



Social Media in Business

How to Harness and Use its Powers to Benefit Your Brand

In this White Paper, you'll learn how Social Media is revolutionizing the way we do business every day and why it is important to get in now, or be left in the cold.

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What is Social Media?

The dawn of a new era has begun. Traditional media methods - magazine articles, press releases, trade shows, etc. - are no longer the only meaningful tools in a marketer's tool box. Social Media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube and LinkedIn, to name a few, are on the rise and becoming powerful tools to help drive customer loyalty, improve feedback and innovations, cement brand image and propel companies expertise in their field.

So what is Social Media? The Interactive Advertising Bureau (IAB) defines it as a way to "speak to a new way of understanding how individual users are interacting with branded content via online publishers, social networks, blogs, and applications."¹ In essence, social media is the new medium to cut out the middle man and interact directly with your target market.

The IAB breaks social media down into three categories:

- Social Media Sites (Twitter, Facebook, etc)
- Blogs
- Widgets & Social Media Applications

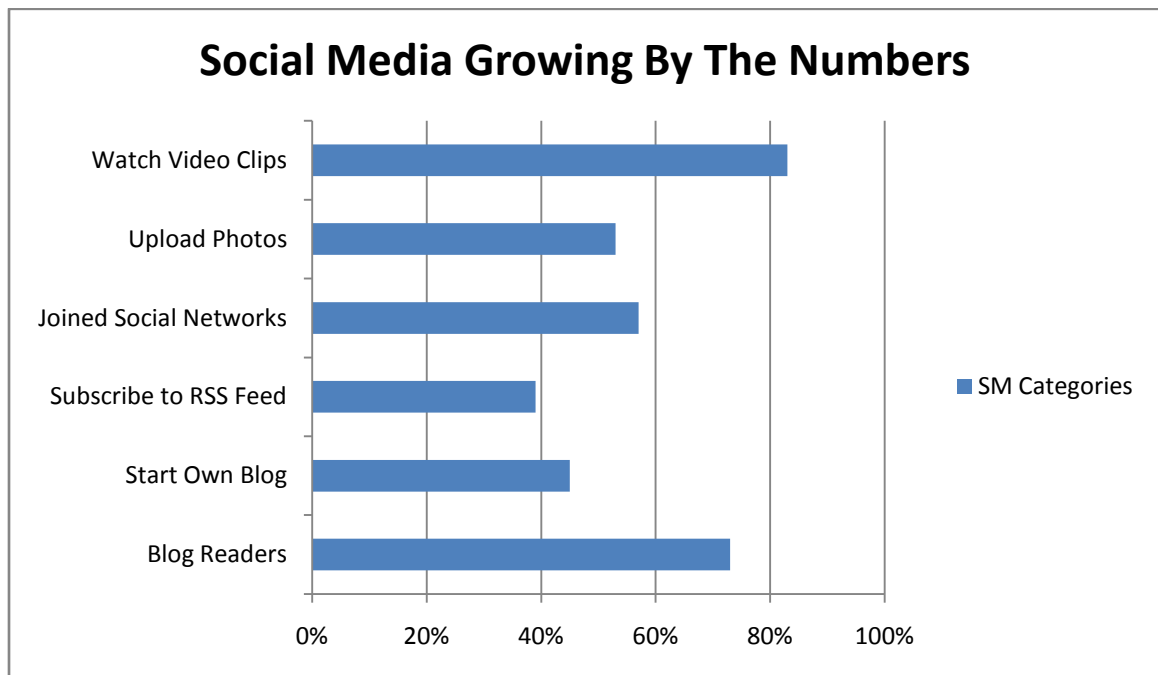
In this White Paper, you'll learn how Social Media is revolutionizing the way we do business every day and why it is important to get in now, or be left in the cold.

¹ Source: Interactive Advertising Bureau, Social Media Ad Metrics Definitions Report 2009, <http://www.iab.net/socialmetrics>

How Can Social Media Help Your Business

In a recent paper released by the IAB, entitled the *Social Marketing Playbook*, "the social media audience in the US totals 122 million, or 64% of the total Internet audience, according to the research firm comScore, Inc., and social network usage globally exceeds Web-based email usage." This is a huge group that cannot be ignored.

Social Media is everywhere you turn. No longer for your kids in college, Facebook provides Pages for businesses to connect with their end users. Twitter helps to promote connections and short bursts of ideas. Deals are now being closed over LinkedIn. Social Media is now the fastest growing category on the web²:



With facts like that, you can't afford to be invisible. Social Media can help businesses stay relevant and become involved with their end user base. With the middle man gone, honest feedback can be given directly from customer to company and vice versa in near real time. Social Media can help a business increase their visibility on the internet, and by increasing your visibility, you are increasing your opportunities to stand out from the crowd and establish yourself as a Subject Matter Expert³.

The important thing to remember with Social Media is that you are engaging with your customer base directly and they will know if you are trying to sell to them. Consumers are savvy now and avoid direct pitches, so don't make them on your Social Media platforms. Be authentic. Be transparent. Offer advice, tips, tricks, insider information and occasionally offer some sort of promotion only available to followers

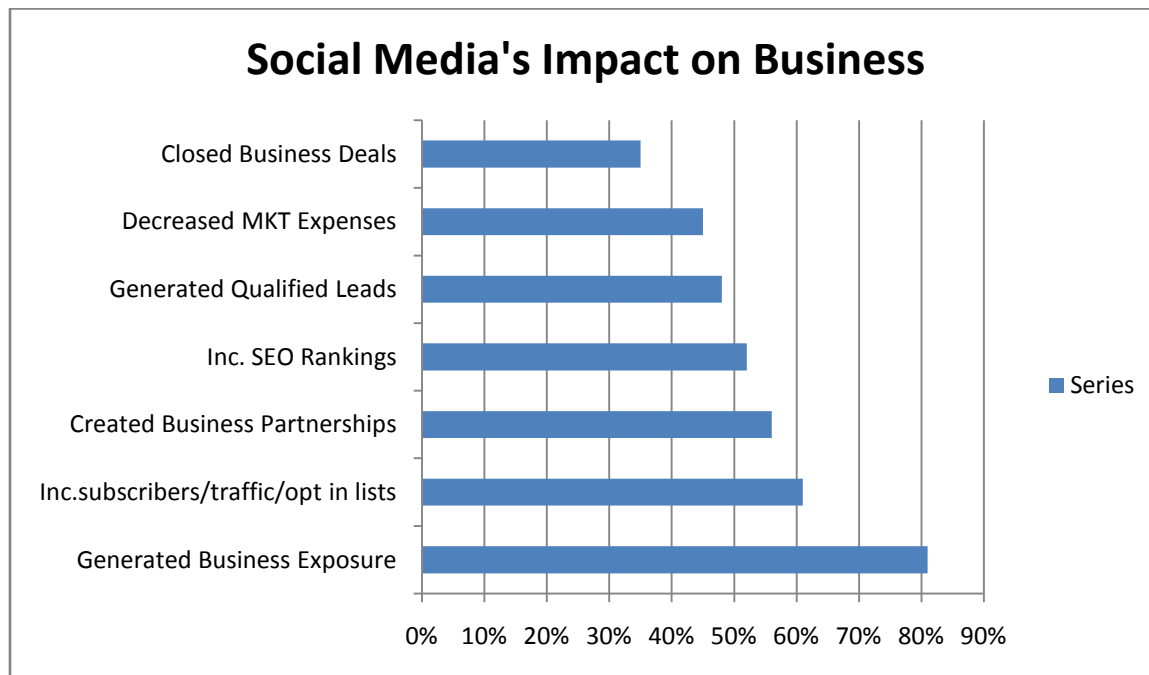
² Source: Universal McCann's Comparative Study on Social Media Trends, April 2008, 17,2000 respondents in 29 countries using internet at least every other day

³ A Subject Matter Expert can be defined as a person who exhibits the highest level of expertise in one particular area.

of that platform. In order to become a Subject Matter Expert, you must add value to the conversation, not just be another person adding to the noise.

Social Media platforms are where you, as the business, develop relationships and generate leads and interest for your business. Think of it as a 24/7 cocktail party. You are reaching out to find who your target market is directly, to engage them in conversation and drive them to your website where they will enter your pipeline.

Not convinced yet? Take a look at these statistics regarding Social Media and how it has helped other businesses⁴:



Whether you like to admit it or not, Social Media is here to stay and it will influence the way you market your business and brand its identity for years to come. There are many different platforms out there, social network sites, blogs, video sharing sites, photo sharing sites, sites to manage all your other sites, and so forth. It can seem a little daunting and overwhelming to the new comer in the Social Media realm. If you don't have the right Social Media plan laid out for execution, it may crash before it ever takes flight. That's why you need the right team behind you.

⁴ Source: Stetzner, Michael, Social Media Market Industry Report 2009; MarketTools

The Laura Burgess Solution

The world of Social Media can be overwhelming for those who are not well versed in all that Social Media has to offer. Perhaps you lack the time to fully create a plan, or you lack the experience to do so. Sitting this one out because of those reasons is not the answer. That's where Laura Burgess Marketing can help. A full service marketing firm, offering services from press events to advertising, Laura Burgess Marketing is also skilled and experienced with Social Media Marketing.

Don't have the time? No experience? Let us help you get your foot in the door of Social Media. An initial meeting will be set up with you where we will discuss the various forms of Social Media and learn more about your business and your goals for this program. After this initial meeting, we will create a plan with a complimentary mix of various Social Media platforms that we think will fit your needs. From there, we can create, manage and monitor your accounts in conjunction with your business goals. Meetings to discuss action plans and results can be set up based on your comfort level. All the success of Social Media without weighing you down with the time and energy to manage them all at a fair, low price. Contact [Laura Burgess Marketing](#) today to find out more.

Stay Tuned

Interested in learning more about each individual Social Media platform? In the coming months Laura Burgess Marketing will be releasing more White Papers outlining such popular platforms as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook, to name a few.

About Laura Burgess Marketing:

Laura Burgess Marketing provides public relations and marketing communications to companies within the law enforcement, tactical, military, shooting sports, home building, boating and fishing markets.

www.lauraburgess.com.

