

**The
internet
is YOU !**

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"SOCIAL COMPUTING IS NOT A FAD NOR IS IT SOMETHING THAT WILL PASS YOU OR YOUR COMPANY BY. GRADUALLY, SOCIAL COMPUTING WILL IMPACT ALMOST EVERY ROLE, AT EVERY KIND OF COMPANY, IN ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD".

-

Anonymous

"IT IS DIFFICULT, INDEED DANGEROUS, TO UNDERESTIMATE THE HUGE CHANGES THIS REVOLUTION WILL BRING OR THE POWER OF DEVELOPING TECHNOLOGIES TO BUILD AND DESTROY COUNTRIES."

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RUPERT MURDOCH

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Preface

Thank you for downloading this ebook from ayruz.

We came across the idea of writing this ebook during one of those countless consultancy sessions with our clients. Social Media as a marketing medium is at its infancy and most businesses are interested in how it works for their niche area.

This is a short, sweet and to the point ebook which is intended to get you acquainted with the world of Social Media in general and its marketing in specifics. We have also added a glossary of common terms used so that you can know what those jargons mean.

The world of Social Media is ever changing and we are always at the tip of the wave. So expect updates to the eBook. Check www.ayruz.com/ebook for the latest edition.

Introduction on Social Media

Before the advent of internet, we users and information consumers hardly had any say in the media. The regular print, the television or the radio only allowed you and me to view, read or listen to them. With the concept of the user generated content and media, we are the news breakers. It has literally changed the way people respond to products and services.

User now has an active platform where he can respond along with many likeminded people positively or negatively to create an impact on the product or service on a large scale. This power of the people has been possible by "socialising" on the internet. Internet has many social hotspots where people gather virtually to discuss, speak their mind and researching their next shopping list among many things.

Social Media Trends

The most important thing about social media is that it encourages everyone in the crowd to participate. Everyone is an audience and anyone among the audience can generate a media, upon which others can comment. Conversation among the crowd is possible and is largely encouraged. Peer to peer conversation is one of the dominant factors of social media which has changed the dynamics of present day media.

Social Media is an open platform where anyone can access the content and respond to it in any way they feel. They can mail the content to others among the crowd, respond to it then and there, vote and comment. Communities within the crowd allow effective peer to peer communication on a common topic of interest.

One important thing about Social Media Audience is that they have a short attention span. They look only for specific information and are not interested in going for a lengthy reading session unless they are specifically looking for something.

Social Media Numbers

More than 110 million blogs are being tracked by Technorati, a specialist blog search engine, up from 63 million at the beginning of the year 2009.

Social Media recently overtook porn as the #1 activity online.

An estimated 100 million videos a day are being watched on the popular video sharing website, YouTube alone.

Facebook has 123 million users across the globe. If it was a country, it would be the 4th largest country in the world after China, India and United States.

Social Media Components

It is important that you recognize what these components are so that you can better visualize how these can work for your business. Social Media being an ever-changing platform, changes are rife.

Social Networks

These are online platforms which allow users to build their profile pages and connect with their friends. The most popular social networking sites currently are Facebook and Orkut in India.

Some of the social networks are specifically targeted towards a niche audience like travellers, professionals, students or gamers.

Blogs

Blogs are perhaps the most popular form of Social Media. They are online journals with new content added frequently and are usually based on a topic of expertise the author of the blog is familiar with.

Wiki

The most popularly known wiki is Wikipedia which used the power of the crowd to create a virtual encyclopaedia. It is currently regarded as being more accurate than a Britannica Encyclopaedia.

Wikis are collaborative websites which allow for easy creation and editing by the users of this site. It helps users collectively create resources for the benefit of the community.

Podcast

Podcasts are a series digital media files usually audio or video which is distributed by web syndication or video stores like Apple AppStore.

Forums

Forums are perhaps the oldest form of Social Media. They can be considered as a social network which gives importance to discussions on a particular topic. They have become more powerful with the advent of Social Media.

Content Communities

Communities are built around specific themes or types of content such as photos, videos or bookmarked links.

Micro blogging

Most people will recognize Twitter as a site which facilitates quick and short updates but are very alien to the term of "Micro Blogging". These updates are distributed online with web syndication and mobile networks.

Traditional Media vs. Social Media

Internet as a medium for news is getting traction with the advent of the power of the crowd sourced content and the fact that anyone can be a news breaker. With more and more people spending time online, especially youngsters, it is safe to assume that traditional media channels like the print, the television and radio are feeling the threat of either getting online or losing out on viewers/subscribers.



Characteristics of Social Media

Most of the online social media share one or more of the following characteristics

Participation

Social media is a platform which cannot exist without the participation of the community. It encourages contributions from the community. Here the distinction between the news maker and the news consumer is blurred.

Openness

Social Media is an open community making it easy to access and share content. It allows people to participate by the means of comments, tags, ratings or shares. Barriers such as password protected content are frowned upon.

Conversation

Perhaps the most important characteristic making it different from traditional media, it helps audience and brands to converse two-way on the platform.

Community

A social network such as Facebook maybe catering to a wide range of audience, but what really makes these networks is the sub-groups that share common interest such as photography, political issues or a TV show.

Connectedness

Social media is no longer confined to the walls of the computer alone. It has spread to users' cell phones, email, text messages and online syndication. Users thrive on such ability to be connected.

What Social Media means for your business

Social Media if you have not already noticed is the new way of engaging and interacting with your customers, partners and even your own employees.

Social media is no rocket science. It is a shift from the formal press releases to informal real time updates and blog posts.

“It can be best thought about as just about being about human beings and relationships.”

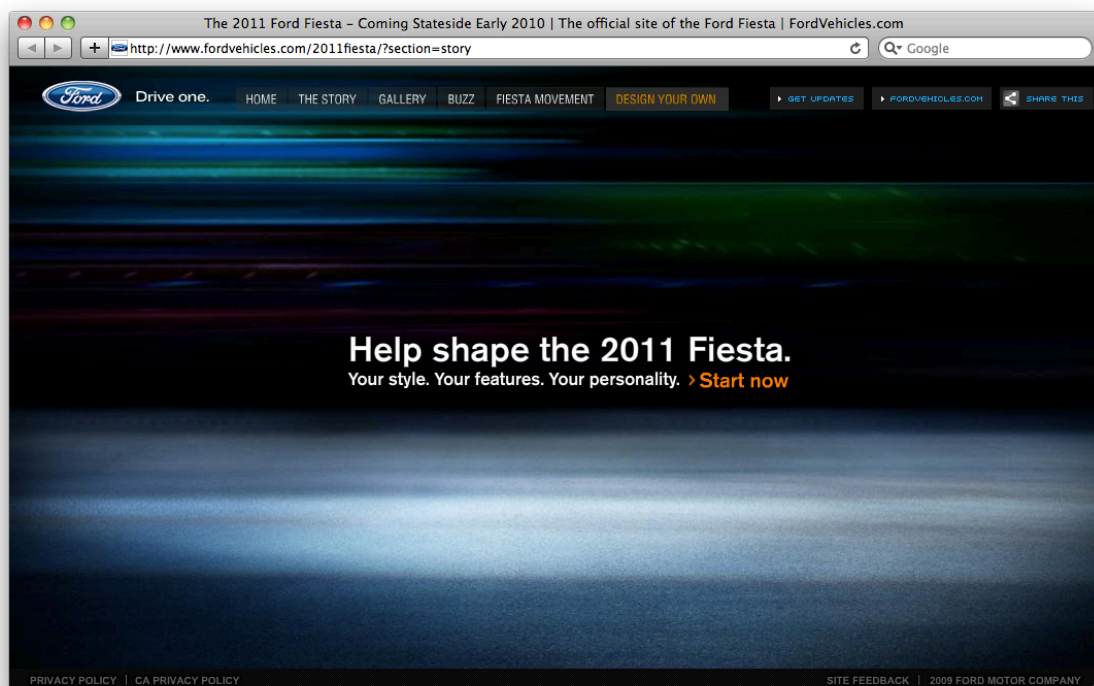
Today the majority of social media activities like awareness, brand engagement and lead generation are driven by marketing. At ayruz, we are very confident that we are only scratching the surface of what is called Social Media today. It is a young and evolving medium which has truly made the “Global Village”.

What happens in Vegas stays in **Vegas**

Digg
Twitter
YouTube
Facebook
Google
Flickr

Some of the other popular usages of Social Media for business include

- Customer Support
- Employee Interaction, knowledge management and more
- Engaging internal and external communities for ideation



Why use Social Media for your Business



Social Media is growing by leaps and bounds every year and almost every survey conducted on the age group of 18-24 say that they spend more time online than on any other medium like the television or the radio. Do you see the possibilities of selling to this audience when they are out of college and in a job with their spending capacities? If you answered yes, social media is for your business.

How to get started with Social Media

Being very new and a highly dynamic medium, it is very difficult to setup a blueprint for success in social media. At ayruz, our social media blueprint is not based on tools or processes, but it is based on a series of steps we undertake for all our clients.

Ayruz Web holdings - Internet Marketing Services

Plan	Listen	Understand	Engage	Monitor
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Start with a shared understanding on campaign objectives. 2. Identify Measurable entities. 3. Collect tools, analytics services and web services to monitor identified metrics 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setup Keyword Lists to obtain data 2. Use Network analysis to identify segments to target 3. Tag content and identify content clusters 4. Use Human resource to analyze duplication, spam, sentiment and competition. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aggregate obtained data into a report or dashboard. 2. Set benchmarks for metrics 3. Suggest and plan social and viral strategies to implement 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Identify tactics to execute social media baits 2. Identify social networks where these tactics will be best seeded at. 3. Devise social media tools to facilitate measurement 4. Develop and deploy social media tools 5. Build and manage communities around social networks 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Setup a realtime or periodical reviews on campaign status 2. Setup email alerts to manage web properties 3. Suggest course corrections based on analysis of metrics

Social Media Plan, ayruz 2009

Social Media Do-it-Yourself (DIY)

But if you plan to do-it-yourself, the following steps will most probably guide in the right direction. This is a very broad concept level implementation of social media for your company and does not discuss the tools and resources for the same. If you are looking for the ways to implement these, you might want to check out our blog at www.ayruz.com/blog/

Stuff you will need:

1. People
2. Strategy
3. Measurement
4. Promotion

People

Social Media is an aptitude, an inherent ability of all us to connect with other fellow beings. It requires passion, engagement and the right people to start off with.

Hire a person who gets Social Media. Or tell your employees that their homework for the next week is to learn everything they can about social media.

Strategy

Social media revolves around communities. It is in our strategy to listen to communities and our target audience on what they are talking about you. It is possible that the talking is already going on about your service and product somewhere on the internet. Find out the places where your target audience hang out. Are they working professionals, students or homemaking wives?

Some of the basic pointers for a good social media strategy, if you ask me are:

- Be personal
- Multi-Channel Exposure
- Sociable approach to audience
- Immersive Content

Measurement

One of the most important parts of any online campaign is measurement. Why? Because we can! Internet is perhaps the first marketing medium which can actually tell you the numbers and other vital information for your campaign.



Social Media is ambiguous. It is up to you to decide what your end goals of your social media strategy are. Once that is clarified, it is easy to track conversions to that goal.



Newspaper Ad,

How many people bought your product after seeing this ad?

Some of the things you can measure in your social media campaign are:

- Click-Through Rates (CTR) – Number of clicks your website gets from a advertisement online.
- Brand Buzz – Measure the number of times your brand is mentioned in popular online channels.
- Traffic – Where are the visitors to your site coming from?
- Lead Generation – How many have contacted you for more information about your product?
- Impressions – How many views did your online ad get last week?
- Statistics – Where are the people coming from? Who are the most engaging audience? How do you compare to your previous weeks numbers?

The number of things you can track about social media is nerve-racking, so it is best to **focus on milestones which give you business results.**

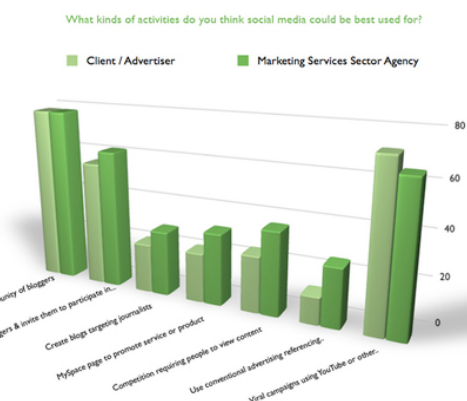
Integrate your marketing efforts as much as you can because together, they work best. It is also important that once you start off with your online marketing campaign on social media, that you be active and participate in the discussions of the crowd.

Social media should be a long term medium and the more time and effort you invest in, the better will be the output. It is important that you go with the crowd, not sell blatantly, listen well and react sensibly.

Statistics & numbers

Some of the probable business results:

- Marketing – Leads, engagement, conversions
- Communication and PR – Influence, brand awareness
- Customer Support – Time for resolution, issues resolved – cost benefits.
- Human Resources – productivity, retention and training advantages.



Promotion

If you already have an offline marketing process established, then it is best to integrate the both together. Cross promote your online initiative and offline marketing by putting up your online profiles in a print ad or put up your television ads on YouTube.

About ayruz

We are a digital marketing agency which provides services and products that help business get online and use internet as a marketing medium. We blend in the best online marketing services like Search Marketing, Social Media Optimization, user experience and web application development.

Our clients come from across the globe and include super brands like Kerala Tourism. Headquartered in Cochin, the company has 2 offices in Kerala and is aggressively expanding to UK and Australia.

Find out more about ayruz at www.ayruz.com or contact us at +91 484 4020463 or mail@ayruz.com

About the author

Anand is Chief Operating Officer and founder of ayruz web holdings.

He heads the operations and daily activities at ayruz and has developed processes and frameworks of our clients' online marketing strategy. He is a blogger at heart, a search engine optimization specialist by interest and a self proclaimed Wordpress expert.

Before ayruz, he was a freelance internet marketer and full time blogger. He blogs at www.theanand.com/blog and on our official blog at www.ayruz.com/blog/