

## **Social Media brief and checklist**

Social media is going through a classic 'hype cycle'. There is huge interest and discussion in it as a way of marketing products, but many B2B companies aren't really using it seriously i.e. spending serious marketing budgets on social media channels.

Whether it is becoming mainstream or not, there are some important differences to consider with social media. Companies struggle to 'control' the message with social media, in the same way they can with an advertisement in a magazine.

With something like blogs companies have to truly communicate i.e. try to achieve a shared understanding between them and their audience. That's because everything is two-way, instead of simply sending messages out to your audience, social media allows people to see your message, comment on it and send it to other potential customers with criticism or endorsement.

That makes it a very powerful method of communication. Cheap, instant and persuasive, which can either boost or blast your brand.

Transparency becomes really important with social media – it is hard to 'spin' things. You can't just simply promise to customers and then not deliver. That's because people are out there watching and talking and can share much more effectively than ever before.

A key for companies in the world of social media is understanding what your story really is. What do you want to communicate, what is special about you? It has to be based on something fundamentally true and real, not something clever an advertising agency has dreamed up.

While this need for greater transparency is one real difference with social media, it is not changing the marketing game. Social media needs to be treated as another channel for persuading customers to buy your product. The fundamental rules of marketing still apply – probably even more so than ever before.

Who is your ideal target customer, what is it that you do for them, why do customers choose your product over competitive options. Only when you are crystal clear about these marketing basics will you be clear about if and when to use social media.

Before you start, there a few questions you could ask:

- Who are the audience groups I want to target with my content?
- What role do these channels play in their buying decision?
- What is the single most important thing to get across through this content?
- How will I measure its effect?

<b>Upload it to your website</b>	
- By uploading your content to your own website first, you can direct all other online links back to your website. This also gives people the opportunity to browse further around your site.	
<b>Tweet about it</b>	
- Use keywords, include a link to the content on your website and ask people to check it out.	
<b>Blog about it</b>	
- Use your own blog as a form of promotion, ensuring the use of relevant keywords and metatags.	
<b>Comment on it</b>	
- Where it is highly relevant, refer to your content in posts on blogs serving your target markets.	
<b>Write a press release about it</b>	
- Distribute a press release about your new content to a list of targeted media outlets and media release distribution sites. - Ensure the release is relevant and interesting and above all make sure it focuses on “what’s in it for me” for the reader in order for it to be picked up by media.	
<b>Share it with your social networks</b>	
- On sites such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Plaxo.	
<b>Create a video or slide deck about it</b>	
- Post on your website and share it on YouTube and Slideshare.	
<b>Create an eBook about it</b>	
- If you are an expert in a particular field, an eBook is a great way of sharing your knowledge with others and helping them to solve any problems they have. Users will appreciate practical and useful content that is directly related to their issues.	
<b>Send an email campaign about it</b>	
- Send a relevant email to your contacts with a link to your content and ask them to check it out.	
<b>Bookmark it</b>	
- On stumble, Digg, Delicious and other bookmark services	