

A SOCIAL WORLD

Charlotte Quartly, Digital Strategy Coordinator @VanillaIP says the digital age is here and it's vital that all business in today's world have a digital strategy in place. Quartly suggests that to embrace the latest digital trends and technologies it's important to understand why digital needs to be a vibrant part of your future business plan.

Digital marketing is a way of promoting your brand or products using digital technologies. Over the last 10 years digital has grown enabling every business to target a range of audiences using a variety of different digital platforms. If you are new to this whole idea of digital marketing then social is a great place to start. The big change with digital media is that everything is measurable. At a simple level we can see open and click rates, but this can also extend to the companies that visit our site. Using cookies taken to their fullest extent we can track a complete journey for a specific individual across all our digital platforms.

Why Social Media?

Most companies dabble in social media, but for social media to work for your business you need to be active. When you think of the word social what springs to mind? Connecting, Sharing, Updating, Networking? It's all of these and more. Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Facebook are just a few of the social channels that will increase your brands online exposure, allowing you to showcase products and services to an audience that you may never have been able to reach using traditional marketing methods. Social media has wide coverage and it has the capability to influence people and convince them that certain products and services are worth buying, making it a very powerful tool. Remember the more active you are on social networking sites, the more searchable you become which is key in today's digital world because we all know that no one ever looks on page 2 of Google! Stop and think what are the desired outcomes from my social platforms and devise a strategy to support that. Saying 'Because we think we should' or 'because everyone else is' is not a valid reason to engage on social media. The target does not have to be grand, it could simply be to keep the website dynamic [assuming you embed your feed on your website], to allow customers to contact you or just a

branding exercise.

One contemporary trend is that email marketing is almost dead from overuse. Social fills that vacuum.

Determine your social goal

Before you dive into every social platform and try to measure every single tweet, post, conversation you send about your company, you first need to think about what your social goals are. What are you trying to accomplish or gain through these social channels? And which channels are most relevant to those goals?

Social platforms can serve a variation of purposes, from spreading news and information, to answering customer questions and communicating with a specific audience. It is very important to not just use social channels to promote your products, people will soon stop reading your posts or following you if they feel like they cannot engage with what you are saying. The best way to keep people engaged on your channels as well as promoting products is to comment about different things in the industry, post articles, start conversations with people and also comment on other brands posts.

Measuring your social activity

There is not much point spending time on your social activity if you are not going to measure your success. To measure your social success there are many tools that are freely available to you on the internet such as google analytics, tweet deck, Hootsuite, Buffer, Klout and LinkedIn analytics. Measuring success of tweets, posts, videos etc. will help your business understand what part of your digital strategy is working and what needs to be changed. Analytics from

your social activity is detailed and often available to you immediately. The two main types of measurements that are made are;

1. Ongoing Analytics
2. Campaign-Focused Metrics

Ongoing analytics are very important in terms of making sure your brand is active in the social space. The Social Media Management System Hootsuite provides users with a dashboard to monitor and track their social platforms. Hootsuite supports Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, Foursquare, Myspace and WordPress.

Campaign-focused metrics help you to understand if a recent campaign has been successful or if changes need to be made for future campaigns. Tools such as Google Analytics and WOW Reverse IP lookup will give you a clear indication if people have clicked through to your website from the campaign as well as the name of the company and what pages they visited.

Conclusion

So if you are yet to launch yourself into the digital age, then start with Social. All social platforms are very intuitive and easy to work your way around. All activity is easily tracked helping you to implement changes to improve your digital marketing and it's a great place to start engaging with an audience you may never have thought you could reach. #success.

