

Whitepaper

Social Media Best Practices

Swiftpage 

Swiftpage.com

[Twitter] [Twitter.com/swiftpage](https://twitter.com/swiftpage)

BrightPeak.com

[Blog] Swiftpage.wordpress.com

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Executive Summary

Social media has quickly become a marketing must. The rise of blogging, tweeting, connecting on Facebook and joining in to the discussion on LinkedIn have exploded. If your company has yet to jump on the bandwagon then you have come the right place. We want to help you answer your questions regarding anything and everything social media.

We will define for you the three big dogs of social media: Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. We will share tips and tricks of blogging and answer your questions about why social media is essential, how to be most effective and most importantly how to partner social media with your email marketing efforts.

Part One:

What are the social networks?



Twitter

Twitter is a fast paced mode of communication. With only 140 characters to use, content is quickly picked up by followers and transitioned to the next fragment of information. Twitter is used primarily for giving up-to-the-minute information. Within Twitter, you have a small profile of yourself or company (whichever you are representing). It is a community that is open to the

public. Participants can follow you without you following them. Each user has “followers” who have subscribed to read your “tweets” (updates) on their own page. If you use Twitter for your business, expect to update your tweets at least two to three times a day—this may involve developing a process for regular news. Twitter can be an excellent tool for providing news during a trade show, product launch or other business-related events.

Through applications such as TweetDeck, twitter.search.com and twellow you can strategically listen and react to your industry at large. You can find people looking for products/services similar to yours and pay attention to your followers’ excitements, concerns and questions.

You can find Swiftpage on Twitter at [@swiftpage](https://twitter.com/swiftpage) or <http://www.twitter.com/swiftpage>



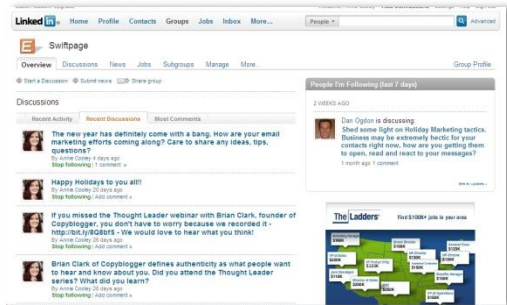
Facebook

Facebook currently has over 350 million users. It was originally created to help friends stay in touch with each other. It also allows businesses to create profile pages and share media such as pictures, videos, articles and so on. You can also create and invite people to events, start discussion boards and conduct poll. Expect to update your Facebook page—or at least your status—somewhere between once a day to every three days. Ask your current fans to invite others and

consider providing incentives for doing so.

Additional applications you can use for Facebook include static FBML and networked blogs allowing you to add your own HTML edits to pages and showing your RSS feed.

You can find Swiftpage on Facebook at <http://swiftpage.com/facebook>.



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is primarily a business networking tool.

Businesses can create profiles similar to a resume format. You can also create groups centered around your business or an industry topic such as small business marketing, email marketing, social media, real estate, retail, etc... You can invite people to join your group or an individual can ask permission to join. Within the group, members can

engage in discussions and post news for others to respond. LinkedIn, like Facebook, is a good place to share company news and maintain professional contacts. It also stands as a good resource for posting jobs and recruiting individuals.

You can find Swiftpage's group at <http://swiftpage.com/linkedin>.

Part Two:

What about blogging?



The big question to ask is what is so important about blogging? Through blogging, you are not only able to share your thoughts and expertise about your services and industry at large but you have the ability to start discussions and really get to the heart of what your customers and readers want and need, ultimately leading them to your web site and to a new relationship. Maintaining a blog correctly can also have the potential of increasing your page rank for search engines, but that is a whole other story and a whole new white paper.

So, how do you start? The first step to starting a blog is to listen to what your industry is talking about, what your competitors are covering and what your customers need. Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn are all great places to find out what is going on. Email Marketing is another great way to know what your customers need. Does there seem to be a larger number of email recipients clicking on a specific link in your email? You can now create value-driven content that is targeted to that specific link, whether it is a particular product/service, news about your company or an upcoming event. An important thing to consider though is that your blog should not try to sell your business but rather share the benefits of what you have to offer.

Do your competitors already have blogs? If so, take a look at what they are talking about and out of that what your customers also want to here. Share your own spin on the topic. Start reading other blogs outside your specific industry. Make connections between the two and share your findings. Cite other

bloggers (purposively) and if you write compelling enough content they might turn around and cite you as well.

As you read other blogs, you should start to add your input to them. Post comments on what you read, ask questions and add insightful commentary. Try not to promote your company or services, but rather be another voice to the topic at hand as an industry expert. Most of the time you post comments, you are given a field to add your website. You should post the url to your blog so if someone is so compelled by your comment they can see what other content you have to offer.

Wordpress(.com) and Blogger are two great blogging software to get you started. They are both free services that are easy to use.

You can find Swiftpage's Blog at <http://swiftpage.wordpress.com>.

Part Three:

Why is social media essential to your marketing efforts?

Social media creates an avenue for businesses to engage in conversation. The people that are going to follow you want to know about your products and services, but don't want to necessarily be the other end of a sales pitch. It opens doors for business professionals to educate clients and prospects through valuable content. The content you provide for this new community of people should be appealing enough to retweet or repost. Webinars, cases studies, live demos, articles, press release, events, giveaways, blog posts and white papers are all valuable content to be shared.

Embracing your company identity

Social media gives you the ability to share your story and your brand. You have an incredible opportunity to let the world know what sets you apart from your competitors. You don't necessarily do this by shouting out who you are plain and simply. You do it by embracing your company's personality and by sharing value-driven information to the people following you. If you are able to listen to your greater audience and engage with them in a way that is true to your company you will no doubt build lasting business relationships that will positively affect your business as a whole.

Ability to respond to negative feedback quickly

By paying attention to what people are saying about your industry or more specifically about your products/services you will be able to respond quickly to negative feedback. If someone is sharing something negative about your company, it is in your best interest to follow up with them immediately. Act gracefully and figure out how you can help them in the most appropriate way.

Driving traffic to your site

As I mentioned previously social media is a great way to promote news and drive people to your site. Facebook has an application for you to post events to. You can easily fit a product launch announcement

or event invite in 140 characters or less. You can start a discussion about the upcoming tradeshow you are part of in LinkedIn. And you can highlight the benefits of your event/new product through a blog post. These are all great places to share other content your company has created as well, such as whitepapers, case studies, demos, support resources.

In short, social media is your ultimate resource to share, engage and build relationships.

Part Four:

Using social media effectively

The biggest hesitation you may have with social media is the time commitment it takes to really get into it. Here is a check list of items that will help you develop an efficient plan.

- ✓ **Set goals.** What ultimately do you want to get out of this? What are the reasons you are involved? When you start out with a clear and articulated list of goals you will know the right strategies to get the most out of the social media avenue you subscribe to.
- ✓ **Decide what social media applications you want to be a part of.** As I mentioned above, Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn are the big dogs but maybe your target base is not present there. Consider local online communities and industry related ones. Bottom line: find where your customers and prospects are. If they are already fully engaged in a social network they are probably not going to leave it to find you – the ball is in your court.
- ✓ **Start slow.** Once you figure out where your target base is sit back and listen to what is going on in the community. Get a feel for the environment. Once you have a good understanding of it start joining in the conversation.
- ✓ **Go ahead and make your presence known.** Find key people you want to connect with and show your interest by engaging them. Share valuable content your company possesses. Post news, event invites, press releases, white papers, case studies meanwhile investing in your followers and key prospects. Again, remember to embrace your personality and share your story.
- ✓ **Look back over your goals.** Are you following through with them? Have they changed? What expectations did you have in the beginning, what expectations do you have now. This check point will be an important one to continually come back to. You need to make sure that your valuable time is being spent well and your metrics are revealing that.
- ✓ **Don't be a sales pitch.** Listening and engaging the community around you will turn over more lasting relationships than a promotion centric mission. Social media is about relationships not how many followers you can attract. It is good to focus on growing your numbers but the process in which you do is the difference. Intentionally built relationships are more likely to increase your bottom line than pure promotion.

- ✓ **Pay close attention to your industry.** Twitter applications such as Tweet Deck and Twitter.search.com allow you to search key words, companies and individuals. For example, if you search the keyword “email marketing” on Tweet Deck it will give you a log of the most recent posts that had that keyword in it. Going through each post, you can see what people are talking about the subject. You can do this same thing with individuals and companies. Find out who the leading professionals are and pay attention to the trends they introduce and follow. Determine if these are also important for you to get involved in.
- ✓ **Good content is good content.** What you post on Facebook may not have to be exclusive just to Facebook. If it is good content share it everywhere. Services such as Friend Feed help you share your content across your social media applications. Be mindful still of the uniqueness of each social media site. Some content is universal but also embrace each environment for what it is.
- ✓ **Pay close attention to your competitors.** In the same way you can search industry key words and professionals, also find out what your competitors are up to. What are they doing that you are not and vice versa? Figure out how you can stand out among them as an industry expert and reliable source. However, always remember what your clientele’s needs are.
- ✓ **Encourage your follows to share.** Encourage your followers to retweet, repost and start discussions about your content. Just the same, share your followers’ content.

Part Five:

Love at first sight: Social Media and Email marketing

Email marketing and social media have together become the greatest form of communication for businesses across the board. Though marketing budgets have decreased due to the economic situation, small business are increasing their budget for email marketing. With both of these mediums growing it is apparent that they work together.

How to promote Email Marketing through Social Media:

- Increase your email readership by posting the “view as a webpage” link of your email on your social media pages.
- Add an email opt-in form to your profiles. Facebook allows you to add a section on your fan page that provides fans with the option of opting into your email list. You can tweet a simple message asking people to join your email list. Through LinkedIn you can post a news update encouraging people to join as well.
- Post surveys through your social media outlets, increasing your survey participation and ultimately gaining stronger results
- Social media provides a space for relationships to develop. Email marketing pursues this and has the ability of creating lasting relationships.

- You now have a better view into your industry at large. Pay attention to what is being said and provide valuable content and feed back through your email marketing efforts.
- The content you share can be diverse. Your email campaign can have more exclusive material while your social media efforts promote featured content.

How to promote Social Media through Email Marketing:

- Add links to your social media page on all your outgoing emails. Download icons that represent each application or simply link the text. They should be positioned in a place that your eyes will naturally move to but will not detract from the overall message or original call to action.



- When there is negative feedback from someone on one of your outlets follow up through email if possible. You make the impression that you are free and willing to help through any form of communication.
- Promote a social media campaign through email. For example, set a goal to reach 1,000 followers on Twitter by the end of the year. The 1,000th follower will win product A free of charge for a year. Use email marketing to encourage your recipients to join in.

Social Media Resources:

Twitter:

- [Tweetbeep](#)
- [Techrigy](#)
- [Scoutlabs](#)
- [Engagementdb](#)
- [Radian6](#)
- [Search.twitter.com](#)
- [Google Alerts](#)
- [Twellow](#)
- [Wefollow](#)
- [Exectweets](#)
- [Twitter Lists](#)
- [Listorius](#)
- [Cotweet](#)

Educational Resources:

- [Social Media Examiner](#)
- [Mashable](#)

Facebook :

Enter each into the search in Facebook

- Static FBML
- Networkedblogs

About Swiftpage

Swiftpage is a subsidiary of Summit 5, a software development company whose founders have a passion for changing the way people communicate. We work hard every single day to provide thousands of companies with a way to create, send and track their email campaigns. Swiftpage is also the first server-based email management system to be fully integrated into ACT! by Sage, the leading contact management system in the world.

Swiftpage provides you with the tools to construct professional email templates. It gives you the ability to track your email campaigns and provides you with valuable information when contacting your clients. Swiftpage gives you the power to send emails without the fear of being blacklisted, as we maintain key relationships with Internet Service Providers.

Swiftpage stands out from its competitors through its full integrations with ACT! by Sage, Sage SalesLogix, SageCRM, Microsoft Outlook and Microsoft Excel. Customers can spend their valuable time managing their existing database instead of maintaining the same list in two different locations. Swiftpage believes our customers should not have to change the way they do business, so we bring the sales and marketing solutions directly to them in their own environment. Whether sending email to database contacts, updating contact information from survey results, adding contacts to automated marketing campaigns, or receiving ranked lists of the most interested contacts, Swiftpage brings the tools to them. Our main goal is to make our users' email marketing solutions simple and easy. Swiftpage exists to help you do the important work of communicating with your contacts.