

How to Win in Social Media

A Guide to Optimising Your Social Marketing Campaigns



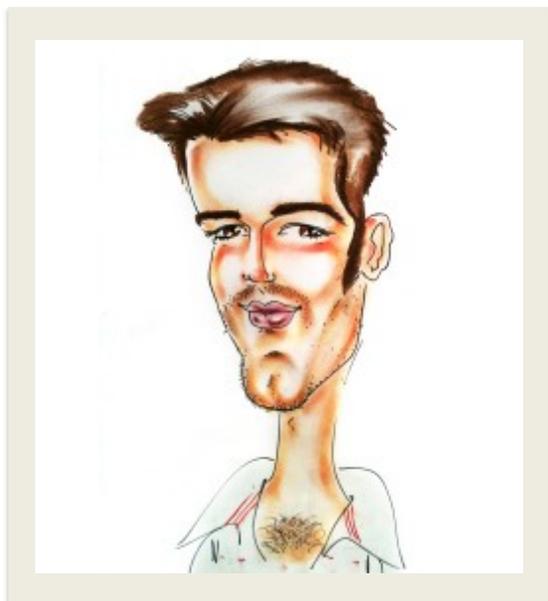
Written by
Stuart Davidson



About the Author:

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Stuart is a freelance social media and digital marketing professional now based in London, United Kingdom. Alongside his work at The Social Shark, Stuart co-owns a web design and development company called [Thinking Forwards](#).



Stuart has been developing his own online business initiatives since 2008. He is an active contributor to numerous social media blogs, publications and domains. Stuart's Twitter handle is [@RealSocialShark](#).

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CHAPTER 1:

Introduction

Winning in social media. It's harder than you think. You probably have some sort of online presence, but are you winning?

The diversity in social media allows you to establish a wide scope for marketing. It is a fast route to market and comparably cheaper to set up than traditional channels.

But neither doing your homework nor preparing yourself effectively will ultimately result in a very rocky ride. Or an epic fail. As the modern internet users like to say.

After reading this eBook, you'll be able to get the most out of social media for your business by understanding how to optimise your social pages, formulate sustainable strategies, and efficiently manage, maintain and refine your campaigns.



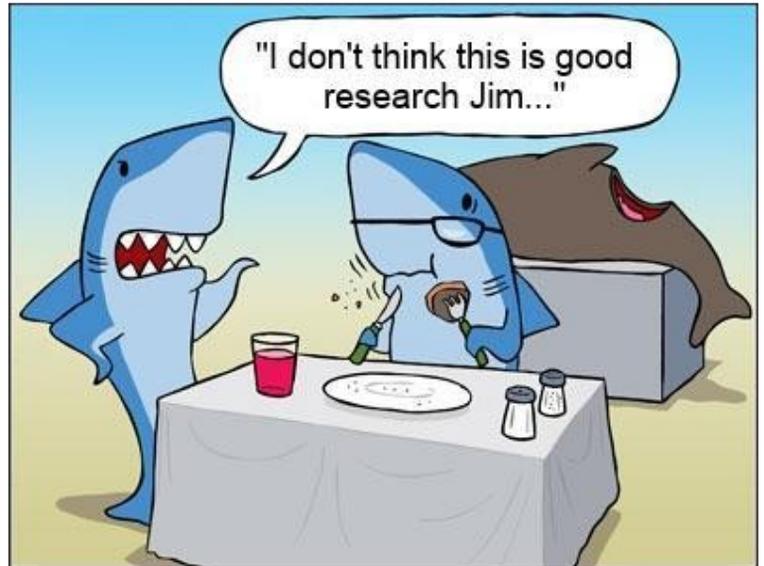
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CHAPTER 2:

Research

Never underestimate the value of good quality research. Find out what your competition are already doing in social media. What is working for them? How are they able to generate traffic, convert leads or build audiences?



Monitoring, analysing and making use of data collected about your competitors social conversations and interactions, can be a hard slog. But it's worthwhile. Your research should be geared towards establishing how you can improve on existing social strategies that are working, while avoiding those that aren't.

Your research should also help in establishing the foundations of your future social media strategies. So get it right. At the beginning.

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In order to successfully conduct quality research, it might be best to use social tools to assist you, or outsource this entirely.

There are many different tools and software to consider, which can help in various ways, depending on your business and industry. A good starting point is choosing a listening tool like [BuzzBundle](#) to evaluate how your competitors are interacting. You will also want to gain a solid understanding of your target market and how (and where) your ideal customers are acting and communicating in social media.

What platforms they are using? How active are they? What are they discussing most? What type of content encourages positive actions from them?

Take the example of a new cleaning business. It's competitors mainly use Twitter for brand awareness and customer service strategies. Their audiences are highly engaged with discussing the problems of a poor cleaning service. This alone highlights many key considerations and strategic implications for the new cleaning business, such as content strategy, engagement practices and perception barriers.

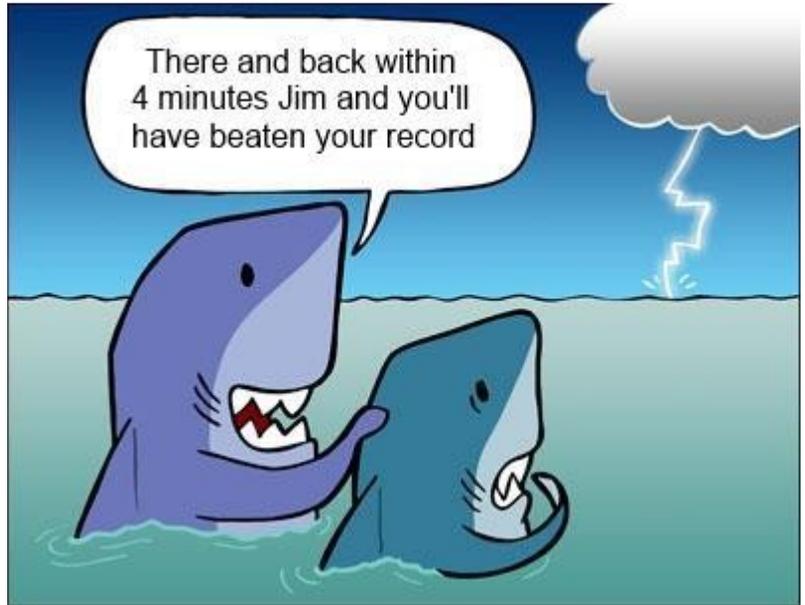
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CHAPTER 3:

Aims and Objectives

Unless you know exactly where you want to get to, chances are you won't get there. Your aims and objectives should at least use some basic management principles such as the SMART acronym:



Smart, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**elevant and **T**ime-bound.

You should also look to create both platform and campaign level objectives. Everything that consumes investment or energy should be focused on reaching a set of targets. If there aren't clearly distinguished goals to measure performance against, then you're fighting blind.

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CHAPTER 4:

Strategy

Fundamental to any strategy is the reasoning behind *why* you will be acting. Always keep your business result and your objectives at the forefront of your mind when formulating social media strategies.



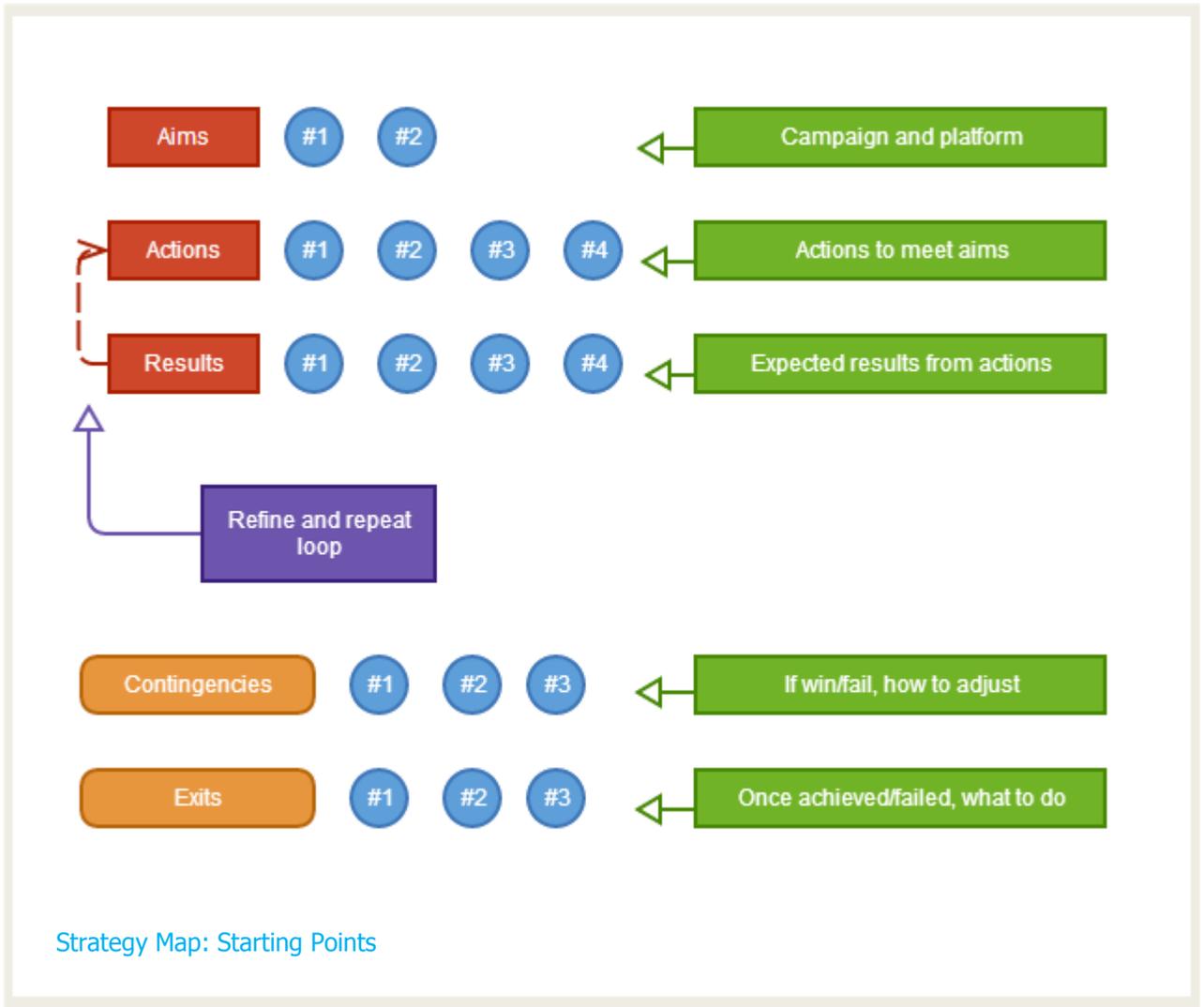
Realising and understanding *how* you will get from an objective to a business result lies in experience and expertise. And a deep understanding of your business and your clients.

Strategy isn't a vague word when you can theoretically match aims, to actions, to results. Having contingencies, loops and exits in a visual model tends to provide a better understanding of what the overall strategy model is trying to achieve. And what each platform and campaign is adding to the overall strategy. Let me give you a basic outline of what you should be looking to map out and build upon during your first strategy session...

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This skeleton strategy map is a good starting point. It should provide a good overview before you take it many levels deeper and start to match individual social actions to objectives, to business results. Don't skip over the strategy phase – it is vital for understanding the scope of your execution.

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To recap, what is your **Business Result**? What are the **Objectives** of your social media campaigns? Right, so let's consider an example of how you might formulate a strategy for getting there...

Imagine you are an established accountant but have few clients. You want to attract more clients to ultimately earn more money. Initially, a successful social media campaign would focus on sales and lead generation and little else. Wider social benefits are not very important to you right now – it's all about the bottom line.

Your research has indicated that LinkedIn is the most suitable platform to attract professional clients. You understand that your profile must be optimised and that you should become active in many relevant LinkedIn groups. Your initial roadmap indicates that targeted daily participation will increase your presence and strengthen your network. You decide that this passive approach can be enhanced with LinkedIn PPC and some proactive lead generation activities. You refine your LinkedIn ads, establish your sales copy, create a clear content calendar and segment who your ideal target audience base is to approach. You bring all the components together into a single sales and lead generation strategy that you can follow, measure and quantify. You start implementing your strategy and within the first period you start to attract and convert new clients. Win!

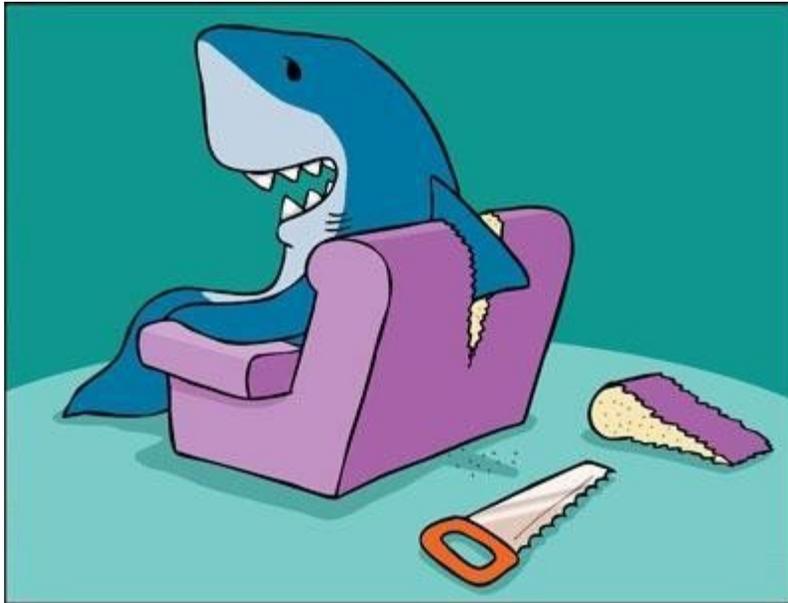
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CHAPTER 5:

Getting Set Up

Your research should indicate the appropriate social platforms that your business would benefit from being actively engaged in. Depending on your industry and campaign objectives, this could highlight a number of combinations of different platforms and tools.



Once you are confident on which social media platforms you will utilise, setting up the accounts and profiles should be a step not taken lightly...

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“Account branding and optimisation will ensure your profiles appear where they should and to whom they should, while satisfying your client's needs.”

Branding your profiles should focus on clearly communicating your core business messages and call to actions. Key business information, contact details and benefits should be included as the back-bone of your profile copy. Keep in mind that all copy should be optimised for search, while retaining a high level of interaction and personability.

It is important to consider that each profile is a point of contact with your clients. Integrating navigation to your website, landing pages, other social profiles or key marketing channels will direct your traffic flow accordingly. If for instance, your key campaign objectives point towards attracting sign ups on a landing page, then this should be the main focal point when setting up your social profiles.

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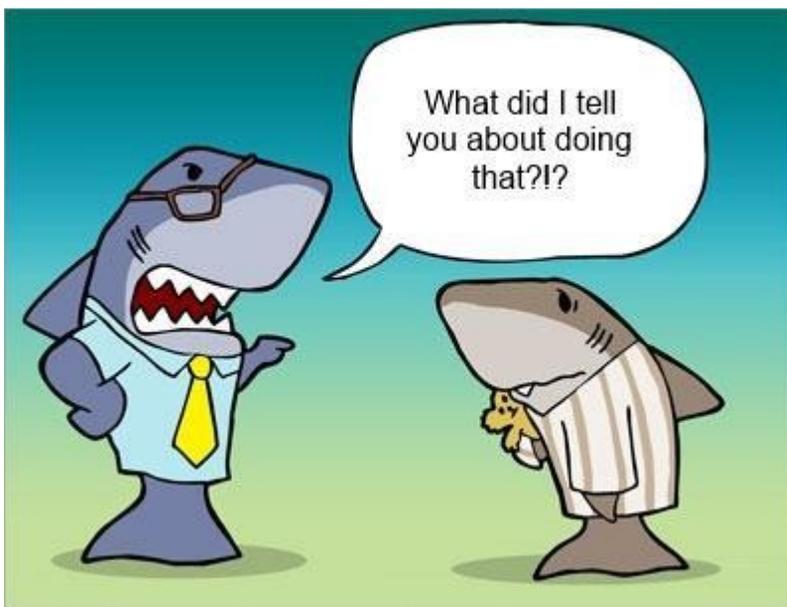


CHAPTER 6:

Social Tools & Software

As part of getting set up, you should consider using various tools which could assist you throughout your social media campaigns. Their benefits are obvious: productivity, scope, efficiency, flexibility, continuity. The list could go on... So what tools should you be using?

A good way to establish what tools will be of benefit to your specific campaign is to segregate them based on what activities they will assist. I keep mentioning assist, because that is exactly what they should do. Automation should never replace you!



Let's examine what areas of your campaign social media tools and software could assist with. I have offered a few examples of different tools that you may consider using for each area...

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Campaign Activity

Set Up

Listening

Management

Analytics & Reporting

Syndication

Complementary

Social Tools & Software

[ThemeForest](#)

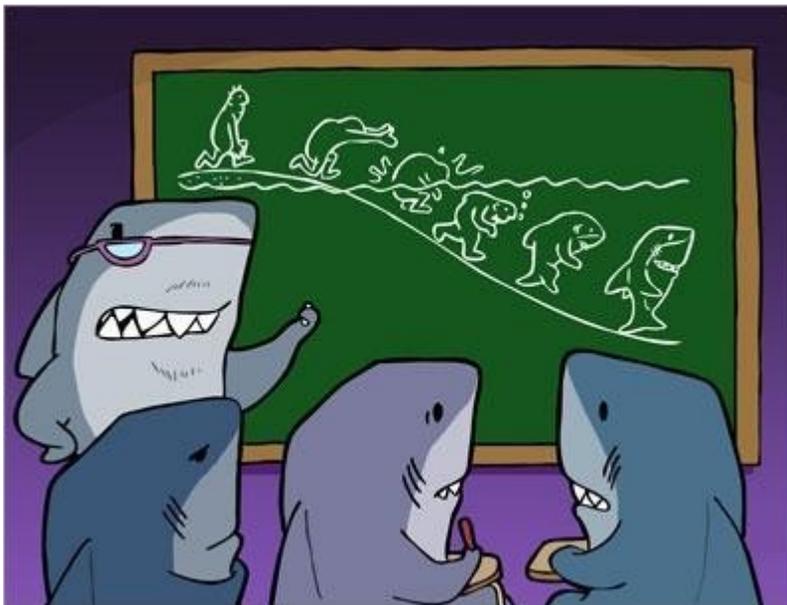
[BuzzBundle](#)

[Hootsuite Pro](#)

[Sprout Social](#)

[The Best Spinner](#)

[SEO Powersuite](#)



These suggestions are just the tip of the iceberg in terms of what's available. Spend some time researching various tools and establish which ones work best for your business.

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One of the tools I use frequently to assist me in managing various social media campaigns is [Hootsuite](#).

Hootsuite is a social media management tool that allows users to integrate all of their social profiles into one hub. It comes in both a free and paid version, making it suitable for both organisations and casual users. I recently wrote a [review](#) of Hootsuite that included a detailed video tutorial. I have added the tutorial link below for more information on how you can leverage Hootsuite to enhance your campaigns.



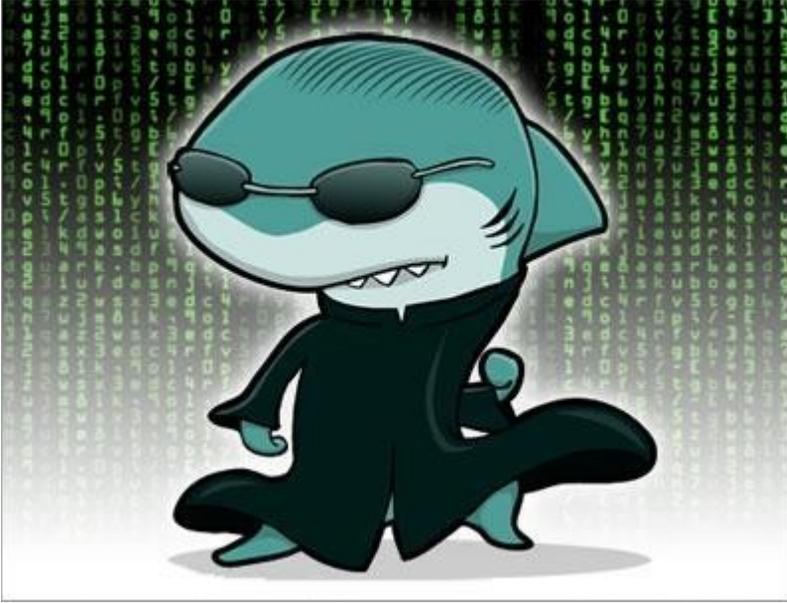
Hootsuite is a huge time saver when you are running social media campaigns across various platforms or when there are numerous contributors. The 30-day free trial version of Hootsuite Pro is available [here](#).

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CHAPTER 7:

Executing The Game Plan



Your research is done and you have everything set up and ready to go. Now its time for executing the gameplan. Business owners with little time often outsource this phase to social

media professionals. If you would prefer to get your hands dirty yourself, then there are various tactics and best practices worth considering before diving in. Depending on your campaigns and strategies, a few areas which should be routinely managed and undertaken include:

- Traffic generation
- Content strategy
- Community management
- Campaign management
- Lead nurturing

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There are numerous execution practices which will require consideration during your strategy implementation.

Etiquette is an important factor when participating in different social environments.

“Social media outsourcing increased 128% in the past two years.”

Source: www.hubspot.com

For instance, Facebook users are more inclined to use the platform for networking with friends and sharing with them what interests them. Consistent business promotion is typically not an effective approach to take. On the other hand, LinkedIn is made up solely of professionals who are keen to network and discover potential business opportunities. Maintaining best practice etiquette on each platform will inevitably increase your social marketing campaign effectiveness.

To give you an idea of what to consider when executing your social media strategies, we can look at the core segments of what execution is: what to post, when to post, whom to post to, how to react, how to convert and how to adjust.

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Understanding *what* to post highlights many key considerations. Creating a sound keyword strategy and content calendars to coordinate and organise your content is an effective way of maintaining consistency and coherence, especially if you have multiple contributors. Realising that content value derives from the value your *audience* gains, also highlights how to focus your content and how it should be presented.

When to post is another key factor which can be leveraged to increase your scope and engagement levels. For instance, Facebook activity peaks between 1pm and 4pm, whereas Google+ activity is at its highest between 9am and 11am.

Understanding who your customers are and who the key influencers are in your industry is essential research. But how do you interact with different types of people? Be personable, professional and always keep your goals in mind when interacting. There is a time for gossip and a time for strengthening your network and engaging with customers.

Social marketing is a dynamic medium and reacting effectively to trends or spikes can improve your execution. Placing a rigid system on your social marketing can reduce your ability to react accordingly to opportunities that may present themselves. Be flexible and consider that social impacts are almost impossible to predict and plan for entirely.

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Converting social connections into leads can be a daunting prospect. Sometimes, it's as easy as replying to an enquiry, but this is usually not the case. Make sure you have not acted too soon and don't appear to value their connection just to trigger a sale. Get to know them and engage with what they consider to be concerns, barriers or general beliefs. If the opportunity presents itself that your products or services would benefit your follower, then by all means share the relevant information and links.

Adjusting your social marketing approaches to continually suit your audience's needs is important. No person is identical and your tactics should mirror this. Don't be afraid to think outside the box and try different approaches, as long as they stay consistent with your goals.

The old mantra that returning customers cost 6-7 times less than new customers holds true in social marketing. Take time to maintain engagement with your existing audiences. Effort spent on existing clients should be balanced against attracting new clients

"15% of consumers use social media to search for local businesses."

Source: www.socialmediatoday.com

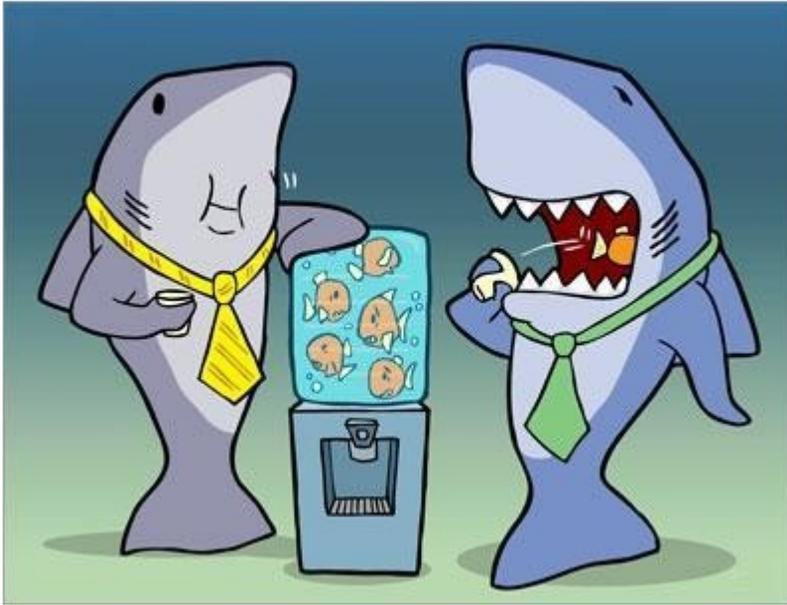
Knowing how to maximise the execution of your social marketing campaigns comes with experience. Unfortunately, there is no definitive blueprint you can memorise. Everyone is different.

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CHAPTER 8:

Ongoing Management



The ongoing management of your social campaigns can be a tough slog. You are doing great executing your strategies, yet there is still a wide range of tasks you need to integrate into your everyday working

activities. Adding leads to your CRM, updating your team on strategy adjustments, responding to emails, answering calls, attending meetings, liaising with your branding department. It all seems to keep piling up...

Having a robust system in place to deal with the 'side effects' of social marketing is crucial. If not, all your social marketing time will be eaten up by routine admin tasks and overlapping responsibilities you are not even sure you should be doing in the first place.

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Being creative with your ongoing management can refresh your working routines.

Have flexible contingencies in place for increased workloads. If you're working as part of a team, make sure to inform your line manager of the added load. Things can easily spiral with the virality of successful campaigns. Use a touch of creativity to decide what happens in different future scenarios.

More success leads to more work (this isn't a bad problem to have!). Your time is now elsewhere and not focused on executing your strategies and fulfilling your goals and objectives. Work to your pay grade and not above or below it. Keep in mind that you generally wouldn't find a CEO taking a sales call.

If you find your ongoing activities are becoming routine and repetitive, then its time to spice things up. Launch a promotion. Run a contest. Guest blog. Anything that breaks the cycle.



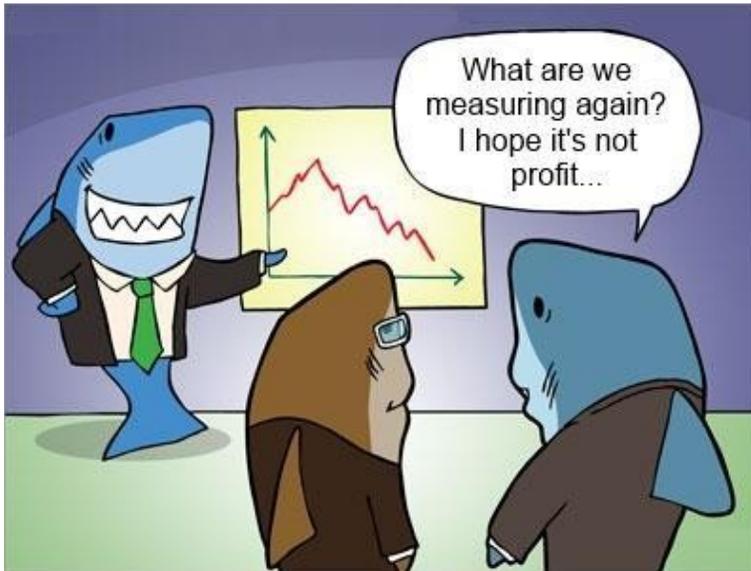
Being creative with your ongoing management can refresh your working routines, while keeping your efforts focused on the business objectives.

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CHAPTER 9:

Measurement & Reporting



Pretty much everything in marketing should be measured. Put simply, if you don't measure your performance, you will have no idea whether you are being effective and have little

understanding of whether you achieved your business results. To recap, social media marketing is ultimately a business expense; an objective led series of campaigns to benefit the company. The particular metrics to measure will depend on your goals and strategies. It's important to understand which metrics meet your objectives.

Avoid metrics which have no bearing on your objectives. Some people get disillusioned by the amount of people following their profiles. If follower counts have no relation to your objectives, then they could just skew your perceptions or analysis. Let's explore a few of the most common social media marketing metrics that matter.

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Reach - Page views and impressions. Who was exposed to your content and marketing activities?

Engagement levels - Ratios like the number of people talking about you divided by the number of likes.

Influence - Who took an action because of your content? Metrics could include amount of shares, subscribers or number of social interactions.

Virality – Amount of people who create stories from your posts.

Repeat engagement - Number of multiple actions from a single follower.

Unique relationships - Number of different people you're connected to and have spoken with.

Reporting is an area which is usually under practiced and under valued. Creating reports can be made easy by using tools and software outlined in previous chapters. The reason why people generally fall short with reporting is because they don't understand the true value of what reports offer.

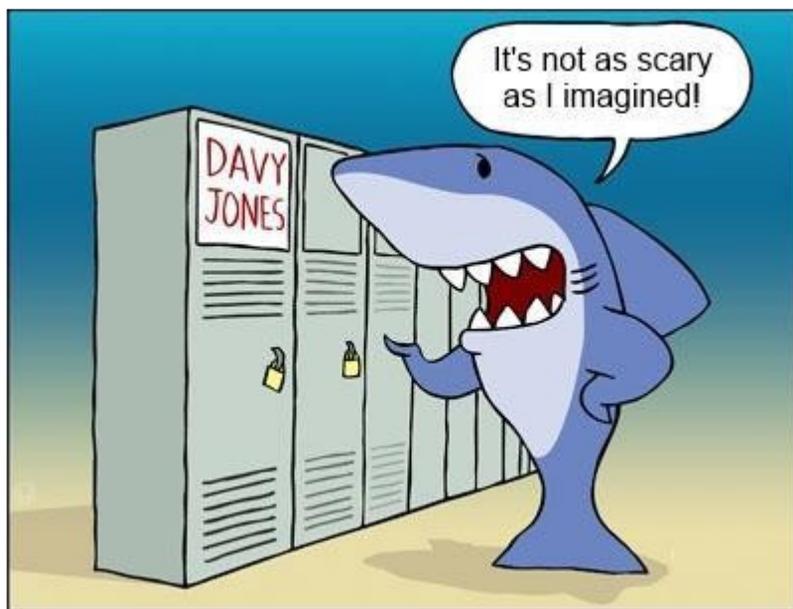
In a nutshell, reports bring together everything that went right and wrong, highlighting areas that can be improved. Visual aids often make it easier to spot trends or gaps. How this wouldn't provide value is beyond me...

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CHAPTER 10:

Summary



Although there is a lot to tackle in order to successfully execute social media campaigns, it isn't as scary as you think. Split the tasks into manageable chunks, such as the chapters in this book. Everything will become a lot clearer

and easier if you do. Begin by doing some solid research. Then sit down and flesh out the planning stages. Set your aims and objectives and formulate robust strategies to follow.

Your social profiles will be the main point of contact with your audiences. Optimise each channel for objective conversion, while retaining your brand vision and core competencies.

When you're all set, it's ready to deliver! The tools and software you identified in your research will assist you in executing and managing your ongoing campaigns. Always remember to periodically measure, report and refine everything that consumes investment or energy.

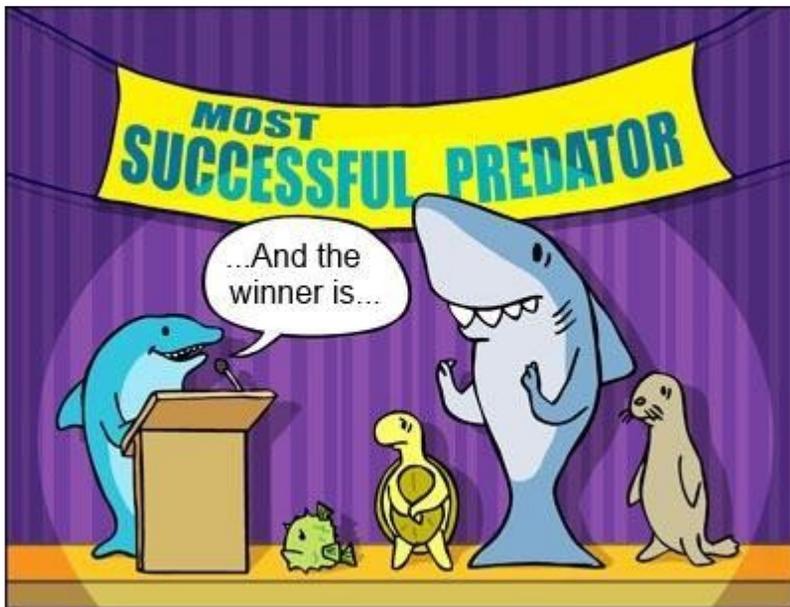
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CHAPTER 11:

Conclusion

With any marketing discipline comes both theory and practice. Learning best practices and proven approaches can put you on the right path. But implementing the concepts and ideas is down to you...



With the right attitude, motivation and persistence, anyone can be successful in social media marketing. And with great success comes great responsibility. Remember that.

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I look forward to connecting on social media and sharing ideas. Maybe we will even sit down for a drink some time and you can tell me all about your social media wins!



I'll leave you with one of my favourite quotes:

"Give them quality. That's the best kind of advertising in the world." - Milton Hershey (circa 1900)

See you on the other side!

With thanks to...

// Phil Watson at www.shaaark.com

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