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Introduction

You sat back, sighing with relief that your website was running faultlessly, optimized for search engines, and producing traffic, leads, and sales. Maybe you ventured into e-mail marketing or pay-per-click advertising to generate new customers. Then you thought with satisfaction, “I’ll just let the money roll in.”

Instead, you were inundated with stories about Facebook and fan pages, Twitter and tweets, blogs and podcasts, Pinterest, Google+, and all other manner of social media buzz. By now you’ve probably tried more than one of these social media platforms. Perhaps you haven’t seen much in the way of results, or you’re ready to explore ways to expand your reach, increase customer loyalty, and grow your sales with social media.

Much as you might wish it were otherwise, you must now stay up to date with rapidly changing options in the social media universe. As a marketer, you have no choice when 80 percent of Internet users visit blogs and social media and when your position in search engine results may depend on the recency and frequency of social media updates. Since the second edition of this book, social media marketing has become an essential component of online marketing.

The statistics are astounding: Facebook has more than 864 million daily active users; more than 60 million blog posts appear on the Internet each month; more than 500 million tweets are sent per day on average; and 6 billion hours of video are viewed each month on YouTube. New company names and bewildering new vocabulary terms continue to flood the online world: Instagram, Snapchat, pinning, location tagging, and sentiment monitoring, for example.

Should your new business get involved in social media marketing? Is it all more trouble than it’s worth? Will you be hopelessly left behind if you don’t participate? If you jump in, or if you’ve already waded into the social media waters, how do you keep it all under control and who does the work? Which platforms are the best for your business? Should you take advantage of new channels or stick with the comfortable ones you’ve already mastered? This book helps you answer both sets of questions: Should your business undertake social media marketing? If so, how? (Quick answer: If your customers use a social media service, use it. If not, skip it.)
About This Book

The philosophy behind this book is simple: Social media marketing is a means, not an end in itself. Social media services are tools, not new worlds. In the best of all worlds, you see results that improve customer acquisition, retention, and buying behavior — in other words, your bottom line. If this sounds familiar, that’s because everything you already know about marketing is correct.

Having the most Likes on Facebook or more retweets of your posts than your competitors doesn’t mean much if these achievements don’t have a positive impact on your business. Throughout this book, you’ll find concrete suggestions for applying social media tactics to achieve those goals.

If you undertake a social media marketing campaign, we urge you to keep your plans simple, take things slowly, and always stay focused on your customers. Most of all, we urge you to follow the precepts of guerrilla marketing: Target one niche market at a time; grow that market; and then reinvest your profits in the next niche.

What You Don’t Have to Read

You don’t have to read anything that seems overwhelming or insanely complicated, deals with a particular social marketing service that you dislike or disdain, or doesn’t apply to your business. Content following a Technical Stuff icon is intended for developers or particularly tech-savvy readers.

Reading the case studies in sidebars isn’t critical, though you might enjoy reading about honest-to-goodness business owners who successfully use the social marketing techniques we discuss. Often, they share a helpful tip that will make your social media life easier.

If you have a limited budget, focus your explorations on the free or low-cost tools and resources that appear in various tables, instead of enterprise-level options, which are designed for large companies with large marketing budgets. Sometimes, however, a tool with a moderate price tag can save you lots of time or expensive labor.

You can skip any of the minibooks on individual social media services if you don’t include them in your social media marketing plan. If you decide to add one or more of them later, simply return to that book for freestanding information. Of course, if you’re looking for a thorough understanding of the social media whirl, read the book straight through, from cover to cover. You’ll find out all about social media — at least until a totally new service launches tomorrow.
Foolish Assumptions

In our heads, we visualize our readers as savvy small-business owners, marketers in companies of any size, and people who work in any of the multiple services that support social media efforts, such as advertising agencies, web developers, graphic design firms, copywriting, or public relations. We assume that you

✦ Already have or will soon have a website or blog that can serve as the hub for your online marketing program
✦ Are curious about ubiquitous social media
✦ Are comfortable using search terms on search engines to find information online
✦ Know the realities of your industry, though you may not have a clue whether your competitors use social media
✦ Can describe your target markets, though you may not be sure whether your audience is using social media
✦ Are trying to decide whether using social media makes sense for your company (or your boss has asked you to find out)
✦ May already use social media personally and are interested in applying your knowledge and experience to business
✦ May already have tried using social media for your company but want to improve results or measure return on your investment
✦ Have a passion for your business, appreciate your customers, and enjoy finding new ways to improve your bottom line

If our assumptions are correct, this book will help you organize a social marketing presence without going crazy or spending all your waking hours online. It will help you figure out whether a particular technique makes sense, how to get the most out of it, and how to measure your results.

How This Book Is Organized

We’ve built this book like a sandwich: The first two and last two books are overviews of marketing or business issues, or of social media tools and techniques. The five books in the middle are how-to manuals for incorporating blogs, podcasts, or image-sharing services, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, or Pinterest into your social media marketing campaign.

Like most For Dummies books, this one enables you to get as much (or as little) information as you need at any particular moment on a specific topic.
How This Book Is Organized

You can return to it as a reference guide at any time. However, unless you’re certain that you’re interested only in a specific social marketing service covered in Books III through VII, we recommend that you read Book I first to establish your goals, objectives, and schedule for social media marketing.

For information on a specific topic, check the headings in the table of contents or look at the index.

**Book I: The Social Media Mix**

Book I gets you off on the right foot. Chapter 1 explains what social media services are, individually and collectively, categorizes the overwhelming number of social media options by type, and explores how social media are the same and different from other forms of online and offline marketing. In the next two chapters, you define your own marketing goals, objectives, and methods for social media, with a particular emphasis on return on investment (ROI), and learn how to research where your target audiences “hang out.” The final chapter in this book offers some practical tips on how to manage your social media effort in terms of precious resources: time, money, and people.

This minibook includes three key planning forms: the Social Media Marketing Goals form, to establish the purpose of your campaign; the Social Media Marketing Plan, to select and document your tactics; and the Social Media Activity Calendar, to assign and schedule tasks.

**Book II: Cybersocial Tools**

Implementing and tracking social media marketing campaigns across multiple services is a daunting task. In the first chapter of Book II, we offer a variety of productivity tools to help you post content in multiple locations, notify search engines, and monitor your growing social notoriety. The second chapter deals in depth with integrating social media into a coordinated search engine optimization strategy, and the third deals with social bookmarking, social news, and social sharing as new methods of viral marketing.

**Book III: Content Marketing**

Your content is your most important online asset. It’s through your content that you catch the attention of the search engines, raise brand awareness, and establish your expertise. We delve into the importance of content and what goals you hope to achieve with your content marketing strategy, and explore the different types of content available to you online. We also touch on blogs, podcasts, and videos for those of you who hope to expand beyond print to reach your online communities. Finally, we discuss sharing images and the legalities involved.
How This Book Is Organized

Book IV: Twitter
Twitter is an essential marketing tool for brands wishing to grow their online presence. Brevity is key, and though some find it challenging to communicate in 140 characters, most agree that it’s a great way to learn more about the people using a product or service, and grow a community of supporters. In Book IV, we cover the basics of Twitter marketing and even some not so basic areas like hosting a Twitter chat, uploading a Twitter background, and using Twitter to search for brands, jobs, and clients.

Book V: Facebook and Instagram
Facebook is where the people are, and you owe it to yourself and your brand to be a part of the action. In Book V, we take you through setting up Facebook and Instagram accounts, as well as marketing to your community through conversation, photos, and other content.

Book VI: LinkedIn
In Book VI, we explore using LinkedIn as a marketing tool. We take you through setting up a LinkedIn business page, networking through LinkedIn, and using LinkedIn as a content platform.

Book VII: Pinterest
Book VII covers Pinterest, a social networking force to be reckoned with. With Pinterest, a picture really is worth a thousand words, and we show you how to find the photos that best tell your brand’s story. But don’t worry; we won’t just toss you into the water without teaching you how to swim first. We take you through creating an account, uploading photos, and creating boards, and even touch on some unique uses for your Pinterest account.

Book VIII: Other Social Media Marketing Sites
In addition to the “big guys” covered in the Books III through VII, there are hundreds of social media services with smaller audiences. Some of them are networks specific to a demographically segmented audience, and some focus on narrowly targeted vertical markets. Book VIII analyzes the value of working with smaller services and surveys many stratified niche options, including geomarketing and group deal sites. This minibook also includes chapters on using Google+, popular new social media fad sites, and social mobile sites; and multiplying your social media impact with advertising, public relations, and e-newsletters.

Book IX: Measuring Results; Building on Success
Book IX returns to business principles with a chapter on the importance of measuring your results. The first chapter offers details on Google Analytics
for your website in general, and on Google Social Analytics to assess the performance of your social media campaigns. We do a deep dive into the metric sea with details on internal performance measurements for content-sharing services, plus detailed instructions for measuring Twitter, Facebook, minor social media platforms, and social mobile sites. Book IX concludes with chapters covering how to compare results from social media metrics with other forms of online marketing and suggestions for using data to guide your marketing decisions.

**Icons Used in This Book**

To make your experience easier, we use various icons in the margins to identify special categories of information.

These hints help you save time, energy, or aggravation. Sharing them is our way of sharing what we’ve figured out the hard way — so that you don’t have to. Of course, if you prefer to get your education through the school of hard knocks, be our guest.

This book has more details in it than any normal person can remember. This icon reminds you of points made elsewhere in the book or perhaps helps you recall business best practices that you know from your own experience.

Heed these warnings to avoid potential pitfalls. Nothing we suggest will crash your computer beyond repair or send your marketing campaign into oblivion. But we tell you about business and legal pitfalls to avoid, plus a few traps that catch the unprepared during the process of configuring social media services. Not all those services create perfect user interfaces with clear directions!

The geeky-looking Dummies Man marks information to share with your developer or programmer — unless you are one. In that case, have at it. On the other hand, you can skip any of the technical-oriented information without damaging your marketing plans or harming a living being.

**Where to Go from Here**

You can find helpful information on the companion website for this book at [www.dummies.com/extras/socialmediamarketingaio](http://www.dummies.com/extras/socialmediamarketingaio). From the site, you can download copies of the Social Media Goals and Social Media Marketing Plan forms, which you can use to develop your own marketing plans. You can also find an online Cheat Sheet to print and keep handy near your computer at [www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/socialmediamarketingaio](http://www.dummies.com/cheatsheet/socialmediamarketingaio). If you find errors in this book, or have suggestions for future editions, please e-mail us at books@watermelonweb.com. We wish you a fun and profitable experience going social!
Find out about two important aspects to protecting your brand online at www.dummies.com/extras/socialmediamarketingaio.
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