



# Benefits of social media

Social media offers numerous benefits, and survey\* results show a clear pattern in terms of order of priorities.

1. Reputation and brand-building
2. Increased traffic
3. Sales and lead generation

Approximately half of all companies say that increasing direct traffic (56%) or indirect traffic (46%) to the website are major benefits of social media. Getting new leads and increasing sales are seen as a major benefit of social media by 43% and 29% of companies respectively.



# How good is your company at social media?

## How will you measure up?

Award one point for every time you answer 'yes' and  
rate your performance at the end of this section

Think you've got social media covered?  
Run through our checklist to see if you're  
maximising the benefits and avoiding potential  
dangers...



	YES	NO
1. Do you have a good understanding of the way social media is being used in your market sector?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. Do you know what your competitors are doing with social media and is it working?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. Do you run a corporate blog?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. Do you promote your blog by reading similar sites and engaging with their audience via comment boards?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Have you signed up and then customised your Twitter account?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. Are you using Twitter to distribute information about your products and services, or to engage in industry discussions?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. Have you set up a profile page, fan page or group on Facebook to help promote your products or services?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. Are you maximising your Google profile by distributing audio-visual media on sites such as Flickr and YouTube?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. Are you taking advantage of any of the myriad of available free monitoring tools such as Google Alerts, Google Blog Search and Backtype.com?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. Have you created a clear set of policies for responding to enquiries and comments arriving via social media?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
TOTAL	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



# How did you do?

1 - 4

**Oh dear**

You're missing out on opportunities to promote your brand to millions of people worldwide.

Go back to question one and start making some changes!

5 - 7

**Not bad...**

But there's still work to do.

You need to spend a little more time developing your social media strategy to maximise its benefits

8-10

**Congrats!**

You're well on your way to mastering social media.

Just fill in any gaps and try to stay with the curve - and remember; the best campaigns are long term.



# Planning, evaluating = success

Want to begin engaging in the social media sphere?

The following steps (by no means exhaustive) are good pointers to get you started.

Then decide on the most appropriate way to measure your social media campaign **BEFORE** the campaign is launched.

Read on...



## Research your online landscape

The first thing you should do is research. Where do you stand at the moment? Where is your audience, where are your customers, your potential customers and your competitors customers? What are they saying about you and your competitors? Are they angry, happy, passionate or just seeking answers that they can't get from you?

## Strategise

Once you know your landscape, you can begin to set up a strategy. Work out what you want to achieve through social media. Do you want to: Provide customer support? Add traction to your offers? Build brand advocates? Talk to your customers?

Once you have established your objectives, use your landscape research to determine where you want to position yourself. Don't just jump on every social network out there. Firstly that is bad practice and impolite. Not every platform will be useful to your brand or your objectives. There is no point being in places where no one will listen to you.

And lastly do not become involved in areas where it may require resource and management that you have not accounted for. If you try to communicate through many platforms at once and you do not have the time or resource to keep track, monitor, analyse and respond you will be unsuccessful.

## Create content

What are you going to give your audience? Why would they want to interact with you? Work out how you're going to add value for your audience. It all starts with excellent, engaging, entertaining and downright useful content.

Maybe you are providing a useful tool, providing advice or giving support. Think about what you are doing / offering and how you can promote it.

## Resources

Make sure you have the resources to be in social media. Being successful in social media takes patience and dedication. You need to be dedicated to writing that blog, or answering your customers' questions and you need a superstar that is passionate about your brand to manage your social media presence.

## Monitor

Monitoring is vital to evaluate the success of your social media campaign. Monitoring will help you gauge the pickup of your campaign, how many people have been interacting with you? How far have your messages gone? It will also provide insight into where you can tap into industry conversations that perhaps you should be part of.

# Evaluating



Take time to look back at what you're doing to see if there is anything you can refine. The best campaigns and communications plans are reviewed on an ongoing basis as conversation evolves.

The ideal metric for many brands may well be a public opinion survey before and after the campaign. The challenge is surveying the same demographic as the social media campaign is likely to reach.

Perhaps the simplest evaluation metric is the online equivalent of column inches; how much conversation did the campaign produce? To make this measurement you need to be able to discover where conversations about the subject that interest you are occurring and some way to measure their inch space.

Free sites like Alexa.com and Compete.com offer a rough insight into the popularity of a website and the Technorati blog authority metric is also freely available. Conversations on popular sites could be considered more significant than conversations on niche sites. Sites can be graded for appropriateness or desirability. Downgraded sites might be subject to a reduction in their effective popularity. Upgraded sites might be treated as twice or thrice as popular as the freely available web metrics suggest they are.

In some instances traffic itself is a measure of success. It may not be appropriate to measure the impact of a social media campaign by counting the web traffic but it may be possible to measure the impact of tweeted headlines by calculating clickthrough ratios or even tallying clicks.

If involved in user engagement mapping or click path analysis for their search campaigns you may well notice that shoppers tend to visit the site many times before making a purchase. This is especially true if a would-be customer needs to convince themselves that they have found the best place to make a purchase.

Brands that are still building up their reputation and might not be well known to the consumer are particularly prone to this. A successful social media campaign, one that reaches a broad demographic, may shorten this click path as users are quicker to make their purchases from brands they are familiar with.

In this scenario the user engagement analysis can be compared before and after the social media campaign, the average CPC factored against the average click path length, and the difference between the two benchmarks be used to produce a monetary value success metric.

# 10 top social media tools



1. **Social Mention** <http://www.socialmention.com>  
Get an instant overview of your social media profile
2. **Tweet Deck** <http://tweetdeck.com>  
Desktop based Twitter client with many options to customise your Twitter experience.
3. **Google Blog Search** <http://blogsearch.google.com>  
Google's tried and trusted blog search tracks down and archives virtually any site with an RSS feed.
4. **Board Reader** <http://boardreader.com>  
Stay in touch with what people are talking about in your sector by searching for key phrases across multiple forums.
5. **BlogPulse** <http://www.blogpulse.com>  
Provides excellent, up-to-the-minute trend graphs tracking blogging volume and activity.
6. **Backtype** <http://www.backtype.com>  
Searches through blog comments.
7. **Blinkx** <http://www.blinkx.com>  
Search all the top online video sites from a single site.
8. **Google Alerts** <http://www.google.com/alerts>  
Setup alerts for every time your keyword is mentioned
9. **Twitter Search** <http://search.twitter.com>  
Twitter's very own search engine. Find out what people are saying about you about right now.
10. **Yahoo Pipes** <http://pipes.yahoo.com/pipes>  
Merge RSS feeds from the above tools using Yahoo pipes to create your own custom monitoring tool.



Social media success is hard to come by.

It takes time and effort, constant attention and patience. But when it does work, and you can see your message spreading as people start talking about and engaging with your brand, you can begin to see what a powerful effect a social media campaign can have.



# The future?

Predicting the future is never easy, particularly when it comes to the web.

So, when it comes to plotting your company's course through the online media minefield it becomes very easy to get confused, but the trick is not to be too distracted by the mass of unknowns, instead focus the bulk of your energies upon the technologies you can be sure of while keeping a weather eye on the latest emerging trends.



# Need help?

If you would like us to help your engagement strategy, then please do contact us - we can get you focused on the right technologies and help build you a great reputation in the social sphere.

[www.intranace.co.uk](http://www.intranace.co.uk)