

Social Media Marketing for Business:

A RevenFlo eBook

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Social media is about authenticity and relationships. We encourage our clients to approach the world of social media as a way to engage their stakeholders in meaningful conversation.

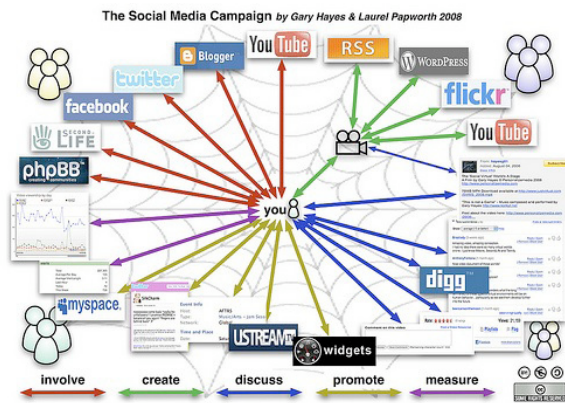
Social media marketing is as an online extension of the many networking activities you undertake in the “real world,” such as membership in your local Chamber of Commerce, attendance at social or networking functions, or service on a civic or charity board/committee. The time you spend getting your face and name out into your local community is vital to your business. You should do the same in the web community, and social media marketing is an effective way to do it.

We here at RevenFlo have written a lot about social media marketing, and we have compiled these articles for you in the following eBook. We hope you enjoy it, and we invite you to [contact us](#) if you have any questions.

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Social Media for Small Business



Earlier this week I attended a seminar/lecture at Queens College in Charlotte. The topic was Social Media Today. Initially the topic itself caught my eye and then I saw who the speaker was, Joshua Benton, Director of the Nieman School of Journalism Lab at Harvard.

Social media is any form of online media where people are able talk, share, comment, network and bookmark online. Most people are familiar with Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, Flickr, etc. There are more and more social media outlets emerging as the online community continues to grow.

RevenFlo offers social media campaigns to all of our clients and we can customize campaigns to complement websites we design as well as existing websites. Social media is a means of communicating with your existing customers as well as prospects. In addition of being a means of communication, a strong social media presence can increase organic SEO as well.

It was interesting to hear Mr. Benton's perspective, especially coming from someone who is so steeped in the print industry. Here are the main points that I got from the lecture:

- Social Media has caused a shift in power; creating media has been removed from the professionals. You now have an opportunity to speak directly to your consumers and prospects.

- In many cases it is free (outside of the cost of acquiring a computer and Internet access).
- You no longer need established media to reach your customers and prospects- this is an insane concept if you really think about the potential that this opens up for all of us, especially business owners!
- Twitter is equivalent to a river of news- it is chronological and you can tap into it on an at will basis.
- Shift in publishing power equates to a shift in content. Blog sites, etc- you can find all kinds of information on the Internet that may not be as prevalent in the traditional print media.
- Google has introduced real time web results- this makes updating content even more imperative.
- People are going to Facebook almost as regularly as Google.
- Twitter has an asymmetrical following.
- Many companies are experiencing success in offering incentives to clients and prospects via Twitter.
- Companies are also improving their customer service/ utilizing social media to address customer service issues.

You now have an opportunity to speak directly to your consumers and prospects.

Overall I enjoyed the lecture very much. If social media is something you wish to dive into, by all means [contact RevenFlo!](#)

Have you taken your social media inventory?



Have you researched which are the social media sites where your target audience spends the most time? A lot of businesses have joined the social media marketing world and, while it is of great benefit to simply be present, it is important to identify who is using which medium. According to a University of Maryland study, nearly one in five small business owners are integrating social media into their marketing models.

Just like the traditional marketing methods that many of us are familiar with, a big part of using social media effectively is to understand your audience. As a business owner you should have an idea of the general demographics of your ideal prospect. Have you applied that logic to social media? The paragraphs below dig a little deeper into who is hanging out where on the social media sites available on the web.

Where is your target audience hanging out?

According to The Nielsen Company, global consumers spent more than 5.5 hours on social networking sites in December 2009. Compared to the 2008 study results, there has been an 82% increase of time spent on social media sites in one year. There are more

people using social media sites, and those people are spending more time doing so. One of the greatest things a small business owner can hope to do is to tap into a location where target audience prefers to spend 5.5 hours each month!

There has been an 82% increase of time spent on social media sites in one year.

Social sites

A few examples would be Facebook, Friendster, MySpace and Ning. These sites can be broken down even further, MySpace tends to attract a lot of teen members and Ning has become popular for connecting classmates and assisting in setting up reunions. A recent study from Pew reported that 71% of the younger generation actively maintains a Facebook profile and 75% of the older generations maintain one as well. Facebook seems to come out ahead of most social media outlets. This site is relationship-driven and users interact with people, groups, and pages that they are interested in on a personal and social level.

Professional Sites

Some of the more commonly known professional sites are LinkedIn, FastPitch and Plaxo. These sites are used for business networking and job hunting. Many people consider them to be lead generation vehicles as well. These sites share the common objective of building a business community network and offer a means to strengthen and expand your business community. Professional sites are fairly drilled on as far as member profiles. You have the ability to execute very targeted marketing based on personal profiles and individual networks. In addition, you have the ability to network and communicate with people that you have specific trade and business information about based on their profile.

Industry Specific Sites

Industry specific sites are all too commonly overlooked. Take the initiative to surf the Internet

and find social media sites specific to the industry or industries that you serve. An example is i-Meet, which is specifically geared towards event planners. The ResearchGATE site connects scientists and researchers for collaboration purposes. Just to let you know how specific sites can be, check out veggppl.com, the vegetarian and vegan network. The sites are out there; you need to determine who your audience is, and what they are interested in, and then you can look for the social media site that best fits them.

Twitter Tweet

Twitter offers a lot of value for business owners and can be approached from different angles. With real time search engine results, your tweets have a great chance of being found by people that are searching relevant content. Some describe Twitter as a river of information that you dip into and dip out of at will. Twitter is easy to use, and people can follow you without the worry of email communication or a high level of commitment. You have the freedom to create as many accounts as you want and followers are considered Friends. Another advantage is that message boards or “tweets” can be viewable in public whether you’re friends or not, and you may include your URL as well which is a direct link to your site.

20% of 25 to 34 year olds have used Twitter.

Twitter also has limitations. Unlike other sites like Facebook, Twitter offers no other applications. As of the writing of this article, it does not offer groups, videos, blogs, ads, forums, and other unique and popular social networking menus. Another challenge to Twitter is that the more friends you follow - and the more followers you have - the more challenging it becomes to manage information.

Despite the limitations, research dictates that Twitter is a social media force to be reckoned with. [Pew Internet](#) studies suggest that 20% of 25 to 34 year olds have used Twitter, with those 18 to 24 only 1 point behind (19%). Online usage of Twitter is dominated by adults and has attracted far less teens to date. Suffice to say, if

your target audience is primarily teens then you may not attract prospects with Twitter.

Blogging

This is another outlet that relates to social media. The beauty of blogging is you can create your own blog site or blog on your existing web site and target your content towards your industry. The web is content driven and the more information and content you produce, linking back to your site, profile, etc, the greater web presence you achieve. If you post a series of blogs with advice, input or content related to your product or service, interested parties will have an increased probability of finding you. Another advantage of blogging is you can build a stronger community and attract prospects that are interested in content you publish relating to your industry. If you want to start blogging, be sure to have the time, energy and creativity to commit.

Social Media Strategy

Best wishes executing your social media inventory and devising an effective and productive strategy. Figure out where your audience prefers to congregate online and start a conversation with your prospects. We cannot stress enough the importance of establishing a social media strategy. Outline your long-term plan and identify industry topics that you can speak fluently about. Commit to a minimum amount of posts, tweets, etc that you will employ weekly to engage your online community.

[RevenFlo](#) is here to help if you need someone to navigate the Internet web waters with you.

Invest Wisely in Social Media Marketing

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According to [CMO.com](#), a website aimed at Chief Marketing Officers, 2010 will be the year that companies dive into social media in a major way. They will do so with several goals in mind, including

customer communication, brand exposure, driving traffic to their sites and search engine optimization.

Give your business a boost through Search and Social Media Marketing.

Based on these criteria, CMO.com developed a nifty chart that lays out the good, the bad and the in-between of the major social media platforms, including del.icio.us, Reddit, StumbleUpon, digg, YouTube, LinkedIn, Flickr, Facebook and Twitter. Today, RevenFlo would like to summarize the piece, and share with you the best of each category.

Most Effective Customer Communication:

- YouTube: The video sharing program informs, entertains and engages the customer in an immediate way.
- Facebook: Particularly for customers who are already on board and part of your fan base, FB allows customers to share opinions, and participate in giveaways and contests.
- Twitter: By hooking up with keyword search monitoring programs like Hootsuite, you can track and monitor what people are saying about you and your competitors.

Most Effective Brand Exposure:

- Digg: Effective at attracting objective press or blog coverage of your brand, as long as your content isn't too sales-y, which could get you banned.
- YouTube: Particularly when you build a mass of video content, and promote it effectively.
- LinkedIn: Builds your brand by showcasing your company and associates' expertise. Lends an image as a thought leader.
- Facebook: Brand pages are powerful, especially when paired with FB's ad platform.
- Twitter: Clever tweets with embedded links give that "viral" cache.

Most Effective at Driving Traffic to Your Site:

- StumbleUpon: Allows a wide range of users to discover your content and share links effectively via the su.pr link shortener on Twitter.
- Digg: Simply the most effective way to drive traffic, and to establish you as an opinion leader in your field.

Most Effective SEO

- del.icio.us: From top to bottom, this site is built for SEO. It provides direct links back to your site in a number of valuable ways.
- StumbleUpon: Has a large user base, allowing many people to discover and link back to your content and your site.
- Digg: Allows quick indexing, even if your content isn't extremely popular. According to CMO.com: "If your story does become popular, this is likely the best site in terms of getting linked to by bloggers."
- YouTube: Simply put, videos with proper tags and active comments always rank high.

So, Which Social Media Marketing Platform is Right for You?

Like any other product or service you buy, you weigh the pros and cons. One platform may offer terrific SEO, but poor customer communication. One may earn only average scores across the board. Your choice will vary by your goals, your budget, your particular industry, or the social media savvy of your intended audience.

Confused yet? No need. RevenFlo has been helping businesses navigate the social media scene almost as long as there has BEEN a social media scene. And we are ready to put that expertise to work for your business. To learn how to give your business a boost through Search and Social Media Marketing, contact [RevenFlo](#) today!

5 Ways To Start Establishing Expertise on the Web



Every executive, business owner, and high-functioning knowledge worker typically represents two brands: the one they work for, and themselves. Establishing personal expertise is paramount to the success of both. Short of merely achieving notoriety, expertise in a topic or field demonstrates YOU as being both a thought leader and someone the public should turn to for answers. Investors and venture capitalists have repeatedly asserted that they prefer a “B idea and A management team, to an A idea and B management team.” Short of an Ivy League M.B.A. or Ph.D. in your field of work, how do you establish both credibility and expertise on the web today?

Establishing personal expertise is paramount to the success.

1. Blogging

Don't sneer; sure the word “blog” might be the most overused word of the decade (it's right up there with “innovative”), but it's become essential for getting known on the web. By channeling your industry knowledge into a stream of posts on a Blogger, Wordpress, or personal (see #4) blog, you're sharing valuable content with potential readers, and are given the chance to add your own social commentary on the matter. What are the best and worst aspects of your industry? What are some of the behind-the-scenes

aspects that the everyday person might not have anticipated? These are great ways to peak interest and start the ball rolling!

2. Technorati

Technorati.com is the key hub of much of the blogosphere, home to what some affectionately refer to as the bloggerati (think glitterati among bloggers). The best way to use it is to seek out other blogs within your field, and start contributing as a commenter. If you have a lot to offer, consider contacting the blog author to do a guest post. At the very least, be sure to include a back-link to your own site in your comments. If people like what you have to say, they might stop by your site to hear more.

3. LinkedIn Answers

This is an area that is hit or miss depending on the strength of your LinkedIn network. The goal is to seek out questions in your desired area, and provide exceptional answers. Merely posting a reply isn't enough here: your goal is to be rated the “Best” answer by the questioner to gain what LinkedIn refers to as ‘expertise points.’ The more you have, the better you're perceived.

4. Personal Domains

Your name is your first personal brand. If you haven't snagged it already, go to GoDaddy.com and grab it! Seriously, at \$10 per year, it's a low price to have control over a domain with your name (or some portion/combination) in it. Add on a minimal hosting account, and you're looking at \$60 a year max for the chance to build whatever you like. It can be as simple or complex as you want. Regardless, you should park it today before a less-qualified doppelganger does.

5. Twitter

“Save the cheerleader, save the world.” When it comes to Twitter, it's more like “Own the Twitter name, own the search.” If you establish control over @<word>, you will come up first in the search results for that

word. Google loves fresh content, and Twitter is as fresh as they come! Just remember: think before you tweet. An off-color comment might be missed offline, but with Twitter there are several services that archive everything that gets said. Tweeter Beware.

As with everything online, you get out what you put in. 1 hour or 10 hours a week, it's up to you. Just remember, the web will respond accordingly. If you have questions, [RevenFlo](#) is here to help. Just call or comment. Remember - We Are Your Web Team!

4 Laws (kinda) of Social Media Marketing



It appears as though social media has truly reached the tipping point for mainstream America. The innovators that have been blogging, Tweeting, Facebooking, YouTubing and using various other social media outlets have a lot more company these days. For those of you familiar with the Innovation Curve, the late majority has arrived! A large part of the growth of social media pivots around the realization that businesses can achieve greater exposure via social media. Business owners and companies recognize that they can control a message and disseminate it at a minimal cost in comparison to other media outlets, and they want to reap the benefits.

For those of you that are new to social media there are some things that you will want to avoid.

Social Media Law #1

A major mistake is employing one approach for several different social media outlets. Instead, approach each outlet individually and keep the target audience in mind. Take the time to research the social media sites and select ones that seem most relevant to your company. Make sure you have outlined marketing objectives and have an understanding of the functionality of each outlet. Approach each profile differently based on the social media outlet and craft meaningful messages that are relevant and timely to the target audience.

For those of you familiar with the Innovation Curve, the late majority has arrived!

Social Media Law #2

Incomplete profiles are not a good idea. Creating incomplete profiles all over the web is not something any company should aspire to. Without a comprehensive profile you cannot expect to engage with prospects and clients. Would you be interested in a profile that is not complete and lacks meaningful information? Underdeveloped profile information can lead people to several conclusions that are not conducive to success in business. A prospect that is looking up your company may assume that you are no longer in business or perhaps that you lack the ability to finish a project. That is not the type of message you want to convey to clients and prospects. Take the time to complete personalize your profile.

Social Media Law #3

Give people compelling information and they are more likely to engage with you. There is so much information available on the Internet and with real time updates it is important to have current information. Keep your readers interested and make regular updates to all the profiles you create. If you start a blog, make a commitment and stick to it and post articles on a frequent basis. Outdated sites speak volumes about the culture of your organization and

can lead clients and prospects to believe that you lack time management or perhaps you abandon projects.

Social Media Law #4

Assign a dedicated individual or group to manage your social media campaigns. Make sure you do your research and set measurable goals and objectives for your social media campaigns. In the event you do not have the time/staff to dedicate to social media employ a company or an individual that understands social media and can help you achieve your goals. Be sure to research your audience and set up a realistic social media strategy. Once you have a strategy in place be sure to stick with it long enough to measure the results and decide where your energy will be most effective.

Best wishes with your social media endeavors!

Five Ways to Improve your Social Media Posts



Tweaking Your Social Media Messages

You have set up your social media profiles, established a fan base and dedicated time to interacting with fans and followers...FANTASTIC! As a small business owner it is difficult to add additional responsibilities to your already demanding schedule. To those of you that have been proactive in creating online profiles, we say, "Way to go!" Now the next step: continuing to improve your approach, refining your message and reaching your audience. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Keep It Simple!

Your message should be as simple as possible. Strip it down to clear and concise language. If you take a step back and read it out of context is it clear and relevant? Keep in mind that you do not always have to be very brief but, in many cases, less can be more. Make sure the message is compelling and has a hook that will draw people in and get them interested in your concept, company, product etc. As you craft messages for social media outlets be mindful that a message that is complicated and hard to understand will not be shared and most likely will not be acted upon.

2. Timing is Everything

There are conflicting schools of thought regarding timing. Many sources advise you to post during "high traffic" times. This generally correlates to the eight-hour workday that constitutes much of the social media activity. Granted, there are a lot of people who may potentially see your message at peak times but it may also get lost amongst all of the competing posts. Try out different times and be sure to approach each profile differently. Experiment, shake things up, boldly go where no social media enthusiast has gone before!

Seriously, try posting different messages at different times; take your audience into account along with the message. Keep track of the time of day you receive responses to your posts, and base your posting times on those responses.

Never underestimate the value of asking for feedback and encouraging people to share your post with their extended community.

3. Talk to ME

Lets all be honest and acknowledge that one of the things we value the most...ourselves! Personalize your posts as frequently as possible, and use the words "you" and "your". It is a direct appeal to the ego but, boy, does it work! Relate to your fans and followers

by appealing to their interests, lifestyle and behavior. We are most involved with ourselves and are likely to respond to messages crafted with that in mind. This is such a basic concept but it will increase your chances of engaging with fans and followers.

4. Spread the Wealth

Re-purpose information. You can make minor changes to a message and put it on several different outlets. You can post something on your blog and take snippets of that content to re-broadcast on other social media outlets. Never underestimate the value of asking for feedback and encouraging people to share your post with their extended community. There are a lot of applications available that make it easy for people to share your content. Take a step back and assess the quality of your content and the accessibility of sharing. It should be easy and obvious that readers can share your information with the touch of a button.

Keywords are Essential

Every one of us wants to show our inner brilliance to the world! However, social media posts are not always the time and place. You need to use very specific and targeted keywords in your title, post and content. Mind you, do not overuse words, but be sure to integrate key words wherever possible. Think about how you intuitively search the web, you search for something and click on the post that most resembles the key word search. Be sure to use language and keywords that are indicative of your subject!!

And Now You Know....

Write with intention. Share meaningful information that readers will enjoy and share. Make them look forward to what you have to say next. Always keep your target audience in mind and pay attention to what you post, where you post, when you post and the response rate you get.

Best wishes in your future social media engagement!

A Facebook Fan Page Can Help Your Business



We have talked about how to leverage your Facebook Fan Page and we have touched on best practices in more than one post. Now we are taking a step back and speaking to the small business owners who are struggling with the value of a Facebook Fan Page. This article is all about the inherent value of a Facebook Fan page to your business. Naturally, we still want to see everyone contributing valuable content to his or her Fan Page and growing his or her fan base, but there is added benefit in the mere existence of a Fan page.

A Facebook Fan Page creates the opportunity to increase qualified traffic visiting your site.

I am already on the web....

There are companies that think, "I have a website and I paid a lot for it. Why would I want someone going to a Facebook Fan page instead?"

Think of a Fan Page as an extension of your brand, or perhaps even your website. It is another avenue you can create to reach your clients and prospects. The great thing about Fan Pages is:

- They are public,
- They show up in searches, and
- They can be viewed without logging into Facebook.

Additionally, you can link your website to the Facebook Fan Page and redirect traffic to your website. Another option is to insert a Facebook widget on your website that directs people to your Fan Page. This synergy allows people to go to different places on the web to learn more about your company and the services you provide. It also creates the opportunity to increase qualified traffic visiting your site.

Increasingly, customer praise for your business on Facebook is one of the best testimonials you can hope for!

All of this provides the additional bonus of improved search engine optimization (SEO.) Google has a new [Social Search](#) feature that indexes content created on social media websites. Other search and decision engines are following suit. If you link your Fan Page to your website, you can take advantage of Social Search to drive even more traffic back to your website.

You Can Communicate for Free

We all want something for free. In most cases, however, if it is free it is not worth having. Well folks, here is the rare exception to the rule! Facebook is free and it definitely has the ability to add value to your business. In only minutes, you can set up a branded Fan page where your clients can post photos, leave comments, and interact with you and other fans. There is a lot of cost and strategy involved in launching a discussion forums on your own website. Creating a Fan page eliminates this cost and may reach more people in less time.

You can reach out and communicate with your fans and customers with ease. The Fan Page allows you to send messages to all of your Fans or targeted individuals. You can very easily plan events and send invites to your Fan base at no cost. The Events App has

settings that allow you to specifically target individuals by age range, gender, and geographic location. All of this is free of charge.

Directly Connect to Customers' and Fans' Conversations

What other medium offers the ability to communicate directly with your customers? Not only can you send direct messages, but also you are able to see how the Fans interact on your page and what aspects of your business they respond to. This allows you to build stronger relationships with your customers, to communicate with them and not just sell to them. In most cases you are reaching out to your customers and prospects to sell your services and/or products.

Although Fans may not shop on your page, they will spread the word about your business and their customer experience. Increasingly, customer praise for your business on Facebook is one of the best testimonials you can hope for! That praise will reside on your profile page, and it will also be shared with your Fans friends, as well. Building good relationships with influential Facebookers is invaluable: you gain “brand ambassadors” who will market and sell on your behalf!

Updating posts on your wall holds the potential to reach far beyond your immediate Facebook audience. As Fans interact with you, it goes into their news feed, to be seen by all of their friends. In addition to reaching beyond your Fans, you have the ability to listen to the conversations about your business. This is candid, honest information that you can use to improve your business.

If You Don't, Your Competitor Will....

Maybe you think social media is merely a passing fad. Maybe you think you are too busy to “play around” on Facebook. Rest assured that at least one of your competitors “gets it.” They will put the time and energy necessary to build a successful Fan Page and corner your market. Their Facebook following will spread the word and sing the praises of their business while you are “too busy” to engage. This may be the chief

reason to get on board and take advantage of the free marketing medium provided by a Facebook Fan Page.

Do you have a Fan page success story you would like to share? Perhaps some praise on your page that resulted in a new customer? We would love your feedback and stories on how you leverage your Fan Page.

RevenFlo offers informational seminars, one on one consulting and a variety of other services related to the web and web marketing. We are happy to speak with you about your current web strategy and what we can do to bring greater value to your web campaign.

Life After You Create Your Facebook Fan Page



Social Media is Everywhere

Social media is all over the place, and more and more frequently TV hosts remind us to check them out on Facebook or to reach them via Tweet (it sounds really odd from Dr. Phil). Just this past week I took my bi-annual trip to the mega mall in our area and noticed a lot of signs in stores encouraging shoppers to look up their Facebook page and become a fan. My trip to the mall left me with the impression that social media has infiltrated the masses and is rapidly approaching its saturation point.

What does this mean for the small business owner with a desire to maximize their social media presence and, ideally, increase their bottom line? The good

news is that it means there are more social media followers than ever, which equates to more potential customers that are now in your extended Facebook network. The reality is that when the saturation point hits you want to be well positioned with your fans in order to keep a captive audience. A typical small business sets up a Fan page, invites their pre-existing friends and does little else to grow the fan base and add inherent value to their Fan page.

The best way to add value to your site is timely and relevant page updates.

Keep Fans Interested and Grow your Fan Base

Let me start with acknowledging your willingness to tackle social media and kudos to you. Now that we are approaching "social media saturation" it is time for the small business owner to get a little savvier in leveraging their Facebook presence. The best way to add value to your site is timely and relevant page updates.

Here are the basics:

- Update your content regularly and mix up the types of content as frequently as possible: add video or photos, and update your status to reflect what is exciting or new with your business.
- Elicit responses from Fans by asking for their feedback, opinions, etc.
- Post during "high traffic" times
- Use the calendar to add upcoming events
- Use the Facebook Fan Page to Twitter app if you are on Twitter as well

Find your Facebook groove

What is a Facebook groove? Well it is specific to the company. My general opinion is that if you do not have a retail store or an existing customer base that you can mine, it is much more challenging to engage a fan base. If you are in the service industry or perhaps a niche market that customers seek out when they need

your product or service, you may need to work a little harder. A good place to start is to do a search for your industry on Facebook and check out other Fan pages. Make note of what that particular company is doing well and implement in a way that fits your company. Remember the old adage, imitation is the sincerest form of flattery? It applies on Facebook as well!

After you have checked out what your local and national competitors are doing there is another area you should address. Check out the Fan pages of large companies that you are interested in. This is a great way to see what others are doing to keep fans engaged and to add value to their brand. I pay particular attention to companies that have marketing and advertising campaigns that I admire. The best-case scenario is that if a company runs a great ad campaign-they just might have a bangin' Facebook page with a big time fan base. Keep in mind, large companies throw a lot of dollars towards marketing and advertising and have access to the best firms in the business. So, you are likely to learn a few things from these pros! Let me help you out and give you a few companies that are "known" for having a great Fan page: Coca Cola, Starbucks and Volkswagen. Go from there and take the time to check out companies that you admire and you will probably discover a few new ways to leverage Facebook.

Set up a Strategy

If you are not sure what to post-ask your fans! That is a great way to get people involved and engaged. If you offer relevant and interesting content you will have an active fan base and be more likely to grow that fan base. The other thing you can do is create a master idea list for your Facebook page-generate a list of industry topics that you can post on, create pre-determined photo categories and commit to updating them with regularity. People are far more likely to visit your page if you update your page with relevant information. Being on Facebook is a step in the right direction, using all of the exiting outlets a Fan page provides to craft a message, reach prospects and/or existing customers is good business.

RevenFlo offers monthly Web Marketing programs!

We ROCK your social media. We can assist you in developing a Facebook strategy that helps position your company in the forefront of the Social Media Revolution! [Contact us today!](#)

How FourSquare Can Benefit Your Local Business



Perhaps you have heard of FourSquare? If you are a local small business, you should definitely check out this social media outlet. For the first time since its inception, the Internet is focusing on local business and FourSquare is leading the trend. Instead of a global marketplace, local business owners have the ability to communicate with clients via a location based network (LBN).

LBN's can be used as a social city guide, a friend finder, and offer a dynamic game to engage and keep in touch your local clients. Foursquare is now being used by local businesses such as restaurants, hotels, coffee shops, night clubs and fitness clubs to name a few.

Location based services allow you to build meaningful online connections with the audience that lives within 20-30 miles of your business.

How Does It Work?

Foursquare encourages users to check in via their smart phones and let others know where they are spending their time (and \$\$). Users are rewarded with points every time they visit an establishment and use your smart phone to check in via FourSquare. In addition to points, users can also receive badges. An example would be getting five points for visiting a new place in your neighborhood.

They also offer badges based on how often you log in and how many places you login from. Users are incentivized to participate from both the LBN and the business. The ultimate FourSquare reward is Mayor status for a given establishment or business. A mayor is a person who has visited a location the highest number of times. As the Mayor you are generally entitled to a free product. Mayors can be denounced anytime if another user trumps their visits.

There are also enticements for first time visitors, like a drink the first time you visit a restaurant. Users are also able to leave suggestions and reviews for the establishments they visit. FourSquare tells you what rewards or specials businesses are offering when you check in.

Why should local business get involved?

The driving reason that you may want to get involved is the increasing popularity and use of mobile phones and mobile apps to access information. Cell phones, smart phones, PDA's, etc increasingly used to access the web. Location based services allow you to build meaningful online connections with the audience that lives within 20-30 miles of your business.

- FourSquare increases of your local visibility
- Four Square helps bring potential clients to your business
- Offers very creative ways to make your brand unique and innovative
- Allows you to promote specials, events, new products, etc to a local audience
- Creates and opportunity for more frequent and more meaningful interaction with clients

If you have a brick and mortar/retail location you should definitely look into FourSquare and other LBN's to see if they are a fit for your business. There are a lot of benefits to social media and adding localized searches and updates to the list is a HUGE plus for local business owners. As we have mentioned in the past, it is FREE too...

Drupal Goes Social, a South Carolina Perspective



Hello all, we are cranking away here in Rock Hill on some great new Drupal projects, and we can't wait to show them off. As you know 99% of our development and website builds are done in open source technologies like Drupal (these are full feature content management systems and so much more). Today I wanted to give you a glimpse on the ability Drupal has for creating a social experience.

Drupal can promote some great interaction and community participation.

Anyone that uses Drupal currently know that you can set different permission levels for "members" to your website and allow them to have different capabilities. Not unlike some of the other Open

Source technologies that allow multiple users this comes in the base set-up of Drupal, all you have to do is define their abilities and they are off to the races. On Wordpress you can have multiple bloggers that can log on and create posts of even be assigned administrator duties. This gives your website some great functionality and allows different members of your team to contribute to that oh-so-important content production task.

Drupal developers have put together a great new selection of plug-ins that allow your developer to create social profiles to create a Facebook like environment that can promote some great interaction and community participation. Let's take a look at a few and then I will give you links to the whole list of potential components to create your very own social community.

The time you spend getting your face and name out into your local community is vital to your business.

Show Group Memberships & Events

The front module displays a customized front page for a user showing his or her group membership and events. This is useful for social networking and online group sites that wish to help users participate in events and engage in group activities. If users are not logged in, a custom text message can be configured in a text field.

Facebook-style Status

This is a module that provides users with a microblog where they can write what they're doing, how they feel, or anything they want. With permission, users can also post messages on other users' profiles. This helps build a community and make your users feel more connected to your website.

Advanced Profile Kit

This kit provides building blocks for putting together fancy user profile pages like those commonly found

on social networking sites. It is meant to work with CTools and Panels, but the provided pieces can be used independently as well. The provided instructions are meant to get you up and running with a nice looking profile with no coding and no theme changes but are only one example of how this module can be used. Because it is a kit module, the idea is to provide some essential pieces and a base to build on. While the "out of the box" profile is usable, it is only intended as a start.

These are just a few modules that can be used to create an outstanding online community. For more information call 803-328-6033 or have us contact you.

5 Easy Tips for an Effective Business Blog



Social media marketing is a cornerstone of RevenFlo's monthly Web Marketing Management program. We encourage our clients to dive into the world of social media as a way to engage their clients in conversation that revolves around their needs and buying tendencies.

One way to think of social media marketing is as an online extension of the many networking activities you undertake in the "real world," such as membership

in your local Chamber of Commerce. The time you spend getting your face and name out into your local community is vital to your business. You should do the same in the web community, and social media marketing is an effective way to do it.

The great thing is that you can “get social” right now by posting on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, submitting articles to Digg and Reddit, and by starting a business blog, which is the main topic for today.

Benefits of Blogging for Business

Regular blogging about your company, products, services, specials and events provides you several benefits. In addition to the less-tangible benefits of community building and being perceived as an opinion leader, business blogging promotes search engine optimization, a tangible and measurable way to drive traffic to your website.

Of course, if you are going to start blogging for your business, it makes sense to do it well. The web is full of best practices and helpful tips from various gurus in the field. One such blogmeister is Rich Brooks of Flyte New Media, who has a top-nine list of best practices designed to make your blog a more effective business tool. Let's look at a few of his suggestions:

1. Blog for your audience

People will visit your site primarily because they have some interest in your product or service. They want to hear your thoughts about those, not about what you have for lunch, or whom you voted for!

2. Make your blog search engine friendlier

The constant conversation in your blog about your products and services is a rich source of natural keywords. But you can boost your SEO by using keyword-rich category names and writing keyword-rich post titles.

3. Engage your most active commenters

Commenting is the big bonus in blogging. When a visitor comments on a post, he is extending the conversation, and the opportunity to mention your products and services a few more times. So, encourage

that! Respond to each commenter in an email, link back to or comment at their blogs, and mention them by name in later posts.

Your audience wants to be engaged and heard!

4. Comment on influential blogs in your niche

Every business niche has its opinion leaders. You may already know them but, if not, you can track them down by way of a Technorati search. Read their stuff and, if you something relevant to add, do it – and provide a link back to your site.

5. Leverage your blog traffic into real business

Otherwise what's the point? You are trying to promote your business, so your blog posts should include some appropriate call to action. Include links that drive traffic from your blog to your business website.

The final word on the topic is Subtlety. You are trying to drive business, but your audience in the social marketing realm will be turned off by the hard sell. They want to be engaged and heard!

RevenFlo Offers Social Media Marketing Services

It takes time to get it right. It ALSO takes time to find topics and do the writing, but that's another subject. The good news is that, aside from merely stressing the importance of social media marketing, RevenFlo has the tools and talent to get you in the game effectively. So, [give us a shout](#), and start taking your business social with RevenFlo.

Five MORE Tips for Better Business Blogs

We have written about [effective business blogging](#) in the past. Social media marketing for small to mid-size businesses is a topic RevenFlo is passionate about and we have a lot to say. Our unwavering belief in the power of social media compelled us to write this follow up post with Five MORE Tips for Effective Business Blogging.

1. Your Blog Topic must be Relevant to Your Audience

Ideally, you know your audience – the potential customer you are trying to reach and persuade. You know what they care about and what they need. Hopefully, your product or service fills a need. So, if you are blogging to support your replacement window business, please PLEASE focus on that! Energy savings, ease of installation, home resale value, green tax credits, and so on. If you want to write about politics, religion or movies, start a personal blog someplace else.

2. Your Blog Post Must Have an Attention-grabbing Headline

Your reader makes his first decision right at the top of the page: read on or skip it? So your headline must engage the reader in some way, or the post will not be read. For a typical service business (the kind RevenFlo serves) some sort of financial benefit to the reader might make a good headline, such as:

Protect Your Investment by...

Save Money with...

Increase your Resale Value with...

Cut Through Red Tape with...

Achieve Greater ROI by...

So what comes after the “with” or the “by”? Ideally, your product or service.

3. Begin Your Post with an Illustration – in Words or Pictures – of the Benefit Stated in the Headline.

This is sort of like starting at the end, but it’s an effective way to keep the reader’s attention. And, as we said, it can be prose or pictures. So, if your headline is something like “Save Big Money with Replacement Windows,” you could begin with something like “Charlotte homeowner Joe Jones never believed his replacement windows would pay for themselves within a year...but they did!” And if you are talking about home resale values, nothing says success like a photo of a real estate yard sign with a big old SOLD slapped across it.

4. Your Blog Post’s Layout should be Clear and Easy to Skim

It’s pretty much accepted that people don’t have much patience for reading from the computer screen. There is a kind of attention deficit disorder caused by having the whole universe of information at your fingertips. People tend to scan a page quickly and bounce if nothing catches their attention. Poor layout – often in the form of an endless gray block of text – is a sure way to lose your audience. So break it up. Use headers like you see here. Experiment with white space. And don’t use 100 words when 50 will do.

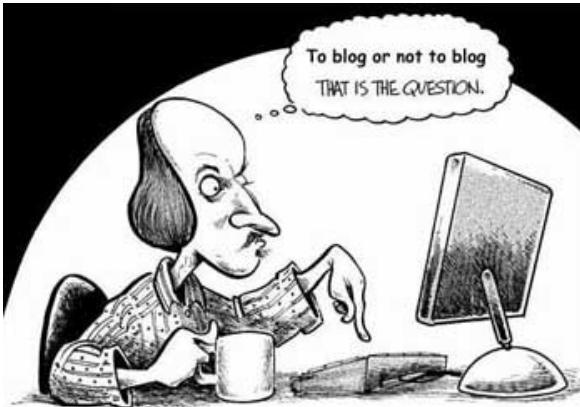
5. Your Blog Post Should Include a Call to Action

Hopefully, you began with this point in mind. Again, if we look at replacement windows, you began with some remarkable statement about energy savings that helped the homeowner recoup the cost of windows quickly. You probably stepped back in time to recall how the homeowner was paying high home energy bills. You followed him through the process of selecting the right vendor (you) and you wrapped it up with how happy he is today. All that’s left is to offer that same satisfaction to the reader of your blog. You call them to action by saying “these are the kind of savings you could be experiencing! Lower your energy costs. CONTACT US to find out how!”

Effective Business Blogging is a Powerful Marketing Tool

We have said before: blogging for your business builds a sense of community with your current and potential customers. It allows you to present yourself as an opinion leader in your field. And it promotes search engine optimization, driving traffic to your website. Business blogging is an important part of RevenFlo’s social media marketing services. We believe in it, and we believe in doing it right. From simply getting you set up to blog, to full turnkey blogging services, we can help your business “get social.” [Contact RevenFlo](#) to learn more.

Corporate Blogging is NOT a job for College Interns



"I'm not comfortable with new technology—HTML? Blog posts? CSS?! What's that?!"

"The teenagers like using the Internets. They do it at work anyway, why not make it productive?"

"I can't afford to pay a manager to waste time blogging! That comes out of my budget! Let the free help do it!"

All of these sound like perfectly good, logical reasons to put a new intern to work as your company's official blogger. After all, it's something that's time intensive and can have significant SEO benefits for the brand when done well. Utilizing a college intern who might have limited job duties is therefore incredibly tempting to most managers.

The biggest issue is that someone who's only been involved with your company for a matter of hours or days does not have the same knowledge or perspective about your company as someone who's been working with your customers and your products for a while. Ultimately, you must ask yourself: Who is the best person to represent my company?

For most, the answer is *"the same people I hired to work here full-time."*

One commonly accepted definition of a blog is "something that lets you create and publish new content, that allows other people to leave feedback in some form." (Source: MarketingProfs.) So at the heart of blogging, there are two main activities going on: content creation and communication. Content

creation is about producing useful articles, white papers, podcasts, videos, and case studies that can draw leads to your website. Communication is about reading and responding to the feedback left (typically in the form of comments) from the readers.

You can trust an intern to create content—with the right supervision and review of course. But the ongoing communication is something best left to the experienced employee, for two reasons:

- First, they already know the tone and frame of mind of your customers, and usually already have significant rapport with them.
- Second, readers who have become accustomed to an intern will question why they disappear when classes start in September. If your readers feel the loss acutely enough, they just might abandon you. As unlikely as that might be, it is still best practice to maintain some form of consistency in the corporate blog.

There is one area of blogging where interns typically excel: blogging about their internship experience to help recruit future new hires. While it may come across as being slightly biased, it is useful to be able to present an 'inside look' into daily life at your company from someone other than a recruiter or member of HR.

Have you used college interns for blogging with good results? We'd love to hear about your experience and what made it so successful! [RevenFlo](#) has developed strategies for companies that incorporate blogging, as well as supplemented blogging content to ease the demands for the internal staff.

Content creation is about producing useful articles, white papers, podcasts, videos, and case studies that can draw leads to your website.

Thanks for your interest in Social Media for Business. If you have any further questions, [contact RevenFlo](#) today!

RevenFlo Company History

RevenFlo was founded in 2004 by Jason Broadwater.

Originally named Prose Productions, LLC, the company found its footing as a content generation and strategic content consulting firm serving an online marketplace of Internet Marketing professionals and Advertising Agencies.

Prose Productions grew to the size of 15 writers being managed and strategically guided by Jason in his efforts to serve a growing network of global freelance writing projects.

As Jason became more interested in serving local and regional service organizations, the scope of services grew to incorporate all strategies, communications, and marketing online – including Web Strategy, Web Design and Web Development, SEO, PPC, Email Marketing, Analytics Tracking, CMS Development, and more.

Instead of supplying a hyper-niche service to clients across the nation, we began to provide a comprehensive web solution to local and regional organizations. Today, we serve organizations of all kinds spanning the nation, but our core business is in serving businesses in North and South Carolina. We provide comprehensive Internet Marketing Services.