



Why you can't ignore Social Media in Business

- practical tips and case studies



Victoria Tomlinson



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Northern Lights PR

The Coach House
4 Rutland Road
Harrogate
HG1 2PY
T 01423 562400

 [Northern Lights Blog](#)

 [Northern Lights Linked In](#)

 [Northern Lights Twitter](#)



Victoria Tomlinson
chief executive
Northern Lights PR

Foreword

In early 2008, one of our business partners stated very firmly that 'the future is all about Web 2.0 and Twitter'.

At the time we were pretty sceptical. Particularly about Twitter. Why would anyone be interested in reading what others are doing all day long?

But when you run a business, you have to be open-minded. You cannot dismiss anything.

So we purposely set about to research, train ourselves and explore the possibilities of this new world. The trouble was, the books were written by people steeped in – and excited by – the technology. We paid people to come in and train our team. They were OK, but couldn't anticipate the questions we needed to be answered and didn't know how to ask.

And even when we found examples that made business sense – they were invariably for consumer markets. Where was the evidence and the step-by-step guide for those operating in business-to-business (B2B) markets?

Over the last three years we have come to see the possibilities for our clients. We have started blogging and tweeting, continued researching and learning and are starting to see successes. But we still haven't found any handbook on the 'how to' of all this for business people.

So this book is written for others who, like us, want to know how social media is relevant in the B2B market and how to go about it.

We have in mind our clients and business contacts – senior people who are clearly focused on delivering profit, rather than interested in new gimmicks that are just a distraction.

The key point to make – which we hope will come through the whole of this book – is that there is nothing clever about social media. It is just 'another route to market'. It's not something to do on a whim, it must tie in with your business plan and be focused on achieving key business goals – just as with any other area of marketing and PR.

We can't pretend to be 'experts' in this market – as you learn one thing, technology and markets have already moved on. However, this book shares openly and honestly our learning – what has worked and what hasn't – and tells you where we are still looking for answers or results.

The thing that we all want to know is: what are the business benefits, how can we measure them and let's see the case studies. Despite searching far and wide, we can't find any cracking stories of how business has increased 50% because they started using social media. It is too early and there aren't enough others in the B2B market to engage with yet – but that is changing and very quickly.

What this book does have is evidence of a lot of small successes – and stories of business leaders seeing enough evidence to know that social media is worth pursuing.

This book is a starting point. We'd welcome challenges, case studies and opinions to add to this and will be happy to publish them in later versions or through our own blog.

Throughout the book we try to explain each step of social media, assuming you know little or nothing. However, there is a glossary of terms at the back if we have used a phrase or concept before it's been fully explained!

Index

Page

Chapter One

Who cares about social media – does it matter for your business?	6
Why is social media important?	6
What is social media?	7
Where is the opportunity for a business?	8
Real life social media: Professor Chris Gale – Head of Law School, Bradford University School of Management	10

Chapter Two

The basics explained	12
Blogs	12
Facebook	13
LinkedIn	14
Twitter	15
Foursquare	16
Real life social media: Gina Malatesta, Regional Information Officer for the North of England at Partnerships for Schools (PfS)	17

Chapter Three

Getting started in social media and making an impact	19
Taking your first steps	20
Achieving business goals	20
How could you measure success?	21
Real life social media: Ruth Wilson, Marketing, New Media & Web Manager at The UKRC	22

Chapter Four

Writing a blog	24
The aim of a blog	24
Finding your niche and blog topics	25
Your voice	27
Ready to post?	27
Would you follow your own blog?	27
Real life social media: Victoria Tomlinson, chief executive of Northern Lights PR	28

Chapter Five

LinkedIn – the basics	30
Getting going	30
Create an account	30
How to upload a photo	30
Getting recommendations to complete your profile	31
Building your connections	31
Remember, others are watching you	32
Don't let your sales team use LinkedIn without training	32
Consistency of profiles across the business	33
Who should you accept invitations from?	33
Don't bombard contacts with invitations to events	33
Real life social media: Julian Rawel, Director of executive education, Bradford University School of Management	34

Index

Page

Chapter Six

LinkedIn for new business and recruitment	36
What are groups and which should I join?	37
Use LinkedIn to help research for tenders	37
How can you recruit through LinkedIn?	37
Basic recruitment techniques on LinkedIn	38
- How do you find potential recruits on LinkedIn?	
- What about LinkedIn's own recruitment tool?	
- Can others look at my employees to recruit them?	
Real life social media: Rob Arntsen, managing director, MyKnowledgeMap	40

Chapter Seven

Twitter – to tweet or not	42
Setting up an account	42
How much personal in your tweets?	42
What should you tweet about?	43
Some Twitter basics	44
How to build your followers	45
Managing the ratio of followers to following	48
How often should you tweet?	48
Watch out for what others are tweeting about you!	49
Why do businesses and journalists tweet?	51
Real life social media: Professor Nigel Lockett, Professor of Enterprise, University of Leeds	53

Chapter Eight

Facebook	
Which business people are using Facebook?	55
Why would a business use Facebook?	56
Facebook terms	57
How to set up a personal Facebook profile	57
Setting up a business page on Facebook	58

Chapter Nine

Getting people to respond	
Write on topics that people are searching for	59
Ask for comments	59
Make it easy to comment	60
Use your communities	60
Predict trends	60

Chapter Ten

The social media world	
The tone and courtesies in social media	61
Gaming the numbers	62
Real life social media: Richard Bailey, public relations educator, university lecturer, blogger and corporate PR trainer	63

Index

Page

Chapter Eleven

Social media – internal communications and policies; crisis communications	66
Internal communications	66
Crisis communications	66
Real life social media: Martin Wright, Group HR manager, The Arena Group	69

Chapter Twelve

Creating a social media strategy and evaluating success	71
What are your business goals, who are you targeting?	71
How will you measure success?	71
Which social media is best for you?	71
What is your social media brand going to look like?	72
How are you going to get people to respond?	72
Who is responsible for your social media presence?	72
Have you got the resources to keep going?	72
What criteria will you measure success by?	72
Set up evaluation criteria	72
Case study: Working with Eureka! The National Children's Museum	73
Real life social media: Sarah Quinn, head of marketing, The P&A Group of Companies Ltd, Sheffield	76

GLOSSARY OF TERMS	78
-------------------	----

FURTHER READING	80
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APPENDIX 1: ARENA GROUP'S INTERNET, EMAIL AND COMMUNICATIONS POLICY	81
--	----

APPENDIX 2: THE P&A GROUP OF COMPANIES LTD INTERNET USAGE POLICY	88
---	----

APPENDIX 3: EUREKA! – LIST OF PEOPLE TO FOLLOW ON TWITTER	93
--	----

About the authors	94
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Who cares about social media – does it matter for your business?

If you are wondering why on earth your business would ever use social media, you need to cast your mind back to when websites first appeared.

Do you remember dial-up internet connections and those first slow, clumsy websites? Most of us thought 'why would my business ever want this?'

How quickly that changed. And how quickly a business looked old-fashioned without one - and was missing lucrative opportunities.

Social media for the business to business market is at a similar early stage of its development.

This book will help you understand what is happening with your customers and your competitors – and where the opportunities are for your business.

And, just like websites, we firmly predict that in five years you will wonder how you could have questioned the relevance of social media for your organisation.

Having said all that, social media is just another way of communicating with your audiences. It is not something to be done in isolation or played with – it needs to be another part of how you achieve your business goals, part of your marketing and communications plans.

Why is social media important?

In a snapshot, this is where social media can take your business. It can

- Bring your business to life, make it constantly current and topical
- Give you credibility through third party endorsement – other people talking about and rating you, which is so much more powerful than you talking about yourself
- Provide rich, current content that Google loves. This puts you high up on Google search rankings (and should be part of a search engine optimisation strategy). It gives a breadth of content when people search on Google for you. It will not just promote *your* website but much more importantly, you will appear on *other* websites, giving you more credibility
- Give your business a personality
- Portray your expertise in a useful and relevant way to your customers and clients
- Help you find and build relationships with new people who it would take you years to meet or be introduced to
- And yes, it could lead to new business – but probably not for some time and not necessarily in an immediate, direct way

Social media is about giving your business visibility on the internet. About forming new relationships and strengthening existing ones.

For many, its biggest selling point is to get you higher on Google when people search for words and phrases relevant to your business.

It is not quick or cheap. The longer it is done – over years – the more successful it will be. Much of it is about building relationships. Genuine relationships take time.

What is social media?

If you have dismissed social media, the chances are that your knowledge of it has come through seeing teenagers on Facebook, celebrities on Twitter and blogs that verge on vanity publishing.

Forget all that. They are part of the picture, but not the part that will make a difference to your business.

Social media is used to describe online conversations between people, which became possible with what is known as 'Web 2.0' (spoken as two point oh) – an internet-based technology that allows anyone to post comments, sounds, pictures and video clips on websites, to be seen and shared by all.

Social media is immediate and of the moment. Within the space of a minute it is possible for

- A blog to go live on a website
- A customer or follower to read it and post a comment with their own view on the subject
- At the same time, another person read and tweet about it
- Three or more followers of the tweet then re-tweet and send it out to their followers and so on. The only limitations are the size of a network of followers and how interesting they find the tweet

Where is the opportunity for a business?

If you meet someone at a business networking event and think they could be useful to your business, what do you do next?

Most people go onto the internet and do a Google search to check them out.

To get our heads around this, let's imagine you meet a lawyer who specialises in European property law. Let's call her Mary. You are in the middle of a complex cross-border property deal in Spain, France and UK. Mary could be really helpful, so you Google her and her firm.

Your Google search throws up the following

- Her firm's website. It's OK but to be honest, a bit corporate, traditional. Lots about 'national reputation', being innovative and 'going the extra mile' for their clients. So nothing to give you a real feel for what they do
- Legal 500, a recognised industry 'bible', has an entry with quotes from their clients. Mary, our lawyer, is clearly well rated
- Her LinkedIn profile – you connect to her while searching and see recommendations from very high profile business names. You are impressed
- Then you spot that she writes a blog. Scanning through recent entries, she has written about four specific issues that you have been pondering, particularly on how Spanish law will treat your deal. Mary writes fluently and explains the technical details better than anyone you have come across. You email a colleague with a link to her blog and a note to 'take a look at this'
- At the bottom of her blogs are comments from the world at large. One blog in particular has generated considerable debate. Mary had posed a question at the end of her blog – she thought the Spanish tax system would look at a property deal in one way, but asked if anyone had recent direct experience to confirm this? Lots of people had and it was not at all consistent. Two property developers, a Spanish tax lawyer, a real estate agent and an accountant shared their experiences. It made interesting reading. And Mary had come back into the debate and probed a bit more on one particular point and clarified another with her own experience
- Clearly this last blog and the comments had been spotted by the FT, because Mary and one of the property developers were quoted in a recent article on the topic – again this is showing up on your Google search
- You also see her Twitter account on your Google search. You see she has tweeted about some useful snippets that you will read later – a couple of links to interesting articles you haven't seen, some research and also 'conversations' with journalists covering European property law
- And finally, through Google you see that Mary also cropped up as a guest blogger on a respected property blog in Spain and on a major French accountancy firm's blog

What's your impression?

Mary's firm's website tells you little. They seem solid, a lot of partners, reasonable breadth and depth of expertise.

But Mary's blog brings her experience to life. She is very current, she doesn't assume she knows all the answers and it feels like she is really passionate about getting the best for her clients. Above all, she seems to be forming connections with all sorts of people in France and Spain who could be useful. You would like to tap into some of these. She is someone you want to do business with.

Which bits of this story are about 'social media'? These are the key elements

- Mary's blog on property law issues, which is presented as regular comment on her firm's website – many would not realise this is a 'blog' but see it as useful web content
- Comments on Mary's blog – they are from a mix of people who Mary knew already and asked for their views (a nice way to stay in touch with contacts and make them feel good) and new people who found Mary on the internet and wanted to share their views. Could be good for business long term
- Twitter – Mary has posted comments on Twitter (known as tweets) asking for views and also snippets of useful information such as research, interesting articles
- LinkedIn – useful way to stay in touch with Mary. Her profile tells you more about her than you might learn in years as her client – and some impressive names have endorsed her work. She is also widely connected in the industry and you would like to know a lot of her contacts
- 'Conversations' with journalists through Twitter – increasingly journalists go to quality bloggers for comments and views and do their research through Twitter.

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from ... Professor Chris Gale – Head of Law School,
Bradford University School of Management



What did you think about social media initially?

When you look at how I initially viewed social media, you have to put it into a wider context of what has happened online generally.

When I first heard about the internet, I saw it as a wonderful resource. I loved the anonymity of it, the fact that you could use it in your own time and convenience and saw it as a great way to evaluate the law.

Next came emails, which seemed a great force of communication – you can reply when you have time and there is none of this awful chasing. You call them, they are out; they call you, you are out.

This was followed by Friends Reunited, which seemed to be the right thing at the right time. People could get in touch, put up just a little information or keep their personal details quite protected.

And then came Facebook – which I watched through the eyes of my children. For the first time I was stumped. For the life of me I couldn't understand why you would put so much current information up for everyone to see when

- You were in daily contact with most of the people anyway
- The rest of the world could see personal information – I thought this was fairly unpleasant

There is no way I would have a Facebook account – and this remains the case today.

So when I heard about blogging and tweeting, I thought 'for goodness sake, why tell the rest of the world what you are doing? Who would be interested – I'm not and I can seek out the opinions myself if I really want to'.

When Northern Lights proposed setting up a blog for Bradford University School of Management and asked me to be one of a team of founder bloggers, I confess I was twitchy. But I could see the point in terms of building my own professional profile and in turn help the School to raise its profile, particularly with young people.

Your first steps in blogging – how did it go?

The first blogs I wrote were tentative. I didn't set up any real structure for when I wrote them, just when it occurred to me. And it was all a bit half-hearted.

Then Northern Lights suggested each of our team of bloggers should deliver one blog a month, and mine was for the 15th of every month. I'm a list person, so I put it on my list of things to do and I've now been delivering this for five months on a regular basis and it is all more disciplined and much better now.

Where is the blog going now?

The blog is now starting to move to a new level. I was invited to an event at Leeds United, where FrontRow Legal were hosting a debate on 'Integrity in sport' with some big names speaking. I thought there was no harm in going and it might make for an interesting blog around sport and the law – which it did.

This has got me exposure in a number of ways: FrontRow Legal asked if they could put this as a guest blog on their website and several senior people in sport have commented on the blog, some of whom I met at the event and we invited comment from.

I don't think I would have gone to the event, if it hadn't have been for the blog – though of course that may sound silly. But in my mind it gave me a reason to go and justification for the time.

What are the benefits of the blog?

In my early career, lecturers would make an impression by writing books. These helped you to become known and rated by students – it gave them a sense that you knew what you were talking about, of belonging with the leaders on that subject and gave you gravitas!

Now I am finding the same thing happening with my blog. Increasingly students are mentioning that they have read a blog and seem really pleased that the head of their law school is commenting on topical issues and out there.

My colleagues at the School have to some extent ribbed me about the blog, but a most interesting experience recently showed just what value we are starting to see from it. I was invited by the Association of Law Teachers to be on the interview panel to help the University of Winchester's law school recruit a part-time chair.

The Head of Law nominated a few possibles for the panel, asked for our CVs and eventually asked me to join them. Weeks later I joined them at the session – and to my surprise, my blog was mentioned. The others on the recruiting panel were a VC and a number of scientists – so I would not have expected them to know me from Adam. Clearly they had not only read my blog but also had a few views and comments to make. It was a strange but very interesting moment.

What do you think of blogging now?

You can probably gather, my views have changed! I went along with social media because I like new initiatives and thought I should try it. But my initial resistance has gone.

It takes time to build a blog and after 18 months I would say we are still only just starting with the possibilities. Perhaps the biggest surprise has been how counter-intuitive it is. You think because you can write and post a blog so quickly, the responses to the blog will build as quickly. But it doesn't work like that.

I'm not sure I can even imagine the potential of this blog at the moment. There is definitely something really important bubbling here and I want to carry on. I am certain more interaction is building and that we will start really engaging with businesses, students and lecturers through it. I have already had interest from three lecturers in their 30s who want to start blogging too – and I see this as the next generation joining us and taking it forward.

Any tips for others?

You have to be spontaneous. At the beginning, I kept waiting for the next big thing to write about. Or thinking I had just missed the perfect topic and it was too late.

Having a routine is essential, so you know you just have to write something for that date.

We are lucky at the School to have the support of Northern Lights. I can write down a stream of thoughts and ideas and they turn it into a blog shape that I couldn't do on my own, add hyperlinks to really interesting sites and other bloggers and add numbered paragraphs. It seems to come out very readable.

I am certainly looking forward to watching how this develops – and there is no doubt, I am now hooked!

ACTION TIPS



If you are new to social media, block out two hours in your diary, turn off email and phones and immerse yourself in how your customers and contacts are using social media

1. Search the internet to find customers, suppliers and competitors who are using social media
2. Read a number of their blogs and blog comments
3. Do a search on LinkedIn for their employees. Analyse the groups they belong to, who they are connected to, what their profiles look like
4. See if anyone has a Twitter account – what do they tweet about, click on some of the replies [just look for an @ sign before a name eg @nlightspr or @welcometraining]
5. Jot down what impressions you are forming of them all and why – what is good and bad
6. Learn from this – copy the good things and improve the poor

Chapter Two

The basics explained



Blogs

A blog – abbreviated from ‘web log’ – can either be part of your website or stand alone, almost like a website on its own.

A good blog should be a natural extension to your business - with a touch more personality and more topical. You may well have read numerous blogs without registering that is what they are.

An individual or a company posts regular articles with views, commentary, information on topics that will be of interest and useful to your target audience. In business, it is generally best to make the blog a part of your main website to help drive traffic to it and increase Google rankings. If this is not possible, for whatever reason, then include your business website URL in the blog as a weblink.

A large number of early bloggers wrote very personally about their lives, some attracting thousands of followers. This has tended to make business people think a blog has to be some kind of personality/celebrity shopwindow, rather than a business tool.

Your blog is what you choose it to be. We set up our own Northern Lights’ blog with a byline of ‘Communications for your business, communities and life’ – because that’s what we do. But we are increasingly thinking this might be too broad a range of topics and maybe we need to make our blog even more niche. Perhaps just focus on ‘social media for businesses’?

Whatever you decide, your blog should support your business and marketing strategies. You need a clear identity and labelling showing what it will be about and why people should follow you. A snappy title and description will help anyone landing on the blog for the first time to be drawn in, so they want to read it and follow you.

The key ingredients of a good blog are

- Clarity
- Quality and useful information
- Passion and integrity
- Personality
- Relevant content and key words to support search engine optimization
- Controversy, questions and debate – to encourage people to post comments

Each published blog is called a post.

We see blogs as the cornerstone of social media for the business-to-business market. It will almost certainly be the most important part and the heart of what you do.

Later in this book we cover details of how you can choose your blog topics, structure the content, get comments and guest blog.

Facebook

Facebook is a social networking website that people sign up to by opening an account and entering details – name, age and location at the most basic. Further details can be entered – from love status to event invitations and photos – but can be kept private to friends, people who know you.

That is the personal side and the best known aspect of Facebook. However, businesses can set up Pages – like a website page about your business on Facebook. You need to think about how you position your business in a new medium like Facebook – simply taking text and photos from your website will not work. You need to be chattier, more informal and encourage two-way conversations.

Groups are also useful for businesses. A lot of professional bodies now do their main communications through groups on Facebook – such as the Yorkshire committee of the Chartered Institute of Public Relations. They post news, set up discussion groups and put details of events on Facebook, which people can accept or decline. It makes administration very easy.

In December 2010, Facebook became the most used search engine in the world – beating Google. So people of all ages are signing into Facebook and then once in, typing in the names of people, topics, events etc that they want to find out about - using it as a search engine.



The profile of people using Facebook is no longer about teenagers and students. In September 2010, NetNatives gave the following stats

- 26 million people in the UK are Facebook users – roughly a third of the UK population
- 81% of these are over 18
- 50% go back on Facebook every day
- 1 million new UK users join every month
- Half of all Facebook users are 'friends' with a parent



LinkedIn is a social networking site for business people. It costs nothing to open an account.

It is much more than an alternative address book. We've heard a lot of business people say 'I have a vast contact book, more than I can manage. Why would I want more and why do I want to put that online and share it with others?'

The answer lies in two special aspects about LinkedIn that your contact database can never deliver, no matter how good it is.

It's not about the people you know, but about the people they know. And LinkedIn immediately gives you far more information about your contacts than most people could ever collect – where they have worked, what they read at university, who they know and connect with, what they are up to now.

We have heard a lot of stories of business people successfully using LinkedIn to help with tenders, recruitment, winning new business and informal research.

How does this work? Suppose you have 200 contacts on your LinkedIn account and each of these typically has another 200 contacts – you will be tapped into a network of 40,000 people.

Imagine you are invited to tender by a company you know nothing about. You want to get a feel for their culture, what their priorities are, what issues they are facing. You can do an advanced search on LinkedIn (explained later) and see if you know anyone who has worked there. Out of 40,000 people there is a reasonable chance someone may have – you could even discover one of your employees has!

If not, you could send out a message on the LinkedIn 'status update' and ask if anyone knows this company – could they give you background?

You can search on job titles and specialties for recruitment; set up discussion groups to find the latest thinking in particular areas; win new business from LinkedIn. More on all this later.

Twitter

Twitter is another social networking site, called a microblog. You set up a (free) account with a short biography and then post short messages (a maximum of 140 characters) known as tweets from your mobile phone or computer.

The aim is to build up your own 'community' – you follow people you know or would like to know or who have something interesting to say. And you hope these people and others will 'follow' you.

You can 'talk' directly to someone through Twitter by sending a direct message (DM). You can retweet (RT) messages that you think are interesting and will be helpful to your followers. You can reply to tweets – either so just your followers can read them or so that anyone can.

The key issue for anyone starting to tweet is what to tweet about. Each business needs to decide about the style and content but in order for it to work they need a distinctive 'voice'.

A good place to start for topics is to look at what information or activities could be interesting or helpful to customers or journalists looking for expert views. Some examples include

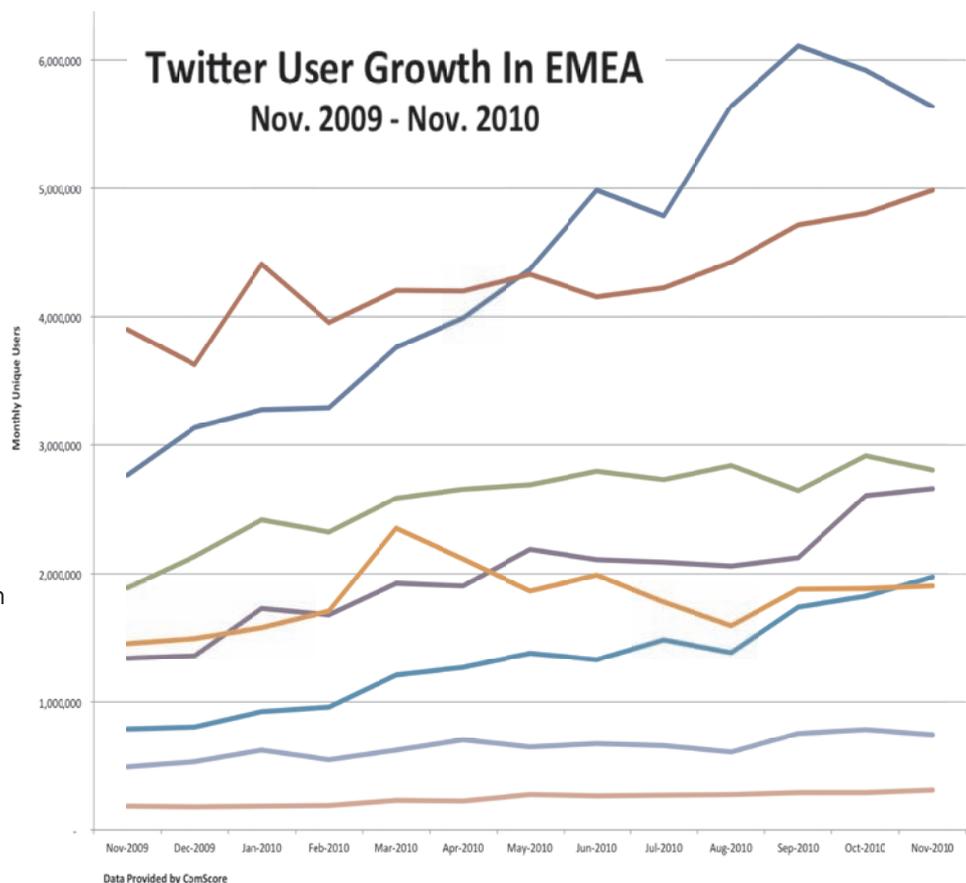
- Industry reports
- Events with interesting speaker comments or announcements
- News that you know ahead of most people (though careful you aren't breaking confidences as you do this)
- Product testing
- Buying trips
- Graduate recruitment
- Trends in your business or market sector



Some businesses use Twitter to send out offers – it's immediate. A hotel with four spare rooms could Twitter at 6am 'Four rooms going for £10 today. Please RT' (RT being re-tweet)

Some people tweet several times a day, others a few times a month. We have followed people who were tweeting every few minutes for long periods of time. This dominated our Twitter page so much that we stopped following them – nothing was that interesting. There are no hard and fast rules about how often to tweet. Tweeting once a week is usually an absolute minimum.

Twitter usage in the UK has grown roughly from 4m to 5m users in the last year. Thanks to ComScore for the data.





Foursquare

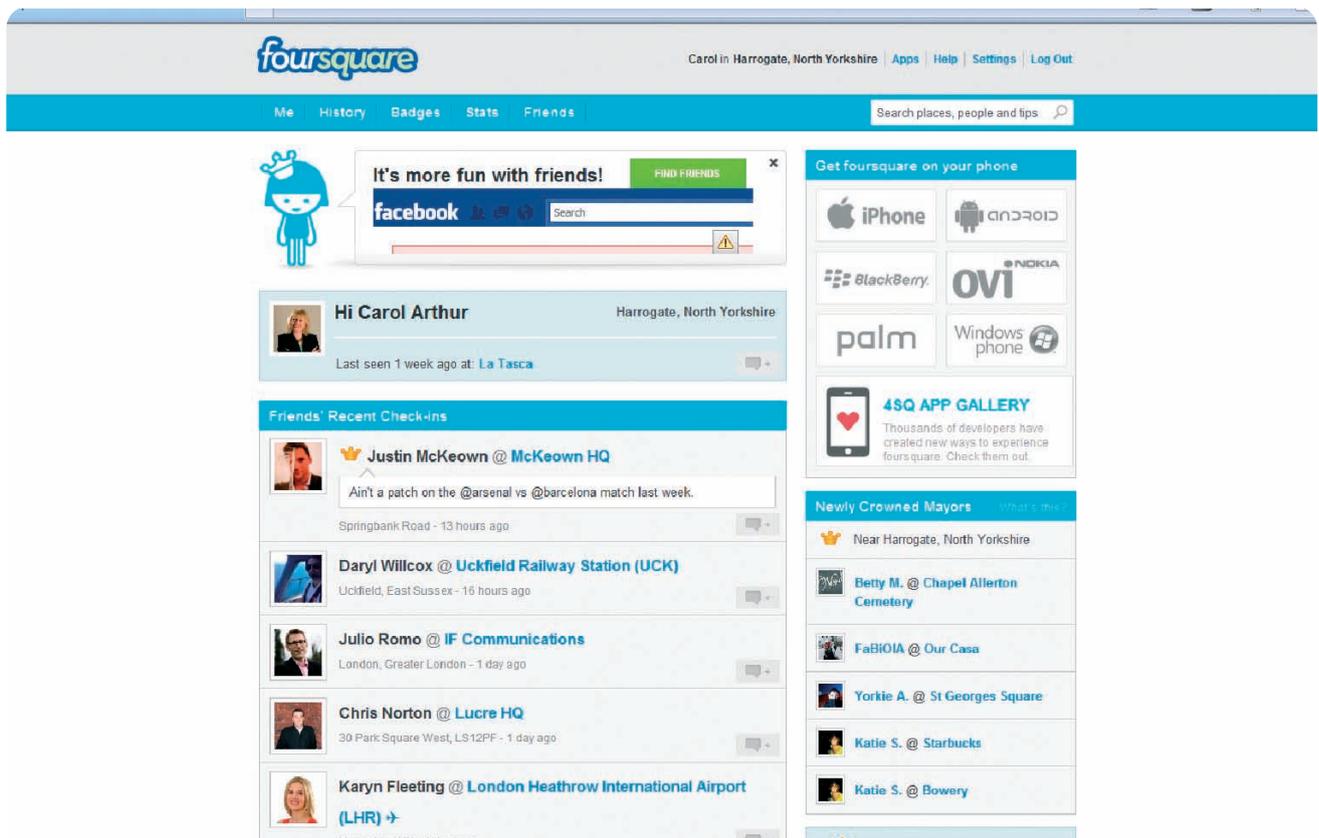
Foursquare is a location-based, social networking site using GPS technology – the same used for satellite navigation.

Users 'check in' to venues in a geographical location and share the fact with their friends. Foursquare rewards users with virtual badges and you can even become the Mayor of a venue, ie the person who has checked in the most to that venue.

Initially when we started using this there was a slight sense of incredulity – as if we had gone back to some Famous Five children's adventure game. Also a concern over security – you are letting the world know where you are, as well as not, such as at home.

However, if you have a business that wants to attract people to your building – shop, restaurant, tourist attraction, business meeting place – it is a great way to reward loyalty and offer incentives and discounts.

It is still early days, but some examples include Debenhams' flagship Oxford Street store which offers free coffee to anyone who 'checks in'. And Welcome to Yorkshire (the tourist body for the region), the first tourism agency in Europe to have its own branded page on Foursquare.



REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from Gina Malatesta, Regional Information Officer for the North of England at Partnerships for Schools (PFS) and volunteer Press Officer at The Transformation Trust



What were your first experiences with social media?

I currently work for Partnerships for Schools and I also volunteer working on communications for an independent children's charity set up by PFS called The Transformation Trust. This funds projects that provide after-school activities for young people across the country.

We held a first birthday event for The Trust at The O2 arena and a PR expert reviewed the campaign in trade magazine PR Week, September 2010. Although he praised the campaign for generating large amounts of traditional coverage across a variety of media on a modest budget; he noted that, whilst social media had been used to provide updates and information on the event, its full potential had not been exploited in terms of creating conversation and buzz about The Trust and using the opportunity to engage with key stakeholders.

I had dabbled with social media at a personal level and in my previous role in consultancy for clients, but only experimentally. We were aware that social media had an important role to play in helping us to engage with the young people that The Trust supports on Facebook and build relationships with our existing and potential stakeholders on Twitter. However, resource was limited because we only have a small number of volunteers who work on comms.

We decided to meet up with the person who had written the review and take some advice on the direction we needed to go in. He advised us on the research and planning we needed to do to use social media platforms effectively to help us meet our objectives.

How do you now use social media in your current role?

We are now putting mechanisms in place to get the resources so we can do a proper audit and research into how The Transformation Trust is using and benefiting from social media – and what more we can do. We have started to use Twitter more effectively to keep up to date and build relationships with Trust-funded projects and other stakeholders, and ensure that we are spreading the word about each other's work.

However, we recognise that we need a strategy in place to start positioning The Trust as a commentator on policy and research to give it credibility and start conversations with current and potential stakeholders. For this, we are putting the resource in place to make sure that we can comprehensively track conversations and comment on topical issues.

How do you keep up to date with the latest developments in social media?

By reading blogs, creating and following relevant lists on Twitter and talking to people. I have also attended workshops at the Media Trust on implementing social media strategies and blogging which I found really useful. Sharing your concerns and experiences with others face-to-face really helps you to learn and build confidence.

What is your advice to others venturing into using social media to achieve their business goals?

Network with people, share experiences and learn from others. Experimenting is useful but it's important not to jump in too soon as it could go nowhere, or worse the wrong direction.

Any organisation that is currently using social media on an ad hoc or experimental basis would benefit from taking a step back and undertaking a full audit of what they are currently doing, why they are doing it, how they can do it more effectively and how they can measure the success of it against their business or organisational goals.

ACTION TIPS



Who are the key journalists in your industry?

1. Do a search for individual journalists and publications who your business knows and works with – trade, local/regional, national, international, broadcast – on Twitter
2. Follow three of their accounts
3. See what interests them – the conversations, what they retweet
4. Who are they following – can you work out why?
5. What requests for information do they put out? Who is responding, what speed?
6. What opportunities are there for your business?

Chapter Three

Getting started in social media and making an impact

This chapter should come at the start of this book, but there is a chicken and egg about social media – you need to understand what it is and how it works before you can get your head around being strategic with it. So we'll begin the process here with the sorts of business goals you can achieve and where you start, then in the last chapter look at how to create a social media strategy.

It is important to understand that social media is not an activity that you choose to take part in or not, at your own choice. It is just another way of communicating. And others may be communicating about your business – with or without you knowing it.

Just as any business will monitor and manage its communications – in and with the media, with customers, shareholders, its local community – so social media needs to become a part of all this.

The trouble with social media is that it is still a very new activity for the business-to-business market. Social media is two-way and about conversations, so you need others to 'play' with. Any business who is into this early may find it a touch lonely on the proactive side (although the market is changing quickly), but there are millions out there tweeting and commenting on blogs - and any one of these could be one of your customers or clients talking about your business at random. You need to be monitoring what people are saying and ensure you have the skills to engage and respond.

It has been interesting to see many of our most traditional clients grasping social media, long before we expected them to. It may be tentative at first but they are starting to understand and use it at different levels. We honestly believe this market is going to take off very rapidly.

Taking your first steps

There are a number of decisions to make before integrating social media into your marketing and communications plans.

One of the most important is to decide what resources you will put into this. You can approach this in a number of ways

- Recruit an expert in social media to join your team – that is a big commitment for a starting point but will ensure you really exploit the opportunities and continue long term. One of the hardest things for a business is finding the relentless time that you need to do social media
- Employ an agency who can work with you, start training you in the skills as your business learns and also gets you up and running while you are learning. This is not particularly a cheap option either and, as with any communications activity, you cannot just delegate the whole thing. You will still have to be involved but it may be a good starting point and will ensure commitment
- Nominate one, two or more people in your business to learn the skills and to set up and run your social media activities. This is what we have done in our business. It is very hard work, still quite expensive (courses, books, bringing people in to train us and the time) and requires enormous discipline to learn about and relate it to your business. And keep going despite all the other priorities in your business. But in our case we feel we now understand what is relevant in social media to our business, we 'own' it within the team (we've all been involved in different aspects) and we have been very disciplined in following this through.

What you should not do is to open a few accounts (Twitter, LinkedIn etc) or set up a blog without any plan for them. The internet is littered with people who have started on one of these, posted a few entries and then abandoned it. It looks amateurish and does no favours to your business. It is a waste of time and energy.

Achieving business goals

Your social media activities need to help you achieve key business goals, just as you expect from your broader PR and communications - it is another part of a communications mix or 'route to market'.

Compare it to direct mail. If you are planning to send out a direct mail to potential customers, you will ensure it fits into your marketing strategy. You will be clear about who you want to target, what they would be interested in, what response you want and how you will measure this.

The same applies to social media. You need a strategy as to what you will blog and tweet about that supports your marketing, what response you want and how you will measure it.

Typical goals for social media campaigns include

- Increasing brand awareness
- Becoming a recognised 'expert' in a market
- Increasing website hits
- Improved Google rankings
- Generating ideas for products and services from customers
- Stronger relationships with customers
- Improving customer service
- Generating new leads

As with any marketing activity, the starting place is your business plan and marketing strategy. Identify your target audiences that use social media and which marketing goals you could support. Set goals and timescales for social media activity, evaluation and tracking methods.

How could you measure success?

Research was carried out with marketing professionals in 2010 to see what benefits they were finding from social media. These could help you to think about what results you might achieve through your social media activities.



Source: Social Media Marketing Industry Report 2010
www.whitepapersource.com/socialmediamarketing/report

In the research covered by the Social Media Marketing Report, the longer the marketing respondents had been doing social media, the more likely they were to say it was helping them to close business.

And a significant number said that their marketing costs dropped when social media marketing was implemented.

ACTION TIPS



Getting social media going in your business

1. What resources are you committing to social media – appointing an internal expert; teaching skills to existing employees; working with a PR and social media agency. Or a mix of these
2. Get an external social media trainer to hold an internal tailored workshop for your managers and marketing and comms teams so that everyone understands the language and concepts
3. At the workshop, agree who needs to look at what areas within the business: internal policies, training, strategy, communications, linking with sales teams
4. Set up a plan with a clear timetable and budget
5. Make sure everyone internally knows your plans and buys into the process
6. Set up monitoring and evaluation systems

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from ... Ruth Wilson, Marketing,
New Media and Web Manager at The UKRC



What were your first experiences with social media?

I was working in the Communications team at the UKRC, an organisation that is building gender equality in science, engineering and technology.

We started experimenting with social media tools and techniques when we realised how beneficial it would be for engaging with our members and stakeholders. Our client groups include computing and IT companies and professionals, and young adults who are growing up with social media, so we needed to demonstrate our awareness of emerging communications channels.

Our first step was setting up a blog on our website where every fortnight we host a different woman SET professional.

We built a Facebook presence and found it a useful way of creating links and disseminating news - one Facebook campaign was run with an external PR company and gained us international media coverage.

Then, at our Annual Conference a few years ago, we were aware that some of the speakers and attendees were tweeting about the event - including a Government Minister - and we realised we needed to be part of the conversation. At the same time we started looking at LinkedIn. Again, the approach was experimental at first and we made use of the enthusiasm and knowledge of particular members of staff who were keen that we make use of these tools.

Over time, we began to join the dots with all of our different activities and I was given responsibility of managing the overall approach. A brand refresh and launch of a new website gave us the perfect opportunity to assess what we were doing and what more we could do to get the full potential out of social media and integrate it with our overall communications strategy and activity. In particular, we built RSS feeds into the new site, and this enables us to drive out core information across different platforms. We are more efficient at sharing news in a way that creates dialogue and engagement, and we are also able to pick up on issues and events relevant to our work through tracking social media activity.

How do you now use social media in your current role?

I am now responsible for all of our social media activity. We don't claim to be experts but we have come on a hugely valuable journey. Social media is a very reciprocal, conversational environment which has allowed us to expand our offering to women in science, engineering and technology as well as strengthen our links with a wide range of audiences. And we have been able to do this at very little cost.

One of our key roles is to help these women to raise their professional profile and we can now give them training on how to do this using social media channels.

We have started using YouTube and Flickr to share content and have occasional sessions in Second Life.

What is your advice to others venturing into using social media to achieve their business goals?

We took it one step at a time - you don't have to have an instant presence on every platform.

Talk to people already making good use of social media, and involve members of staff who are already enthusiasts and have useful experience.

If appropriate, provide in house training and information sessions, so you keep people up to date on what you are doing so you bring the whole organisation with you.

At the UKRC, senior management have been able to see the successes each step of the way, and it has been important for us to have one person managing the process. We have a corporate approach: we have to balance the personal and conversational tone of much new media with making sure we are always promoting the UKRC and its key messages and services, and it is my role to make sure this happens.

Social media activity is now an integrated part of our overall organisational objectives and is a highly valued marketing tool.

ACTION TIPS



Setting up your LinkedIn profile

1. Think about who your business is targeting – chief executives, a buying manager, key academic, a journalist
2. Find five profiles from this list and analyse them – what do you think works and what not? Why not? What should your profile contain – or not?
3. Agree within your business how you want to describe your company or organisation. Get someone to write standard wording for all employees to ensure consistency – and agree what can be varied and how
4. Set yourself a target of connecting with 10, 20, 50 people a week to build your profile – whatever you have agreed for your strategy. And stick to it
5. Research 20 groups – find ones that your customers or target clients belong to. Request to join them
6. Watch the LinkedIn video clips on their site so you understand the settings for privacy and the opportunities

Chapter Four



Writing a blog

The aim of a blog

The best business blogs are an easy read, written regularly in short digestible chunks, with an opinion or nugget of information in each that will inspire or help you.

The goal for most bloggers (people who write a blog) is to create a following. As a business, the groups you probably want to target are

- Your customers or clients
- Target customers
- Referrers of work
- Opinion formers in your market
- Journalists

Exactly who you want to follow you will be defined in your communication and social media strategy. But whoever you target, your blog should be strategic and support your business goals – not just an outlet for your chief executive or a new recruit in the social media team to spout their thoughts on any subject.

You want to plan your blog before writing it. Ideally, you will already have researched your clients and target clients as part of your business, marketing and comms strategies and will therefore have a good idea of how you are going to be helpful to your clients.

If not, go out and start talking and listening to your clients and prospective targets!

The sort of questions to ask that will help ideas for your blog could include

- Have they searched the internet for information for their business recently – what was it on, what did they find, how useful was it? Was there anything missing?
- What are their development plans for the next year or two? What is going to be the greatest challenge in these? Are there areas where they will be searching for ideas and advice?



Finding your niche and blog topics

When you are clear about the goals and direction for your blog, you then need to translate this into blog topics. To get you thinking, here are some ideas as to how others are doing this

Arena Group

Our client, [Arena Group](#), is helping businesses and education organizations manage the printing and processing of their documents better. At its most basic, this could make for a deathly series of blog topics which could quickly run out of content steam.

So we are looking at slightly wider issues, where no-one quite has all the answers yet (ideal for blog topics so you can comment and debate as information emerges) and which will really help their customers. These are the areas we are looking at for their blog when it goes live

- The business differentiates itself on service – their clients absolutely love them. We could talk about how they create fantastic service and win some of the UK's top service awards. This might be too generic for their branding and if we do include blogs, we need to talk about the challenges rather than a piece of puffery – the pros and cons of their own Academy for apprentices; how do you provide cover for holidays and staff training but still provide continuity with a customer?
- Sustainability and reducing carbon footprint has become a big issue for universities, schools and businesses. This could provide years' worth of blogs around what the legislation says, what that will mean in terms of copying, how much impact a managed print service could have on achieving targets and the best way to recycle old hardware
- Another core part of Arena is their electronic document management service. This probably will provide the richest seam of blogs – why won't businesses archive their old documents and what does the law actually say about it; how do you get your IT systems to talk to each other across a business – accounts payable linked to sales databases; how do you manage security and access to confidential documents, track who has viewed them etc?

Tin Basher

One of the country's earliest and best-known business blogs is the [Tin-Basher](#), a blog for Butler Sheetmetal in 'the darkest recesses of North West England'. They are a very small company.

The blogs are down to earth, look on life with wry amusement – and just about cover topics to do with metal. They have a very pithy comment about a live stream to NASA while they build the Mars Rover (would you want the world watching you while you do diddly squat?); helpful information about the theft of copper telephone wires in Atlanta and a snippet about liquidmetal for iphones – which isn't liquid metal.

There is a quirky charm to this blog. This can be hard to pull off. I suspect if we were working on this blog we would probably recommend a stronger theme of useful information in the content. But who knows? That could destroy exactly what has made this blog so successful.



Bradford University School of Management

At [Bradford University School of Management](#), we are positioning their academics as experts in specific fields (though academics don't like the word 'experts') and showing how they are relevant to and can help businesses. This is part of a strategy to position the School with businesses, journalists and business commentators, such as the CBI – and since they are a top ten UK business school and number one in the north, this fits together well.

Of course, the other secondary goal is to attract top MSc and MBA students from around the world.

We have a team of bloggers – extremely hard to achieve, but the academics are now really buying into this and a team demonstrates a breadth of expertise and topics.

The focus agreed for this blog is 'Academic views on current business issues' – and has worked well. There is enough latitude to accommodate different academics and their approaches but enough focus so that businesses or public sector bodies would know why to follow it – every blog addresses a business issue.

With a team, we have had to be flexible in developing a slightly different strategy with each academic - to fit around their workloads, particular interests, their research and engaging with the business world.

This is how we came up with some of the blog content

- Dr Sarah Dixon, new dean at the School, is carrying out a major piece of research on strategy and working with household-name global corporates including Intel and Motorola. We have taken elements of the research and broken it down into different blogs such as one aspect on [transformational leadership](#)
- Julian Rawel is working with a number of public sector organizations – particularly NHS and councils – helping their senior managers to look at how they cope with cuts and restructure service delivery. He wrote a number of blogs when the [Comprehensive Spending Review](#) came out – and some of the blogs became the basis for articles in Local Government Chronicle and one as a guest blog on the [Forum for Private Business](#)
- Dr David Spicer is chair of the judging panel for the [Yorkshire Post's award](#) – Best Company to Work For. With a team of academics, he analyses all the entries and visits ten shortlisted companies each year. He writes a blog on what he thinks make a company a [great employer](#), particularly in the current economy
- We have asked the School's alumni if they would like to write guest blogs on business issues. This is starting to generate a new flow of material, such as the one from [Optimal HR](#). These are good because they help to stay in touch with alumni – who are of course the business leaders the School wants to engage with. And it means the load of writing is shared with a wider pool
- A number of academics have been invited to join the CBI's small dinners when policy directors go round the country to hear business views on key issues and how policy is affecting them. Prof Mark Freeman joined a discussion on the government's energy policy and wrote a [blog](#), summarizing the discussion with his own views and concerns injected into the debate (and attracted quality comments from leading bloggers in America)

If you are stuck for topics, try these to get you going – these might trigger thoughts. You will need to write them within the strategic theme you have decided on

- Are you going on a buying trip that might interest your customers? A wine merchant might talk about this year's trip to France – how the weather is going to affect this year's production or a trend they have spotted
- You could blog about what is new or disappointing at a trade show
- If you are visiting two or three suppliers, you might want to compare the good and bad – maybe not naming the companies
- New legislation that will affect your customers
- Are you about to speak at a conference or a meeting of local business people? Are you preparing a power point or presentation with some key points that could be the basis of a blog?
- When you spot something in your industry paper that makes you want to respond, don't rant at the coffee machine, write it down
- Questions that your customers are asking you about
- Reviews of new books around your industry or customers



Your voice

Writing a blog is harder than it seems for many people, even for regular writers and journalists. It can take some months to find what is called your 'voice'. A good blog is chatty, not an essay or a feature piece in a magazine. It needs to be written as the writer would speak so it feels like a conversation.

It is a good idea to write a dozen or more posts before they go live. That way there is time to practise and feel comfortable with a theme, check that the content is useful to the target audience and that it is consistent. An archive of posts also means that when the blog goes live it looks immediately full and interesting - one blog post looks very lonely. Apparently Google does not start picking up blogs on searches until 25 blogs have been posted.

Ready to post?

Part of your social media marketing strategy will define what your blog is going to achieve, who it is targeted at and how you will measure success (sorry to keep repeating all this, but social media must be focused on your business goals).

Most good blogs will need posts at least once a week – some post daily and others several times a day. There is no definitive answer about best practice. The more frequently you post, the better for search engine optimization (provided you are writing good quality content). But if you are building up a following of people who ask to be informed every time you post a new blog, getting several blogs a day would drive most professionals mad.

Whatever you decide, you need to set a goal and stick to it - posting once a week is a good start for most businesses. We would then recommend coming up with a schedule of topics that you can blog on, thinking always – what will be of interest and helpful to our target audience? Why might they read and comment? What can we write about that will help people spot trends, understand the market better or solve a problem?

When the blog is set up, it needs an RSS button (a software device that allows people to request new content from the site) so people can subscribe to the blog. You will also need buttons to link to any other social media accounts that you have set up such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

Would you follow your own blog?

You have to think all the time – would I follow my own blog? Why? What would I get out of it? Ask critical friends to give you feedback. And of course, set up a Google Analytics account to measure how many visitors are reading your blog.

We talk later about how to generate comments and engage with visitors to your blog. This is important in terms of writing in a way that make people rate you and want to come back again to share thoughts with you.

One of the tips to get people to comment on a blog is 'don't finish the conversation'. This is really important to think about when writing, so that you don't come over as the ultimate expert but want your blog to be a meeting place to discuss and share ideas.

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from ... Victoria Tomlinson,
chief executive of Northern Lights PR



A personal story of blogging

As a business, we decided we needed a new website and that it would have a blog. We wanted the blog to be best practice. In the early days we were struggling to know what that was!

The books all said a blog must have personality and share personal experiences. That didn't sit comfortably with our culture – we would always rather talk about our clients than ourselves. We wanted the blog to be helpful to our clients, as well as position our business in PR and social media.

It took me two months to write my first blog. To be honest, it felt a bit prattish to be writing down thoughts on a subject. I've been a writer for 30 years, write anything up to a dozen articles and press releases a week. I couldn't believe how difficult I was finding this.

Eventually I decided just to write. On anything. Not look for angles and something clever but just get it going. My first blog was about an event I was invited to – the 20th anniversary celebrations of Pakistan's independence. I reflected on the evening and the lack of confidence I felt in the community – and how confidence is so important to success.

Looking back, I can't help feeling – so what? Why would anyone want to read this and what would they learn from it?

The next blog was on my daughter starting work – and remembering my father's advice to me on my first day and how times had changed. Again, heck, I am no famous columnist where the world is looking for my views on life. What on earth was I doing?

Then I went to a lunch party and got to talking to a number of people about tenders and decided to blog about our tips on tendering. This was packed full of experience from over the years and tips to take away.

The next few blogs were on a book about 'my favourite people' and what I had learned from my favourite business people over the years; going to a ballet which changed my pre-conceived prejudices; commentary about Renault, its culture and lack of board scruples; my observation that several clients were struggling to recruit skills at director of communications level.

At this point, I sent these blogs to a number of critical friends (they had not gone 'live' yet so were still in Word format) and asked for their views. The feedback was

- An expert blogger said 'don't go too personal – maximum of 1 personal in every 5 blogs'
- Several said they really liked the blog about tenders and our experiences of what had worked and not
- I sensed they were apathetic about the rest!

When I got the feedback about 'personal' or not, I struggled to reconcile the advice I had had. I thought a blog was meant to have personality, have a clear 'voice' and share your personal experiences and views. So shouldn't the blog be personal, especially since I would never go into the really personal about my family or confidential client matters?

I started reading more blogs and going back to the feedback. Gradually the penny dropped. I needed to share our knowledge and tips on areas of business where our clients need help. This would be personal about our knowledge but less personal about me, my thoughts and reflections.

Then last Christmas I spent the holiday period researching and analyzing journalists who were using Twitter, then wrote a blog on the findings (my first 'live' blog). I came up with a list of the sorts of questions specific journalists were asking on Twitter (eg 'anyone got examples of recent property prices in the North?') and how companies could monitor and engage with journalists this way. This felt my best blog to date. It was completely original, I knew it was useful and it was full of tangible examples and links.

I felt we'd found our blogging 'voice'.

Feedback suggests that our best blogs now are

- Our own original research – with a blog it doesn't have to be scientific so long as you explain how you have done it
- Explaining something that we have learned on social media – what did or didn't work
- Reviewing books and conferences – the key learning points
- Interviewing people we respect for their tips on things that will help our clients

Nearly two years later, I feel we have got our voice, got a far more focused theme and generally have an identity so that people will know what to expect from our blog – and follow it if that appeals to them. We are also guest blogging elsewhere.

What do we need to improve? The title and descriptor – which we are working on now. Get the number of visitors to our blog up – which we are doing by working with a search engine optimization expert. And some people suggest we need to reduce the number of guest bloggers we invite to write on ours (this is to do with links in and out of your website) – but I'm not sure about this one. I think they make our blog more interesting and useful.

And finally, we are still not quite sure about what content. I wrote a blog about the lack of senior women at BP – and its business impact. This generated some of the most thoughtful comments we have had to date. I am sure it is good for our business, yet it doesn't quite fit our business profile.

ACTION TIPS

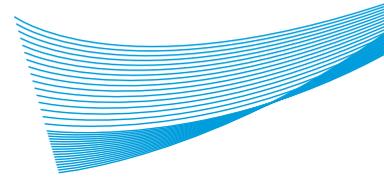


Try these steps to help you write your first blogs

1. Find three business blogs that you admire and want to follow
2. Analyse them to death. What are they doing that makes them interesting or helpful? Which elements could you use in your own blog?
3. If you've got blog writer's block, don't worry about posting your blogs at first. Just write. Try doing something every day to start with – even one or two paragraphs
4. Leave some 'vulnerability' in your blog – say what you are stuck on or would like other people's views about. That will encourage them to comment and engage with you
5. Test out your blogs with critical friends – what is working and what not?
6. Keep one or two customers or target clients in your mind when writing (mentally have them sitting on your shoulder). What are their problems, what do you know that would help them?

Chapter Five

LinkedIn – the basics



Getting going

We're going to cover LinkedIn in this chapter from the business rather than the individual's perspective, sharing lots of issues that we have seen arising with our clients and other businesses.

If you have not got a profile already, here are the basics of how you set one up. In the next chapter, we look at how you can use LinkedIn to win new business and as a recruiting tool.

Create an account

As with most social media, it's free to set up a LinkedIn profile. Go to www.linkedin.com and it will take you through very easy steps to do this.

To get LinkedIn working for you, you need your profile to be 100% complete. To do this you should fill in at least

- Two previous jobs
- A profile summary
- Your education
- A photo
- Something (anything) in 'Specialties'
- Keywords for your business and the individual in 'specialties'

Why does 100% completion matter? LinkedIn claims that you are 40 times more likely to appear in a search if your profile is complete. And it will help generally in other searches, such as Google.

As you complete your profile, you will spot a bar that says 'Your profile is 40% complete' etc as you go. A lot of people ask, 'how can I get to 100% complete?'. Usually the critical ingredients are to get three 'recommendations' – each one giving you another 5% - and uploading a photo.

How to upload a photo

If you are not sure how to upload a photo, here are a few steps

- Use your digital camera or mobile phone with a decent camera – or find a friend with one!
- Think about the image you want to create and ensure the photo reflects this – it is going to be around for some time and will be the first thing new contacts see. Do you want to come over as professional, approachable, creative?
- Save the photo onto your computer desktop or into a file. The file size needs to be less than 4MB
- Sign into your LinkedIn account and go to 'Edit my profile'. Click on 'Upload a Photo'
- Click on the 'Browse' button. This will take you to your computer files. Click through the files, find the photo and click to upload it
- Click on the 'Edit photo' and you can crop an area of it – say, just your face – and see how it will appear on your profile
- You may also want to change the settings on your photo – you can have it so that only known contacts see you or everyone can



Getting recommendations to complete your profile

Getting recommendations can feel awkward. Don't be embarrassed to ask. Find five people to ask, who you know, who are on LinkedIn, who are active and have connections. They will understand what this is about. They will have had to ask others for recommendations when they first set up their profile.

You actually only need three recommendations to complete your profile so five gives you a safety net.

People you can ask to recommend you include former and current bosses and colleagues, people who have hired you to do work for them or even lecturers and teachers. We've had a number of our clients asking us to recommend them – although flattering, LinkedIn doesn't allow you to do this. For obvious reasons.

It is quite hard work doing a recommendation for someone, so try and help them. Give them a few tips as to what you would like them to say 'I am trying to network with people who are looking for a corporate financier, so anything you could say about the deal we did and how we kept finding solutions to every problem thrown at us, would be really helpful.'

LinkedIn does give you the facility to send out a request to up to 200 people with a standard email request (you can add the names in bulk but the emails are sent individually). We would not recommend this

- First of all, tailor the request to the person. If you are getting back in touch, make the most of the opportunity. Be personal, helpful and friendly
- Doing a recommendation is a pretty big deal for most people. Do you honestly have 200 people who would feel they know you well enough to do this? We would not recommend someone unless we really knew the quality of their work
- Better to get half a dozen quality recommendations from people who are respected and give a thoughtful recommendation, than dozens of what can start to feel like 'rent a quote'

Your summary profile and specialties are really important. These are keywords for Google and LinkedIn to search on.

Some points about these

- You probably want a corporate description about your company that everyone uses to ensure consistency
- You may then want to agree how individuals adapt and tailor the company information to their particular areas of operation and expertise

Building your connections

This takes time. Set yourself a task of inviting 20 people every week for ten weeks and that will get you on to a solid platform. You may find you do a batch of 50 to start while you are enthusiastic, then it tails off. Slow and steady can be best.

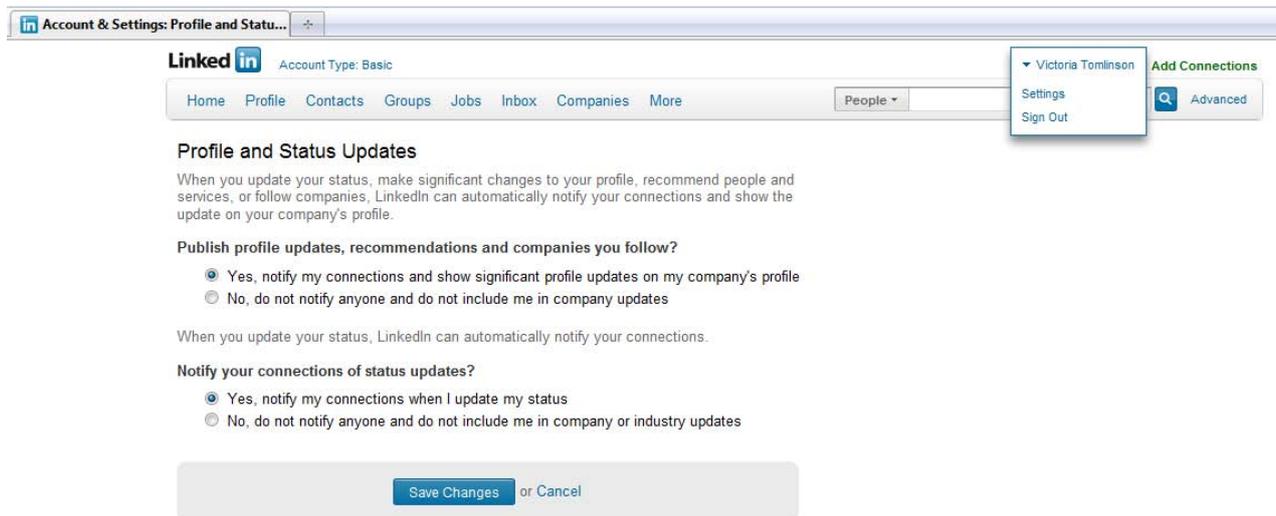
LinkedIn has a tool, as you might expect, to link to your Outlook. Again, we would not recommend this. You need to own and manage the connecting process, making sure you connect with quality people and maximize the process of connecting.

When you send an invitation through LinkedIn, it suggests a standard email for your invitation. It may seem a lot of effort but the whole point of having a network is to increase your contacts for business. If you start sending volume emails out using the template email that everyone recognises, you are not networking and engaging.

Personalise each email. That is the point of social media, it is about relationships. Remember, you will be finding people you may not have seen for years – school, university, former employers.

Remember, others are watching you

When you create a profile, you can set your settings as to who can watch what you are doing on your profile. Go to your name in the top right corner, click on the drop-down box for Settings. Spend a bit of time looking at all the options – particularly privacy settings.



Most people click that they want to notify their contacts about updates to their status – ie who they have connected with, when they have updated their status (you can put short messages on LinkedIn, like Twitter), joined a group and so on. This is all part of staying in regular touch with your contacts.

However, you need to think about what people are watching. A very senior retail director, looking for a job, mentioned that he followed the key headhunters to see who they were connecting to. If he spotted a new connection that he thought was to do with a new job, he would write to the company direct. That could be a win:win for everyone – except the headhunter.

Equally, imagine you are on a pitch list and meet the potential client for a brief, then connect to them via LinkedIn before you have submitted your tender. You may alert competitors to your involvement that may or may not be an issue.

The point is that you are giving away information that others are looking at and interpreting – rightly or wrongly. We have decided that we are comfortable with this, you need to think what is right for your business.

Don't let your sales team use LinkedIn without training

LinkedIn can seem like manna from heaven to sales staff. We've now heard of three companies where someone in their sales team has been banned because they used it without really understanding the rules.

They see dozens of possible connections and send out invitations – saying they have done business with them. The recipients reject their invitation and report it as spam to LinkedIn or say they don't know them. After a few of these, LinkedIn bans them.

Before they are allowed back on, they have to confirm they won't approach anyone else they don't know. And they have to include the person's email address before they can send an invitation, to prove they do know them.



Consistency of profiles across the business

This one is tricky. LinkedIn is about individuals – however they want to portray themselves to the outside world. But if they are going to talk about their present job, do you want them to represent your company or organisation in some way?

There is no right or wrong about this, but each business probably wants to discuss some principles and agree guidelines. Unless you make these a requirement of an employee's job, you may have to accept that you can recommend but not enforce how an individual writes their profile.

Why does this matter?

We recently did a LinkedIn audit for a company and found these three very different individual profiles/summaries on LinkedIn, all from their employees

- Personal profile: 'A hard-working and self-motivated professional. Effective communicator and drives sales through an organisation'
- Summary: I am a qualified xxxxxxxx and xxxxxxxxxxxx practitioner. I am predominantly involved with xxxxxxxx
- Summary: Experience working within the xxxxxxxx sectors, delivering tailored xxxxxxxx. Working with a range of corporate clients on xxxxxxxx

None of these mentioned the company they worked for nor what it did. And some of the profiles read as if the employee was looking for a job. When we raised this point, the employee was horrified – 'I've only just joined this company, it's fantastic working here. I want people to know about the business I work for'. They had not thought through what that meant in terms of what they wrote in their profile – they had simply answered the LinkedIn questions and 'filled in the boxes'.

Who should you accept invitations from?

You could debate this – and we have. But certainly for most businesses working in the B2B market (business to business), your network is part of your reputation.

One of our business partners gave us the following rules of thumb as to who he links up with. We would generally agree with this. He says you should only link with someone you

- Would do business with
- Would have a drink with after a meeting
- Would recommend to a trusted client

Don't bombard contacts with invitations to events

This is something we've spotted a number of less experienced, enthusiastic marketing professionals doing. Struggling to get people to an event, they discover the '[Promotion of your Event using LinkedIn](#)' button and think this is the answer to their problems.

They send out information to all their contacts, regardless of relevance.

Instead of which they needed to think who would get something out of the event and send messages on the following lines – personalised. If this is worth doing, it's worth tailoring

- Bob, I know you mentioned your team were struggling with understanding the new legislation on xxx. Thought this event might be useful – please feel free to pass on details
- Jenny, wondered if any of your colleagues might find this event helpful – and of course do feel free to come along if it sounds interesting to you.

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from ... Julian Rawel, Director of executive education,
Bradford University School of Management



As a marketing professional how do you think social media has changed the face of marketing?

I teach marketing and marketing communications at post graduate level. When I speak to my academic peers we always say that our students know far more than we do about marketing via social media.

I first started coming into contact with social media from an academic point of view about four or five years ago. As a professional marketer I've watched its growth with interest. There's definitely a generational difference. My daughter is nearly 18 and she does everything via social media. She and her friends are not pouring over newspapers and magazines looking at advertising.

People over 40 might not be using social media in the same way, but they are purchasing online and getting information from the internet. That's changing traditional customer relations. If I'm booking a hotel or going to a concert I will find out what people are saying online on sites such as TripAdvisor. Then, when I've stayed in my hotel I might leave a review – and that's where the consumer can get involved.

If you look at brands like Walkers Crisps and Coca Cola they are not directly selling more products through Facebook but they recognise the need to be there. Walkers use social media because they can encourage customers to suggest new flavours of crisps. The under 30s are no longer going to watch those 'Teach the World to Sing' ads. Instead, Coca Cola is developing a Facebook community.

Universities can't sell a service like a packet of crisps but social media such as blogs and Twitter allow people to talk about your university. More importantly it enables us to put people in touch with each other – alumni, current students and potential students.

Traditional media has not disappeared and it's important to see social media as part of the communications mix, but not the whole communications mix. It enables people to have their say and to engage with other users and businesses.

Is there any aspect of social media you feel isn't good?

I feel that LinkedIn has been hijacked by people using it in unsubtle ways to sell at me and it is in danger of becoming an annoyance. I get emails I don't want, people spamming me and invitations from people I don't know wanting to connect. It's become a numbers game.

LinkedIn should be about networking with like-minded people. Owen Whitehouse, who runs the SME Knowledge Network at Bradford University School of Management, has the right approach to LinkedIn. He uses it in a subtle way in terms of social engagement, not as a hard-edged sales tool.

Any tips for businesses?

There is nothing you can do to stop people talking about you online - the control has gone. You will be found out if your organisation does bad things and you have to think about how many people will read about it and take note. But if you're a half decent organisation then you shouldn't be overly concerned. For every negative comment, there will be plenty of positive comments.

Has social media brought any benefits to the School of Management?

Social media is a great way of sharing information. A good example of how this worked was when the School recently launched a sponsored degree with Morrisons. The story about students being paid to study and having a job at the end was well covered by offline media. I did an interview for a substantial article in The Guardian, which attracted lots of comments when it was posted online. Some were positive; others felt the university was 'dumbing down'. However, none of the comments said anything negative about us.

At the same time we filmed some interviews with young people interested in the new degree and put these on YouTube.

We had a certain amount of control in that we issued the initial press release and made the YouTube film but then it was up to people how they used and shared that information online. As a result we had several hundred applicants generated through a mixture of traditional and online media, with people talking about the new degree.

Social media is just another channel of communication and I don't think you should get too tied up with the terminology. Our experience with the Morrisons' degree showed that traditional media and social media can work together.

Can social media be used for B2B marketing?

Using social media for B2B marketing is more difficult because it is a considered decision-making process. Decisions are not done on a whim or by an individual and they are budget-driven.

However, if it's done well then using social media can be useful in terms of network building. In my own experience, both as a marketing professional in the travel industry and now in executive education, I know that what makes the difference in B2B communications is the personal contact. If you use social media just as a selling tool you can ruin relationships. But I have found that I can use social media as a subtle promotional platform, for example I can say to people I meet "have a look at my blog". I use the blog as part of building the relationship.

ACTION TIPS



Setting up your LinkedIn profile

1. Think about who your business is targeting – chief executives, a buying manager, key academic, a journalist
2. Find five profiles from this list and analyse them – what do you think works and what not? Why not? What should your profile contain – or not?
3. Agree within your business how you want to describe your company or organisation. Get someone to write standard wording for all employees to ensure consistency – and agree what can be varied and how
4. Set yourself a target of connecting with 10, 20, 50 people a week to build your profile – whatever you have agreed for your strategy. And stick to it
5. Research 20 groups – find ones that your customers or target clients belong to. Request to join them
6. Watch the LinkedIn video clips on their site so you understand the settings for privacy and the opportunities

Chapter Six

LinkedIn – for new business and recruitment

There are lots of examples of people getting business from LinkedIn. A lawyer won a sizeable contract from an old schoolfriend, who happened to have a major legal problem, spotted the lawyer's specialisms and replied 'I hadn't realized this was what you went on to do.'

We were surprised when I put on my LinkedIn status that I had some spare tickets for the panto (OK, this isn't business but you'll see why it is interesting), did anyone want to buy them – and an hour later, a very reputable contact came back to say he would.

And one Saturday morning, I posted a comment 'anyone know where John Smith from the LSC has now gone' and within 15 minutes had a message from a mutual contact to say where they now are.

Now of course, you could have tracked down your old school pals at any time, found their email addresses through other friends and made contact. But in reality, what are the chances of that happening?

I could also have emailed all my contacts and said 'got some tickets to the panto'. Or picked up the phone to track down where a former client is now working. But social media makes all this interaction quicker, so much easier and cuts through the formalities with people you know, but not especially well.

These examples also demonstrate that senior people are watching and responding to requests put out on LinkedIn.

We talked earlier about whether you should notify your contacts about your new links and what you are doing. The advantage is that this is a gentle, regular reminder that you are here. A lawyer recently said to us that women are better staying in touch with contacts than men are. Man or woman, it can be hard work finding natural easy ways to stay in touch without becoming a nuisance. LinkedIn is a very good way to do that.

If you let everyone see your updates, it will send out updates like this one below, saying who has connected to whom, if your contacts have posted a blog post or posed a question to a group.



Jeff Colclough is now connected to [Tony Hurlow](#)

9 minutes ago • [Send a message](#)



Graham Clayton Uploaded a flyer on a free Webinar event on 17th March on Visualising Faster & Better Formulations - see my profile

11 minutes ago • [Like](#) • [Comment](#) • [Send a message](#)



Andy Green #StDavidsDay An idea I've got for the Welsh Tourist people to encourage everyone to give a 'cwtsch' ahead of March 1 <http://tiny.cc/4c892> via Twitter 

11 minutes ago • [Like](#) • [Comment](#) • [Send a message](#)



Graham Clayton uploaded [Visualising Faster and Better Formulations Webinar 17 March 2011.pdf](#) using [Box.net](#) for LinkedIn! [View this file >>](#)

13 minutes ago • [Like](#) • [Comment](#) • [Send a message](#)



Andy Green Good debate about 'churnalism' - and some good things about it too! <http://tiny.cc/j4fd5> via Twitter 

13 minutes ago • [Like](#) • [Comment](#) • [Send a message](#)

What are groups and which should I join?

You can join up to 50 groups at any one time – and join and leave groups as you find them useful or not.

You have access to the networks of all your group members. Some will provide volume links while others may be small and very good quality and you have to be vetted and relevant to join.

It is good practice to join relevant groups. A good place to find these is to look at the profiles of people you know – customers and target customers – and see which groups they belong to. If relevant, ask to join the groups they belong to. It is normal to be vetted and accepted into groups, so it is important only to join groups that appear appropriate. No business wants a reputation for their managers being rejected.

Choose a few groups that you think are good quality and get updates emailed, watch for questions and help others when they ask questions for views.

Post your own question – though you want to get a few people you know to start the ball rolling with a reply, then others may follow suit. Our first question to a group received zilch reaction – it seemed quite a good question to us and we think that happened because we didn't get it noticed and 'moving'.

Use LinkedIn to help research for tenders

Use an Advanced search (see below) to identify people who have worked for your pitch company. Find who have worked for the company and who can give you background information about the people you are pitching to, what the key issues are for the company, what will matter to them.

It can even help you identify existing colleagues who have previously worked there.

How can you recruit through LinkedIn?

The power of LinkedIn is not to do with the people you know, but about who your contacts know. And that's why it is such a great recruitment tool. Its use as a resource is in the access to and getting to know the second and third levels of your contacts.

To emphasise the point.

I currently have

324 connections and belong to 20 plus groups.

This gives me access to the 52,500 people that these people know. I can then reach 3.7m people through the contacts of these contacts – see how this works below. (I would need one of my connections to introduce me to their connection to access this third degree network).

Your Network of Trusted Professionals

You are at the center of your network. Your connections can introduce you to 3,738,900+ professionals — here's how your network breaks down:

1	Your Connections Your trusted friends and colleagues	324
2	Two degrees away Friends of friends; each connected to one of your connections	52,500+
3	Three degrees away Reach these users through a friend and one of their friends	3,686,000+
Total users you can contact through an Introduction		3,738,900+

5,530 new people in your network since February 18

So imagine you are looking to recruit an engineer who could help you sell into China. Your network of a few hundred – or even a few thousand – is unlikely to give you many possibilities of people you know. However, if you tap into who your contacts know (including your own employees if you are LinkedIn to them), this becomes a considerable database.

And if you then tap into the wider market of your contacts, among 3million people, there is a high chance of finding someone ideal.

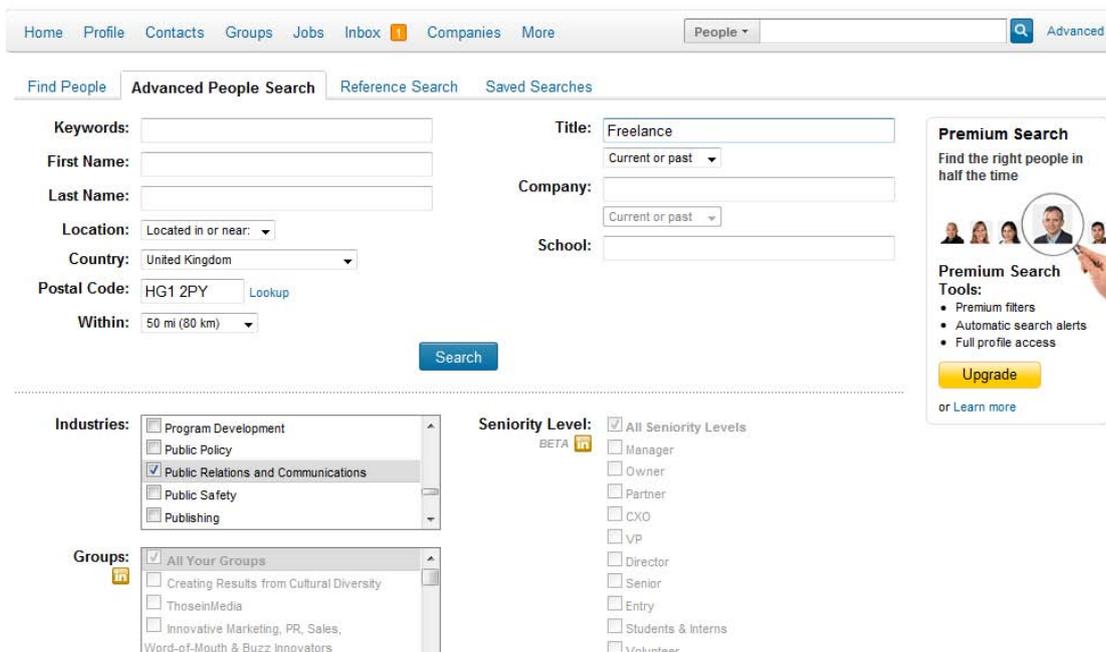
Basic recruitment techniques on LinkedIn

How do you find potential recruits on LinkedIn?

The quickest way is to use Advanced search – at the top right corner of your profile. Click on this and then fill in your search.



I recently used this to find a PR freelance professional. Under Industries, I ticked the 'Public Relations and Communications' box. I then put in our postcode and put the search within 50 miles (just below the postal code). And finally put 'Freelance' into the Title box – I could have done this as a Keyword.



I confess. This was the first time I had used LinkedIn for recruitment. I was stunned that 78 names came up. I expected two or three or a dozen if we were lucky.

Quite a few of these had been freelance in the past and were currently employed – so, OK, I discounted those straight away.

Some were former journalists whom I knew and had not realised had gone freelance. And 3 or 4 had exactly the profiles I was looking for – genuine freelancers who enjoy the flexibility of this role and have been doing this for years. One was someone I have known in different guises for 20 years, but would never have thought of. I emailed her to find she had got a number of commitments and could not take on more work.

Finally I honed in on one person whom I had never met or heard of but who was connected to one of the region's business leaders whom I respect enormously. If he rated her, she would be first class and enjoy business. I could have asked him to introduce me but I found her website and approached direct. We have now met, she is exactly the quality we want and we have agreed she would like to work with us on some projects.



What about LinkedIn's own recruitment tool?

We've not used this in our business, but researched what it is about.

LinkedIn offers additional services that you have to pay for, such as LinkedIn Recruiter. There is a [promotional video](#) on YouTube which pretty much explains the whole service – except for the cost. My understanding is that they quote you a fee depending on your company size, whether you are a professional recruitment business and what you want to do with it.

You can also post jobs on LinkedIn for a fee.

I found a number of useful websites which will give you further views on how this all works
[Susan M Heathfield](#) – practical examples of recruiting through various job sites and LinkedIn
[Happy About LinkedIn for recruiting](#) - free e-book on recruiting

[How to use LinkedIn as a recruiting tool](#) – good step-by-step on paying to use LinkedIn

And a [LinkedIn](#) discussion forum on practical experiences of using LinkedIn for recruiting, with some pros and cons.

If you are recruiting significant numbers or real specialisms, paying for wider access to people makes sense. However, for many businesses, their own LinkedIn networks may well be all they need.

Can others look at my employees to recruit them?

The simple answer is yes. Can you stop this? Increasingly difficult to do. A few companies have put a complete block on any employees having a LinkedIn profile, particularly banks where security is such an issue.

However, even they are looking at how they can open up LinkedIn without damaging security, rather than saying they will never allow LinkedIn.

As our client, Martin Wright at the [Arena Group](#), said: "The frightening side of LinkedIn is that it will also be used to try and poach our staff. But our strategy is to be an employer of choice and we continue to win awards for Best Employer, so it's up to us to make sure that our employees are not tempted. We will have to be wary though, particularly for sales people where they tend to be mobile."

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from ... Rob Arntsen, managing director,
MyKnowledgeMap



What did you first think about social media?

I guess I first heard about blogs followed by Facebook. I thought it was for people who had too much time on their hands, or who were otherwise “that way inclined” to talk about what they were doing to anybody who would listen.

What do you think about social media now - particularly for businesses, including your own?

I can see good examples of how effective use of social media can greatly assist some businesses as a marketing tool. Our own business is still exploring (actively) how we can use social media to best effect. I do not believe that we have yet found the golden bullet – but I do increasingly believe that you need the right sort of people in the business who have the right personality and communication skills to fully exploit social media to best effect.

I think social media has evolved to become much more relevant to business over the last two years, beyond consumer product businesses. But it can create problems as well as opportunities. We saw one competitor suffer when a Facebook page was set up for people who were unhappy with their product and service. It therefore creates an environment where quality of product and service matters even more than ever.

In terms of positives – it gives us new ways of conversing with our customers and potential customers, about specific areas of mutual interest, and it also gives us mechanisms to stay in touch about emerging topical areas of interest.

Which social media do you use and rate – and what has been the most difficult part of social media?

I use LinkedIn because the motives of people are primarily about business and less about personal interests.

The hardest part is giving a new, unsolicited personal opinion – setting yourself up as an “expert/authority” on anything and everything. This does not always come naturally to a lot of people including myself. Commenting and feedback on other people’s contributions is easy – especially if your contribution is just to agree and amplify or reinforce a point. Asking a question is probably the easiest, although you then need to be able to articulate a good question.

Where do you see the future for social media?

I think social media “derivatives” will grow. I also think we will see more hybrid types of social media emerge, linked to organisations’ websites and popular application systems such as Sage.

Within our own business we see the opportunity to create a personal portfolio product which we call MyShowcase that can (among other things) harvest a person’s various social media sites and extract relevant information to help them build their portfolio for specific objectives, such as proving competencies, gathering cpd evidence and building a CV.

ACTION TIPS



Get LinkedIn working for your business

1. Make sure all key employees have got their profiles 100% completed or they won't be picked up on searches
2. Put interesting information on your LinkedIn status update at least once a week
– this reminds your contacts that you are around and what your specialisms are
3. Have a plan to ensure you and colleagues build up your contacts. Create a timetable to ensure it happens
4. Make sure your summary reflects your business and what you want people to come to you for – not a CV to get a job
5. Don't use the automated LinkedIn message when inviting people to connect
– do personal messages and engage. You are building relationships, not numbers
6. When others invite you to connect, similarly write a personal message back

Chapter Seven



Twitter – to tweet or not

Setting up an account

The starting point for Twitter is to decide some basics

- Are you going to have an account under your business name or have one or two individuals under their own names?
- What is your biography (bio) going to say – you have 21 characters in total to describe your business or the individual. This needs to reflect your marketing strategy and goals
- What location will you put down – you can put several
- Which photo – it's good to have one photo/logo or image that your business uses consistently across all social media (your blog, LinkedIn, Twitter and so on). This helps to build your profile
- How often will you tweet? Once a week is seen as a minimum, though increasingly at least every few days is becoming more normal. Many do several times a day

Here are some of the pros and cons to consider when deciding these

- If you have a business Twitter account, it tends to keep it more purely business focused. This is what we have chosen to do so far ([@nlightspr](#))
- But it is easier to create more of a 'personality' if you set up personal accounts
- A number of chief executives tweet themselves, it comes over as great leadership if they are good communicators

How much personal in your tweets?

One of the things we have found hardest with Twitter is this 'personality' issue in social media. Twitter is relaxed, informal and chatty. To begin with we only tweeted about pure business – articles that were interesting with links to them; new research; congratulations for a client success; asking if anyone knew the answer to a specific business problem. But it made our tweets quite dull and not very 'social media'.

We then made a move to relax. I love flying and tweeted about a great TV programme on women flying Spitfires. We started replying to some of the lighter, wittier tweets made by those following us. It doesn't come naturally to us. And to be honest, we are now worrying that it is diluting the corporate/business brand that we want to differentiate ourselves on.

There are some people who have made tweeting into an artform, with an elegant, crisp style. They offer a different perspective on something topical that everyone is tweeting – and manage to make you think differently. I can't say we are good at this.

We have had compliments about our tweets. So although we beat ourselves up that we don't do the witty and chatty very well, there are those who only want the pure business. And I think we do this quite well.



What should you tweet about?

We ran a workshop for one of our clients, The P&A Group of Companies Ltd, restructuring and insolvency professionals. We included a group discussion on what they might or might not tweet about. This was the list we put together to get them thinking and debating. Most of our suggested tweets are completely made up but mixed in with a few genuine tweets that we found. And we've added what the group decided more or less, though there was not necessarily unanimous agreement. Some were adamant they should not be tweeting anything at all.

Suggested tweets (all these are made up just as examples or are other people's tweets)	Tweet? Our view only	Our views on why a business should or should not tweet on these – but you may disagree.
Hot off the press – just got administration for BCB	✓	OK, it is about the business. But you wouldn't want to tweet too many 'self-congratulatory' comments
Off to Monaco to discuss debt collection with credit professionals	xx	This would really jar – Monaco vs insolvency professionals. Would feel unpleasant and unprofessional. The sort of thing that could be retweeted in seconds with unpleasant/snipey comments
More shops empty in Sheffield. This recession is really hitting local people	✓✓	Sharing information about what's going on re the economy, in area of their business specialism
Why are we paying for security for the Pope's visit?	x	Personal views, irrelevant to business
Loving the Russell Brand punch up at NY airport	x	Personal views, irrelevant to business and fairly unpleasant
Who's got a panadol? Great crowd in the bar last night, bed at 4am	xx	Definitely not. Just comes over as unprofessional – if you were about to meet a new client, what would they think if they saw this?
Anyone else having trouble downloading Times to iPad? It says my subscription has expired when I have 15 days left. Any tips?	✓	It's useful and helpful, all about sharing and asking for help on social media. Not specially relevant to business but nothing wrong
Booked + paid for a holiday with www.dreamticket.com and now they want another £2000. Avoid them at all costs. Their small print is a marvel	✓	Useful in a social media way – but also relevant to an insolvency business; helping people avoid getting hit
We've got linguists who can recover your debts from 15 European countries. Can we help you?	x	No. Too salesy. Wrong tone and approach for social media – it's about being helpful and engaging. Not talking 'at' people
Third retail administration this week. Looks like a gloomy Christmas for the high street	✓✓	Sharing what is going on in the economy. Absolutely relevant to business, helpful to journalists and followers.
Anyone else seeing Time to Pay propping up bad businesses? (<i>with a bit.ly link to a relevant blog</i>)	✓✓	Ditto – this is what social media is about. Sharing information and seeing what is going on out there. Linking to your blog drives traffic to it. Asking a question encourages people to comment and engage with you
Banks have got to get lending. Two good businesses bust this week – could have saved with decent banking system	✓✓	Ditto – relevant and topical, it is sharing your expertise
Is your business being chased for credit? Call us today on 0114 275 5033	x	No. Too salesy as above
Connaught is going to cause havoc in our region – lots of suppliers will be badly hit	✓✓	Sharing knowledge about impact of what has happened with a business going down
Son home from uni. Why is our full fridge suddenly empty?	x	No. Personal
Rumours of new scam – online retailers taking money for non-existent goods and closing. Look for secure ecommerce sites with lock logo	✓✓	Yes. Positions the business as helpful to other businesses. Being hit by a scam can result in financial difficulties or going bust – so it is also relevant. Have not just mentioned the scam – but also given help to avoid it
R3 survey out (<i>bit.ly link to the survey</i>) – people running out of money on 20 th of month. Silly b s	✓x	Yes, tweet about surveys and articles, with links to the articles etc. Yes, add comments about a key point. But not a personal, derogatory view such as 'silly b.....rs'

Your topics for tweeting should support or reflect your blog topics. Just as with your blog, you want to look for information and activities that could be interesting or helpful to customers or journalists looking for expert views.



Some Twitter basics

Follow people you want to engage with – industry spokespeople, key customers, journalists and suppliers.

Monitor the tweets from people you are following – Tweetdeck is a useful tool for this – and then respond, re-tweet, offer views and help.

Twitter can drive traffic to your blog. Post a question, controversial comment or challenge that will encourage people to read it and link to the website address of your blog. Because a tweet can't be more than 140 characters, you need to shorten website links in a tweet. You can do this by going to bit.ly or tinyurl.com (though bit.ly is seen as the more professional site), put the web address in that you want shortened and hey presto, you will get a short version that you can copy into your tweet.



Twitter only shows @replies from people who are connected to each other. For other followers to see the whole argument and debates, the tweet needs to be preceded with something before the '@someone' so Twitter does not think it is a straight reply. This could be the letter 'a' so it appears "a @person....." That way followers can see the whole discussion, provided all replies are also re-tweeted.

A useful feature is the hashtag (#). You can put this in front of an event name (#CBIconference, #exporting) or a particular subject that lots of people are likely to be tweeting on, such as #TheAshes, #XFactor, #Royalwedding. The # groups all tweets on that subject. So people in a conference or meeting can easily tweet views and feedback to each other while the event is going on. This keeps your speakers on their toes if they know there is immediate feedback about them, no waiting for the evaluation questionnaires at the end of the event.

If you come across #ff, this stands for Follow Friday. On Friday, Twitter users pass on interesting tweeters that they have found, so others can start following. If someone recommends you it is good manners to thank them.



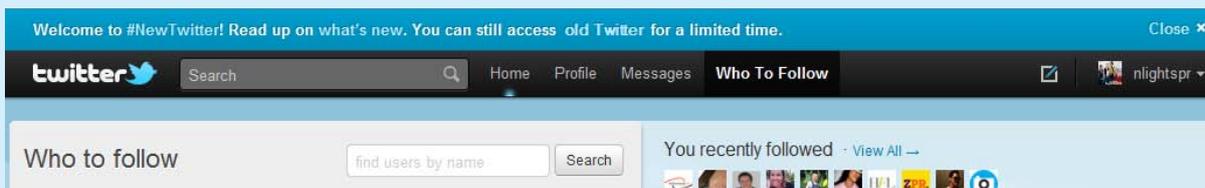
How to build your followers

Once you have opened an account, you need to start following people to get your account going. There is a courtesy in social media that if you follow people you know, they will probably follow you back. So if you follow 50 people you should get at least a dozen following you.

If you start putting out good quality content – links to interesting research reports, sharing key points from discussion of a group of business leaders, links to your own or others' good blogs – these will start being picked up and retweeted. In turn, that will alert others to your Twitter account and generate followers.

Here are some ways to build followers

- Check your contacts on LinkedIn and see who has a Twitter account, then follow them. They will have filled in their Twitter account name on their profile with a link to it
- Follow organisations that you are a member of – your local Chamber of Commerce, professional body, companies and universities that you are an alumnus of. You hope they will follow you back and that other businesses in their networks will also spot you
- Twitter now suggests people you may want to follow, based on your profile. These are worth looking at. A few will appear on your account summary. You can also go to the button at the top and get a long list. But they do produce these suggestions on 'people like you' – which tends to mean your competitors. You may want to follow some of these but they won't help you build new relationships with potential new clients



- Search for businesses you know and want to do business with. It is worth saying that we generally assume that if a business has around 200 to 500 followers, they are probably using Twitter fairly well so they might actually spot and engage with us. When businesses get to more than 1,000 followers you wonder how well they are engaging with all these
- Look at the accounts of people you rate and are following. See if these feature in lists – all sorts of people create lists from professional bodies to businesses to individuals. Have a look at their lists to see if there are other people there who you want to follow

There is a lot of spam on Twitter. You may find local hairdressers, restaurants and estate agents start following you to promote their business. They are trying to make you aware of them, but unless you know them and want to support them, don't feel you have to follow them.

Think about the judgements that others will make about you when they view your account. Here are our thoughts of how we analyse Twitter accounts. This could help you decide who to follow and how you go about it

- We want to get, in a snapshot, who the person is, what they do and if they are in our 'market'
- We will probably check out their website – make the links clear
- And we are more likely to follow an accountant in the north of England than a painter in Uruguay – so make your location clear to an international market (and don't use the Google location reference)
- Anyone who has 15,000 or 100,000 followers raises question marks. Are they an international business guru or are they playing a numbers game to get a very large following?
- One of the quickest ways to assess this is to look at the ratio of followers compared to the people they are following. Look at these and see what you think



Andrew Power

[@mybusinessfirst](#) view full profile →

Australia

Rapidly making your competitors frustrated!
<http://www.mybusinessfirst.com.au>

9,759 Tweets | **5,561** Following | **5,059** Followers | **38** Listed



Diane Coyle

[@diane1859](#) view full profile →

London

The Enlightened Economist <http://blog.enlightenmenteconomics.com>

3,278 Tweets | **252** Following | **1,375** Followers | **94** Listed



Bernard Ginns

[@BernardGinns](#) view full profile →

Yorkshire

Business Editor, Yorkshire Post

1,096 Tweets | **877** Following | **1,151** Followers | **34** Listed



Jack Welch

[@jack_welch](#) view full profile →

New York

Author and Commentator <http://www.jackwelchmba.com>

1,604 Tweets | **27** Following | **1,288,853** Followers | **8,536** Listed



YorkshireMafia

[@MafiaYorkshire](#) view full profile →

Yorkshire

The Yorkshire Mafia is Yorkshire's top business group. We bring together executives and stakeholders from the Yorkshire Business Community. <http://theyorkshiremafia.com>

1,660 Tweets | **789** Following | **1,142** Followers | **27** Listed



Ian Briggs

[@IanBriggs1](#) view full profile →

Leeds

Deputy Editor of *TheBusinessDesk.com* Yorkshire, the dedicated business news website. Many of the views I post on here are my own ramblings. <http://www.thebusinessdesk.com>

695	775	997	28
Tweets	Following	Followers	Listed



Brent N. Hunter

[@brentnhunter](#) view full profile →

Worldwide

Building a bridge from war to peace, from the present to our common future, for the benefit of all world citizens... one person at a time. Come join us! <http://www.BrentHunter.TV>

20,538	156,610	152,648	2,556
Tweets	Following	Followers	Listed



Liz Strauss

[@lizstrauss](#) view full profile →

Chicago

Founder of *SOBCon*, brand strategist, leadership trainer It's only fun when it's brilliant strategy, high return, AND connects customers in a meaningful way. <http://www.successful-blog.com/>

53,366	51,385	72,356	4,298
Tweets	Following	Followers	Listed



Richard Abbott

[@RichardAbbott](#) view full profile →

Harrogate, North Yorkshire

Deputy Editor at *Insider* and long-distance supporter of Southampton FC. Views my own <http://www.insidermedia.com/yorkshire>

64	182	432	9
Tweets	Following	Followers	Listed



Nigel Lockett

[@nigellockett](#) view full profile →

Leeds, UK

Academic, entrepreneur & community leader. Professor of Enterprise. Director of Leeds Enterprise Centre. President of ISBE <http://www.nigellockett.com>

595	89	228	14
Tweets	Following	Followers	Listed



Managing the ratio of followers to following

We've now run a number of social media workshops for business people. One of the sessions we include is a discussion of the impressions people form from various Twitter account summaries. It's surprising how even newcomers to this, quickly work out their own views, which tend to be very consistent. These are

- If you are following more people than you have followers, your credibility is in question
- A credible business should have considerably more followers than they are following – if you look at Liz Strauss, she is following a large number of people but she has 21,000 more followers than she is following
- In the case of Brent N Hunter, he is following 4,000 more people than have returned the favour. He is campaigning and you sense he is pushing himself out there to build a very large following
- Compare this to Jack Welch (former chairman of General Electric and now a business 'guru') who has more than 1 million people following him and follows a mere 27 people. Though actually this is more of a 'celebrity' account – his content is a mix of personal and odd comments on the economy, so you don't actually get the pure insight you might expect from him

A number of social media books say that you should always have one more follower than the number of people you are following. In the business-to-business and academic markets, our view is this should be a much wider gap.

Interestingly, we followed Liz Strauss on one Saturday, when she started following us and we sent a few messages to each other. Over half a day

- She started following 107 more people – including our own business (reckon this might be a monthly blitz to update her account. We started following her about 4 weeks ago)
- The count of her followers rose by 12
- But interestingly the number of lists she appeared on dropped by 20 – we don't know why

How often should you tweet?

The other point of interest in these examples, is how often they tweet. We have purposely included some really big-hitting Twitter accounts which most business-to-business tweeters are highly unlikely to achieve within even a few years and probably would never want.

However the more you tweet, the more Google spots you and the more you get picked up on Google searches. If you look at the accounts, there is considerable co-relation between how many tweets they have made and the number of their followers.

So some people who want to build a large following, will tweet every hour or even every few minutes. For the business community this is highly likely to annoy people. Your account becomes dominated by one person and you can no longer see interesting comments from a breadth of people. We and others will unfollow them.

If your business is taking advice on how to get higher on Google rankings (SEO), take care with the advice that you may get. Numerous blogs and tweets may send you up the rankings, but they may also 'disengage' you from the business community you want to engage with.

Our view is that you need to tweet at least once a week and probably three or four times, more if you really have interesting things to say.



Watch out for what others are tweeting about you!

Anyone can tweet about your business, any time, any place and on whatever they want.

While this can be a great opportunity if people are sharing good experiences, passing on tips and recommendations about you, it is also a challenge to ensure you are monitoring what is said online and that you have people in your business who know how to respond.

If someone is criticising your business, you need to engage openly, ask them for more details, apologise and see how you can put it right. Don't try and take these conversations offline. That is likely to irritate the person complaining and others who have spotted the conversation will be keen to see how you respond. As with any complaint, if you handle it well you can create lifetime loyalty.

Just to see what this can look like, we captured the tweetstreams below. You need to start with the tweet on 18 December. @Executivefocus has 817 followers and you can see that a number have spotted the tweets and are clearly replying to them and joining in the discussions. And it rumbled on for three weeks.

-
-  **Executivefocus** Anne Watson
Booked tickets for Opera Bastille in Paris. Just showing you @opera_north that customers always have choice even after 25 years with you.
20 Dec
-
-  **Executivefocus** Anne Watson
@TootingGareth At Opera North you get a long wait, a flea in your ear, your champagne confiscated and told to stay in your wheelchair!
20 Dec
-
-  **Executivefocus** Anne Watson
@TootingGareth Deeply envious of your Turkish adventure. Knew you would applaud our move to Welsh Opera!
20 Dec
-
-  **Executivefocus** Anne Watson
Enjoy a brief musical, dancing moment with Northern Ballet
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eihSvx2Kppc>
20 Dec
-
-  **Executivefocus** Anne Watson
@sandracorcoran Saw Merry Widow. Fantastic performance. Shame about the rest. We are trying West Yorks Playhouse next week!
20 Dec
-
-  **Executivefocus** Anne Watson
Can't reply to your DM @opera_north until you follow me. Just bought my husband a subscription to Welsh National Opera. They welcome disabled
20 Dec
-
-  **Executivefocus** Anne Watson
@Opera_North Suggest you train your dress circle staff. No fun being in a wheel chair at Opera North. I am still reeling from abuse.
18 Dec
-



twitter Search Home Profile Messages Who To Follow

Executivefocus Anne Watson
@WN0tweet I hear from @TootingGareth that you look after disabled customers unlike my experience with @Opera_North. Am I welcome?
21 Dec

Executivefocus Anne Watson
@Opera_North @grandtheatreLS1 Nothing you can do to fix that night but I can cause a fuss so other disabled people are not humiliated
21 Dec

Executivefocus Anne Watson
@Opera_North Sounds like a cop out to me. You sold me the tickets and knew I was in a wheelchair. Don't you have a responsibility to me?
21 Dec

Executivefocus Anne Watson
@GrandTheatreLS1 I had a terrible experience. I was humiliated by your 2 ushers in Dress Circle. Don't you want people in wheelchairs?
21 Dec

Leeds Grand Theatre
@GrandTheatreLS1 view full profile →
Leeds

The best of musicals, drama, comedy, opera, ballet and music from the West End and beyond in Leeds. <http://www.leedsgrandtheatre.com>

645	551	785	34
Tweets	Following	Followers	Listed

+ Follow

Recent Tweets

GrandTheatreLS1 Leeds Grand Theatre
@lorraineandcouk is the Grand Arcade too far? Roots and fruits are excellent
37 minutes ago

Welcome to #NewTwitter! Read up on what's new. You can still access old Twitter for a limited time. Close

twitter executivefocus Home Profile Messages Who To Follow

Executivefocus Anne Watson
@TootingGareth I know you don't mean that! You both love my animated chat
7 Jan

TootingGareth Gareth James
@Executivefocus A rare treat for Martin then!
7 Jan

Executivefocus Anne Watson
Today will be a silent day as I have lost my voice. I expect jokes and cheers all round. E mail here I come.
7 Jan

Executivefocus Anne Watson
At last. Proper apology from @GrandTheatreLS1 plus promise to retrain their staff. Hopefully disabled patrons will benefit. I won't be back
6 Jan

TootingGareth Gareth James
@Executivefocus You've got it in one. My turn!
5 Jan

Executivefocus Anne Watson
@TootingGareth I sense you are on a mission, dealing with the arrogant theatres who forget that customers sit in the seats and pay the bills
5 Jan

Anne Watson
@Executivefocus view full profile →
Dacre and Kew

International headhunter, coach, best selling business book author, speaker and addicted to Spain, opera and literature in all its forms - and coffee! <http://www.executive-focus.co.uk>

1,219	180	817	6
Tweets	Following	Followers	Listed

Following

Message

Recent Tweets

Executivefocus Anne Watson
Thanks to @msf_phop I am embarking on a dangerous knitting project to see me through a month of travel- China,US, Hungary and Sweden.
4 hours ago

Executivefocus Anne Watson
I wish Twitter would stop suggesting that I should follow DanniMinogue. I feel quite insulted.



Why do businesses and journalists tweet?

Increasing numbers of journalists are using Twitter to find answers to their questions, find good case studies, find out what is going on that is up to the minute. Many check their Twitter more than their emails these days.

We asked a few people whose Twitter accounts we rate, to say why they are tweeting.

- **@ruskin147** is the Twitter address of **Rory Cellan-Jones, the BBC's technology correspondent**. He replied *"Twitter has become indispensable to the running of my professional and personal life - perhaps dangerously, addictively so. First, it provides a rolling news service, with tweets telling me about breaking stories faster than the wires. Then it's an essential promotional platform, which I use to tell people about every broadcast or blog I do. Then it's vital for research - an appeal on Twitter for case studies or pointers on stories always yields plenty of results. Oh, and I even talk to my wife via Twitter, but that's really sad...."*
- **@garyverity** is the Twitter account of Gary Verity, who – as his Twitter biography says – is **'Chief Executive of Welcome to Yorkshire** and determined to make Yorkshire one of the world's top visitor destinations'. His reply was *"There are three things that a leader has to do: create and deliver a strategy; ensure everyone you work with knows what that strategy and vision is and how you are doing on delivering it; and motivate and inspire those around you. I'm finding that Twitter is increasingly helping me to do all these."*
"I initially started on Twitter because I thought it would be good just to talk about the region I love, Yorkshire – to tweet about a great restaurant or a new attraction or event and that others would want to go and visit them as a result."
"I am doing that – and I can convey the passion that people in Yorkshire feel for our region. I tweet about a stunning sunrise over Scarborough harbour, our award-winning Railway Children production at Waterloo station or a mouth-watering roast lamb in our local pub. But I am also starting to try and convey a sense of my role for our team and stakeholders to understand, as well as engage with journalists through it. And I'm finding it a very fast, helpful way to get news out or get people to vote and support us!"
"Welcome to Yorkshire has its own (very successful) twitter feed; mine is much more personal about my life and experiences in the broadest sense. I do take part in a bit of banter and some personal comments to show my human side, but mostly I keep it about Yorkshire."
- Michael Skapinker, **@skapinker**, is a **Financial Times editor and columnist** and says he tweets because *"Like many of my generation (I am in my mid-50s), I deal with friends one-to-one or in small groups. While I enthusiastically use new media to communicate with them (email, texting), the idea of addressing them in a large group, as on Facebook, is alien to me. They are all different, became friends at different times and in different places and would not necessarily get on with one another. I also keep private and work life resolutely separate."*
"So when Twitter arrived, I used it purely to promote my column in the Financial Times on business and society. However, I soon realised that there were people on Twitter with interesting things to say and I began to follow them. I occasionally joke with friends on Twitter, but, to me, it is a space to exchange ideas - on business, politics, economics or the arts. (Although I do follow the odd comic; life can't be all serious.)"
"As well as my column, I now suggest articles to read by colleagues or other writers I have come across and follow people who do the same. The short format sometimes seems constraining but has the advantage that it doesn't take very long to get through. I quickly "unfollow" people who tweet constantly. I am not interested in what they had for breakfast - unless they have something interesting to say about genetically modified cereal or free-range eggs." www.ft.com/skapinker www.twitter.com/skapinker



- **@nickywake** is the Twitter account for Nicky Wake, **MD of Don't Panic**, an event management agency which specialises in communications, digital and marketing events. She said

"I've found Twitter to be an invaluable and rather addictive marketing tool. I use both a corporate and a personal twitter account which helps keep private life and company communications separate and allows me to have two distinctly different voices.

"We've won at least three new clients as a result of connections I've made on Twitter, it enables me to network really effectively, start conversations and get to know prospective clients ahead of any phone or e-mail contact. I find it much easier and more effective to make a cheeky business approach through Twitter than picking up the phone to make a cold call. I've regularly used Twitter to make approaches to potential speakers and I find it really helpful to make connections with high profile individuals where an e-mail approach is likely to get overlooked.

"Twitter has changed conference and event etiquette. We now encourage delegates and guests to keep their phones on and tweet their thoughts throughout the event, using hashtags. This improves networking and audience interaction and allows us to effectively evaluate delegate feedback instantly. We often display Twitter feeds at events so guests are encouraged to join in the conversation.

"We promote all of our events through Twitter now and regularly find that we get more tickets sales or RSVPs through tweeting, as opposed to more traditional marketing methods such as e-mail marketing. We deliver a series of search and social media conferences and awards events where Twitter is actually the primary marketing channel used. One particular Search conference last year sold in excess of 200 delegate tickets and 80% of all marketing activity was through Twitter."

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from Professor Nigel Lockett, Professor of Enterprise, University of Leeds



What did you think about social media at first?

I can't remember a 'first hearing' about social media – just a growing awareness of blogs, Twitter, and Facebook. Initially, the focus was all about personal life style and then I became aware of LinkedIn and began to see the point for my professional life. This was not true for blogging and mirco-blogging (tweeting).

Have your views changed and how?

Very much so. Northern Lights PR ran a 'media and blogging training' session which got me thinking and helped bring together some loose threads for me. As a result I decided to do three things: build a professional profile website; start tweeting; and write a blog. Now I can see the linkages, the opportunities and most importantly the challenges!

By spending the last year 'experimenting' I can now see the potential and limitations.

What is working well?

The best part is linking blogs, tweets, RSS feeds to my own professional profile website – www.nigellockett.com. My objective was to comment and reflect in a way that built a genuine image of me. By integrating my profile, blogs, tweets (hoots!) and RSS feeds on a single website it has helped me to achieve this. However, I didn't want to appear too serious – the balance had to be right. I have tried to develop a daily routine of reading the RSS feeds on my website and tweeting the most interesting one or two.

What has been the hardest part?

Blogging! It is so hard keep on top of this. Other things simply get in the way. And finding time is still the hardest part of it all.

Do you see benefits to you now – and opportunities for the future?

It is difficult to be specific but I have a 'feeling' this is going in the right direction. Followers are gradually increasing in number and offline contacts are commenting on tweets and blogs.

I was approached at a conference by someone who thanked me for tweeting – they enjoyed the humour but also found the links relevant, saying they saved them time!

The next step for me is to increase the number and relevance of my blogs. My new textbook has just been published and I will use this to increase the number of blogs each month. My target is two blogs a month.

Any tips for others?

Get the balance right between tweeting about your life and what your readers are interested in about you and your thoughts. Simultaneously work on multiple fronts – tweeting, blogging, social networking. It is good to have someone like Northern Lights PR supporting and encouraging this. Having just moved jobs, I feel this more keenly.

And finally be patient and allow your online voice to develop.

ACTION TIPS



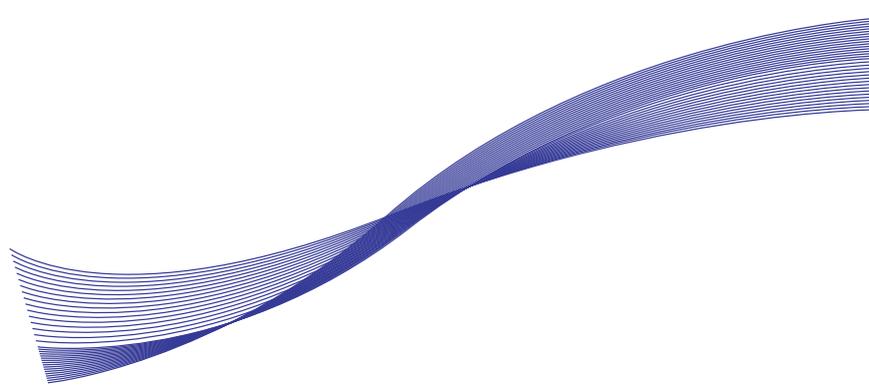
Ensure your Twitter account reflects your business brand

1. Agree a strategy for your Twitter account, as part of your communications plan
2. Make sure your biography (bio) succinctly reflects your business and clearly states how you would like to help other people (ie the business you want!)
3. Decide if you are having a corporate account (or accounts for different areas) and whether you want individuals to tweet – such as your chief executive – or for it all to be 'the business'
4. Nominate two or three people who will manage and monitor your account – and ensure they are trained in how to deliver your brand and goals through the tweets. Get them to respond to new people who start following you and pick up on DMs (direct messages – these are like emails direct to you and need speedy responses)
5. As part of setting up your strategy, get a group together and agree around 50 tweets that you would or wouldn't tweet. Turn these into guidelines for your team
6. Every week or two look objectively at your Twitter account. Does it reflect your business, what do you like about it, what isn't working? Regularly review and agree new guidelines if needed

Chapter Eight



Facebook



Which business people are using Facebook?

Whenever we run a workshop or talk to clients about social media we usually get the same response about Facebook – “It’s something my kids use – definitely not for me”.

While it is true that Facebook remains a significant communication tool for most young people under 25, the fastest growing users are the over 50s. Your son or daughter might be embarrassed that you are in their digital space – the online equivalent of ‘sad dad dancing’ – but the silver surfers are on Facebook in their hundreds of thousands with the oldest user 103!

It is hard to believe that Facebook started just over six years ago at Harvard University. Its use in the UK was initially limited to students at the elite Russell Group of Universities. Photographs of drunken students behaving badly are probably the main reason why Facebook is still seen by many professionals as inappropriate for business use. And the reason why many young people positively discourage their parents from signing up.

Communicating with your target audience online is the same as it is for offline – who are they, where will you find them, what do they read, where do they go, what are their interests? If you are working with or targeting young professionals, then you should certainly be considering Facebook as part of your marketing and communications mix. And many companies now recognise that Facebook is a good platform for engaging with the over 50s too.

If your audience is global then you may also want to consider using Facebook, which now has 500 million users worldwide and is the top social network site in many countries. These include India, where it took the number one spot in July 2010 with 20.9 million visitors – a 179 per cent increase from the previous year. However, you can forget reaching customers in China – Facebook is banned there.

The golden rule about business use of Facebook is to engage with and relate to your audience, not push information at them. Encourage two way communication and feedback, even if you don’t always like what people are saying. If you simply talk at people, or use your Facebook page only to promote your services or products, you will not build those rich relationships that could benefit your business –and worse, you could destroy relationships.

One of the biggest criticisms about Facebook is the lack of privacy. Employers are known to check out the social networking site for indiscreet photographs of job applicants. So well known is this practice that sensible PR lecturers at Leeds Metropolitan University advise their students to cleanse their Facebook profiles of anything that could harm their future employment.

In a blog on TNW, Alex Wilhem says: “In a shocking [report from Hitwise](#), Facebook was the [most visited site on the internet](#) in the US for 2010, beating Google out of its crown. In 2010, Facebook accumulated some 8.93% of site visits online, while Google secured just 7.19%.”

People increasingly follow the links posted by their friends, a reason why clips on YouTube can attract thousands of viewers. And another good reason to have a blog!



Why would a business use Facebook?

To build brand awareness

Corporates such as [Coca Cola](#) recognise that Facebook is a great place to engage directly with their customers. Rather than advertising at customers, savvy brands use Facebook to create innovative campaigns and interact in a way that is not possible offline. In fact the Coca Cola page was started unofficially by two fans before the brand had a presence on Facebook. Rather than close down the page, Coca Cola invited the two users to visit the drinks factory and take photographs. The two fans are still involved in the Facebook page which is 'liked' by a staggering 22,136,659 people.

Direct communication

Some charities have been quick to recognise the opportunities that Facebook brings for them to communicate directly with their supporters and to help them to influence and fundraise. Not for profit organisations, usually restricted by tight budgets, can afford to be creative in a way that would not be possible offline. [Oxfam](#) has a particularly effective presence using video and animation to drive donations and calls to action for particular causes.

To network and build relationships

Facebook might be more social than LinkedIn but you can have valuable relationships which could lead to business. To use an offline analogy, LinkedIn is the CBI, the IoD or The Rotary Club whereas Facebook is more like the local tennis club, the pub or even your hairdresser. All places where you can meet someone you might in future do business with. We know of several senior people who chose not to be on LinkedIn - sometimes because their jobs are too sensitive - but who are on Facebook in a personal, not professional capacity. We have secured conference speakers from our own Facebook networks of friends.

To recruit talent

As part of their recruitment strategy, [Ernst & Young](#) created their first Facebook group page in 2006 to connect with students interested in learning more about careers with the global company. Now, 58,967 people 'like' the Ernst & Young's Facebook page. In order to create a pool of the brightest talent, Ernst & Young starts an online relationship with university students months - and even years - before they graduate.

To move up Google rankings

Having a Facebook page for your business will increase your online visibility. A Facebook page is public so any links you put into it back to your website or blog are known as 'do follow' and will be picked up by search engines. By updating your page regularly with links back to your site you should move up the rankings. This won't happen if you have a 'group' rather than a 'page' - the differences are explained below.

To promote an event and engage with delegates

Facebook allows you to invite people to an event, post reminders and carry on discussions with delegates. You can see who is going to attend your event and those who are maybes. With so many young professionals using the social network, Facebook can be an excellent way of promoting an event to would-be delegates. The [Yorkshire & Lincolnshire group of Chartered Institute of PR \(CIPR\)](#) has its own Facebook group (see definition of terms below) which it uses to promote forthcoming events. Attendance at events has improved since the CIPR started to use Facebook as a marketing tool

To manage your reputation

A Facebook campaign against a brand or business is far from unusual. Disgruntled customers or former employees can criticise a company through their own personal profile, through a brand's Facebook page or even set up a specific page or group to criticise or campaign against an organisation or product. Instead of ignoring the complaints, or trying to take down negative comments, you can use Facebook to put your side of the argument, to address customer concerns and to ask customers and people who do rate you to share their positive comments on your Facebook page. If you have made a mistake then admit it, but stay cool and don't get involved in a Facebook catfight.



Facebook terms

These are just some of the basic terms to get you started. There is a comprehensive glossary at [How do I Facebook?](#)

- **Personal profile**
Generally used by individuals – Facebook’s terms and conditions forbid use of the personal profile for business. But, confusingly, you must have a personal profile before you can set up a business page
- **A page**
Used by businesses, charities and other organisations. You used to invite ‘fans’ to join your page, but now people are invited to ‘like’ your page – this is signified by a thumbs up sign. Pages have the advantage of being able to display information directly in the ‘news feeds’ of the people who ‘like’ you
- **A group**
Usually set up by a group of like minded people, or perhaps members of an offline club or association and can be restricted by invitation. Groups are run by an administrator or administrators who can send messages directly to members. They can be good for discussions and for events, but are not as good for Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) as pages
- **News feed**
News feed highlights what is happening in your social circle on Facebook. It draws in comments from your friends and the latest headlines from the pages you like
- **Wall**
A space on every user’s profile that allows the user and their friends to post a message.

How to set up a personal Facebook profile

- Before you can have a business page on Facebook you must have a personal Facebook profile. To register go to <http://www.facebook.com>
- How you use your personal profile is up to you. Some people prefer to keep Facebook for close friends and family, using LinkedIn for their professional lives. Others decide to mix both professional and personal networking
- However you decide to use your personal Facebook profile, make sure you adjust the privacy settings so that you control who sees the content. A good tip is to use the custom button rather than one of the pre-set ones
- When you are setting up your account you will be asked for your marital status, your birthday, your interests. But these are not compulsory so leave them blank unless you do want the world to know your age and the fact that you’re an Elvis fan
- Remember that many of us use personal information for our online bank accounts. Be careful you are not going public with the critical secret answer to a security question
- Consider the photographs you want to post and the information you put out. Do you want people to see pictures of your children or know when you are on holiday?



Setting up a business page on Facebook

- You can set up a page as a brand, product or organisation. However, if you are already a Facebook user and are logged into your own profile, it is surprisingly hard to find the 'create a page' button. So log out of your own profile and you should find the ['create a page'](#) button on Facebook's home page
- Then it is quite straightforward to set up a page for your business. Remember you have to link it to a personal profile, so it is an idea to think carefully whether to use your own or someone else's in the business. What if you use an employee's profile and they leave the company?
- Once your page is set up, you need to get people to 'like' it. Ask your existing Facebook friends to 'like' it and recommend it to their friends. Keep the content fresh and engaging, relevant to your audience and encourage discussion. You need to work at building a following for your page
- Don't let your page become stale. No new content and few people liking your page looks unprofessional and may even suggest that you have gone out of business

ACTION TIPS



If FACEBOOK feels right for your business

1. Set up your own personal profile so that you understand the process and the way Facebook is used
2. Decide if you will keep your own profile for personal use or whether you want to mix in business friends too
3. Make sure that your privacy settings restrict who can view your profile
4. Decide who in your organisation will link a business page to their personal profile. Agree a strategy for how your business will use Facebook and what information can be posted
5. Have a look at how other businesses in your sector are using Facebook - how many people 'like' these pages, how new is the content, do they really engage or do they simply push out information
6. If you decide to have a page for your business keep it updated regularly with new content and links back to your blog or website so that it doesn't look stale and out of date

Chapter Nine

Getting people to respond

One of the hardest parts of social media is getting people to reply or comment on your blogs and tweets. Anyone who is worried about being inundated should be so lucky!

There was a famous blogger who became the star of a film, *Julie and Julia* starring Meryl Streep. She cooked all 500+ recipes from a famous cookery book, blogged as she went along - and towards the end had a considerable following. However, she reckoned she had 100 people following her before a single person responded and posted a comment on her blog. Up until then, she wondered if anyone was interested.

This is an area where we know there is still a huge amount to learn and get better. However, we are doing as well if not better than many business to business bloggers.

We are admitting defeat in getting our blog to large numbers, just by doing quality blogs and then getting quality followers. We are going to have to start employing some of the tools in the 'numbers game'. So we have started working with an impressive SEO (search engine optimisation) expert and starting all sorts of new activities. We will share these with you but will not know how they work for a few months. Watch our blog and we will let you know how they do!

In the meantime, here are some of the things we have done that have worked to get responses – and having checked with our expert, these are all still valid, with or without the SEO back-up.

Write on topics that people are searching for

What have your customers set up [Google Alerts](#) for? Who are they following? What might journalists be searching for on the web – hints and tips, topical comment that adds value to a debate, controversy, great opinions, insight on something no-one really understands.

Write your blog with phrases, questions and topical words or people's names that will get you noticed on the web. Insert [hyperlinks](#) to bloggers or websites that are helpful and that you might want to engage with.

You will notice there is a link behind the word 'hyperlink' in the paragraph above. I searched for a good website to link to, to explain this. If you choose someone niche (ie not Wikipedia or Google) they may spot you, follow you and comment, if you then follow the rules below.

One of our early unsolicited comments was on [a blog](#) titled 'Why aren't there more women on UK boards?'. Kath from [Where the Bright Women Are](#) was looking for women to take part in their survey, so had found and commented on our blog with a link to her site. I then forwarded this on to a number of other women asking them to take part in Kath's survey. Everyone is a winner!

Ask for comments

Sounds simple? Don't miss the obvious. Email people who will be interested in your blog (clients, contacts) and say 'you were talking about this topic the other day, thought the blog might be helpful. Would really appreciate your thoughts – would you mind posting a comment?'

They will probably ask you for help another time in return – make sure you help them too.

We invited Prof Chris Gale – who is interested in law and sport – to an event at Leeds United on Integrity in Sport. This blog was spotted by a few people in organisations looking at the professionalism of football who commented. We then emailed others to say would they like to respond – and a number have.

However several did not, so this is not fail proof. Don't underestimate how daunting it can be for people to comment on blogs. A lot of very senior people are seriously uncomfortable putting their views out there at first.

Make it easy to comment

If you sound like the expert and there is nothing more to say, it sort of closes the conversation? Write in a way to open up the dialogue – remember most people don't go around looking for blogs to comment on. How can you make it easy and natural for them to do this?

- Ask questions
- Be controversial – so no matter how busy, someone wants to say that your view is tosh! Or how right you are. But do this carefully and sparingly – and this approach may not be right for you
- Mention what you have done that has not worked – it encourages others to offer help and ideas as to why not
- Ask for help
- Take a stand – this is slightly different from the controversy. I did this in [a blog](#) on whether we should go for the numbers game in social media. I know there are a lot of views both ways and mentioned people whom I respect who see the value of 'numbers'. I emailed one of the people I had mentioned so he knew what I'd said – out of courtesy – and this also encouraged him to come back and explain their own point in more detail
- Don't finish the conversation – leave it in a way that entices others to finish it for you!

Use your communities

Another blog that generated speedy comments was a review I did of a social media conference. I wrote [the blog](#) late that night and emailed people I'd met that day, saying 'good to meet you, here is my view of the conference, would welcome your views'.

I purposely wrote about some of the speakers with links. Some of them are now following us as a result.

I also said I thought I disagreed with one of the speakers, Thomas Power but wasn't sure. That was the bit that got people responding. I have to say I hoped Thomas Power might comment but that bit didn't work!

Predict trends

We recently took on six paid interns and, in just a few weeks, got them up and running with their own blogs and generating comments.

One of them, [Shaheeb's blog](#) got a debate going about the future of newspapers. This provided a good seam for people to comment on – we asked speakers, clients and colleagues if they would support our interns by commenting.

ACTION TIPS



If you want people to comment on your blogs, respond on Twitter or reply to your questions on LinkedIn – you need to be doing the same for others

1. Find blogs of your customers or your suppliers. Follow them until they pose a question or make a comment that you have a view on. Post a comment
2. If no-one in your market is blogging yet, look for journalist blogs, online publications (trade and national papers online) and make yourself make a comment at least once a week.
3. If you are finding it hard to comment anywhere – analyse why. Is it that the blogs don't make it easy to comment? Note when you find it easy or difficult and adapt your own blog to encourage others
4. Follow people in your market on Twitter – customers, suppliers, journalists. If they put out a request or ask a question, respond to it when it's relevant
5. Look for interesting tweets that would interest your customers or clients – and retweet them
6. Watch on LinkedIn for questions that people put out in your groups – and reply to one

Chapter Ten

The social media world

The tone and courtesies in social media

There is a particular culture in social media. We would describe it as you at your most helpful and courteous. Your networking head and heart at their best.

We cannot stress enough how important it is that all your employees understand this. We are beginning to see a pattern of which teams struggle most with this culture – pure sales teams (the idea of so many new contacts can make them giddy!) and marketing teams who normally focus on advertising, advertorials and direct mail. At first they see this as a new way to direct mail and advertise, before they get to grips with the new way of doing business.

You might say ‘you would say that wouldn’t you’, but teams that work in PR, media and communications tend instinctively to understand what is needed, particularly in terms of creating ‘rich content’ that Google likes.

Good phrases to use in social media are

- Can anyone help us on....?
- Can I ask for your help to ...?
- Thanks for your help on ...
- Thought this might be useful
- What do you think of ...?
- Want to share this with you ...

If you want to build new relationships in the ‘real world’, you spend time getting to know each other, understand what you do and learn to trust each other. You have to do the same through social media.

You may be able to make initial contact quickly and easily, but it is rare that anyone gives new business to a completely new acquaintance. You usually want to get to know them, check out who they associate with and take a while to make up your mind.

In their book, *Trust Agents: Using the Web to Build Influence, Improve Reputation, and Earn Trust* authors [Chris Brogan and Julien Smith](#) use the anecdote of Joseph Pistone, an FBI agent who infiltrates the Mafia in the 1970s. Calling himself Donnie Brasco and posing as a jewel thief (yes, you may have seen a film on this) he spends months hanging around in a bar where the Mafia meets.

He becomes so well known that, as they get to know him slowly, he becomes part of their scene and can then start operating with them because he knows their names, habits, lifestyles. He effortlessly slips into their lifestyles because he’s been watching them for so long and no-one spots that he is, actually, a complete stranger.

It’s a point well made for social media. Watch what others are doing and get to know how everyone is operating. You need to be a part of the gang when you start engaging, or you will stick out like a sore thumb.

You may have noticed that at the end of every chapter in this book there is a set of Action Tips for you. And you may have registered how many of these are suggesting you research your market in social media, analyse what people are doing and saying, then take small steps.

Gaming the numbers

You will have picked up all through this book that many people use social media to drive volume and improve their Google rankings.

For many businesses this will directly convert to business – for instance a bathroom company, student finance or garden products.

We have written this book for businesses in the B2B market – lawyers, accountants, corporates selling to other businesses.

We don't believe that going for large numbers is right for this market. Corporates want to do business with people they know and trust. They make judgements on the company you keep. And if you start bombarding them with a couple of blogs, messages and tweets each day, they will just go 'whoa, stop this, I can't keep up'.

Others will disagree with us and we have been round in circles, wondering if we are being too purist in our approach to social media.

However, we have finally come to a clear conclusion (for now) that we want quality, not quantity.

You need to decide what is right for you – and hopefully this book will give you some pointers as to how to make this decision.

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from ... Richard Bailey, public relations educator, university lecturer, blogger and corporate PR trainer



Do you remember first hearing about social media and what did you think?

We called it 'new media' before 'social media' became the current phrase. I think the discussions around Web 2.0 in 2005 were the tipping point for awareness of social media as an important phenomenon.

I like the phrase 'social media' except for two things. One is that it's not new: media has always been social but for the brief interlude of the mass media age. The other is that discussion of social media tends to exclude developments in the mobile internet, one of the most exciting areas.

You were an early adopter – why was that? Particularly thinking about blogging

This calls for (another) history lesson. Do you remember the change from dial-up to broadband (always-on) internet? When I got always-on internet at home, I remember wondering what to do with it and decided to create a home-coded website with blog-like qualities. This was in 2001. In 2002 I was delighted to discover there were two other people in the world blogging about public relations!

Your blog is one of the UK's top PR blogs – why do you think that is?

I don't think it is by most measures, though Cision ranks it as such. I can only think that I'm being rewarded for persistence as I've been plodding away with the same PR Studies blog since 2003. Since Google ranks sites on their links, mine is quite well connected (though its Page Rank has declined from 6 to 5, an indication that as the web grows, to stand still means you're going backwards).

What do you think now?

I agree with Dan Gillmor, author of *Mediactive*, who envies his students (he teaches entrepreneurial journalism in the US). This is a golden age for media creativity and self-expression – and the end point is beyond my ability to predict.

Broadly, the pattern is clear. The internet and social media have encouraged millions of flowers to bloom. Most will of course wither, though some will evolve into the great forest trees – just as some great and long-lasting newspapers emerged from the coffee house pamphlets of the seventeenth century.

One aspect of these changes is the move from the personal to the professional, which in some ways I regret. You see this with blogging. The outstanding blogs today are not written by individuals, but by teams: they are the specialist media of the future.

Have your views on social media changed – if so, how and why?

I've been consistent in sensing its importance to the future of public relations; this has been reinforced by witnessing the value of social media to graduate prospects. But I'm not one of those who thinks we need to tear up the textbooks and relearn everything. I prefer evolution to revolution!

What do you think is good/working?

I think the reducing emphasis on media relations is a good thing for public relations. This is happening because of the growth in 'owned media' as well as because of changes in the media business. My students hardly know the 'old world'.

What was the hardest thing when you started out?

This change from the familiar (media relations) to the unfamiliar (web technology, SEO) is very scary for some. It's also a challenge to the idea of the public relations consultancy or public relations department, since the boundaries between once-distinct disciplines are blurring.

With traditional media, even if journalists were a bit scary you knew who they were. With social media we don't know the people who may turn a message against us. Messages get picked up, repeated and passed on by the public. The uncertainty is bigger than with traditional media.

Businesses and organisations have to take an even deeper breath. But if you don't put anything out, you don't get anything back. It's just another communications channel – only less manageable.

Where do you see it going and what are the opportunities?

Change is a threat – but it's also an opportunity. While I see a decline in traditional PR agency functions (such as media relations), I see continued growth in the PR consultancy business. Now is the time to take clients under your wing and help them navigate to the future

What is still difficult and why - and how could we get that better in future?

In a world in which everyone (individuals, businesses, brands) is a media company, who should we trust? Paradoxically, the role of journalists as fiercely independent truth seekers becomes more important even as their business model comes under threat.

Public relations has in the past benefited from being a covert tool – but in a world of open, transparent communications, it needs to become more open. Public relations should dare to speak its name!

Where do you think the benefit to yourself and to your organisation is?

I work for a university. In a competitive environment, we need to attract fee-paying students. Since their first point of contact for most is a Google search, then we need to actively populate and monitor our online presence.

What has surprised you about all this (whatever that is!)

Those who most fiercely resist this are some of my (admired) colleagues, who recall the old 'command and control' days. They are fearful of the chaotic online world and sometimes seek to warn our students off from it.

Any tips for others?

Social media is like life. There's much to be fearful of – but that's no reason not to get involved, to experiment and to learn. The biggest risk is letting it pass by.

Business leaders have to learn to relax their style and give up some control. Big corporates recognise that social media is not simply a means of selling products but can be part of having real life conversations, helping to neutralise government and public opinion. They are conscious of their licence to operate and they know that people can regulate them or boycott them out of the market. They know they need a message - just like a news hook for a journalist - that will appeal to their customers and encourage them to pass it on.

Social media is breaking down the boundaries of customer relations and public relations. A customer Tweets a product complaint and someone in your business picks it up. But do the people picking up the complaint on Twitter have the authority to deal with it? Businesses need to empower staff to deal with customers' online comments. Clearly there are risks in delegating, but there are huge risks in not doing so – it's like trying to hold back the tide.

How is social media relevant to B2B?

Ten years ago people were talking about social media challenging the advertising model and being about conversations. Now the general view is that social media is about relationships. If you are a customer of say Boeing do you want a deep, rich relationship with that business? The answer is probably yes. But social media relies to a large degree on relationships being conducted in public. If you're a customer of Boeing do you want to conduct that relationship in public? Probably not.

But social media channels can be highly valuable in a B2B environment, adding to the collaborative and richness of relationships between companies and their customers and prospective customers. So you can meet someone and follow them on Twitter, connect with them on LinkedIn or read their blog and you are building a relationship. You do business with people you trust and social media can be part of building that trust.

ACTION TIPS



Make sure your employees understand the protocols and courtesies of social media

1. Decide if your business is going for a quality or quantity strategy in social media – we would recommend quality. Make sure this is reflected in how your team uses social media
2. Hold workshops for your employees and get them to work through what feels right or wrong for your business, to deliver your comms strategy
3. Encourage employees to spend time researching and watching other social media accounts and feedback good ideas from others. Be objective about what you are doing
4. Do a regular audit to see how your team is using social media and check it continues to feel right. Adapt if not
5. Get employees to tell you what responses they are getting – evaluation will partly be pulling together lots of small successes
6. As your employees learn how to use and maximise social media, make sure everyone is sharing how they can develop to the next step



Social media: internal communications and policies; crisis communications

Internal communications

When were your policies last updated? Check them to see whether they address issues such as

- Are you happy for all employees to set up a LinkedIn account without any guidance?
- Is it OK for employees to mention they work for your company on their personal Twitter account?
- What are you happy for them to say about customers on Facebook?

The best way to tackle your policy is to get a cross-company team together to look at what people are doing and are likely to be doing.

Most businesses want to encourage employees to use LinkedIn to generate business. Others are worried about security issues, particularly banks, and yet more are concerned in case employees unwittingly break confidentiality and regulatory rules.

Each business will be different. You need to decide what is right for you within the context of your cultural and regulatory framework.

To help you, two of our clients have kindly shared their policies for this book – in the two appendices. Both admit they are pretty strict about what they allow but they want to start on this basis, see how it goes and then look at what they are happy to relax later.

Crisis communications

Hopefully your business has a crisis management plan. If not, you should create one and look at the key risks to your business and what you can do to avoid or mitigate crises. A good plan should cover everything from the death of your chief executive to your computers going down or the loss of a major customer.

And communications should be a part of the plan. You need to anticipate disasters and again set up a plan as to who should do what if a product fails or your employees post a clip on YouTube blatantly breaking health and safety rules (yes, we've seen this happen in various guises to a number of businesses).

You need to anticipate and manage social media crises, just the same as with offline PR and communications. A social media crisis plan should include procedures to be followed, chain of command (who needs to know), spokespeople and their contact details.

Social media can be a really useful tool for an offline crisis where people need to know what is happening and quickly. Bad news travels very fast thanks to the internet but social media – Twitter, YouTube, Facebook – can put businesses in charge of their news agenda. This provides opportunities to communicate very effectively in a crisis and to publish apologies, clarify the facts and issue statements to a wide audience.

Here are some good practice guidelines to help to avoid and, if necessary, manage crises

- Have a social media policy for employees so that they understand and have guidelines for any online communication which may relate to or have implications for a business ([IBM](#) has an excellent policy, downloadable online)
- Ensure that if you have employees designated to manage online content and social media accounts, a number of other people also have the password and user names so they can manage the accounts in a crisis
- Company blogs need more than one person who knows how to upload the blogs and access the 'backroom' functions
- Businesses should set up a daily audit of what is being said about them online. [Google alerts](#) and [Tweetdeck](#) can monitor what people are saying about your company and products online (more sophisticated systems such as Technorati are needed for large corporates)
- Ensure the person monitoring online comments has the authority, processes and contacts to know how to deal with any crisis, or potential crisis, they spot
- Be prepared for negative and even critical comments. While it is OK to correct factually incorrect information, you don't want to get involved in an online fight
- If you don't like what is being said, change the conversation

We have been asked by a Masters student to answer questions about crisis communications in social media for her dissertation.

As part of this, she gave us a couple of case studies and asked for our views and how we would have advised these companies. Let's look at the examples and questions she gave first

Vodafone faced a crisis in Dec 2010 when a competition they launched using the platform Twitter backfired. The public was asked to tweet '#whatmakesmesmile' in order to win a prize - however people used the 'hash tag' to discuss Vodafone's alleged tax avoidance. Not only was the topic trending globally on Twitter but tweets were streamed live from the Vodafone website. There is research to suggest that a crisis response strategy should depend on the amount of reputational damage inflicted. For example, the stronger the amount of damage incurred the more accommodative the response has to be and vice versa. Vodafone denied allegations and refused to accept responsibility or address consumers. How would you have advised Vodafone to act in this situation?

On 26 Jan 2011, **Toyota** was confronted with another vehicle recall of certain Lexus and Avensis models. They immediately issued a statement on their website and a YouTube video to state what the specific problem was and who might be affected. It seemed that the company were very open from the outset and coverage hasn't been particularly negative. Do you think transparency is one of the fundamental elements of crisis communication?

Taco Bell have used social media channels to tackle a crisis which claimed the American fast food company misrepresents the contents of its beef. Although there has been a lot of negative press surrounding the issue, Taco Bell appears to have come out fighting. Their quick and active response which utilised Twitter, YouTube and Facebook directly addressed consumers and has somewhat raised the profile of the company. Do you think this example is one which other organisations should look to follow?

I don't know what you think, but these aren't really social media issues – they are fundamental, core business issues. The social media element is almost irrelevant – all it does is make it quicker and faster for the public to comment and take you to task. And for you to respond. Put another way, it exacerbates what is going on in your business and the outside world.

It seems to us that Vodafone has a perception issue about their tax avoidance – and surprisingly for an international consumer brand, it has no idea how to engage with the public. These are what they need to address, not the Twitter campaign. Toyota is finally learning how to handle product recalls and be open with the public. And Taco Bell needed a campaign to tell the public that its beef content is 88%, not less than 35%, which is what the Twitter campaign was saying. The social media campaign made them address an issue which it seems they had not realised was a problem (perhaps more market research needed?).

In fact, one blogger reported on this, showing how by engaging Taco Bell has done themselves a lot of favours. Ken Hoffman said in his blog:

“Taco Bell went even further. In this age of full disclosure, Taco Bell revealed its secret ingredients: water, salt, chili peppers, onion powder, tomato powder, sugar, garlic, COCOA POWDER (didn't see that one coming), oats, caramelized sugar, yeast and citric acid.

“I am impressed by Taco Bell's honesty. Now that I know what's in my food, I feel safer eating at the Bell. Good for them.”

The message here is very clear. No company should let junior teams lead on handling a crisis, just because they are the ones who have been tweeting. There is a danger of being distracted by the social media, instead of focusing on what is actually a key strategic business issue.

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from Martin Wright, Group HR manager,
The Arena Group



Where did you start in social media?

I used to run the IT division of our document business, so we had to get involved and understand it very early – 2005 if not before. Technology is so key to everything we do and we have to be ahead of our customers.

In the early days, I saw social media as a personal rather than a business tool. But we thought it would gain traction quickly, having seen the internet explosion and the impact on our customers. LinkedIn was the first social medium that we thought would become prevalent in the business world.

I still think Facebook is for a different kind of user and way of using. More for people to come back from the pub and chat to friends.

How is your business using social media now – and what are the issues?

We've become converts to a large extent, having initially been very sceptical. We can see the opportunities but they need managing, so we've had to develop a social media policy for our employees and latterly one for LinkedIn.

Social media is pretty scary for most businesses, but we will all have to get up to speed. There are no hiding places – once you are out there, it's in the public domain. Even if you have policies, you can't actually control people.

Our social media policies are pretty tight at the moment. I think we expect to slacken them in due course, but we need to do this one step at a time and see how it all works in practice first.

Where do you see the potential?

With my HR hat on, we have to recruit large numbers of people over the next five years for our growth strategy. I see LinkedIn as a very good recruitment tool. We're only just starting to look at this but I think it will be really powerful and very cost effective.

Of course, the frightening side is that it will also be used to try and poach our staff. But our strategy is to be an employer of choice and we continue to win awards for Best Employer, so it's up to us to make sure that our employees are not tempted. We will have to be wary though, particularly for sales people where they tend to be mobile.

From a wider business perspective, I can see LinkedIn as a business generation tool, if we use it correctly. This will depend on how we write our profiles, the words we put in for search engines, the groups we join.

I'm not quite sure how all this will develop and we do need convincing still in some areas. Whether we like it or not, we are now part of the social media age and we have to be ever mindful to exploit the opportunities and protect the business.

ACTION TIPS



Make sure your internal your internal and external comms policies are in place

1. Have you got a social media usage policy for your employees? Do you want to encourage or ban the use of some media? Look at the two corporate policies (The P&A Group of Companies Ltd and the Arena Group) for ideas and download IBM's policies
2. Get an internal group to help you develop your own policy and have a plan to revisit the policy every six months – things are changing very quickly
3. If you are worried about letting the outside world in to your business – do you need a strategy to be employer of choice and ensure you retain key employees?
4. Create or update your crisis comms plan. Check you are monitoring what the world is saying about your business online and have a plan to manage responses. Don't leave this to a junior member of staff who has a Twitter account to run it for you
5. Ensure senior people know how to access and manage your social media accounts in case of a crisis
6. Make sure everyone in the business really understands what your policies mean – particularly in areas such as using Facebook

Chapter Twelve

Creating a social media strategy and evaluating success

Just as with your PR and communications, social media is not something to delegate to a techie team or do in isolation.

It must form an integral part of your whole business, marketing and communications plans.

We've said it before, but social media is still at an early stage in the UK business-to-business market. So your strategy needs to be very flexible to adapt as your customers and target clients start using social media increasingly and in new ways.

The principles of how you create a strategy are just the same as for a comms strategy.

Your focus is your key business goals – though realistically, you may initially need to set simple goals – blogging and tweeting regularly to get going. This can be a huge achievement in itself – as we know! And then as you get better and slicker you may feel you can get more strategic.

Social media strategies should include a timetable of activities with a broad outline for the year, alongside a specific plan for three months.

A schedule for blogging and tweeting, checking Facebook and Twitter account is essential. This helps everyone to stay committed and focused.

Review periods are also needed to see what is, and isn't, working. Then revise activities based on this. Social media is not a quick fix, so time needs to be allowed. The longer it is done – over years – the more successful it will be. It is about building relationships and relationships take time.

What are your business goals and who are you targeting?

Start off with your business plan, plus the marketing and communications plan. Look at your key target audiences and the messages you are conveying. Who amongst your audiences is on LinkedIn? Who is using Twitter? What will they be searching for on Google that you can direct through your blog?

How will you measure success?

How do you measure success in your communications plan? Is it generating leads or direct sales? Engagement with journalists, media coverage? Requests to be a speaker? The more specific the goals, the more you will see how social media can help to achieve these.

Which social media is best for you?

Analyse your target audiences and where they are in social media – which LinkedIn groups they belong to, what conversations they are engaging with on Twitter, where they are commenting on blogs and on articles? Set up a strategy to join in where they are.

What is your social media brand going to look like?

This one is difficult. Until you are working in and familiar with social media, it's hard to know what you should be doing. The style of social media is far more relaxed and informal than you may be used to. You probably want to start out fairly formal and then review how much you want to 'let go'. You won't be able to approve or control much – it all moves too quickly. Who will you trust to manage your brand within your business?

How are you going to get people to respond?

If you are clear about who you are targeting, your strategy could include inviting the chief exec or finance director of a target company to write a guest blog for you. You can follow their accounts and engage. Write blogs on topics that you know have been concerning them, then ask them for their views. Make sure your social media engages with journalists – this can be one of the best successes from social media

Who is responsible for your social media presence?

You probably want to make one person ultimately responsible for ensuring you have a quality blog going up each week, that you are tweeting several times a week, that all your colleagues are building LinkedIn profiles. And you need a schedule to make sure this happens.

Have you got the resources to keep going?

Social media is hard work to manage. Don't underestimate this. It won't go away and will require increasing amounts of time, just as managing websites and emails has. You can't bury your head in the sand, you have to find a way to resource this.

What criteria will you measure success by?

Initially, it will be a great achievement just to carry out all these activities in a quality way and appearing regularly. That may be your initial measurement. Then you can move into inviting target companies to guest blog, posting blogs on other sites. Most social media activities are partly measured by Google Analytics – how many people are visiting your blog – plus you can check how many people are leaving comments on each blog and the quality of those people. You can also track the numbers following you on Twitter, and the new connections on LinkedIn.

Eventually you will want to measure how this is all converting into new business, but this will not usually happen for months or even a year or more.

Set up evaluation criteria

Set up systems to measure success on – probably – a monthly basis, then review your plans and activities on a quarterly basis.

CASE STUDY

Working with Eureka! The National Children's Museum



We have just started working with [Eureka! The National Children's Museum](#), in Halifax. The brief is to position their experts in the play-based learning field. They are already known by many in this world and speak at conferences, but want to do more. They want to be on relevant government and think tank panels so they can share their knowledge and learning, generate consultancy work such as designing a play centre for a GP surgery and take part in academic research.

Social media will be at the core of our strategy.

To give you an idea of what this looks like in practice, here are some of the headlines of what we are developing for the first six months.

TARGET AUDIENCES (a selection as example)

- Department for Education
- Universities/ academics (named)
- Teachers' groups and unions
- Think Tanks
- Museums sector
- Funders/commercial partners
- Influential websites eg Mumsnet

We have looked at what can Eureka! offer to these groups as part of the engagement process

- Profile building through and access to Eureka!'s networks for consultation, research etc
- Access to Eureka!'s expertise
- Eureka! to help address their agenda

PR STRATEGY

To develop relationships with national bodies and individuals who are leaders in play and learning to

- Influence policy on children's development through play
- Gain more paid consultancy work
- Attract funding for new projects

MEASURABLE PR GOALS

- To be invited by a government department or think tank to contribute to policy on children's development through play
- To develop relationships with two new academics, a key charity and a major funder and to convert existing contacts into relationships. Relationship is defined as
 - Invited to make a contribution to a research/ policy paper or report
 - Invited to contribute to a journal or publication
 - Invited to be part of a working party on play and learning
 - Invited to speak at an event on play and learning
 - Request to use Eureka!'s expertise on play and learning
- To start and take part in a debate on Mumsnet / DadTalk

PR / SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

The core of the PR activity will be a 'Eureka! professionals' section of the website, containing an expert blog and resource centre of existing research, reports, conference briefings and case studies, outlining Eureka!'s expertise and offering up consultancy services. As well as generating expert content from Eureka!'s professionals on the blog, we will also use Twitter to maximise its exposure and advise on techniques for generating comments and interest that will lead to relationships with target audiences. Offline, we will identify comment, feature and speaking opportunities and advise on techniques for forging direct relationships with target audiences.

Blog

- Title: Eureka! professionals – the experts in play and learning
- Tone/content: a blog full of the knowledge and expertise – Eureka! sharing its learning and answering questions that civil servants, museum experts, play academics will be searching Google about. It will be written professionally – but still aim to have the sense of fun at Eureka! (this may be a difficult balance and can be discussed and reviewed regularly). Bloggers can disagree and be controversial in a professional way and the debate needs to be left open for comment rather than critical of others
- Examples of possible blog topics
 - 21st century children – how can you help your kids deal with the pressures of modern life?
 - The loss of time for play and huge reduction in outdoor play – what is the impact?
 - Born creative (Demos report)
 - Families playing together and inter-generational learning – how to get the best out of family time
 - Do today's children need technology to help them play, learn and develop?
 - What will the end of the play sector mean for early years learning?
 - Is health and safety restricting our children's development by not allowing them to take risks?
 - What are the issues in trying to get children to be financially literate?
- Multimedia content – we will advise on how to utilise images and video in blogs
- Guest blogging – we will identify opportunities for Eureka! experts guest blogging on other blogs

Twitter and LinkedIn

NL to set up [@eurekaexperts](#) twitter feed and research people to follow (see suggested list in Appendix 3) then manage tweets and advise on how to engage with target audiences and position Eureka! as the experts in play-based learning. NL to hold a staff training workshop on twitter and LinkedIn to encourage staff to create LinkedIn profiles and engage with target audiences through connections and groups.

Media relations and speaking opportunities

NL to utilise Eureka!'s existing and ongoing research and stay on top of the play and learning agenda to find media hooks and opportunities for comment and feature pieces.

NL to identify speaking opportunities for Eureka!'s experts at play and learning sector events attended by target audiences.

Monthly activity – what this will look like

- 1 topical, expert blog per week
- 1 guest blogging opportunity for a Eureka! expert per month
- 4 tweets per week
- 5 strategic LinkedIn connections for each Eureka! expert per month
- 2 LinkedIn group activities eg discussion topic generating comment and debate per month
- 2 comment / feature opportunities in national / trade media per month
- 3 speaking opportunities generated over the first six months

Examples from social media/PR tactics matrix

Target audience	Blog	Twitter	LinkedIn	Other PR
All	eg Blog on whether children need to interact with technology to develop	Regularly tweet on blogs, interesting news stories, new research etc	Make strategic connections and set up discussion groups	Position Eureka! experts for comment on key issues in the news and pitch research materials for features eg piece on supporting families with autistic children in EducationGuardian
Government department/politicians/civil servants	Blog on the Government agenda and invite guest blogs from influential people in policy	Tweet about blogs and re-tweet Govt announcements/ political issues. Research and follow influencers, engage where relevant	Connect with key influencers with a hook – after reading a paper, meeting them at an events etc	Keep on top of Government agenda and contribute to reports, publications, working parties etc
Universities/ academics	Email relevant academics when blogs on their topics and ask for their views as comment; invite as guest bloggers. Leave comments on their blogs	Retweet academic research Research and follow key academics and universities	Set up group for early years academics on play-based learning to network and discuss big issues	Speak at academic conferences, comment in academic publications, set up roundtable discussion with range of stakeholders on issues in play-based learning
Influencers and funders	Email relevant individuals and groups when new blogs on their topics –ask for their views as comment; invite as guest bloggers. Leave comments on their articles and blogs	Tweet about blogs and re-tweet interesting reports and announcements. Research and follow key individuals and organisations. Engage on relevant topics	Join teachers groups and get involved in debates	Speak at conferences eg Primary Head Teachers' Association conference, input into think tank reports, set up roundtable discussion with range of stakeholders on issues in play-based learning, start and get involved in debate on Mumsnet/DadTalk

REAL LIFE SOCIAL MEDIA

from Sarah Quinn, head of marketing,
The P&A Group of Companies Ltd, Sheffield



What were your initial views on social media and where are you now?

My views are a mix of my personal thoughts and how we are looking at social media for our business – you can't separate these out.

I started out viewing social media with a great deal of scepticism – and if I'm really honest I'm still not quite 100% convinced.

However, I absolutely see the very valid worth for businesses and individual business people.

However, it is not going away so as a business we have to embrace the positives and see past the negatives. It's here for the long term so we have to be open to the conversations you can have through it with your customers and clients and individuals.

What do you see as the benefits?

Its beauty is its openness. It provides free open channels for conversations. They may not be what you want to hear but comments will always be valid.

If you don't include social media in your communication channels, it is telling the world that you are closed to some of the ways you could be communicating with them. Increasingly your business will look rather narrow and shut off.

Of course, any searches on Google quickly show you the biggest benefits. More often than not, blogs, Twitter and LinkedIn entries will all appear before your own website. Social media gives you very very juicy content for Google, which laps it up! It is an excellent way to raise your profile.

I think also people are increasingly trusting social media. Not sure I know exactly why. It is probably to do with the constant stream of information that you can get on sites such as Twitter – there is a sense that if people are taking the time out to comment, then it is worth listening to what people have to say.

Where do you see the future?

This is very hard. The P&A Group of Companies Ltd is a professional restructuring and insolvency firm so we are governed by strict codes of conduct and regulation. At the moment we are really concerned not to compromise our professionalism and are not embracing all social media yet – particularly Twitter and Facebook.

Compliance and staffing management issues are certainly points we are looking at – we just can't police social media the way we'd like. And I can't see any professional firm embracing all aspects of social media wholeheartedly. We are doing this step by step, starting with blogs. This is definitely the best way to get started – and Facebook is a no go area for the moment.

From a legal point of view, social media is very scary for businesses. You can't take back online discussions – and increasingly online comments and emails are being used as evidence in legal cases. You can just see lawyers sitting in a room watching social media and rubbing their hands 'we've got them now'!! It's non-retractable.

Having said all that, there is no turning back now. There are real business opportunities with social media and we all have to welcome the opportunities it can bring.

ACTION TIPS



Making your social media strategy deliver results

1. Step back from the detailed strategic planning and ask yourself – who would be my dream customer or client?
2. Think hard how could you engage with them – what blog would really get the attention of the chief executive or the key purchasing manager?
3. Is this actually reflected in your strategies? Are they focused on achieving business results?
4. Have you included internal and crisis comms in your plans?
5. How will you measure success? Involve colleagues across the business for ideas about how they can measure results. They won't be big initially
6. Are your reviews regular enough? Social media is moving so quickly that typical annual reviews are not enough

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Avatar register your photo (for individuals) or logo (for companies) as an avatar (logos may need simplifying) and use this image to become an 'icon' that becomes recognised whenever you comment or take part on social media sites

Blog shortened from web log, a blog is part of a website or stand alone. An individual or a company posts regular articles with views, commentary, information

Blogroll a list of blogs that you like, listed in a section on your blog – often with headings such as 'Blogs we like' or 'Favourite blogs'

Category your blog topics need categorising into themed topics – Google searches on categories so this is important

Comment most blogs have a box at the bottom for you to leave a comment. You can also ask to be notified as others comment further on that blog

Direct message (DM) when using Twitter – a direct reply to a particular Twitter account, that can only be seen by the two of you. You can only do this if you are both following each other

Flickr is an image and video hosting website, web services suite, and online community. In addition to being a popular website for users to share and embed personal photographs, the service is widely used by bloggers to host images that they embed in blogs and social media

Follow to follow someone in social media (Twitter, blogs, Facebook etc) means to subscribe to their Tweets or have RSS (SV) feeds to your phone or email

Google most popular global search engine (SV)

Google Analytics is a free service from Google that gives detailed statistics about the numbers of people visiting your website, which pages they visit for how long and how they found you. It is free to set up

Gravatar (abbreviation for globally recognized avatar) is a service for providing globally-unique avatars (SV)

Hashtag (#) groups of people with a similar interest create a group with a hashtag so they can easily follow conversations on a theme on Twitter. Examples could be #WorldCup, #TheApprentice, #IODConference or #Election or your own business event #xyzexporting

Hyperlink also known as links, are a link from a highlighted word or phrase to a relevant website. You can insert a hyperlink into a document (go to Insert, Hyperlink and insert the website URL address in the box). The link usually appears on screen as underlined and in a different colour. If you hover over it with your mouse, it will say to click on the word to operate the link

Microblog Twitter is often referred to as a microblog because it allows people to update their status using only 140 characters

Mistweet accidentally sending a tweet to the wrong person or wishing you didn't send a particular tweet

Outlook software (Microsoft Outlook) installed on most computers to manage your emails, contacts and calendar

Post is an entry made by someone on their blog

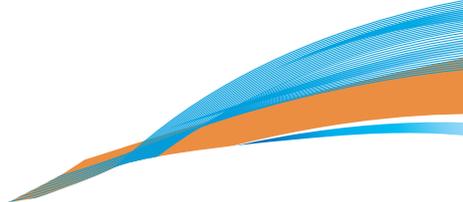
Reply when using Twitter is to send a message responding to one you have seen on another person's Twitter account. It will appear with their @address at the start of the message

Retweet (RT) A Retweet is a repeated tweet. It is sometimes used in a reply to allow everyone to see the original tweet. It is also used to forward a message onto one's own followers

RSS (Really Simple Syndication) – you may spot orange RSS feed buttons on blogs and other sites. Often it will say 'subscribe to this blog by RSS'. Click on the button and the 'subscribe now' button. You will then be notified when a new post goes on that website

Sage market leading software for accountancy, HR and payroll functions

GLOSSARY OF TERMS



Search engine designed to search for information on the World Wide Web. The search results are usually presented in a list of results and are commonly called hits. The information may consist of web pages, images, information and other types of files. Google is the most famous, also Yahoo, Ask Jeeves and Freeserve in the UK

Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the process of improving the volume or quality of traffic to a web site from search engines via "natural" or un-paid ("organic" or "algorithmic") search results as opposed to search engine marketing (SEM) where you pay for online advertising

Second Life a free 3D virtual world where users can socialize, connect and create using free voice and text chat

Tweet a post or status update on Twitter/a message posted via Twitter containing 140 characters or fewer.

Tweet Back bringing an older tweet back into the conversation

Tweeter a person who tweets

Twitter an information network made up of 140-character messages from all over the world.

Twitterer an account holder on Twitter who posts and reads Tweets. Also known as Tweeters.

Unfollow to stop following another Twitter user. Their Tweets no longer show up in your home timeline

Word software (Microsoft Word) installed on most computers for everyday use for writing documents

Youtube a popular video sharing website that lets anyone upload short videos for private or public viewing

FURTHER READING

Thanks to all these authors and bloggers – we have learnt lots from you all, even where we don't agree on everything.

Books

[Rob Brown](#) - Public relations and social media

[Aston Kutcher and Brian Solis](#) - Engage: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web

[Chris Brogan and Julien Smith](#) - Trust Agents: Using the Web to Build Influence, Improve Reputation, and Earn Trust

[Debbie Weil](#) - The Corporate Blogging Book: Absolutely Everything You Need to Know to Get it Right

[Liz Strauss](#) - The Secret to Writing a Successful and Outstanding Blog

[Murray Newlands](#) - Social Media Monitoring Book

[Guy Clapperton](#) - This is Social Media: Tweet, Blog, Link and Post Your Way to Business Success

Blogs

[Behind the Spin](#)

[Bradford University School of Management Blog](#)

[Brian Solis](#)

[Copyblogger](#)

[Dr Nigel Lockett](#)

[Grant Thornton Thinking blogs](#)

[Harvard Business Review](#)

[Holdthefrontpage](#)

[Institute for Family Business](#)

[Jon Buscall](#)

[Liz Strauss](#)

[Market Observation](#)

[Mashable](#)

[Neville Hobson](#)

[Private Equity Blogger](#)

[PR Studies](#)

[Rude Health rants \(not exactly a blog, but interesting concept!\)](#)

[Sir Ken Robinson](#)

[The Huffington Post](#)

[The P&A blog](#)

[The Tinbasher](#)

[Your Chamber](#)

Specific useful blogs

[Seth Godin](#) - How to get traffic for your blog

[Prologger](#) - 10 techniques to get more comments on your blog

[Stepcase Lifhack](#) - 31 proven ways to get more comments on your blog

[Sitepoint](#) - How to get more comments on your blog

[Socialmediatoday](#) - want more comments on your blog? Spend less time there

APPENDIX 1

Arena Group's internet, email and communications policy



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The internet, e-mail, IT and phone facilities provided by Arena Group, are to enable you to work efficiently and communicate effectively. The use of mobile phones is covered in a separate policy.
- 1.2 You may be able to use the internet not only for sending and receiving e-mail, but also in some cases for accessing the World Wide Web, newsgroups and other facilities. This policy explains how these facilities should be used. Any breach of this policy will be regarded as a disciplinary matter.
- 1.3 The reasons for introducing this policy are to ensure that:
 - 1.3.1 you make efficient and proper use of Arena Group's IT and communication facilities;
 - 1.3.2 you do not expose Arena Group's computer systems to undue risk;
 - 1.3.3 Arena Group is protected from external intrusion and illegal activities;
 - 1.3.4 Arena Group's image is properly protected;
 - 1.3.5 you understand and fully comply with the conditions attached to using Arena Group's IT facilities for personal use;
- 1.3.5 you are aware of what constitutes abuse of these facilities and the repercussions that may occur.
- 1.4 This policy shall be reviewed and updated, as and when required.

2.0 E-mail

- 2.1 You should be aware that all messages, distributed via the e-mail system, are the property of Arena Group. E-mails are not sent on a secure network and it is possible for others to read them as they pass through the network. Confidential information should not be sent via e-mail, unless encrypted or password protected.
- 2.2 E-mail may be used to send and receive messages and attachments relating to work.
- 2.3 E-mail messages often carry viruses, particularly within attachments. All PC's within Arena Group are loaded with anti-virus software that continuously monitors for viruses (though occasionally a new virus may not be identified by the software). If your PC shows a virus warning, you should contact your local technical support staff immediately. You must not open any suspect e-mail or attachments.
- 2.4 E-mail messages are classified as documents that Arena Group may have to disclose as evidence in future legal proceedings. To safeguard Arena Group, you should ensure that you save a copy of all e-mail, either electronically or on paper.
- 2.5 When composing and sending e-mail, you must consider the consequences. In particular, you must consider whether you are likely to cause offence, enter Arena Group into any contract (intentionally or otherwise) or commit Arena Group to any legal action. These considerations are important because e-mails are often drafted and sent more quickly than letters and faxes. An e-mail should be drafted with the same care and attention as all other correspondence. If in any doubt, you should refer to your line manager before sending an e-mail. Inappropriate use of e-mail may lead to legal action against Arena Group and may lead to disciplinary action and/or liable action being taken against you. In communicating with anyone via e-mail you are prohibited from composing or forwarding anything which could be interpreted as:

- 2.5.1 defamatory;
 - 2.5.2 sexist or racist in nature;
 - 2.5.3 derogatory, whether about an individual or a generalisation, relating to any area covered by discrimination law;
 - 2.5.4 for criminal purposes;
 - 2.5.5 offensive or obscene;
 - 2.5.6 unsolicited messages or chain mail.
 - 2.5.7 an illegal image - which is defined by law as one which could include extreme sexual activity such as bestiality, necrophilia, rape or torture. It is a criminal offence to publish any article whose effect is such to tend to deprave or corrupt those likely to see, read or hear matter contained or embodied within it.
- 2.6 If you receive an e-mail of this nature, you should notify your line manager immediately.
 - 2.7 You should not forge or attempt to forge e-mail messages, or disguise or attempt to disguise your identity when sending e-mail.
 - 2.8 You should not forward a message or copy a message or attachment belonging to another user without acquiring permission from the originator first.
 - 2.9 Client or customer information may only be sent with their express approval. Information which is sensitive to Arena Group or its clients or customers, may not be sent via e-mail unless the information is encrypted or password protected.
 - 2.10 E-mail traffic will be randomly monitored. If Arena Group believes that e-mail facilities are being abused or used inappropriately, e-mail traffic may be monitored more specifically, which may include opening any e-mails to monitor contents.
 - 2.11 All messages will be appended with the following disclaimer:
 "This e-mail is confidential and may be subject to legal privilege. It may not be disclosed to or used by, anyone other than the intended recipient. If you receive this e-mail in error please notify the sender immediately and then permanently delete it from your system. Any views or opinions expressed in this e-mail are those of the author and not necessarily those of The Arena Group or its associated companies. Whilst we have taken reasonable precautions to ensure that this e-mail and any attachment are virus free, we advise our customers to virus check all messages and their attachments regardless of their source. We will not accept liability for any damage or loss you may suffer as a result of viewing this message or its attachment. If any part is illegible or incomplete, please contact us on 0113-2880282."

3.0 Personal e-mails

- 3.1 Arena Group acknowledges that personal e-mails sent to work colleagues can help team work and foster the "work hard, play hard" ethos that is important to us all. The volume of personal e-mails has the capacity to spiral out of control and have a detrimental impact on the running of the business. To ensure that personal e-mail traffic is reasonable and does not overload the IT systems, Arena Group have imposed the following conditions:
 - 3.1.1 You must ensure that the word 'personal' or 'joke' or some other appropriate word appears in the subject heading to ensure that the recipient knows the e-mail is not work related;
 - 3.1.2 no attachments or images are permitted under any circumstances;
 - 3.1.3 the content of personal e-mails should not offend any recipient;
 - 3.1.4 the sending or reading of personal e-mails should not interfere with work. The time before or after work or at lunchtime is most appropriate.
- 3.2 Failure to comply with these conditions may lead to this facility being withdrawn completely.

4.0 Security

If you are given access to the Company's IT systems, you are responsible for the security of your computer and must not allow it to be used by an unauthorised person.

- 4.1 There are strict licensing agreements which Arena Group must comply with. To ensure that you do not breach any legal obligation, you must not insert a CD ROM or DVD into your pc unless the software has been approved by Systems Division. Systems Division will also test the software to ensure that it is virus free.

5.0 The internet

- 5.1 The system in use at Arena allows all internet activity to be monitored and you must have no expectation of privacy in anything that you view, upload or download via the Company's internet facility.
- 5.2 If you have access to the internet, it must be used in a manner consistent with professional business conduct. In particular, accessing, exporting or importing any of the following material is strictly prohibited and doing so will be regarded as a disciplinary matter, which may constitute gross misconduct and result in your dismissal:
- 5.2.1 pornographic, obscene or other sexually explicit material;
 - 5.2.2 information which is or could reasonably be construed as indecent or offensive;
 - 5.2.3 illegal material or material for a criminal purpose;
 - 5.2.4 material intended or likely to incite racial or religious hatred;
 - 5.2.5 material to gain unauthorised access to, or for the corruption of, the systems, data, networks or computer equipment of Arena Group or other individuals and organisations;
 - 5.2.6 gambling or soliciting for personal gain or profit.
- 5.3 All internet use, whether work-related or otherwise, must be in strict compliance with this policy.
- 5.4 These guidelines apply at all times, not only during working hours.

6.0 Personal internet usage

- 6.1 The internet must generally be used for legitimate business purposes. Arena Group permits personal internet usage, provided it is reasonable and does not interfere with work. Personal usage should be restricted to time prior to working hours, post working hours or during your lunch break and must at all times comply with the conditions listed in 5.2.

7.0 Blogging

- 7.1 A web log (blog) is the term used to describe an on-line diary. Responsible blogging can be informative, amusing and a positive marketing tool. Employees are reminded of their obligation to behave, at all times, in a manner that would not bring Arena Group into disrepute and to respect their duties of confidentiality and loyalty to Arena Group.
- 7.2 An employee who has any concern about working for Arena Group should use either the Grievance or Whistleblowers procedure, for dealing with the matter. Arena Group does not consider posting concerns over the internet as an appropriate method of dealing with an issue.

8.0 Personal use of Arena Group's computer systems

You are not permitted to download or upload any image, which is not work related, from the internet, e-mail, CD's, DVD's, digital camera or any other technology that has these capabilities and the Company's firewall protection will ensure strict compliance of this policy. Any work related image that you require on your pc, must be cleared by the Systems Division.

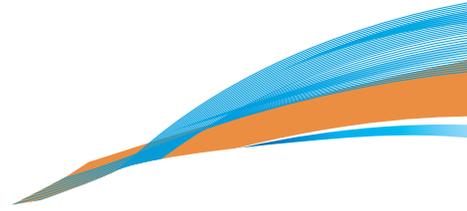
9.0 Telephones (land lines)

- 9.1 Arena Group provides telephones for its business. You may use Arena Group's telephones for a reasonable level of short personal calls. The following may result in disciplinary action and/or you being required to reimburse Arena Group:
- 9.1.1 long telephone conversations (over five minutes) except in exceptional circumstances. If you think you may need to make an urgent long telephone call, you should get permission first;
 - 9.1.2 frequent excessive use of the Arena Group's telephones even for short calls;
 - 9.1.3 overseas calls, other than for Arena Group's business;
 - 9.1.4 calls to premium rate numbers.
- 9.2 Customers, suppliers and other contacts expect to be able to contact Arena Group easily, so the telephone lines should be kept clear for business calls.

10.0 General

- 10.1 You are bound by this policy, and breaches of it will be treated as misconduct and will be dealt with within the framework of Arena Group's disciplinary policy. The level of misconduct will be dependent upon the severity or persistence of the breach. For the avoidance of doubt, any activities which are identified in this policy as 'prohibited' will be treated as Gross Misconduct and could lead to your dismissal.
- 10.2 If you have any questions about this policy or do not understand any part of it, you should contact your line manager.

LinkedIn Guidelines



Employee Profiles

As an increasing number of Arena Group staff are using LinkedIn as a business networking tool, it has become necessary to establish a set of guidelines to maintain brand consistency across all on-line platforms and to preserve the company's reputation.

In essence we are asking everyone to think carefully about how they use LinkedIn, how it reflects on Arena Group and what the consequences of any communication might be. This clearly applies to any groups you choose to join, who you connect with and the way you deal with introductions. Keep in mind that if you choose to associate yourself with Arena Group as your employer, then you must treat LinkedIn as a professional, business tool at all times.

These guidelines are an addendum to our social networking/media policy and must be viewed in conjunction with the e-mail and Internet policies that all employees have signed to accept. There are a number of key rules that **MUST** be followed by all Arena Group LinkedIn users who associate themselves in any way with Arena Group in their profile.

1. ALL LinkedIn profiles must be approved by Arena Group's marketing department before they are posted.
2. No personal information, opinions or activities should be shared. Profiles should be strictly business related.
3. All personal summaries are to be pre-approved by Arena Group's marketing department. Specialities must be selected from the approved list (page 5).
4. All roles/current positions should be consistent with business cards/The Wire.
5. Every individual should include the photograph currently in use on The Wire.
6. All profiles must include a link to the Arena Group web page.

Please see the editing guide on page 3 for instructions on how to make the appropriate changes to ensure your LinkedIn profile adheres to these guidelines.

Corporate Profile and LinkedIn Groups

Arena Group has a corporate LinkedIn profile to which your personal profile will be connected if you choose to publicise your association as an employee. The corporate profile is managed and edited by the Marketing team.

We request that employees are considerate when joining any LinkedIn group as this will indirectly associate that group, and its activities, with Arena Group. Employees associated with Arena Group via LinkedIn must not create any new LinkedIn groups, open or otherwise, without seeking prior written permission from the Marketing Team.

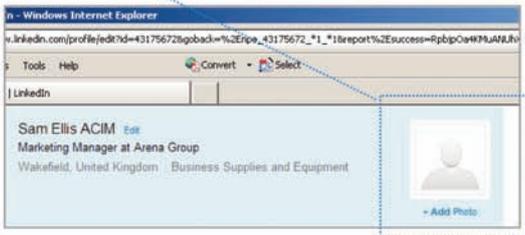
Any user identifying themselves as a current Arena Group employee and not following these requirements will be asked to do so or to disassociate their online profile with Arena Group.

Editing Guide

To enter edit mode

- Click these edit links to amend as necessary

Photo

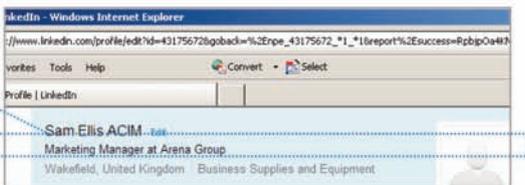


To maintain a consistent look across Arena profiles, the image used must be the photograph currently shown on The Wire.

Find your photo at [F:/Photos](#).

- Click the **add photo** or **edit** link below the photograph area.
- Click the 'browse' button beside the white box and find the relevant file on the system.
- Click **upload**.

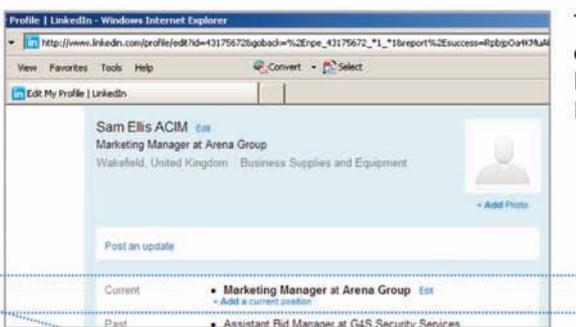
Headline



This should state your current role at Arena Group. (Eg: "Account manager at Arena Group".)

- Click **edit**
- Type in to white box beside Professional "Headline"
- Make sure **Business Supplies and Equipment** is selected
- Click **save**.

Current Position



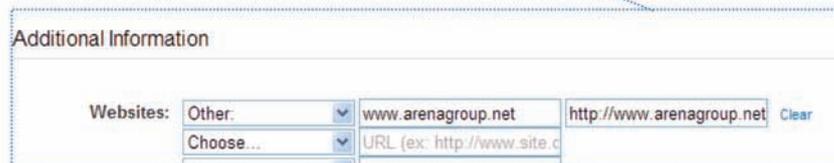
This must read as printed on your business cards, email signature, and on The Wire.

Employers Business Name: **Arena Group**
Industry: **Business Supplies and Equipment**

- Click **edit** next to "current position" in boxed area of profile.
- Enter current position in white box.
- In the **current employer** field please type "**Arena Group**"
- From the drop down box below, select "Business Supplies and Equipment"

Website

The website in your profile should be displayed as a URL: www.arenagroup.net as shown below (ie; it should not appear as a link called "My Company").



- Click **edit** next to website
- Select **other** from the drop down menu.
- In the website name box type www.arenagroup.net.
- In the URL box type www.arenagroup.net
- Click **Save**

Personal Summary and Specialities



Please send your draft personal summary to marketing for approval prior to upload.

- Click **'edit'** or **'add summary'** in summary box.
- Paste in your approved summary paragraph.
- Specialities: Please select a maximum of four from the approved list (Page 5.)

Approved Specialities:

- *Print Audits*
- *Managed Print Services*
- *Photocopiers and Supplies*
- *Print management*
- *Print cost control and recovery*
- *Electronic document management*
- *Email archiving*
- *Document archiving*
- *Computer software and hardware*

APPENDIX 2

The P&A Group of Companies Ltd Internet Usage Policy



Our thanks to The P&A Group of Companies Ltd for sharing this policy

1. POLICY SCOPE AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Introduction

Access to the Internet can increase effectiveness and productivity across the firm, but also poses potential security risks and can be counter-productive if used without policy guidelines. Making the Internet a safe, secure and productive business tool requires a carefully managed mixture of technology, policy and training. This paper documents the usage policy for P&A, for Internet resources available to users of existing corporate computing facilities.

1.2 Background

The Internet comprises thousands of interconnected networks that provide digital pathways to and from millions of host computers. Because these computers subscribe to a common set of standards and protocols, users have worldwide access to Internet hosts and their associated applications and databases. Applications such as the World Wide Web (WWW), and electronic mail permit users to gather information and data from a multitude of sources and to communicate with their counterparts in global communities of interest.

Capabilities such as those described above can provide enormous benefits to P&A, which is dependent on a wide variety of professional and technical skills to carry out its business activities. P&A staff may use the Internet to access career-related topics, to improve knowledge and skills, and to communicate with experts, clients and peers.

P&A encourages authorised staff to access the Internet during working hours, when direct work-related benefits can accrue. P&A computer systems are for P&A business and not for personal use.

In general, there are some basic questions that need to be answered in the Internet usage management process:

- Who in this organisation needs Internet access (Which individuals? What business areas? What functional areas?);
- What Internet services does the user need? (Email? World Wide Web Browsing? Remote access to customers, suppliers, sites, data vendors or research services?);
- What kind of access does the user need? (Full-time, periodic or casual?).

Resolving these questions at the outset will help technology and security planners create the widest access to Internet resources in the most efficient way possible, with minimal risk to core business systems and sensitive firm data.

Among the other considerations of Internet usage management are:

- means of securing sensitive data and applications;
- tools for monitoring and recording Internet usage; Section D Page 2 October 2010
- improve capacity planning;
- decrease network slowdown and keep productivity up;
- plans for training end-users in the proper use of all available access and security technology (search engines, encryption tools and the use of browsers, for example);
- a clear and explicit Internet usage policy.

On the pages that follow, we have laid out the P&A Internet Usage and Security Policy. This takes into account particular corporate cultures, usage patterns and security needs.

Directors should consider to what extent, if any, a staff member's personal usage of the Internet is appropriate for a given situation, how they will balance convenience against security, and how much corporate computing resources (machine time, network bandwidth, data storage space) should be devoted to Internet browsing compared to other IT needs. Essentially, it must be recognised that the Internet is a business tool and personal usage should not take place in business hours.

2. INTERNET USAGE AND SECURITY POLICY

2.1 General

- 2.1.1 P&A provides access to the Internet to help you do your job faster and smarter. The facilities to provide that access represent a considerable commitment of P&A resources for telecommunications, networking, software, storage, etc.
- 2.1.2 This Internet usage policy is designed to help you understand the rules that apply to all who make use of this facility. Unnecessary or unauthorised Internet usage causes network and server congestion. It slows other users, takes away from work time, consumes supplies, and ties up printers and other shared resources. Unlawful Internet usage may also produce negative publicity for P&A and expose it to significant legal liabilities.
- 2.1.3 First and foremost, the Internet is a business tool. You are expected to use your Internet access for business related purposes only, that is, to communicate with clients and suppliers, to research relevant topics and obtain useful business information. The email system is not for personal use. At all times you must conduct yourself honestly and appropriately on the Internet, and abide by the same business guidelines that are applicable to all our business dealings. This means respecting the copyrights, software licensing rules, property rights, Law Society guidelines, privacy and prerogatives of others.
- 2.1.4 All existing P&A policies apply to your conduct on the Internet, especially (but not exclusively) those that deal with intellectual property protection, privacy, misuse of firm resources, harassment of any kind, information and data security, and confidentiality.
- 2.1.5 While our direct connection to the Internet offers massive potential benefits, it can also open the door to some significant risks to our data and systems if we do not follow appropriate security discipline. The overriding principle is that security is to be everyone's first concern. An Internet user can be held accountable for any breaches of security or confidentiality. October 2010 Section D Page 3

2.2 Detailed Internet Policy Provisions

- 2.2.1 Different access for different types of personnel may be given to staff depending on the nature of their work. P&A reserves the absolute right to block access to certain Internet sites, which it perceives to be necessary.
- 2.2.2 P&A has software and systems in place that can monitor and record all Internet usage. We want you to be aware that our security systems are capable of recording (for each and every user) each World Wide Web site visit, or email message, and each file transfer into and out of our internal networks, and we reserve the right to do so at any time using established procedure. No P&A member of staff should have any expectation of privacy as to his or her Internet usage. The IT Department will review general Internet activity and analyse usage patterns on a regular basis. This information may be used in the event of a breach or suspected breach of security.
- 2.2.3 We reserve the right to inspect any and all files stored on P&A computer resources in order to assure compliance with policy.
- 2.2.4 The display of any kind of sexually explicit image or document on any P&A system is a violation of P&A policy and will be dealt with through the disciplinary procedure. In addition, sexually explicit material may not be archived, stored, distributed, edited or recorded using any P&A network or computing resources.
- 2.2.5 P&A uses independently supplied software and data to identify inappropriate or sexually explicit Internet sites. We may block access from within our networks to all such sites that we know of. If you find yourself connected accidentally to a site that contains sexually explicit or offensive material, you must disconnect from that site immediately, regardless of whether that site had been previously deemed acceptable by any screening or rating program and report the site address to Martin Ratcliffe (Queen Street).

- 2.2.6 Any software or files downloaded via the Internet into the P&A network become the property of P&A. Any such files or software may be used only in ways that are consistent with their licences or copyrights.
- 2.2.7 P&A's connection to the Internet may not be used for any of the following activities:
- knowing violation of any laws and regulations. Use of P&A resources for illegal activity is grounds for disciplinary action, which may result in dismissal from service, and P&A management will co-operate in full with any legitimate law enforcement activity;
 - downloading, circulating and/or viewing of any material which could reasonably be held to be sexually explicit or offensive (including images of nudity, whether photographic, cartoon or otherwise), or the distribution of which could breach employment legislation or otherwise be deemed for personal use only.
 - knowingly to download or distribute pirated software or data;
 - deliberately to introduce and/or pass on any virus, worm, Trojan horse, or trap-door program code; Section D Page 4 October 2010
 - disabling or overloading any computer system or network, or circumvention of any system intended to protect the privacy or security of another user;
 - accessing personal internet based services, e.g. "hotmail" accounts;
 - downloading entertainment software or games, or playing games against opponents over the Internet or Intranet;
 - downloading images or videos unless there is a specific business- related use for the material;
 - uploading or distribution of any software licensed to P&A or data owned or licensed by P&A;
 - making purchases over the Internet.
- 2.2.8 Staff members using the P&A Internet facilities shall identify themselves honestly, accurately and completely (including one's firm affiliation and function where requested).
- 2.2.9 Only those staff that are duly authorised to speak to the media, to analysts or in public gatherings on behalf of P&A may speak/write in the name of the firm.
- 2.2.10 P&A retains the copyright to any material posted to the World Wide Web by any member of staff in the course of his or her duties.
- 2.2.11 It is inappropriate to reveal confidential P&A information. Any staff member releasing protected information via the Internet - whether or not the release is inadvertent - will be subject to disciplinary proceedings as per the normal P&A policy.
- 2.2.12 Use of P&A Internet access facilities to commit breaches such as misuse of P&A assets or resources, harassment, unauthorised public speaking and misappropriation or theft of intellectual property are also prohibited by general P&A policy, and will be sanctioned under the relevant provisions of the Firm's Handbook.
- 2.2.13 P&A will comply with reasonable requests from law enforcement and regulatory agencies for logs, diaries and archives on individuals Internet activities.
- 2.2.14 P&A staff with Internet access must take particular care to understand the copyright, trademark, libel, slander and public speech control laws of all countries in which P&A maintains a business presence, so that our use of the Internet does not inadvertently violate any laws that might be enforceable against us. If in doubt, seek advice and guidance.
- 2.2.15 User IDs and passwords help maintain individual accountability for Internet resource usage. Any P&A staff member who obtains a password or ID for an Internet resource must keep that password confidential. P&A policy prohibits the sharing of user IDs or passwords obtained for access to Internet sites. However, where access is to common sites that are approved subscription sites account IDs will be provided.
- 2.2.16 Internet sites that are cost related or have cost implication terms of access must not be subscribed to without the prior authority of the Managing Director. October 2010 Section D Page 5

- 2.2.17 Staff should schedule communications-intensive operations such as large file transfers for off-peak times. If there is any doubt as to the effect of such an operation, or series of operations, then advice should be sought from Andrew Keyword.
- 2.2.18 Any file that is downloaded must be scanned for viruses before it is run or accessed. Instructions on how to proceed are available from Andrew Keyword.
- 2.2.19 The P&A policy prohibits high bandwidth applications e.g. video, audio, 'tickers' news feeds etc. A full technical specification of the Internet elements that are prohibited is available on request. Please contact Andrew Keyword.
- 2.3 Security
- 2.3.1 P&A has installed security systems to assure the safety and security of P&A's networks. Any staff member who attempts to disable, defeat or circumvent any firm security facility will be subject to disciplinary procedures, which may lead to dismissal.
- 2.3.2 Computers that use their own modems to create independent data connections sidestep our network security mechanisms. An individual computer's private connection to any outside computer can potentially be used by an attacker to compromise any firm network to which that computer is attached. Although protection is in place to guard against this threat, these machines should be not left unattended for any period of time whilst they are logged in.
- 2.3.3 Only those Internet services and functions with documented business purposes for this firm will be enabled at the Internet firewall. A full technical specification of the elements prohibited or banned is available on request.
- 2.3.4 It is possible whilst accessing the Internet using apparently normal operations for an unscrupulous or malevolent web site operator to take control of an unsuspecting visitor's computer. Such transactions can introduce material risks to network security for which there is no bulletproof technical solution short of complete abstinence. We have taken the precaution of banning potentially damaging operations at the firewall. A full technical specification of prohibited or banned operations is available on request.
- 2.4 Review and Compliance
- This policy is subject to review on a 6 monthly basis or sooner as deemed necessary to provide assurance that practices properly reflect the policy, and that it is feasible and effective.

3. SOCIAL NETWORKING

3.1 General

As staff members are aware, the internet is provided for business use only. The purpose of this policy is to outline the responsibilities of staff members when using the internet for writing on-line diaries (Weblogs) and/or participating in social networking on websites such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Myspace, LinkedIn or other similar sites (Social Networking Websites).
Section D Page 6 October 2010

3.2 Personal use of the internet on P&A computers or systems

Subject to the provisions of clause 3.4 below, it is forbidden to create and/or use Weblogs or Social Networking Websites on P&A computers or systems at any time, regardless of whether or not staff members seek to use such websites during non-working hours.

3.3 Personal use of the internet on staff members' personal computers or systems

P&A recognises that staff members may choose to write Weblogs and/or participate in social networking on Social Networking Websites during non-working hours on your own personal computer or system.

Should you choose to use the internet in this way you must adhere to the following rules:

- 3.3.1 you may state that you are employed by P&A;
- 3.3.2 if so, you must include a disclaimer stating that the views expressed are your views and opinions and are not made on behalf of P&A;

- 3.3.3 you must not project P&A or any of its employees in a bad light or bring either P&A or its employees into disrepute;
- 3.3.4 you must not say anything which could be construed as discriminatory, offensive, derogatory or defamatory about any of P&A's employees;
- 3.3.5 you must not disclose confidential information about P&A.
- 3.4 LinkedIn

Certain staff members may be permitted to use LinkedIn on P&A computers or systems from time to time, but only with the express permission of the Managing Partner/Managing Director.

4. VIRUS PROTECTION AND INTERNET USE

The Company regularly receives alerts on viruses designed to attack Microsoft's web sites.

Our business network is protected against attack from viruses via firewalls, which monitor all incoming and outgoing Internet traffic. (Emails and web pages) so we should not have any problems.

Listed below is clarification of some issues of company policy regarding virus protection.

- If for any reason you need to load information onto your computer from external sources, such as CDs or Floppy disks then these should ALWAYS be checked by Martin Ratcliffe before any attempt to load the information from them.
- If you feel you need any different software on your PC than that which is installed you should always pass this with Martin. Do not load software onto your PC without informing him first as any software you load could affect other software that is installed and may cause your PC to crash.
- Each PC runs a virus scan at lunchtime that checks the whole machine for viruses. DO NOT cancel this for any reason. October 2010 Section D Page 7

Information for Laptop users.

As Laptops are taken off site there are extra precautions which users need to take.

If the Laptop is used outside of the company property to access the Internet then a virus may affect your machine. This could be a major issue when the Laptop is returned to the office and next used to log onto the system as it could infect other PC's in the building. Internet access should be restricted to business use only.

5. BROADBAND ACCESS

It is becoming much easier and cheaper to get fast Internet access at home via broadband. However, not all home broadband connections are secure.

If you have access to a company laptop it must NOT be connected to the Internet at home via any form unless the IT department has passed it.

In a test situation a machine connected via BT Broadband with no added security software or hardware became infected after only 5 minutes.

Any machine which has been connected to the internet via broadband services which have not been passed by the IT department will not be allowed access to the company network.

6. OWNERSHIP

Responsibility for issue and ownership of this policy rests with the Managing Director.

7. DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES

Where breaches of this policy are found to have occurred normal P&A disciplinary procedures apply.

APPENDIX 3

Twitter accounts for EUREKA! to follow

@eurekaexperts – people for Eureka! to follow on Twitter – our initial research to start the account going

Government/quango

- @educationgovuk
– Department for Education
- @ChildrensComm
– Children's Commissioner
- @tweetminster – digest of what is shaping Gov agenda
- @UKYP – UK youth parliament
- @COIgovuk
- @Directgov_I – bringing together Government and innovators
- @DirDigEng – Government's Director of Digital Engagement
- @eskills – sector skills council
- @bisgovuk
- @camerondirect
- @minforcivsoc
– Minister for Civic Society
- @defragovuk
- @legislation

Universities / academics

- @uniofglos
- @leedsmet
- @Roehamptonuni
- Need to identify specific academics and try to find them on twitter / through LinkedIn

Influencers

- @NUTonline
- @nasawtunion
- @ATLunion
- @nesta_uk
- @Demos
- @weareteachers
- @uktf – UK Teachers' Forum

Museums sector

- @museum_news and @museum_events
– Museums Association
- @britishmuseum
- @mediamuseum
- @sciencemuseum
- @museumnerd
- @jorvikviking

Play / children's sector

- @ncbtweets
– National Children's Bureau
- @playengland
- @righttoplay_UK
- @timetoplay
- @timetoplaybaby

Organisations with similar agenda to Eureka!

- @savechildreuk
- @theNSPCC
- @barnardos
- @ssat
- @schoolfoodtrust
- @SchoolDuggery
– influential blogger
- @beatbullying
- @FamilyLives – national charity
- @YorkFIS – Family Information Service
- @autistictoys
- @NASeventsteam
– National Autistic Society
- @RM_Foundation
- @thebhf
– British Heart Foundation
- @UKRC – The UK Resource Centre for Women in Science, Engineering and Technology (Bradford based)
- @RoomtoRead
- @the_ttrust – the Transformation Trust, Partnerships for Schools after school activities charity
- @LL_UK – Lifelong learning UK
- @YPEF – Young People's Enterprise Forum
- @metrogenm – West Yorkshire transport authority's youth programme
- @gingerbread – advice, support and campaigning for single parents

Funders / commercial partners

- @RMEducation
- @Prometheanworld
- @wellcometrust
- @SutcliffePlay
- @RegionalGrowth
– new regional growth fund
- @LEGIs_YH – Local Enterprise Growth Initiative Yorkshire and Humber

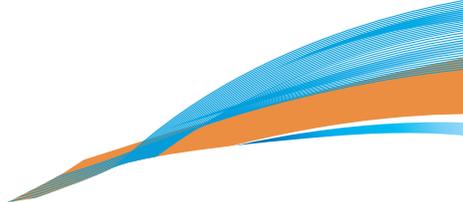
Local stakeholders

- @calderdale
- @nhscalderdale
- @creativecalder
- @csrincalderdale
- @KirkleesLeisure
- @activhudds
- @healthkirklees
- @halifaxuk
- @JasonMcCartney
– Colne Valley MP

Media / journalists

- @mikebakeredhack
– BBC, Guardian, Teachers TV, own website
- @bbceducation
- @TeachersTVNews
- @GuardianEdu
- @hubmum – writes for Guardian and blogs
- @netmums
- @dadtalk
- @societyguardia
- @TimesEducation
- @timesed
- @merlinjohn
– influential education blogger
- @kirstywalker1
- @pollycurtis – Guardian education correspondent
- @jessshepherd1 – Independent Education supplement correspondent
- @mumsinscience
- @bbcnewsnight
- @r4today
- @parentsmagazine
- @parenting

About the authors



Victoria Tomlinson is founder of Northern Lights PR. A graduate trainee, she spent her first ten years in manufacturing before moving into the professions and becoming director of Ernst & Young in London. When she set up Northern Lights her focus was always to achieve tangible business results for clients rather than just media coverage or awareness.

Passionate about businesses, whatever their size or sector, Victoria is also on the boards of Northern Ballet and Bradford University School of Management, a top ten UK business school. She is a Prince's Trust mentor.

Three years ago, Victoria felt there was a gap in the market for applying social media to the professional, academic and business-to-business market. She started researching and blogging so that she had hands-on experience to help her clients. This book is a result of that journey, travelled with her colleagues from Northern Lights PR.

Carol Arthur trained as a journalist with Yorkshire Post newspapers and has worked in marketing and PR roles in-house in both private and public organisations. She has headed up or been part of teams in retail, tourism and education sectors and joined Northern Lights PR eight years ago.

Carol has chaired the Yorkshire and Lincolnshire committee of the Chartered Institute of PR (CIPR) for the last two years; she sits on the employer advisory panel for PR degrees at Leeds Metropolitan University and provides pro bono PR support for a number of charities.

Helen Standing recently joined Northern Lights PR. The region's Chartered Institute of PR Young Communicator of the Year 2010, she has an MA in Public Relations. She previously worked for Trimedia UK (now Grayling) on regional and national campaigns and for West Yorkshire's Transport Authority carrying out public consultations for the Local Transport Plan.

Northern Lights PR - we're a purposely small PR and marketing consultancy specialising in the professions, business-to-business and education markets. We'll help your business to become better known, build relationships with key contacts and eventually win new business. Our clients stay with us for years.

We are very good at understanding your customers – their behaviour, motivations, language – and will help you talk to them in a way that makes them want to do business with you. We do that through market research, creative campaigns and communications through events, social media and traditional media such as newspapers, radio, TV, sponsorship and events and anything else that will engage them. Where relevant we use blogs, Twitter, Facebook, Youtube and LinkedIn.

We've been doing this for over 21 years, so we have the knowledge and experience to know what works (and what doesn't) – and our integrity and passion for what we do means we will always tell you. That's why we start every new relationship by getting under the skin of your organisation so we can match every problem with a solution.

Our clients tell us our extra ingredient is something we don't even charge for – our connections. We have an instinct for seeing win-win situations and love to introduce clients to the right contacts.