

Smart Marketing

The key to effective marketing lies entirely on understanding your customer. Not only is it essential to know who they are and what their needs are but you also need to know how you can communicate with them, to realise how you can add value to their brand.



Social media has taken the world by surprise and is by far one of the most effective ways of communication. Facebook, Twitter, message boards and blogs are easy and effective ways of keeping up with clients that have access to internet and mobile phones.

With approximately 500 million people on Facebook, 150 million on Twitter and many others on LinkedIn, many marketing managers find themselves overwhelmed by this sturdy shift towards these fast paced, on-the-go, interactive platforms that are available.

A study carried out by Michael Stelzner, Social Media Marketing Industry Report: How Marketers are Using Social Media to Grow their Businesses, with 880 respondents showed that the full 88% use social media, moreover a whopping 81% admitted to gaining business exposure through social media.

It is also interesting to note that 64 % of respondents invest five hours a week or more on social networking sites. In terms of age groupings, the study found that the most likely group to use social media as a form of marketing is the 30 - 39 year-old-group, second are the 20 - 29 year-old-group and thirdly, the 50 - 59 year-olds.

The most recognised benefit, as stated by 81% of those that were surveyed, is business exposure. Following this is increased traffic or conversation rates for 61% of the respondents, and new business partnerships accounted for 56%.

The percentage popularity of the various social networking sites:

- **Blogs - 79%,**
- **LinkedIn - 78%,**
- **Facebook - 77%,**
- **YouTube / Video Sites - 41%,**
- **Social bookmarking sites** (*those that allow users to share their favourite sites and links with others*) - **38%.**

Interestingly, a whopping 94 % state Twitter as their top choice of social networking media. Social media has given marketing experts an entirely different platform to play with. "In order to keep with the times and to effectively grow

your brand, it is essential for companies to include this medium with other traditional tools in order to encompass a holistic marketing strategy," says Bonnie Currin, Director at PAG.

SALES

There is an old saying in the sales industry, "Ability plus motivation equals performance." Sales is one of those professions based on individual skill and when recruiting staff, employers usually look for that "x" factor, the trait that some people have that enables them to sell anything to anyone. Selling is an art made up of talent, excellent communication skills, persistence and passion.

Following this, it is essential for employers to create incentives for their sales team in order to keep them motivated and increase sales. "Motivation is an interesting concept," says Currin, "and the incentives are one of the most effective ways to keep your staff motivated, whether it is through recognition, commission or career pathing," she adds.

Marketing and sales work hand in hand; a good marketing plan will reel in a good number of sales. "It is about effectively positioning your company's brands, products and services, coupled with a clear plan of how your sales personnel position themselves within the company and towards clients," concludes Currin. 🌸

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