALITY CHECK:** It's time for you to draw the line and the distinction between personal social media and business social media.

There is an easy way, and a no-cost way, to create attraction and connections from business social media.



I'm challenging you to take advantage of it. Starting now.

*Here are two things you can do TODAY:*

**1. Create a business Facebook page that your customers, prospects, and fans can “Like.”** A page for your business enables you to create an opportunity for dialogue with your customers and prospects. It also challenges you to create value messages, post videos, and offer tips and ideas that will help your customers and prospects build their business – and the result is you can gain a following.

Take a look at my business page on Facebook, and note how I post on a daily basis, and how I create links back to my website so that the people who like my page can continue to perceive me as a value provider and a resource. While you're there, take a few moments to read the comments that I get in response to my value offerings. It's humbling, flattering, and creating a revenue stream. You can do the same.

I would gamble that every one of your customers and prospects is already actively involved with Facebook, but likely only on a personal or social level. You can easily find them and ask them to like your page.

**CAUTION:** Your business Facebook page requires work, constant updating, and response. You zero out your credibility if you post only once a month. My rule of thumb is a minimum of three times a week. It's most interesting to me that even when I don't post, one of my fans will post something for me or about me: a quote, a thank you, an idea, or a story. To me it's not just a post, it's a report card – people taking time from their day to interact with me and share their gratitude, their question, or their idea. *How many people like you?*



**2. Twitter is an anomaly and mandatory.** Most people fritter away their Twitter opportunity. They're either saying nothing, or soliciting sales. In my first year on Twitter, I tweeted approximately 180 times, and from that I gained more than 15,000 followers.

Yes, I have an advantage being a published author and speaker, but I took advantage of my advantage.

I'm now one year and four months into Twitter, and I just posted my 218<sup>th</sup> tweet yesterday. "Resilience is not what happens to you. It's how you react to, respond to, and recover from what happens to you." I had more than 100 retweets that enabled me to pass the 20,000 mark of followers. If I suggest for people to do something in my tweet, it's so that they can gain more valuable information without a solicitation.

The value of Twitter has not yet been realized. But with 175 million users, there has got to be a few dollars in there floating around someplace. Take a look at my tweets, so that you can see the example of how I offer value.

And note that when I post a quote, it's my own. I'm not telling you what Benjamin Franklin or Albert Einstein (both brilliant people) said. I don't want to quote someone else; I want to quote myself.

One of my early Twitter quotes was, "If you want to be relevant on Twitter, tweet something relevant." It got hundreds of retweets.

*What are you doing on Twitter? How are you taking advantage of 175 million people with 140 characters each day?*



# Social Media or BUSINESS Social Media? You Choose.

Of all the business social media options, I believe LinkedIn is the most valid and the most valuable. But it is not the ONLY.

To master business social media, it takes a successful combination of your business Facebook page, your Twitter account, your LinkedIn account, and your YouTube channel.

LinkedIn enables you to find people that can possibly do business with you, be a valuable contact, and (more important) enables people to find you.

Most of the salespeople that use LinkedIn are trying to find leads and/or beg for some kind of connection. This strategy is the least useful, but it's better than a cold call.

LinkedIn has a wealth of CEOs and other C-level people in its network, and millions of entrepreneurs (yes, millions) who own their own business and can make a final decision.

LinkedIn is the new cold call. Instead of calling a gatekeeper and fishing for information on one possible decision maker, you can now advance search on LinkedIn and find exactly who you're looking for BEFORE you make the call. You can discover who is connected to your connections and find people by job descriptions and job titles.

Your job, as a master of business social media, is to attract them, not beg them. Your job is not to find them. Your success will come from letting them find you.





Of my thousands of connections on LinkedIn, I have asked less than 100 people to link with me. The others asked me to link with them. That should be your goal.

*Here's a total business social networking strategy:*

**REGISTER WWW.YOURNAME.COM.** If your name is taken, put the words “I am,” or “the great,” or “the one and only” in front of your name. If all of them are available, buy all four. If your last name is available, buy that, too.

**ESTABLISH A SIMPLE ONE-PAGE WEBSITE.** On it, post your philosophy of how you treat customers. In a short period of time, this will help give you a ranking (probably a number-one ranking) on Google so that people can easily find you.

**THEN CREATE A BLOG.** (Wordpress, Typepad, or Blogger offer free or low-cost options.)

**THEN CREATE YOUR BUSINESS FACEBOOK PAGE, YOUR LINKEDIN ACCOUNT, YOUR TWITTER ACCOUNT, AND YOUR YOUTUBE CHANNEL.** Make sure they're all in your name or contain your name. This gives you even more Googlejuice, and will give you a half-a-dozen listings or more on Google.

The key is to make  
yourself visible on the  
Internet – through your  
website, by blogging, and  
via value-based use of  
social media.



I also recommend that you go to <http://www.aceofsales.com> and establish an account. It's only \$20 per month and it can enable you to access Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter from the homepage with one click. It will also enable you to create and send out your own e-zine.

Read more about Ace of Sales on page 180.

*Now that you have the big picture, here's what to do:*

- 1. Tweet a value message every day.** Just one. Something that your customers and your prospects would consider valuable.
- 2. Blog one paragraph every day that includes your tweet.** Something that others consider valuable. All you have to do is wake up in the morning and start writing.
- 3. Connect your social media accounts so that what you post on one appears on all of them.**
- 4. Post events of importance on your business Facebook page.** Especially post interactions with customers.
- 5. Now begin the invitation process.** Start inviting everyone you know, and everyone you can think of, to join you on LinkedIn, "Like" you on Facebook, follow you on Twitter, and check out your YouTube videos. Make the invitation *a personal one*, not a standard one. Not everyone will honor your request. But when people start to receive valuable information from you on a regular basis, they will begin to tell others. People will comment on your Facebook page. They will retweet you. And they will proactively connect with you on LinkedIn.

**NOTE:** As you can see, the key to business social media is being business social proactive with a value message.



**NOTE WELL:** It will take you less time to write 100 words of value than it does to make 10 cold calls that you'll be hung up on, or 10 unsolicited emails that will get deleted.

**5.5 What's YouTube got to do with it?** Take a look at the Buy Gitomer channel on YouTube. I've taken 100 short value messages and videotaped them. If you take the paragraph that you blog each day and record it on your Flip video camera, then you can upload it to YouTube (in about one minute). Posting your content on YouTube enables people to see you and your passion in action, and to feel your commitment and your validity. It gives people an opportunity to get to know you, even if they've never met you. Keep in mind you don't need to have a million views on your YouTube videos to make them valuable; you need only a handful of executives and other decision makers to regularly look at your posted messages. Eventually they will click and buy from you.

**NOTE WELL:** I'm not telling you what TO DO. I'm telling you what I DO. I invite you to join me on each of these social media, to see what I do every day and learn how I'm beginning to monetize it – so you can do the same.

**Free GitBit...** The true monetization opportunity of social media is still relatively unknown. If you'd like to know a few specific examples of how I've monetized my presence, go to <http://www.gitomer.com> and enter the word MONETIZE in the GitBit box.



## 9 Ways to Fascinate the Goldfish.

*By Sally Hogshead*

A hundred years ago, you didn't need to fascinate the goldfish.

Back then the average attention span was about 20 minutes long. (An estimated one minute for each year of age, up until age 20.) But then, a little thing called "The Internet" happened. Now we have messages coming at us from every direction: voice-mails and videos, emails and apps, updates and upgrades, tweets and retweets.

So how do our brains respond to all this stimulation? Turns out, we're learning to think differently. We think more quickly and get distracted more easily. The BBC has announced, "The addictive nature of web browsing can leave you with an attention span of nine seconds – the same as a goldfish."

*Nine seconds! (That's just long enough to read one tweet.)  
That's all we get before our customer's brain makes a decision to either stay focused or relocate to a new topic.*

In this distracted environment  
you must immediately  
spotlight your unique  
competitive advantage.

You have only an instant  
to communicate, convince,  
and convert.



In this nine-second world, the most fascinating messages triumph, the most fascinating salespeople triumph, and the most fascinating products and services do, too, because they earn a customer's attention.

What does all this mean for you?  
You must learn how to sell to goldfish.

*After you learn how to fascinate the goldfish, you win!*

- **You win bigger budgets, better relationships, and greater admiration.**
- **You build stronger loyalty, bigger networks, and deeper trust.**
- **And, you can charge a higher price.**

If you fail to captivate your customer, you will lose. It's that simple. The goldfish will swim away to the next salesperson, the next ad, the next low price.

Today, it isn't enough just to have a better product. It's not enough to be the best if no one realizes you're there.

Wondering where to start?

*In my book, FASCINATE, I describe how to develop persuasive and influential messages. To build your own social media empire, here are nine ways to instantly begin to attract, convince, and retain the goldfish:*

**1. HAVE THE BIGGEST BUDGET. OR BE THE MOST FASCINATING. PICK ONE.** Your social media can be as boring as you want, under ONE condition: *You have a bigger marketing budget than anyone else in your category.*



If this is the case, you can afford enough advertising to just hammer it in, over and over, wham-wham-wham, until people remember.

That's what Fortune 100 companies like Kellogg's and AT&T and Microsoft do. They can afford to be un-fascinating.

Oh – what's that you say? You don't have a Fortune 100 budget? Well then. Until you do, avoid being pointless. You can't afford it.

To begin, work on the message itself.

**2. MESSAGE FIRST. MEDIA SECOND.** There's a lot of hoo-ha about all the different forms of social media: Twitter and Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn. All of which are important.

*BUT: Before you even think about which form of media to use, you must first decide what to say.*

As you consider different platforms, remember: The message is not an afterthought. It's king. Emperor. World nuclear superpower. Don't "do" social media unless you actually have something to say.

Get your message right first, and the rest gets a whole lot easier. How to do this? Read on.

**3. IDENTIFY WHAT ALREADY MAKES YOU FASCINATING.** Yes, your company has the potential to be fascinating. The trick is to figure out exactly *what to say*, and *how* you can use that to attract customers.



*Here's a quick version of an incredibly useful exercise I do with my Fortune 500 clients to help them uncover their brand's main points of fascination. I call them "Fascination Badges."*

In advertising, we develop ONE key strategy.

But in social media, it's good to have an abundance of message points so that you can share fresh information to reinforce your main points and motivate consumers to engage in multiple ways.

The purpose of this Fascination Badges exercise is to develop a profusion of points that clearly distinguish you.

*Brainstorm a list for each of the following points:*

- **Product.** How you're different or better than the competition.
- **Core beliefs.** The values that guide you; what you stand for.
- **Actions.** The ways in which you "walk the walk".
- **Culture.** How you work, communicate, interact, play, promote.
- **Heritage.** The "back story" of how you became the best.
- **Benefits.** Why someone should buy from you or hire you.
- **Purpose.** The mission behind why your company exists.

Use the lists you come up with to create several messages that demonstrate what makes you different, better, and more fascinating than your competition.



You don't *always* want to talk about yourself, of course. It's also important to connect by sharing information and insight.

**4. START WITH INFORMATION, AND THEN ADD INSIGHT.** Ever sent a magazine article to a colleague, perhaps adding a Post-It note of personal commentary, as a way to bond over a problem or goal or interest that the two of you share? Sure. And you can build relationships through social media in exactly the same way. Sharing relevant and useful information (such as a news report or an emerging trend) conveys your investment in supporting your network, rather than just promoting yourself.

Now, ready to step it up a notch? Add *insight* to your message.

When you share info, go a step further to include your interpretation of the material, and the implications for your reader. Connect the dots.

It might go something like this: "Here's something on the horizon: \_\_\_\_\_, and here's what I believe it means for you and your business: \_\_\_\_\_."

Insight requires a little more effort and sophistication, but increases the relevance of your message – and of your brand. *Adding insight is adding value.* Otherwise, you're just spamming people.

You might not think of your marketing as spam. But if no one gets value out of your message, sorry, it's spam.

**5. THINK IN VERBS.** Successful social media messages don't just get attention – they drive behavior. They incite action. If people don't change their actions as a result of your message, that message failed.





To create messages that change behavior, *identify exactly what action you want people to take*. Rather than just making an announcement (“Now open Sundays” or “20% off!!!”), start thinking of messages in terms of how your message will:

- **Attract customers into your store**
- **Prove why you are the best choice**
- **Increase urgency for immediate sale**
- **Convince new prospects to switch to your product**
- **Recommit to being loyal (when they might otherwise move to a competitor)**

*In social media – and in life – verbs are the foundation of success.*

**6. HIT HOT BUTTONS.** Hot buttons are intensely charged issues that tap directly into a customer’s decision to buy. Different customers have different hot buttons. Identify which hot button will most influence the purchase process, and then create messages around it.

*Here are three potential hot buttons:*

**Fears:** What is your customer concerned could go wrong, and how can you prevent or solve this? (FedEx fear uses this hot button, charging a premium for “fear relief.”)

**Needs:** Identify what’s *missing* or *unsolved* for your customers, on a practical level. Do they have a rational need (such as the need to spend less)? Or, an emotional need (such as feeling validated by a well-known brand name)? Find ways in which your business fulfills what’s missing.



**Hopes:** Deep down, your customers hold certain aspirations (even if they won't admit it). They might want to feel smarter, more relaxed, or even get promoted as a result of buying your product. Although it's easy to identify your customers' rational needs, it takes some savvy to demonstrate you understand *what they aspire to become*.

All this isn't easy. Social media works because *you* make it work. And that takes work.

**7. STOP MOANING THAT IT'S HARD.** Yes, it's hard (especially at first). Agreed. Get on with it. Just start. How? *Write about something that fascinates you and why*. Press enter. BOOM. Done.

Social media isn't a one-time deal, like creating a logo, or designing a billboard. It's free, and it's incredibly effective – but it takes a regular commitment akin to brushing your teeth, part of your consistent repertoire.

When you first start building a network and establishing your point of view, you have to put energy into the process. But soon, the process gives energy to you as people start to respond, react, and (most of all) buy.

I recommend a blend of personal observation, questions, and your own thinking.

*To help get you started, here's a batch of my most retweeted messages from the past month. Feel free to share any of these messages on social media – as your own:*

*You can be comfortable, or outstanding, but not both.*

*Trust your gut. It's smarter than you.*



*You are your most important client.*

*On Sunday evenings, do you prepare for Monday morning by gearing up with gusto? Or do you savor every last possible moment of weekend time?*

*My career advice: Forget what your business card says. You're an entrepreneur.*

*The McRib Sandwich: Yummy? Or culinary freak show?*

## 8. STILL FEELING STUCK? TRY ONE OF THESE:

- **Go on a rant.** Or a rave. Or anything else you sincerely feel strongly about. A passionate voice vividly communicates what you believe in and why people should care.
- **Ask provocative questions (and interact with the resulting commentary).** Once, I posted on Facebook: “Would you rather work for a talented asshole, or a sweetheart hack?” There were so many comments and discussions on Facebook, Twitter, and my blog that it led to a two-part article in *Advertising Age*.
- **Predict what will happen next.** Or what you think should happen next.
- **Praise a company that’s doing things differently and getting it right.** Maybe even praise your competitor.
- **Use social media in unexpectedly direct ways.** What if you use Twitter to cleverly woo a potential new client? Most people keep a close eye on any mention of their own usernames, and their company’s account, so your tweet will automatically pop up on their alerts. You might say, “Reason #47 why @AcmeCo should hire us: We guarantee our work for twice as long as anyone else.”



Personalize it even further by tweeting messages to individuals in the company. A cool, cheeky way to pique their interest.

- **State your “opinions of authority.”** These strongly worded viewpoints are like a letter to the editor but relate to your customer. It must be a topic or sentiment that you can stand behind so confidently that it reflects your expertise. Your opinions of authority shouldn't be obvious; in fact, the more counterintuitive, the better. What do you believe with such conviction that you can authentically advise your customer with full confidence? And what if you make a short YouTube video or blog post about it?

*So why aren't more people fascinating?* Because it requires strategy, street smarts, cojones, and an understanding of human nature. It requires developing and expressing a distinct point of view.

It's easy to be boring. Anyone can do it. Your competition probably does it quite well.

**9. STAND OUT OR DON'T BOTHER. (SERIOUSLY.)** Are you willing to create ideas that irresistibly attract an audience of avid followers? Are you prepared to do the work necessary to inform and inspire your audience? Are you courageous enough to provoke and occasionally polarize? Are you unafraid to ask questions and change the way people think?

If not, don't waste your time and money on social media. Really.

The world doesn't need another tweet. It needs *you*. It needs your secret best practices, your offbeat observations, your old-fashioned advice, and your cutting-edge solutions.



The goal here is to create messages that are remembered and acted upon. But it all starts with being heard.

You will not win by being quiet.

In a nine-second world, you win by being heard.

*Growing up with the last name Hogshead would give anyone an unconventional point of view. Today, Sally is on a mission to help companies create radical ideas and passionate action, expertly shaken and stirred with a tangy slap of inspiration.*

*An author, speaker, and internationally-recognized marketing expert, Sally works with world-class brands such as Coca-Cola, Nike, and Target, and frequently appears in national media including “The Today Show” and The New York Times.*

*Sally’s latest book is FASCINATE: Your 7 Triggers to Persuasion and Captivation. How does your own personal brand irresistibly captivate? Find out by taking Sally’s F Score personality test at <http://www.SallyHogshead.com/FScore>*



# Is Social Media Right for Every Business?

*By Mitch Joel*

A great man once said, “Do or do not, there is no try.”

Fine, it wasn’t a great man. It was a Muppet. But when Yoda said that now-classic line in *The Empire Strikes Back*, many a geek (myself included) nodded our heads as if it were the commonsense wisdom of the Dalai Lama.

In fact, the concept of “trying” something without having a true strategy or direct outcome in mind is becoming a much more sensible approach to the Digital Marketing channels.

This is especially true when it comes to the varied world of social media, where channels and platforms like Twitter and Facebook roam wild with Foursquare and Quora. One person’s video of six dogs chasing a gazelle with 80 million views is equally layered against an audio podcast that focuses on the best burger joints in Montreal. (No joke, check out: The Montreal Burger Report at <http://montrealburgers.blogspot.com/>.)

Is there room for  
your business and  
brand in all of this  
random content?  
Of course there is!



One of the primary reasons that businesses struggle to understand the world of social media is that it's often compared to just one particular traditional media channel, instead of it being seen as a healthy ecosystem where a brick-and-mortar brand (and this includes both products and services with a business-to-consumer or business-to-business focus) can create and do things with content (text, images, audio, and video), across multiple areas, and with varying degrees of impact and audience.

That is the new reality, and it is always surprising to hear many social media pundits say that, "Social media isn't for everyone."

The explanation that follows implies that some companies simply don't have the wherewithal to get it done... and get it done well.

A lot of businesses don't have the bandwidth, budget, resources, people, experience, or the right attitude. It's as if everything has to align like a total lunar eclipse to get into this very complex media mix. That kind of back and forth is a huge misnomer.

It's usually done so that a company hires any one of these many consultants/speakers/gurus/experts/wizards to pay them to do the work.

The truth is that asking, "Is social media right for my company?" is a flawed question.

Instead ask yourself this, "Should my business be sharing who we are and what we do with the world?" What is your answer to that question? If it's not "Yes," feel free to close this book and whack yourself upside the head until you realize that the answer is and likely always will be, "Yes!"



That's why you're in business (and that's why you picked up this book in the first place): so more and more customers can find you, buy from you, and tell everyone that they know how great you are.

*This flawed thinking that social media is not for everyone happens because many of these self-anointed experts focus on only two areas of social media:*

- 1. Whatever platform is most popular (like Facebook and Twitter).**
- 2. The notion that social media is all about the “conversation” that is taking place online about you, your competitors, and/or the industry you serve.**

Those are both valid spaces to play in (and if you do everything that Jeffrey is telling you to do in this book, you'll get there), but they're not even close to the only ones, or the reason to get involved with social media in the first place.

What makes social media (or any other type of media) truly “social” is the ability to share. Whether that is done on an internal basis with your employees, or publicly (or both), sharing is the best place to start. Sharing is also a key pillar in building trust and credibility.

Share everything there is for people to know about you and your business – news, articles, white papers, your thoughts, etc. Share beyond your own hallowed digital walls (your website) and push that information into the channels where people who might be looking for what you have to offer.

That being said, make sure that all of the content on your website is just a click away for people to “Like” on Facebook, or “tweet” on Twitter, or email to a friend.





(You can learn more about how to do this and get a free widget to place on your website that will allow people to share your content right away at <http://www.sharethis.com>.)

While optimizing your site so it can be found on the search engines is still critically important, don't forget that YouTube is actually the second-largest search engine after Google. So if you're not producing a video blog, or posting video testimonials and your public speeches, you may not be reaching every potential customer that is looking for you.

While sharing gets things rolling, being findable is equally important. Every day, more and more people are now doing all kinds of searches and research within their online social networks. They're scanning the industry blogs and podcasts to see who is saying what about whom and making informed purchasing decisions based on the responses they get back.

The more your business  
makes your content more  
findable – in text, images,  
audio, and video – the more  
findable you become...  
everywhere, but you have to  
be listening, too.

People frequently ask me if social media platforms like Twitter are a waste of time. As the President of a Digital Marketing agency with two offices and over 130 full-time employees, I can tell you bluntly that it's my job to know what people are saying about our brand, our clients, and the industry we serve.



It is also my job to be listening for new business opportunities and to close more sales. If people are asking for references to a digital marketing agency on Twitter (Facebook, LinkedIn, or wherever), it's incumbent on me to be there, and be responsive.

Yes, you can purchase social media monitoring tools to hear and capture everything. But you can also access some amazing free tools like Twitter Search ([search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com)), Google Alerts ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)), and Google Blog Search ([blogsearch.google.com](http://blogsearch.google.com)). Start listening. Right now.

Once you begin to benefit from sharing, listening, and becoming more findable, you'll begin to see the many additional options and tools that are available.

From tools that can help you to better collaborate both internally and by leveraging the wisdom of your crowd to listening to the existing feedback and dialog surrounding your brand – all of this public content is there. It can help you better analyze your market position, what customers really think about you and your competitors, and – if you're listening close enough – it can even provide indications as to how you can improve, innovate, and close more sales.

What if you sell toilet paper? Is social media still right for your business?

Charmin released an iPhone app called "Sit or Squat" that allows you to locate, rate, comment on, and even add a clean public toilet. The feature-rich application also allows you to narrow your search to bathrooms that have a baby changing station (as one of many examples). This crowd-sourced initiative has been downloaded millions of times and – as someone who travels as frequently as I do – has a special place on the first homepage of my iPhone.



Charmin is enabling and empowering people like you and me to share with the intent of having a better bathroom experience (and the hopes that you'll consider buying Charmin toilet paper as you make your way through your grocer's aisle).

## If Charmin can make social media work using toilet paper, what's got you all blocked up?

*Here are five ways to start listening, sharing, and becoming more findable:*

- 1. Open up.** Beyond the ShareThis functionality, consider allowing anybody and everybody to be able to rate and comment on all of the products and services on your website.
- 2. Listen better.** Set up a free account with Google Reader and start feeding into it RSS feeds for all of your key/important terms (company, brands, key management people, competitors, industry, etc.).
- 3. Read more.** Use Google Reader to also organize all of the key blogs and podcasts in your industry. By reading, listening, and following them, it will make you smarter and sharper. You'll you'll know what your competition is up to and be able to think of ways to beat them.
- 4. Listen even more.** Use Twitter Search, Google Alerts, and Google Blog Search to hear what people are saying about you, your competitors, and your industry. Here's a tip: every search result will (usually) allow you to create an RSS feed. Do this and bring the feed into Google Reader. This way, you will have one area where every time anything is mentioned,



you'll be able to see it in this one, unified, and easy-to-manage location.

**5. Respond. Respond to everything.** What is said about you. What is said about your industry. What is said about your competition. Become the de facto expert. Don't sell. Don't push. Be helpful. Be likeable. As my friend Hugh McGuire (LibriVox, iambik) likes to say, "Don't Blog to be known. Blog to be knowable." In this instance, respond to become knowable. If you are knowledgeable and helpful, people will buy from you.

*Mitch Joel is President of Twist Image – an award-winning Digital Marketing and Communications agency. Marketing Magazine dubbed him the “Rock Star of Digital Marketing” and called him, “One of North America’s leading digital visionaries.”*

*In 2008, he was named one of the top 100 online marketers in the world and was awarded the highly prestigious Top 40 Under 40. Most recently, Mitch was named one of iMedia’s 25 Internet Marketing Leaders and Innovators. His first book, Six Pixels of Separation (published by Grand Central Publishing), named after his successful blog and podcast, is a business and marketing bestseller.*

*For more info about Mitch, visit <http://www.twistimage.com> or follow him on Twitter at <http://www.Twitter.com/mitchjoel>.*



# The Secret Door: 8 Steps and You Are IN!

*By Richard Brasser*

One of the most common complaints I hear from salespeople is that big company executives are extremely difficult to connect with. One of the main reasons is that there are intentional barriers put in your way. I can almost guarantee you that most access points to the decision maker are well fortified with screeners, guards, high walls, and tar-filled moats. However, through the use of social channels, not only can you learn about your prospect, you can also connect with them directly and better yet, get a response.

Before diving into the best ways to utilize this “secret door,” it is important to first understand why it exists and what motivations are keeping it open.

The rise of social communication via the web marked a significant change in the way that technology aligned and empowered our human instincts. It is the “human” part that makes this paradigm shift different and also the key that drives our motivations. Technology has been advancing at an amazing rate since the first computer started to blink its lights. All of a sudden we could perform tasks that were impossible before. We could do them faster, and highly complex things were made relatively simple.

Faster and easier was great, but it also came with a high likelihood of headaches. Nothing seems worse than when technology abandons us at a critical time without an easy fix. Regardless, it was worth the tradeoff.



Technology continued to develop and assist in our communication. Email, webex, faxes, conference calls, IP phone systems, and virtual offices were enabling us to work from anywhere.

This was GREAT! Kind of. We had flexibility and mobility, but we were getting more and more impersonal. We were losing human interactions and connections at an alarming rate, and came to find out that it wasn't the big things in life that helped us bond with someone, it was the little things. It was the delicate weave of personal and professional daily actions, insights, questions, and realizations that were the fabric of our relationships. We were losing those. And it felt empty.

At the same time and driven by the same need, a strange emphasis and value was starting to be put on "notoriety." Notice that I didn't say "fame." It wasn't the desire to be famous that people were yearning for. Sure it would be nice to win seven gold medals or win an Oscar, but this was more about just being noticed.

In a world that was becoming increasingly anonymous, people just wanted other people to say, "I see you and acknowledge that you are there."

This may seem overly dramatic, but pay attention and you will see it everywhere. Contestants on reality shows are not driven by the money (although I am sure they are ok with it). They are not driven by the need to show people their amazing abilities. In fact, they are not even concerned with being perceived in a good light. They are doing anything necessary to be NOTICED.

The new currency is quickly becoming "attention," and it is driving the majority of social media. Ask an 18-year-old whether she would rather have \$50,000 or a YouTube video with a million views, and I'm sure you can guess the answer.



**ENTER THE WORLD OF SOCIAL TECHNOLOGIES:** These new tools tapped into both of these key drivers. They satisfied our need to connect in a very human way AND develop a network of “followers” or “fans” that think you are interesting. Facebook didn’t rocket to its hundreds of million users in less than six years because it had a good product or offered a good value (although free is nice). It did it because it tapped into a deep-seeded human need and the world was insatiable.

So why should you care about any of this? Because understanding the underlying needs and desires is everything! The tools and technologies will certainly change. New companies are launching every day, offering slightly different versions of existing tools or entirely new services.

Base your strategy and knowledge on the underlying principles, and you will have a solid perspective to evaluate any change in the landscape. Additionally, understanding the motivations of your prospects’ use of social media will help you navigate the use of your own social media and give you a clear understanding of what is going on.

Don’t just take these tips and act on them without understanding why they work. Understand why they work, and you can begin to think up a lot more of your own and continue to create new strategies as the environments change and mature.

Remember, we are at the dawn of social communication. It has gained much momentum and attention, but it is a long way away from maturity. The entire industry reinvents itself every 90 days, and you need to be empowered to grow with it.

If we reflect on these motivators and start to look at the executives’ use of social networking, it will start to make sense why these tools provide such an unobstructed tunnel to connect with them personally.



*Here are three aspects of social networking that open the “secret door” and ensure that you will have the ability to connect directly with your prospect:*

**1. Social networking is a personal brand.** Even for social media that’s business focused, the entire social framework is built around people generating content and growing their network. They might be trying to promote their company’s products or services, but they do it as real people. The general corporate voice just doesn’t work well in social media. Why? Driver number one! It’s the personality and unique insights that other people want to connect with, not the brand or product. The result of this is the executive managing and creating his own social network. Further result? Direct pipe into his world.

**2. Social networking is a river.** Social networking is a continuous conversation. It is difficult to outsource. Have you ever tried to have someone else talk on the phone for you while you were standing there? Eventually you just say, “Give me the phone.” Remember, it is people connecting with people. If anyone gets the feeling that you are shouting one-directional messages out into the social networking world, you will be banished quickly. That kind of behavior is simply not tolerated. Therefore, not only are the executives managing their own accounts, they are constantly checking them for updates. This gives your messages a much better chance of being noticed. Compare this to email. It’s probable that your prospect has five or six different email accounts. As you get closer and closer, they are probably screened by someone else before ever being forwarded to the direct account. Even if you get a direct email address, they probably get hundreds a day and find it easy to delete or ignore your attempt to connect. So why is social networking different? Driver number two! People gain nothing from responding to an email, but they build their network and gain notoriety by responding to a mention on the social networks.





**3. Social networking is a fish bowl.** The core DNA of public social networks dictates that they are open and in plain view for everyone to see. A good friend (and top executive at Facebook) explained to me just how seriously this is taken when he said that his leadership told him that “Facebook would never build anything that was private!” It is always dangerous to say “never” but understand that transparency and openness is at the core of what drives social communication. Therefore, you can trust that your prospects aren’t hiding behind a corporate firewall of anonymity; they are playing out in the world in plain view. They are motivated to connect and be on their absolute best behavior. It is similar to meeting someone at an event. They will be quite courteous, polite, and respectful...because that is how they want to be perceived and because they know everyone is watching. Back at the office they can ignore your call, cancel your sales presentation, and not respond to emails because no one is watching. Social networks enable you to connect with the BEST version of that prospect, and that is a wonderful thing.

What an amazing little alternate universe where your same prospects are polite, responsive, motivated to connect, and willing to interact! Still think social networking is a waste of time? I didn’t think so.

As long as you understand how and why these drivers work, you can create hundreds of your own examples and be even more effective. Remember, BE AUTHENTIC! This is not about taking advantage of people or manipulating them into a conversation. This is about offering them real value and being a real person. If you aren’t willing to do that, then don’t bother. Nothing sticks out more than a self-serving salesperson in the social media world. Be real, be yourself, and be honest and the results will surely follow.



This is a real-life example of how I got a meeting with the CEO of a large and prestigious technology company by having him reach out and thank me. Sounds strange, right?

**HERE'S HOW IT HAPPENED:** I had respected him and his company for many years. I started following his messages on Twitter. I noticed that he had a 75% to 25% balance between work and personal. He liked being a professional thought leader in his space and was grateful when someone furthered that cause.

Every once in a while, he paid particular attention to certain topics or opinions and carried on longer conversations. Those messages seemed to be most important to him, and he was responsive to any feedback. I followed closely and found one opinion of his that I really liked and agreed with. I retweeted his message to my network with the addition of “great opinion by top thought leader.”

You get the idea.

I also mentioned him on a couple following messages and gave him credit for starting the thought that I continued. A few days later, I received a message from him thanking me for my kind words. I responded and explained that I have been a fan of his for a while and would love to connect the next time I am in New York.

He said “no problem” and a few weeks later, we scheduled a meeting. All of this because he reached out and thanked me! Could this have been achieved through traditional communication channels? Probably not.

Wondering how to get started?



*Let's take a look at eight professional steps for using social networking to get an audience with almost anyone you seek:*

- 1. FIND YOUR PROSPECTS.** What networks do they participate on? Where do they spend most of their time? Make a list and link it to their profile or add it to the contact information you have for them.
- 2. FOLLOW THEM.** Don't just click to follow, and then ignore them. Really follow them.
- 3. READ THEIR POSTS.** This might take a bit of time, but resist the urge to just jump in and start trying to communicate. Read their tweets or other posts for a while, and you will start to get a good feel for the subtleties of their communication. It is these subtleties that will prove to be the most important in the long run.
- 4. COLLECT INFORMATION.** Setting up an ongoing search in Tweet Deck (or any other similar tool) for their Twitter name and their company is a good way to have a broad perspective of what is being said. The nature of the social network is that it is a large and complex hub and spoke system. Just focusing on one source might give you a skewed perception. Find as much as possible about what is being said.
- 5. LISTEN.** Don't just hear, but really listen. Try to understand their perspective, their predispositions, their biases, and their style. At this point, it's much less about the individual messages and more about the ongoing conversation. Are they directive or passive, aggressive or accommodating, egotistical or humble? Knowing this is important when trying to understand their communication style.



- 6. CONNECT** – If you have done the previous steps, you are ready to make the connection.

*Depending upon where they are spending the most time and how they are participating, your approach will vary quite dramatically, but here are a few general ideas to get started:*

- A.** Retweet some of their most impactful messages. Adding a few words of your own.
- B.** Mention them in your tweets as having influenced you or helped you in your business life. Be honest and straightforward. They will see these messages. Almost everyone, no matter how big their following is, tunes in when their name is used.
- C.** Tweet about their success, articles, press, and so on. Be a supporter and they will appreciate your efforts.
- D.** Find relevant LinkedIn groups that they participate in and offer intelligent and original answers or comments. LinkedIn groups are a great way to quickly “have something in common” with your prospect. It is also likely that other similar prospects are in the same group, so pay attention to who the other group members are. If a group is not “open,” then you can’t contribute, but you can always reference the discussion in your updates from LinkedIn or Twitter.
- E.** Start topics that are likely to engage your desired audience. You have the ability to start topics within a group or outside of a group. Be careful not to be too self-serving or make it feel like an ambush. People are wary of salespeople asking questions that they themselves are dying to answer. You have to be a bit more creative and smart with this one.



- F. Answer questions that your prospects are asking. This is kind of a no-brainer, but make sure you have a useful and impressive answer.
7. **REACH OUT** – Direct message them or try to connect in a more meaningful way. On LinkedIn, you can ask someone else who is in their network to introduce you. On Twitter, you can send a direct message if they are following you as well. Use other communication channels and reference the social network where you noticed them. **WORD OF CAUTION:** Don't try to friend people on Facebook that you don't know or just have a business relationship with. You can "Like" their business Facebook page, but their personal Facebook is their more private world and unless you are invited, please respect them. Also, it is not recommended to connect on LinkedIn directly unless you know them. It is actually against the user guidelines to attempt to connect with someone you have never met. If you have never met them and can't find anyone to introduce you, their public profile is the only information that you should use. Be respectful and honest in your approach.
8. **ALIGN YOURSELF WITH THE PEOPLE THAT YOU KNOW THEY FOLLOW AND PAY ATTENTION TO.** If you have listened well to their updates, you will know who they respect and who they don't. Having a person that you both mutually respect can be a great common connection. Retweet or mention those people and your prospect will probably see those posts as well.

Generating sales is often a numbers game, and it's alluring to try and cast a wide net.



However, spending a little extra time getting to know the person beyond the target is well worth the effort. Truly understanding the human motivation and drivers for the explosion of social networking will pay huge dividends and enable you to easily navigate around most traditional barriers and find “the secret door” to success.

*With more than 11 years of experience in the interactive media world, Richard Brasser has become one of the leading experts in social media and interactive marketing.*

*As an acclaimed speaker, author, and thought leader, Richard has been a speaker for the Inc. 500 conference, an “Entrepreneur Roadmap” board member for the Kauffman Foundation, and a member of the Social Media Task Force for NASDAQ.*

*Since founding The Targeted Group in 1999, Richard has helped some of the nation’s leading brands create their social networking strategies and successful interactive media initiatives. Aiding in strategic marketing programs for companies such as SAP, Siemens, Citibank, Smith Barney, Avaya Nortel, GMAC, Pepsi, and RSM McGladrey, Richard has honed his understanding of how to create engagement and long-lasting value using social strategies.*

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