Social Media in the Marketing Mix: A guide for business-to-business marketers

Introduction

To speak simply, we live in wired world. The popularity and success of the Web has enabled a tremendous shift in consumer behavior, creating new, more immediate and convenient systems of communication, socialization, self-expression and identities. We blog, we post, we tweet, we email, we Google it, we Wiki it and we click through. Technology and social media hasn't altered the world, rather it is allowing us to become more connected.

While social media is redefining the way we communicate and market, it is shifting the public relations practice along with it. Marketing communications has become a multi-channeled environment and there are new tools, methods and opportunities to reach target audiences.

As defined by the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), "public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other." As technology continues to evolve and enable new modes of communication, public relations will continue to evolve with it but the definition will remain the same.

In this rapidly evolving digital environment, one thing has remained unchanged: the success of a business is still directly connected to its ability to communicate, engage and retain customers.

Ignoring social media strategies as part of a business plan is not an option in order to remain successful. Across industries, social media continues to impact and reroute businesses everyday: bricks and mortar retail, newspapers, TV, books, movies, education, healthcare, among others.

With so much social media attention focused on business to consumer marketing, there is a tendency to remain fearful of social media in the B2B world, ignoring its potential and opportunity for business development. We often receive feedback from our B2B clients that they don't fully understand the value of social media for business or that they already have a web site and don't see the benefit of engaging in social media platforms. We hear concerns around time management, ROI and lead generation, while many clients have anxiety about where to begin and where to focus.

Social media enables opportunities beyond its platforms, and is here to stay. It is an opportunity to engage current constituencies and develop a multi-faceted, emotional connection with your target audience, whether current or prospective.

How C-Level Executives View Social Media

Not every C-level executive is convinced that social media is an effective communication platform for business, but many CEOs or CMOs are convinced. More than 90% of consumers rank word-of-mouth as the top influence in their purchasing decisions. Word-of-mouth can have a significant impact on businesses and that much of the conversations are taking place via social media.

A study conducted at Harvard University by the Society For New Communications Research found that executives realize the importance of social media presence and now do much of their information gathering on the web.

- Corporate executives spend more time with the Internet than they do with any other medium, roughly 16 hours each week.
- 56% of C-level executives, consider themselves intermediate web users, while 40%consider themselves to be experts and just 4 % say they're novices.
- Their favorite destination? Financial and Business websites.
- 90% of senior level executives credit the Internet with helping them keep up to date with current events, with 75% of them getting much of their news from the Internet.
- CEOs are very familiar with social networking sites and 91% of companies report using at least one type of social media tool.
- CEOs also use Twitter; reports indicate that they find tweeting enjoyable both for personal and professional reasons.

SOCIAL MEDIA GROWTH TRENDS

<u>**Trends:**</u>

It took the Internet only four years to reach 50 million users as compared to radio, which took 38 years to reach that amount and TV which took 13 years.

A Nielsen Co. report indicated that at the end of January 2010 there was an 82% increase in web use. Web surfers in the U.S. are spending about three times as much time on the Web visiting social networking and blog sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, as they did a year ago. The average user now spends nearly 5 ½ hours on the web daily compared to that of 3 hours measured in December 2008.

Corporations and other organizations are utilizing social media on an ever-increasing basis. Consumers like to interact with companies through social media. Burson-Marsteller, reports that 79% of the current Fortune 100 companies are using social networking sites, most prominently Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube.

Advertisement spending on social networking sites and blogs more than doubled despite the recession. Spending on Internet advertising is expected to increase from $65.2 billion in 2008 to $106.6 billion in 2011. Social network revenue is projected to increase from $1.3 billion in 2010 to $1.4 billion in 2011.

Research also shows consumers are spending less time with traditional media and increased time with the Internet.

Blogging:

70% of bloggers are talking about brands and 38% post product or brand reviews. It is also important to note that 78% of people trust peer recommendations, whereas 14% trust advertisements.

More than half of all Internet users have joined a social network and nearly 75% have read a blog. 15% of Fortune 500 companies are blogging. Big companies are blogging because it is recognized as a new way to appeal to new clients or customers.

Technorati reports that in the US alone in 2008 there were 23 million bloggers and 94 million blog readers. They also claim that more than 50,000 blogs mention typical news events every day and on some days that figure is greater than 100,000.

Traffikd (2009) claims there are currently more than 400 social media web sites and these have been classified into a wide variety of categories from arts, books, education, event planning, finance, pop culture, real estate, movies, traveling, family, fashion, news, technology and many others.

Social media has had a staggering impact on the practice of public relations since the first weblogs, blogs have appeared more than a dozen years ago. This has continued and increased as social media developed into a number of different forms including text, images, audio and video through the development of forums, message boards, photo sharing, podcasts RSS (really simple syndication), search engine marketing, video sharing, Wikis, social networks, professional networks and micro-blogging sites.

Blogging comes with many advantages:
- It allows for the establishment of a trusted and personal relationship with your clients or customers.
- It provides greater control over what people are saying about your business and a forum in which you can offer direct feedback and respond to these statements.
- Blogs have the capability to be a powerful advertising mechanism, helping businesses to gain exposure on areas of expertise, especially through increased SEO performance
- It positions businesses and their employees as thought leaders and aids in recruiting

Mobile:
Mobile phone penetration is upwards of 4 out of 5 people in the US and more people now have a mobile phone than have PC-based internet access.

As mobile Internet usage continues to grow, opportunities to communicate through this medium are increasing as well. Social networking is now prevailing through mobile devices over desktop usage with Americans spending approximately 3 hours a day on their mobile phones. Individuals are socializing on their mobile phones 91% of the time versus 71% of the time that they use desktops for social networking activities.

Internet via mobile phone is becoming increasingly popular due to the fact that it provides "whenever-wherever" capabilities. The mobile phone provides users with the convenience of instantly and easily accessing the Internet in their hand rather than waiting to log on at home or at the office.

Mobile is not just youth-focused – texting behavior may skew a bit younger, but the bulk of the mobile Internet usage comes from 25-44 year olds. Professionals and non-professionals across industries are using mobile networking apps to connect to Twitter, Facebook and other sites while mobile advertising is increases in popularity. For the B2B world, the most significant efforts have focused on optimizing websites for mobile viewing.

DEMOGRAPHICS

The demographics have evolved with Internet use. Statistics show that 74% of adults use the Internet on a regular basis, 55% of them are connecting wirelessly, and 38% of adults age 65+ are online. It's no surprise that 93% of 18-29 year olds are using the Internet considering this age group is described as always being "plugged in." They are glued to their cell phones, have mastered multi-tasking, and maintain profiles on various social networking sites.

SITES

The top five social networking sites are:

1. facebook.com
2. myspace.com
3. twitter.com
4. linkedin.com
5. youtube.com

According to a 2010 survey published by Burson-Marsteller, of Fortune 100 Companies in the United States, 72% have a Twitter account, 69% have a Facebook Fan Page, 59% have You Tube accounts and 34% have a company blog.

<u>Facebook</u>

The digital version of Our Town -- average people interested in average things. Facebookers are loyal, late adopters and the population skews toward married, white, baby boomers that have embraced Facebook as their favorite network and personal CRM tool to keep in touch with friends and family. The appeal of the site comes from its ability to provide engagement with other people.

Facebook's layout is clean and user friendly and it provides mobile applications for the iPhone and Blackberry, creating easy access for its 400 million users.

Organizations and companies commonly use the Facebook fan page. The use of fan pages has resulted in the accumulation of more than 5.3 billion fans. For business-to-business marketing, the fan page is one of the most successful techniques used for social media optimization. Although, as of March 2010, Facebook changed the "become a fan" activity to the common "like" activity exhibited by many Facebook users. Instead of brand pages gathering "fans" brands and businesses make "connections."

Facebook suggest this benefits marketers in the sense that Facebook users are familiar with and enjoy using the "like" button. They believe that users will be more compelled to "like" rather than "become a fan" of brand pages. They are also encouraging marketers to stay up to date on Facebook lingo when changes such as this are implemented. For example, when trying to direct customers or potential customers to the Facebook page use phrases such as, "Find us on Facebook!" or "We're on Facebook!" rather than "Become a fan on Facebook!"

Numerous corporations and megabrands like Coca-Cola, Microsoft, P&G, Starbucks, among others, have embraced Facebook as a vital part of their marketing mix.

MySpace

MySpace skews younger attracting 67 million of the young, fun and fleeing. This network has the lowest income, the most racial and cultural diversity and a high proportion of singles and students.

The primary demographic targeted by MySpace has been high school age individuals and has continued to focus on that age group allowing Facebook to surpass it in popularity. As of late, Facebook has two times as many users as MySpace.

Currently, MySpace places most of the site's emphasis on entertainment via video games, music and the movie industry, rather than on social engagement.

Twitter

Twitter attracts the hyperactive, hyper-connected information junkies eager to know about news, politics, sports, finance and restaurants. Forty-three percent say they couldn't live without this network, which didn't exist two years ago. Corporate Twitter accounts have seen a sharp increase from 2009-2010, with many companies actively engaging and "tweeting" more than once a week.

Twitter users, also known as "tweeple", can share their opinions, thoughts, feelings, or advocacies via a 140-character message, also known as a "tweet."

50 million tweets per day were being sent and there were 75,000,000 visits to twitter.com during the month of January 2010. 19% of Internet users say they use Twitter.

Twitter can be an optimal B2B communication channel when utilized correctly – focus is key. Quality of the tweets rather than quantity is where it's at. The Twitter question asks users "What's happening?" for your business rephrase the question to ask, "What information can you share?" Tweets should be interesting and relevant to create impact for business. Twitter should be viewed as a mass communication channel; the relationship can be one-sided to some extent, since it's nearly impossible to read every single tweet and direct message.

LinkedIn

This professionally based website has over 47 million users and is the only network with a higher percentage of men and the highest income group is focused on job searching, making deals and doing business. News and sports as well as individual performance-based sports like golf, tennis, yoga and working out are high on users agendas, as are gambling and soap operas; classic forms of Type A stress release.

It is a social networking site for business professionals, which provides the opportunity for personal branding. 80%of companies on LinkedIn use the site as a leading tool in recruiting employees. Executives from all Fortune 500 companies have accounts on LinkedIn.

The site's goal is to link business goal oriented individuals in order to build and enhance professional relationships.

YouTube

YouTube is a web video haven. Almost anything can be found on YouTube and it is the second largest search engine on the web. Owned by Google, it has been a product of search engine optimization (SEO) and stands as a tremendous example of how an effective and successful SEO process works.

Video is a powerful media channel and YouTube allows for video sharing. YouTube creates the opportunity for individuals, organizations, and businesses to implement brand exposure in marketable and effective ways.

YouTube is a primary source of entertainment for Internet users. It distributes 1 billion videos per day. Most embedded YouTube videos stem from 20 to 35 year olds, who contribute 57% of the videos, teens contribute 20%, and individuals over the age of 35 contribute 20%.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND MARKETING

Opportunities for marketing are quickly shifting from TV and radio to Internet based platforms. Marketing budgets are moving towards interactive tools, which provides a more customized outlet for marketers to use, typically at a lower cost than many traditional media choices. If less is spent on traditional ads, dollars earmarked for advertising can be redirected to investments in innovation, research, customer experiences etc.

According to a Benchmark Report, 2010 marks a major shift in social marketing. The majority of businesses will be moving from trial use (creating a social media platform) to strategic use (performance of social media use routinely). A critical mistake that is made by many businesses is diving right in to using social media without having a plan. Facebook pages, Twitter accounts, or blogs are created with no real strategy.

Statistics indicate that, in consideration of all organizations, most (about 40%) are in between trial use and strategic use of social media. Approximately 23% are using social media strategically.

the social media conversation is in its ascendency. The competition is already there. As noted in The Essential Guide to Social Media, "participation is marketing." Marketing is a dialogue, it is a two-sided relationship.

Return on investment (ROI) is difficult to measure at this point and research indicates that 70% of companies active in the social media landscape do not believe they are appropriately measuring the repercussions of using social media. This consideration leads to company reluctance in terms of social media investments.

Social Media: What does it mean at the end of the day?

Social media is still considered to be in its infancy, even though it is making almost surreal strides in real time. Social media is experiencing a period of some confusion with communication methods, monitoring and measurement, and lack of commentary control. So the question is what does it accomplish and where does it take us?

- Social media as a communication platform is a strategic medium that should be approached as such (just as any other aspect of a marketing plan).

- Use the strategies & platforms that will best reach target audiences to promote engagement to establish a presence on platforms that may aid in achieving marketing objectives.

- With social media, there's a relatively high level of control, a relatively low level of risk, and a number of low-cost or no-cost options that can be explored.

For business-to-business, it's a bit more difficult to understand the value of social media platforms. However, it can serve as an avenue to generate leads through requests of e-mail subscriptions, special offers, sampling, and educational content. It also serves as an opportunity to become a thought leader in your industry, increasing a company's visibility. It creates a forum to communicate information about companies or brands that might not otherwise get communicated, that will engage potential customers, potential employees as well increase internal engagement.

From a ROI perspective, social media offers these direct benefits:
- Generates exposure for business and services
- Results in new business partnerships
- Increases networking opportunities
- Improves search engine rankings
- Generates leads and interest
- Reduces marketing expenses
- Increases traffic to website, increases subscribers to email campaigns

When engaging in social media it is important to listen first and sell second. It's critical to engage the customer or audience, not from a marketer's or sales person's perspective, but with the authenticity of the customer's perspective. Keeping the brand in mind, but be helpful and demonstrate the importance of the customer -- this will earn respect.

Consider the other social networking benefits:
- Increases the immediacy of communication and enables companies to directly reach their target audiences in a cost-effective manner.
- Engage people by creating buzz to keep people coming back to a blog/site.
- Ability to further understand customers and their needs in order to quickly learn what consumers are saying about products and services.
- Enables business networking/prospecting opportunities through networks such as LinkedIn where executives from all Fortune 500 companies are members.
- Allows companies to keep a current and constant pulse on the competition.
- Broadens the marketing/PR landscape for a company's communication plans among highly cluttered messaging environments.
- Engagement and interaction inspires trust in clients or potential clients.
- Constant contact/engagement results in the highly appealing nature of instantaneous responses.

It is also essential to develop a social media and PR ROI framework for your campaign:

- *Set goals and objectives* aligned with the overall desired business outcomes.

    o Drive branding and awareness?
    o Generate prospects/leads?
    o Inform?
    o Create buzz?
    o Consumer research?
    o Educate?

- *Develop communication tactics*

  - o E-newsletters, E-blasts
  - o Videos, Podcasts
  - o Digital surveys
  - o White papers
  - o Blog announcements

- *Establish measurement tools and set benchmarks* to quantify campaigns. Although this step may require additional time and budget, measurement is critical in gaining knowledge and developing actionable next steps.   There are a wide variety of measurement tools and in many cases a mix of tools that can be established to track output. There are other low-cost methods to gain results such as free tools, news alerts, etc.

Incorporating social media into any business strategy generates more opportunities to connect and communicate. Choosing to not engage might not result in a tangible disadvantage yet, but it is important to focus on how these new technologies might HELP business and communication objectives.

Start by formulating a purpose. Allow for social media to become a part of the daily processes. Create a strategy for when and how the social media conversation will take place. Implement a routine, but keep it spontaneous at the same time.

HOW TO UTILIZE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR BUSINESS

FACEBOOK
Use Facebook to promote engagement and allow for more direct communication with target audiences. Update the established Facebook Fan Page regularly and direct all traffic to your main website.

- - Add Facebook URL to your e-mail signature.
- - Add links to Fan page, on website and e-newsletters
- - Focus on posting business activities; post relevant photos and videos
- - Make page interactive; allow visitors to be directed to other sites, postings, or videos via web page.
- - Suggest contacts to clients/colleagues in order to help establish trust.
- - Consider Facebook ads for further audience targeting.

TWITTER
Use Twitter to share quick updates and news; formulate short, sweet, and to the point updates. Include links to generate traffic elsewhere. Update frequently to keep interaction going.

- - Tag other businesses or individuals by using the @ symbol (ex. @ckinsight or @johnsmith), this generates interaction.
- - Establish trending topics through hashtags (#).

- Use twitpic.com to include photos in posts.
- TweetDeck (tweetdeck.com) is a useful tool for posting business tweets. It allows the user to sort and organize the Twitter account based on topics, keywords, and messages.
- Link Twitter account to your Facebook account by typing Twitter into the "search" box on Facebook. Then add the application. This allows Twitter updates to simultaneously post the same thing on the Facebook page.

YOUTUBE

Use YouTube to example ability and competence within a specific field through video. It is also a great strategy to market services and products.

- Create a YouTube channel by posting videos. Once established, channel individuals can subscribe to it.
- Once viewers have subscribed e-mails can be sent to registered users which allows for continued interaction and information sharing.

LINKEDIN

Create, develop and maintain business connections through LinkedIn.

- Make sure profile is substantial and 100% complete.
- Always maintain the LinkedIn page and make sure everything is up to date.
- LinkedIn offers a variety of account types. The latest is LinkedIn Premium, which allows for searchability – to find the right people in less time, send direct messages without an introduction, and organize key contacts/profiles into folders.

BLOGS

Use a blog to create marketability. There are a myriad of blog sites with Blogger.com and Wordpress as two of the most prolific. These sites provides you with the tools to create a blog, publish thoughts and opinions, and engage with readers, post photos, and the ability to obtain mobile access.

- Connect to readers on an individual level; provide background information
- Don't introduce a blog with less than five posts. Content needs to be interesting so that readers will come back.
- Incorporate links to other areas of a website or other resources
- Incorporate tags for SEO visibility and greater exposure
- Make sure a link to RSS feed is easily accessible.
- Post regularly and keep content original and fresh.

TIME MANAGEMENT

According to the Social Media Examiner's 2010 Social Media Marketing Report 76% of marketers are spending at least 4 hours on social media efforts each week. Find a balance that allows you to remain competitive while providing fresh and engaging content each week.

- Train and allocate dedicated staff members to maintain social media accounts.
- Establish a weekly editorial calendar incorporating efforts from the overall communication strategy
- Establish criteria for measuring the success and evaluate on a monthly basis

THE FUTURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA

- Pew Internet projects that online use and participation could result in more effective/receptive for profit and non-profit companies and organizations. Social media and the online web will be intertwined; social media will be an undeniable aspect of online and offline activities much due to the ability to access the Internet from anywhere.

- Mobile Internet usage is expanding due to continued technological advancements, which will lead to a great increase of mobile web users.
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- Although ROI is hard to measure currently, in the future, those who most succeed in gathering ROI statistics and information will be able to examine and anticipate the benefits or detriments of their social media investments. These individuals and companies will succeed and they will stay in the competition.
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- Other predictions indicate that women will dominate social media. Women make 75% percent of purchasing decisions and 85% of actual purchases. Women account for 50% of the users on social networks. Women are inherently proficient at successfully communicating and building relationships – social media will allow them to excel in their careers by becoming driving forces in business strategies via social media.
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- Social media will continue to rapidly expand and change the experiences for producers and consumers alike. We won't be looking for products and services, products and services will find us via social media. Social media is not a fad; it is a basic foundational change in the way we communicate. If marketers fail to make the changes needed in order to keep up with the evolution of social media, then they will fail to stay competitively in the game.

SOCIAL MEDIA IN ACTION – Business-to-Business Case Studies

- *HP* utilized Twitter to facilitate a scavenger hunt at a recent conference. Twitter was used at this event to power a scavenger hunt that provided participants with the opportunity to win different products including webcams and laptops.

- *Visa* developed an application on Facebook titled The Visa Business Network in order to connect small business users and aid them in promoting their business to a larger audience or community. The page on Facebook includes posts displaying the Network's Featured Business as a way to generate communication about the businesses and to help broaden awareness. Businesses nominate themselves for this feature by submitting information and other requirements about their business. The Network also provides other information to businesses by asking questions about what individuals are hoping to achieve in their businesses.

• Office Max - When the retail giant launched its first large-scale social media campaigns, it maintained the same method of measurement it has always used—audience impressions—but applied it to social media.

Based in Naperville, Ill., OfficeMax Incorporated (NYSE: OMX) is a leader in both business-to-business office products solutions and retail office products. The company provides office supplies and paper, in-store print and document services through OfficeMax ImPress™, technology products and solutions, and furniture to both consumers and businesses.

Earlier this year, OfficeMax reached an agreement with internationally renowned organization expert Peter Walsh to sell his home- and business-organization solution (In Place System) in its retail stores. To promote the partnership, OfficeMax decided to try a social media campaign, rather than a traditional mainstream push. Its target was bloggers passionate about good organizational habits. The plan was to create a live webcast around Walsh and show him walking through specially created sets showcasing messy and clean offices. Walsh would then answer email questions live.

Before the event, OfficeMax sent out samples of Walsh's solution. More than 175 bloggers attended the webcast in April 2009. OfficeMax typically used impression-based metrics from traditional print and online media to measure success, and the company was eager to carry that over to the social media realm. Another challenge was how to ascertain on an aggregated level whether the posts were positive or negative.

Soon after the event, OfficeMax's PR team, led by William Bonner, began scouring the Web for blog posts, tweets and other mentions of the webcast. To streamline the process of identifying blog coverage, it relied on Vocus, an on-demand PR management solution, and Google Alerts.

Once they identified the coverage, they used a variety of tools, such as Alexa, Quantcast and Vocus, as well as data provided by the bloggers themselves, to tally audience impression numbers (essentially monthly unique visitors).

Bonner's team also manually scanned each post and assigned a positive, neutral or negative score to each one, and then uploaded that information into Vocus to get an aggregated view. Finally the team used search.twitter.com to track down all Twitter mentions of the event. They looked at the number of followers of each posted tweet to ascertain the total reach.

The event was a success. It generated more than 100 blog posts (all positive) with a combined reach of 2.6 million impressions, defined as monthly unique visitors. Bloggers also tweeted about the webcast before, during and after the showing, which generated more than 1,000 total tweets (a combined reach of 2.3 million impressions). According to Bonner, the webcast was one of the top topics (based on the hashtag #officemax) on search.twitter.com that afternoon. Traditional reporters noticed the blog coverage and wrote another 13 stories about the event, generating 1.5 million online impressions. Two bloggers even produced their own videos about the event and posted them on YouTube. Bloggers also posted product pictures on Flickr.

Business Lessons Learned Use what you know, and keep it simple. OfficeMax took its standard method of measurement (online audience impressions) and applied it to blogs and Twitter. Set up a hashtag to allow users to more easily measure Twitter conversations during a webcast. Don't underestimate sentiment analysis—positive, neutral or negative—even if it has to be catalogued manually.

"The first thing to remember [in measuring a social media campaign] is don't over think it. Just try it. Think of how you have had to measure in the past. When we have measured in the past, impressions have been pretty standard, so we have tried not to get too carried away now that the media is different."—Bill Bonner, Senior Director, External Relations, OfficeMax

• *Share Methods -* Based in South Orange, N.J., ShareMethods aligns sales and marketing through on-demand collaborative document management for small and mid-sized businesses. From anywhere at any time, salespeople, sales partners and marketing can access the most up-to-date sales collateral and customer documents to help them close more deals, faster.

With the launch of an important new product just months away, ShareMethods enlisted the services of a New York City-based PR firm to help get the word out about the company's on-demand solutions for document management and sharing. The PR initiative was a significant marketing activity and investment for the company. ShareMethods wanted to know the number of articles and mentions it would receive from the launch as well as how much Web traffic and how many online leads the press activity would ultimately generate.

Getting that kind of detail, however, is difficult and something that standard Web analytics solutions do not provide.

In December, the company discovered Tealium5, which offers a social media measurement plug-in to standard Web analytics solutions. Through proprietary technology, Tealium can measure the referrals from press articles, blog posts, blog post comments, videos, chat forums and direct links to the client website. ShareMethods plugged Tealium into its existing Google Analytics solution and began measuring press and blog activity surrounding the launch of its newest product, ShareSpaces, an on-demand collaborative document management service that combines social networking capabilities.

Following the product announcement, ShareMethods's PR agency generated coverage in a number of online and print publications, including *Destination CRM*, *KMWorld* and *CMS Wire,* as well as some social media outlets.

Almost immediately, ShareMethods could see the traffic from these sources start to rise significantly. In the four-week period following the public launch:

• 22% of visits to the company's website came from PR and social media traffic (as much as 10 times higher than other sites using Tealium)

• 23% of page views on the site were generated by the PR and social media segment

• 57% percent of the company's PR and social media traffic came from traditional news outlets; 34% came from blogs. The remainder came from videos and other sources.

The numbers surrounding lead generation, however, were not as compelling. ShareMethods' PR activity generated only a modest number of Web leads (for example: a prospect completing an online form for a free demo or trial). ShareMethods COO, Paul Soukup, reviewed the Tealium campaign and decided that adjustments needed to be made.

Soukup asked his PR team, "Can we make adjustments to our PR strategy to improve our lead flow?" Together, they decided that ShareMethods should try more industry-specific news and blog outlets, including ones covering high-tech, networking, telecommunications, and healthcare. Soukup is eager to see the difference in bottom-line results going forward.

Business Lessons Learned Measuring PR and social media in terms of traffic and leads (and sales) is possible. Devise a PR measurement solution and strategy before embarking on a major initiative, such as a product launch. Examine Web traffic data and try to look at bottom-line results, if possible.

"For the first time were able to see what type of return we were getting for our PR investment. It was incredibly useful in determining our next steps."—Paul Soukup, COO, ShareMethods

SOCIAL MEDIA GLOSSARY

Blogs – a website that provides individuals the ability to compose entries of various content types.

Brand Tease – when consumer "friends" or "likes" a brand page, but never comes back to the page again. Brands contribute to this idea by not interacting with or engaging the customer and by failing to update/provide interesting content.

eBlast – electronic mail sent all at once to a large mailing list.

Hashtag – used to encourage interaction or provide engagement with specific groups. Simply put, it is the pound sign (#) followed by a name (ex. #cristofolikeeling). Hashtags are prevalent on Twitter.

Microblogging – a type of blogging that allows users to formulate short text updates and post them. Twitter is an example.

Online Social Networks – websites that allow individuals a forum in which they can contact, connect, and share information with friends, family, etc.

Podcast – an audio recording that can be downloaded and played via Internet access.

ROI – (Return On Investment) an evaluation of the worth and effectiveness of an investment on social media tools and techniques.

RSS feed – (Really Simple Syndication) a system that propagates frequently updated information from a site.

SEO – (Search Engine Optimization) the attempt to increase search engine hits; taking the steps to help your site become easily visible and available to people by link building through user-generated content.

Social Media – individuals interacting online, including the tools people are using to communicate, share information, distribute media, and work together in the online community.

Tags – a label attached to web content to boost search accessibility.

User-generated content – any online content or media that is produced by users rather than administrators.

White papers – argue a specific position or provide a solution to a problem; a very effective marketing tool.

Wikis – a web page or combination of web pages with the ability to be edited and updated collaboratively by anyone who has access; also a quick way to put together a website.

Demographics of Internet Users

Below is the percentage of each group who use the internet, according to our December 2009 survey. As an example, 74% of adult women use the internet.

	Internet users
Total adults	**74%**
Men	74
Women	74
Race/ethnicity	
White, Non-Hispanic	76%
Black, Non-Hispanic	70
Hispanic (English- and Spanish-speaking)	64
Age	
18-29	93%
30-49	81
50-64	70
65+	38
Household income	
Less than $30,000/yr	60%
$30,000-$49,999	76
$50,000-$74,999	83
$75,000+	94
Educational attainment	
Less than High School	39%
High School	63
Some College	87
College +	94
Community type	
Urban	74%
Suburban	77
Rural	70

Source: The Pew Research Center's Internet & American Life Project, November 30-December 27, 2009 Tracking Survey. N=2,258 adults, 18 and older, including 565 cell phone interviews. Interviews were conducted in English and Spanish. Margin of error is ± 2%.

Please note that prior to our January 2005 survey, the question used to identify internet users read, Do you ever go online to access the Internet or World Wide Web or to send and receive email? The current two-part question wording reads, Do you use the internet, at least occasionally? and Do you send or receive email, at least occasionally?

Last updated January 6, 2010.

Pew Internet
Pew Internet & American Life Project

Sources: *2009 Interactive Advertising Bureau, MarketingProfs, Pew Internet & American Life Project, Nielsen Co, iMedia Connection Blog, Social Media Optimization, Media Life, Public Relations Society of America, PRSA, Marketing Charts, Social Media Strats, ReadWriteWeb, Web Strategy, The Next Web blog, Pingdom, Benchmark Report, Omniture, The Essential Guide to Social Media, The Social Graf, Mashable, RianSolis, Social Media ROI Success Stories, Advertising Age, CMO.com, The Relationship Economy, Bloomberg Business Week, Socialtext, Blog Traffic Exchange, WebWorkerDaily, Fresh Networks, ConverStations, The Buzz Bin, Socialbrite, Stelzner Consulting, MarketingPower, Jeffbulla's Blog, Tangelo, Social Media Examiner's 2010 Social Media Marketing Report*