

Tomorrow People
Digital Marketing Agency

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How To Generate Leads From Social Media



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Something big has happened to social media

In case you hadn't noticed, social media is big - and getting bigger all the time. What was once the domain of just a small number of people is now everyday currency in and outside of business. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn etc are now familiar channels for many of us.

Now **23%** of all the time we are online takes place on social networks and blogs. Internet users are now spending more time on Facebook than on any other web brand combined

(Source: Neilson)



Business is quickly catching on to the potential, with recent research showing that a third of companies in the UK now put up to 20% of their marketing budget into business social networking

(Source: Regus)

Why many businesses still aren't getting it

Social media's growing profile can make it look like a relatively simple way to generate leads. **Social media was the leading emerging channel for lead generation in 2010** (Source: Hubspot Marketing) and many companies already see it as the next step in attracting more customers. But the reality is a great deal less simple. Here are just a few reasons why:



- **More noise** - As the business take up of social media increases, so does the marketing 'noise' – making it even more of a challenge to stand out.
- **Missing links** - Many businesses have the drive, but lack the strategy. They see where they want to get to in terms of income or leads, but they're missing the crucial links to make social media work truly effectively for them.

• **Minus the strategy** - The returns of social media can be tempting. After all, the proportion of UK companies successfully winning new customers through social networking activity rose from 33% in 2010 - to 41% in 2011 (Source: Regus). But many businesses are still engaging in social media activity without a long-term strategy, often creating initial interest, but failing to convert it into sales.

What does it take to turn social media into business leads?

Most companies have a drive to make the most of social media.

The 2011 IBM Chief Marketing Officer (CMO) study showed that 82% of CMOs plan to increase their use of social media over the next three to five years - yet just 26% per cent are tracking blogs today. This suggests how detached the drive is from the approach.

So what do companies need to do to turn social media activity into real business leads?

01. Go the distance (and take a road map)



Using **social media** as an answer to winning more business is one thing actively generating leads from your specific social networking activity is another. **Avoid the temptation to act for the short-term.**

Take some time to develop a clear strategy for your social media activity that relates to your overall business goals, your sales strategy and your company's value proposition.

Ensure that you carefully adapt this long-term plan so that it fits with each individual channel, whether it is Twitter or LinkedIn. **Think long-term about what it is you want to achieve and who it is you want to reach, rather than moving in too quickly.**

02. Do your homework first

Get your homework done first, before you rush straight in to social media activity. **Success with social media is all about doing your research.**

You can use **inbound marketing** technology to undertake keyword research that gives you an up-to-the-minute viewpoint on what your target market is looking for - and where.



Don't do anything without applying this detailed insight to help shape your lead-creating success or software, might **need to consider more frequent revitalization and rebranding.**

03. Create content for your dream contacts



Who are your dream social media contacts?

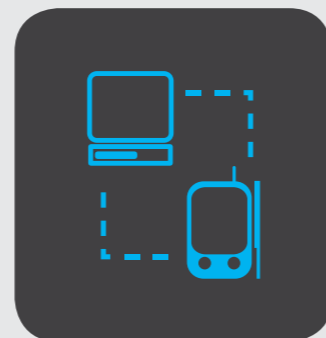
Driving leads successfully with **social media depends on great content which is directly relevant to your target audience** - whether it is 140 characters or 1400 words. **Create and distribute content with a clear and consistent focus on attracting the interest of your ideal potential leads.**

But make sure you back up all your content up using resources such as inbound marketing technology to research what interests your audience. Then you can create content that answers the most important questions your contacts have.

04. Make the connection

Generating leads for the long-term starts with a joined up approach. This means **carefully aligning your social media activity with your other marketing activities – and your wider business strategy.**

Carefully plan a structure to your whole marketing process to take your new connections from initial interest to consideration, by attracting them to useful and relevant content on your website.



This will allow you to engage with them on a deeper level and encourage them **to provide vital data that you can utilise in your sales approach.**

05. Start and end with your sale team



Make your sales team a staple part of your **social media lead generating strategy.** Your overall plan is all about turning your social media connections into leads and then into customers - and your sales team is an essential part of this.

Use inbound marketing technology to give your sales team more up to date insight about who to contact.

Once your social media contacts have been drawn to your website to download your content, your sales team can take over and make the most of the hot leads. They'll have more information and a better focus, allowing them to maximise your social media presence.

Where is social media taking you right now?

Social media is no longer an optional extra for business.

By 2014, social networking services will replace email as the primary vehicle for interpersonal communications for 20% of business users.

(Source: Gartner, Inc.)

There is no doubt that social media offers a huge array of opportunities for companies to connect with and convert new prospects.

Avoid the temptation to take action without a plan and get the right research, resources and sales response in place and you could look forward to generating leads from social media.

But there are still too many companies missing out because they fail to approach social media strategically.

See what else you can do to make your marketing work harder. [Download our eGuide What Exactly is Inbound Marketing, now.](#)