

Foreword

Are you going to read this?

Really, it's a foreword. Does anyone read forewords?

What if I write in short sentences?

What if I give you the "Top Five Really Awesome Reasons to Read My Foreword?"

What if I include a picture of a cat riding a surfboard?



Robert Dollwet of Malibu Dog Training has attracted 10.5 million views of his "HAPPY DOGS & CAT in Australia" video.

Source: Robert Dollwet, "HAPPY DOGS & CAT in Australia," CATMANTOO, May 1, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DePFiF-nNoE&spfreload=1>. © Malibu Dog Training.

Or, what if I put myself in your shoes, as a professor, professional, or student, and create content that actually adds value to your decision about buying this book?

Good idea.

When I met Keith, I had just made the leap from the advertising agency world, where I'd happily dwelled for fifteen years, to the academic world, where I still felt a bit like a tourist. Keith had successfully made that jump years earlier, and his perspective as a professional and a professor is the core of what makes this book great.

As professors, we want theory, but we also want practice. We want real-world examples to make theory come alive to students; we want compelling questions to challenge

them to think critically; we want hands-on activities to engage them in constructing their own knowledge. This book has all of that.

I think Keith wrote the book he wished he had when he was at his ad agency, trying to figure out this social media stuff. He brings the professional and academic worlds together (which is surprisingly rare), blending theory and scholarly research with practice and contemporary application, resulting in a book that's thoughtful, powerful, practical, and (bonus!) fun to read.

We live in a world of Twitter-sized attention spans, tempted by tantalizing listicles promising quick returns at every turn. But despite that “Top Five Foolproof Steps to Super Duper Fast Social Media Success” online article, social media is a long game. We've moved from an advertising paradigm of pay-to-play to play-to-play, where you get back what you authentically put in. And there's a lot of strategy behind those decisions about what to put in to social media. This book provides an engaging blueprint for building an effective social media framework, from helping audiences understand the context for social media, to analyzing opportunities, to developing a plan that can actually improve a brand's business (in case a picture of a surfboard-riding cat doesn't do it).

As advertising innovator Howard Gossage said, “Nobody reads ads. People read what interests them. Sometimes it's an ad.” And sometimes it's a book.

—Valerie Jones, University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Introduction

It is hard being a marketer or advertiser these days. Just when you think you have the game figured out, someone goes and changes the rules. You like the idea of digital media. Who doesn't like everything being measurable? But there is something unique about social media. It is much harder to figure out. The old strategies and methods just don't seem to apply. You can't simply add it to the promotional mix. Yet, you can't ignore it. Every year there is greater pressure to integrate social media and do it well. So you search. You open up Google and look for the top ten social media tips for success. We like lists because they make us feel that social media can be a simple quick fix or add-on: just follow these ten steps and you will succeed!

Yet a Google search of "social media marketing tips" returns 135 million results.¹ Start reading these lists and you find that very few tell you to do the same things. Tomorrow hundreds more social media tips will be published. Now suddenly all those simple tips are no longer so simple. In social media we don't have an information problem. We have an information overload problem.

The truth is there is no one-list-fits-all social media strategy. No matter how hard we search for that ultimate top-ten list, we will never find it. The issue with articles like "The Best Social Media Tells a Story,"² "Top 6 Social Media Marketing Tips,"³ or "Social Media Marketing: How Do Top Brands Use Social Platforms,"⁴ is that you can't build a social media plan out of them. The fact that 60 percent of top brands are using Pinterest does not mean it's appropriate for your organization. Even if you did use Pinterest, how would you use it? What would you post there? How would that tie into what you're doing on Facebook? Is it a good idea to tell a story in social media? Sure. But what story do you tell and where? These are answers that cannot be found in a blog post or news article about the latest social media platform, technique, tool, or case study.

What worked for Comcast Cable, Best Buy, or the Red Cross will probably not work the same for a regional bank, tech startup, or package good. Perhaps this explains why a recent American Marketing Association survey found that only 10 percent of chief marketing officers (CMOs) believe their social media is integrated into the firm's marketing strategy. Despite that finding, the same CMOs all plan to double social media spending in the next five years.⁵ Social media may not be integrated, but marketers still know it is important. You would think that with the publication of new insight would come better understanding. Yet an IBM study of global CMOs reveals that the feeling of unpreparedness is actually getting worse. In 2014, 82 percent of CMOs said their organizations are underprepared to capitalize on the data explosion, up from 71 percent in 2011.⁶

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What can we do? One day I was working in my home office contemplating this situation, feeling overwhelmed, when a FedEx delivery person pulled up. I noticed that on his dashboard was a box of Milk Bone dog biscuits. Seeing that he did not have a dog in the truck, I asked him about the dog treats. He said he keeps them in case of a rogue dog. I thought this was a very smart strategy that is probably not in the official FedEx employee manual. It was a back-to-basics approach that he learned from his unique experiences with customers in the field.

Like my FedEx delivery person, a successful social media strategy needs to take a step back and lay out a basic framework that is unique to the brand and its products, services, and customers. For marketers and advertisers to succeed at social media integration, they must first start in a place rooted in their distinct situation and drive a strategy of choosing social platforms and creating content based on their business objectives, marketing strategy, and target audience. Otherwise they are simply chasing 135 million different people's top social media tips that may or may not work for their organization and situation. Only when a unique plan is developed from the beginning will those tips and lists become useful because there will be a way to cut through the clutter and focus only on what advice and insight applies.⁷

This is not a textbook written from a theoretical ivory tower or a business book chronicling one person's success. It is a roll-up-your-sleeves field guide to sound social media strategy that draws from the best in academic research and professional business practice. It lays out a method that cuts through the hype and sets a strategic mindset to take advantage of the exciting opportunities of social media. Whether you are a marketing manager, advertising executive, entrepreneur, or student this text provides the context, process, and tools needed to create a comprehensive and unique social media marketing solution.

Social Media Strategy: Marketing and Advertising in the Consumer Revolution is a blueprint for the practice of marketing and advertising in a digital world where the consumer has taken control. The game has changed and you need a new plan. The consumer revolution is not about giving up or giving in; it is about adjusting methods to effect change, support traditional efforts, and leverage consumer influence for the good of the brand. Are you ready to reset your mindset about social media?

How to Use This Book

This book consists of fourteen chapters divided into five parts. Part I (chapters 1–3) provides an overview of social media. It defines the topic, looks at its scale, and covers the background and context for how we arrived at our current situation. Part I also explores the overall shift in communications and technology that have caused a rise in consumer influence and how marketers and advertisers must respond with a shift in perspective from control to engagement.

Part II (chapters 4–6) then explains a systematic process for creating a social media strategy and integrating it into traditional marketing. This part covers business objectives, target market, social media audits, big ideas, and integration.

Part III (chapters 7–10) explores eight categories of social media: social networks; blogs and forums; microblogging; media sharing; geo-location; ratings and reviews; social bookmarking; and social knowledge. Within each category the top two or three social channels are defined and explained, including users, content, and possible strategies. The objective is to select the right social media channels for plan objectives, strategy, and target audience.

Part IV (chapters 11–13) looks at how social media is affecting and influencing multiple areas of business outside of the marketing silo. It explains five strategies for the marketing and advertising function to integrate with other departments for social media success.

Part V (chapter 14) pulls every concept and process together to create and implement a complete social media plan for a business or organization. The chapter provides a sample format for writing a comprehensive social media marketing plan and explains the importance of selling the plan to key stakeholders through a presentation.

Individual chapters follow a similar format with a chapter opener “Preview” that provides context and insight for the topic, “Theoretically Speaking” sections that dig deeper into the theory behind the practice, and “Mini Cases” that show theory and strategy in practice with brand case studies. Graphs and photos throughout bring examples and research to life. Each chapter ends with questions for discussion and exercises to help explore topics further in class, on discussion boards, or as assignments.

The Social Plan (Parts 1 through 14) is a consistent overall assignment that weaves itself through the book, pulling all theories, concepts, strategies, and examples together into a unified step-by-step process to develop a social media marketing plan and presentation for a brand, product, service, or organization. Each step could serve as weekly in-class or out-of-class assignments or be combined into a smaller number of main reports.

Appendix A includes all fourteen social plan parts and worksheets together as a single social media plan guide coordinated with each chapter. Appendix B provides a quick social media guide in a condensed five step process, leading to a social media marketing plan and presentation. Appendix C concludes with a list of social media tools and resources to be used in the planning process and for social media implementation.

For more resources related to the book and for updates on current social media examples and channels, visit my blog at www.postcontrolmarketing.com.

Notes

1. Google search, “Top Ten Social Media Marketing Tips,” accessed February 16, 2015, <https://www.google.com/search?q=top+ten+social+media+marketing+tips&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a>.

2. Tom Devaney and Tom Stein, “The Best Social Media Marketing Tells a Story,” *Forbes.com*, July 23, 2013, <http://www.forbes.com/sites/capitalonespark/2013/07/23/the-best-social-media-marketing-tells-a-story>.

3. Lisa Mahapatra, “Social Media Marketing: How Do Top Brands Use Social Platforms,” *IBTimes.com*, August 9, 2013, <http://www.ibtimes.com/social-media-marketing-how-do-top-brands-use-social-platforms-charts-1379457>.

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4. Shilpa Shree, “Social Media Marketing Budgets to Double in Next Five Years!! [Report],” *Dazeinfo.com*, March 15, 2013, <http://www.dazeinfo.com/2013/03/15/social-media-marketing-budgets-to-double-in-next-five-years-report/#ixzz2d5VqVqbb>.

5. Dom Nicasro, “CMO: The C-Suite’s Enigmatic Executive.” *CMSWire.com*, March 19, 2014, <http://www.cmswire.com/cms/customer-experience/cmo-the-csuites-enigmatic-executive-024570.php#null>.

6. Chris Street, “Top 6 Social Media Marketing Tips,” *Socialmediatoday.com*, July 8, 2013, <http://socialmediatoday.com/chrisstreet/1577921/top-six-social-media-marketing-tips>.

7. Keith Quesenberry, “There Are No Top 10 Best Rules for Social Media Marketing,” *PostControlMarketing.com (blog)*, August 26, 2013, <http://www.postcontrolmarketing.com/?p=1270>.