

Top 9 Benefits of Social Media for Your Business by @searchmastergen

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Social media has certainly proven beneficial over the last two decades.

Once a communication experiment that later evolved into platforms figuring out just how much personal data people would make available to their “digital networks,” social media remains a huge part of Americans’ everyday lives.

For businesses, social media has created a way to send a brand’s messaging to the right people at the right time and hope your brand sticks out to them enough to be interested, let alone loyal throughout their lives.

There are a lot of benefits to be had from using social media.

Here are the the top nine reasons why it’s imperative for businesses to be on social media, and how it can help ensure your brand’s success.

1. Faster, Easier Communication

Customers can contact a customer service representative faster and easier now than ever before thanks to social media.

Businesses can also receive, review, and respond to customers’ grievances faster and easier than ever before.

Depending on the industry and the grievance, challenges may still remain, but the line of communication that once was somewhat challenging to establish is no longer nearly as

difficult to do so.

It's faster now than ever before to contact the right people – and oftentimes without having to even pick up a phone – and it's only becoming easier as more people and brands use social media platforms to keep in contact with the people that matter most to their business.

Customers can now communicate real feedback in real time like never before, something businesses have strived to achieve for a long time.

2. Networking & Partnerships

In addition to the simplified lines of communication, there's the aspect of general availability.

Let's face it: there is a small part of the world's population that it would be nearly impossible for most average humans to ever directly communicate with without the right kind of help (publicist, agent, etc.).

Also consider actors and actresses, athletes, and other high-profile people most of us Average Joes would never be able to interact with.

Social media helps connect us easier than ever before.

Heck, even politicians and policymakers have been incredibly available – and often faced with backlash – thanks to social media platforms like Twitter and Facebook.

And while this makes for a fun experience when you get a “follow back” from former President Barack Obama or a retweet from your favorite rock band, it also holds endless potential for networking and partnerships that will help your brand in a multitude of ways.

Backlinks, shoutouts, increased referral visits, and increased

branding are just some of those ways.

Building quality relationships becomes a lot easier with the streamlined communication we get from social media, and building relationships with key influencers earns a lot of value for your brand.

Some examples of the added value these connections facilitate are:

- Trust from others' networks and audience members.
- The acquisition of quality backlinks (that offer SEO boost as well as, hopefully, an increase in referral visitors).
- Potential business opportunities.

3. Boost Organic Visibility

There's so much potential value to be unlocked through social media, aside from the networking and partnership-produced backlinks.

In addition to the SEO value gained from adding quality backlinks to your brand's website (by way of social media relationships, as well as the ways social media help accumulate a variety of link types to comprise a healthy backlink profile), social media also sends relevancy signals and other signals to search engines like Google to ensure popular content is easily visible and shareable.

It's important to understand how social media affects SEO as well.

Google has repeatedly said that social media likes, favorites, shares, backlinks, etc. are not direct ranking signals – but there is a correlation between social media activity/popularity and how/why it is ranked by search engines.

So, even though social media shares don't serve as actual, full-value backlinks, the people, brands, and webmasters/marketers that may see your brand's content via social media then may very well link to your brand's content (since it's quality content offering real value), and those backlinks would certainly hold real value.

4. Increase Website Traffic

Social media channels are supplemental to the brand's website and, if there is one, its brick-and-mortar location.

Social media is intended to reach different audiences in a personable, useful, and entertaining way and refer those potential customers you may not have ever had the chance to engage with previously to get to know and try your business.

This works well in all cases when done correctly.

Both website traffic and foot traffic should increase accordingly with the free or cheap utility that is social media. Let your messaging reflect that.

5. Customer Feedback

In the world of business, sales, and profits, regardless of what your industry is and who you are marketing and selling to, the focus has to truly be on the customer.

And success, both digitally and traditionally, is achieved by understanding – and delivering – the best quality customer service possible, and doing everything in your power to ensure your customer and potential customers have the best possible experience with your company.

Of course, the product or service you are selling should also be good, but there are always going to be unhappy customers. How we respond to the customers – regardless of how “good” or

“bad” their feedback may be – is imperative to your business’s online success and its longstanding reputation.

Social media helps us maintain that reputation by giving us platforms to directly interact with our customers like we never have before. That also means we are receiving real customer feedback directly from the source, faster than ever before (and usually much more raw, too).

Businesses should be using this amazing opportunity to build their brand as a true, consumer-first operation, eventually building the brand’s reputation into one that can never be mistaken and is relied on for many years by an ever-growing customer base.

6. Impress Potential Customers

Keeping in line with maintaining your brand’s respected reputation is the opportunity to impress potential customers with how you’ve handled other, typically unrelated customer interactions.

People often turn to – even rely – on social media and online-review sites to get a good idea of just who a company truly is. Just like marketers, consumers are using social media as a tool to help them make better purchases and decisions in general.

On average, people take into account 10 reviews of a local business before making a purchasing decision. This gives potential customers the chance to see that businesses truly care about their customers even after they’ve made the sale that is so important to them and their business’s success.

7. Branding

While branding essentially involves each numbered entry listed in this column, it’s important to stress it as one of (if not

the) most valuable capabilities of social media.

You may not see as high of a conversion rate via social media (depending on the business and sales structure) as you do other marketing mediums (paid search, organic search, etc.), but the impression a brand gives off and the reputation it built can be greatly enhanced and showcased through social media.

Messaging across social platforms allows us to talk about what's most important to our customers, and lets us train them to keep our brands at the top of their mind when those important buying decisions need to happen.

Each platform is different in terms of what it does well, the demographics of the audience using it, and the kind of content (and timing of its publishing) you see posted regularly. Each brand's messaging should be tailored as such.

And while your business's conversion rate is likely going to be lower on social media than it is via email marketing or paid search, your business goal is always going to be conversions, so maximizing them on all available channels is really the name of the game.

Here are are some tips for increasing social media conversions.

During a business's branding journey across social media, you're able to talk about what's important to the brand and its customers. Tell your brand's story; build the legend as what it's worth to the people who have devoted their lives to building it.

Share your passion and let others understand and support your brand. That is the real power of social media, and the biggest impact social media has on most brands.

You can show off your brand culture and personality, stand out

among the rest for the traits that make your brand different, and attract new, quality employees and further improve your business even more.

8. Track Your Competition

Social media channels also allow us to keep our finger on the pulse of not just other marketing tactics and practices, but also with the tactics used by direct competitors.

And we can learn a lot from our competition.

No one is perfect, and we can all learn something. The ultimate goal is having the customer understand us and depend on us for our authoritative approach within our niche over our competition.

Our competitors are aiming to do the same things as us (establish and protect brand reputation and ultimately sell its products/services), so it's worth us monitoring and finding out ways our business can do better to educate and entertain users, as well as the things our brand does well, and ways we can get better across the board.

9. User-Generated Content & Crowdsourcing of Ideas

User-generated and crowdsourced content isn't just free and unique; it can also be awesome.

The larger the audience, the more potential the content has to really impact a brand and its messaging. Brands will receive and be able to (usually) use this sometimes-quality content – videos, images, infographics, memes, etc. – with proper permission, of course.

Social media allows us to ask for this user-generated content, then receive it directly, but there is quite a bit going in

between all of that, too.

Most brand will have people post their content with specific hashtags. So, the brand isn't just receiving the content; the content is actually being posted throughout social networks (being seen by each person's network individually, as well as the brand and it's network), and equipped with the required hashtags and other "requirements" (which usually includes following the brand, sharing directly with a certain number of connections, and plenty of others).

Getting the Most Out of Social Media

Each business has different goals and ways it measures success.

Social media can help achieve those goals, but it's important to stick to the basics and use them in ways that help your brand succeed.

Every brand is different. Let yours shine on social media.

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