

B2B Social Media

What is B2B Social Media?

B2B social media refers to the various channels of the social web (Twitter, blogs, social networks, wikis, etc.) as they pertain to business-to-business interactions—how prospects, customers and businesses use the social web to research, listen, communicate and engage with each other through the exchange of content. While the term “social media” includes a variety of online communities, B2B social media focuses specifically on the use of the social web to drive revenue and engagement along the revenue cycle in B2B sales and interactions.

Why participate in B2B Social Media?

Although it is considered by many to be more consumer-oriented, social media is having a real impact on the B2B world. The B2B buying process has fundamentally changed, and prospects spend more time on the web doing independent research, obtaining information from their peers and third parties via social media. The traditional method of selling no longer applies—today’s sales teams must engage in social selling, or use Web 2.0 technologies to better listen and engage with prospects.

More and more prospects are relying on the content found in social media channels to educate themselves about a company’s brand, products and services. As a result, social media plays an influential role in the B2B decision-making process. Therefore, today’s B2B companies should use social media to monitor what prospects are saying about their company, capture interest from prospects looking for their products and solutions, and coordinate the marketing and sales follow-ups to social media interactions.

What B2B Social Media is NOT

B2B social media is NOT a one-way conversation from B2B marketers to prospects. At the very heart of social media is the idea of community, relationships and one-to-many interactions. This concept resonates in B2B social media as well. B2B social media offers marketers the unique opportunity to listen to how individuals perceive their companies’ brands, products and services in real time, and enables companies to use this insight to further their objectives in marketing, public relations, product development and more.

Additionally, B2B social media is not using the social web and its applications in an ad-hoc manner or without having a greater sense of social media’s role as a genuine marketing channel. Social media has already proven to be a revenue generator for many B2B companies. As such, it should be treated as any other part of the marketing mix, with well-defined strategies, goals and success metrics tied to it.

Glossary Terms

B2B Social Media – Refers to the various channels of the social web (blogs, social networks, wikis, etc.) as they pertain to business-to-business interactions—how prospects, customers and businesses use the social web to research, listen, communicate and engage with each other through the exchange of content

Blog – An online journal, with new entries appearing in sequence as they are written

Groundswell – A social trend in which people use technologies to get the things they need from each other, rather than from traditional institutions like corporations

Hashtag – A community-driven convention for adding additional context and metadata to tweets

Inbound Marketing – A type of marketing characterized by prospects and customers finding companies rather than vice versa

Influencer – A person who is highly recognized in an online community and has the ability to sway others’ thoughts or opinions

Lead Scoring – The process of determining the sales readiness of leads using a pre-determined scoring methodology and ranking them accordingly

LinkedIn – A business-oriented social networking site

Meme – A catchphrase or concept that spreads quickly from person to person via the Internet

Microblogging – A type of blogging that allows users to send brief text updates or micromedia such as photos or audio clips and publish them. The most popular microblogging platform is Twitter

RSS – (Really Simple Syndication) A web standard for the delivery of content — blog entries, news stories, headlines, images, video — enabling readers to stay current with publications without having to browse to their content

Sentiment – A level of assessment that determines the tone of an article, blog post, a company, etc.; usually positive, negative or neutral

Short URL – An alias short URL used for redirection of long URLs

Social Media – Any strategy, software system or media outlet that relies on social interaction and the participation of individuals or communities to create and publish content

Social Media Monitoring – The use of search engine technology to ‘listen’ for specific keywords as defined by your organization

Social News – Websites where users submit and vote on news stories or other links, thus determining which links are presented

Social Proof – The determination of what is right by finding out what other people think is right

Social Selling – Also referred to as Sales 2.0, the merging of Web 2.0 technologies with traditional sales strategies, enabling salespeople to better prioritize their time and serve as experts—not just negotiators—in the product selection process

Twitter – A social networking and microblogging service in which users send and read other users’ updates known as tweets that are 140 characters or less

Twebinar – A mashup between a live podcast/audio broadcast and Twitter as the backchannel for discussion

B2B Social Media – Basic Techniques

- Crawl, walk, and then run. If you're just getting started with social media, think about why you're getting into it in the first place (and make sure the reason is more than "because other companies are doing it").
- Social media is just as important as your other marketing channels—develop similar objectives, strategies and success metrics that you'd like to achieve with it.
- Monitor what your prospects, customers and competitors are saying on social media sites.
- B2B social media reaches beyond just marketing and PR—leverage the insight you gain across other departments in your organization including product development, customer service and more.
- Use and publicize hashtags for every online or offline marketing event and commit a resource from your team to monitor and promote discussion.
- Start to incorporate social media into your traditional marketing programs (e.g. transform your regular webinars into Twebinars).

B2B Social Media – Advanced Techniques

- Trigger follow-up campaigns based on social media interactions.
- Optimize your lead nurturing by segmenting and responding to prospects based on their social media conversations.
- Use what prospects say on social media to identify hot leads and route them to sales at the right time.
- Notify the sales teams when prospects post interesting comments on social sites.

Social Media - Analyst Facts

"If you're a B2B marketer and you're not using social technologies in your marketing, it means you're late." – **Josh Bernoff**,

"New research: B2B buyers have very high social participation," Groundswell Blog, 2009

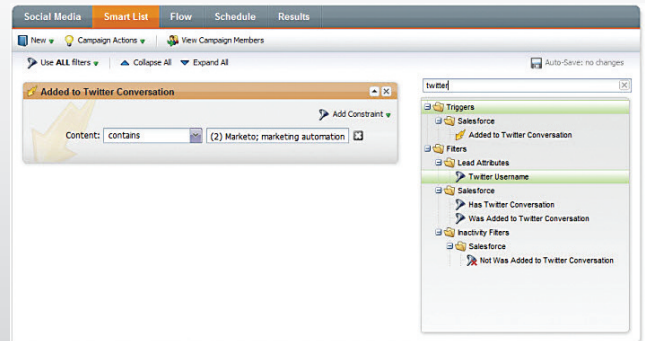
"Social media use is about creating dialog and relationships with a community. The community says what is important, not the marketing folks."

– **Laura Ramos**, *"B2B Marketers Eye Social Media, Web 2.0 Tactics"*
The Forrester Blog for Interactive Marketing Professionals, 2008

"A new report by Aberdeen Group found that 68% of best-in-class companies (those demonstrating marketing excellence) plan to increase their marketing budgets this year for social media."

– **Kate Maddox**,
"Aberdeen finds marketers increasing social media budgets," BtoB, 2009

Social Media in Marketo



Incorporate social media sites such as Twitter into your lead scoring and nurturing initiatives.

Social Media: More than Twitter

Social media is not just Twitter. It is any website or online community where people utilize Web 2.0 technologies. Don't just use the social networks that are popular today, like Twitter. Instead, choose the social networks your prospects and customers are using. These may include Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn, but may also include your blog, industry blogs, industry forums and more.

Top Metrics to Measure ROI with B2B Social Media

- Increased number of qualified leads per social media campaign
- Increased revenue per social media campaign
- Increased number of blog readers and subscribers
- Increased number of Twitter followers and retweets
- Increased positive mentions of your company, products, or services in user-generated content

Top Resources

- Marketo Lead Management Blog: blog.marketo.com
- PowerShift – The Radian6 Blog: www.radian6.com/blog
- Social Media B2B: socialmediab2b.com
- Groundswell Blog: blogs.forrester.com/groundswell

Information for this B2B Marketing Cheat Sheet was taken from Marketo and Radian6 thought leadership including:

- *Marketo's Secret Sauce for Twitter* – www.marketo.com/b2b-marketing-resources/marketo-twitter.php
- *Integrated Social Media Tracking Using Marketing Automation* – blog.marketo.com/blog/2009/07/integrated-social-media-tracking-using-marketing-automation.html
- *Using Digital, Web 2.0 Tactics to Boost B2B Marketing Results* – www.marketo.com/b2b-marketing-resources/video-social-media.php
- *Getting Started with Social Media* – www.radian6.com/blog/2009/11/getting-started-with-social-media
- *The Top 10 Reasons to Monitor Your Brand in Social Media* – www.radian6.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/09/Top10Reasons.pdf

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