



Emily Smart

## Twitter Your Way to Success

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It's official. Apparently you can teach an old dog a new trick. In this instance, I am the old dog (I'll do the gags, thank you) and the new trick is social media. You must have heard about it. From Facebook to Twitter, from YouTube to LinkedIn, everyone - or so it would seem - is doing it. So what it is and what does it mean for your business?

According to Wikipedia (the free web-based, collaborative, multilingual encyclopedia), "Social media is a term used to describe the type of media that is based on conversation and interaction between people online. Where media means digital words, sounds and pictures which are typically shared via the internet and the value can be cultural, societal or even financial."

No, you're right, I was none the wiser either. Now if you were to ask me what it is, in a business capacity, I'd say it's about connecting with clients and prospective clients. At no cost.

Historically, for marketers around the world data has been king. Years have been spent collating names, addresses, telephone numbers and more recently email addresses so that targeted communications selling products and services can be sent to targeted markets.

Take your Onecard for example. The clever people at Progressive Enterprises are looking at what you buy, where you buy it and how often you buy it so that they can send offers that will appeal to you and drive you in-store to part with your hard-earned cash.

What if you could have an equivalent Onecard function for your business? Think about the people you can talk to, what you can offer them and how you can invite them into your business world. You don't have to just think about it anymore, because it's all there in the ether, and all you have to do is sign up and participate online.

Have you ever considered starting a Facebook fan page for your company? Get

25+ people to become fans and you get your own 'URL [www.facebook.com/enter your business name here](http://www.facebook.com/enter_your_business_name_here)'. You can then send out information online about your latest products, techniques and special offers.

You have 24-hour access to talk to the people within your online community. This also gives you the opportunity to become an expert in your specialist area. Over a short amount of time you can build up trust, create a rapport within your online community and see this translate into sales when your business is top of mind the next time they need a treatment or expert in your field.

Now I know there'll be a large group of you out there who are sceptical when it comes to all this new internet stuff. I am forever being told by small-to-medium sized business owners that they have no understanding of what social media is and who signs up for it, and many are convinced it's simply a fad.

If you think that, you'd be wrong. Here are some hard facts that should demonstrate that social media isn't a niche and it isn't a short-term thing:

- Social media has apparently overtaken pornography as the number one activity on the Web
- If Facebook were a country, it would be the world's third largest
- YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world
- The fastest growing segment on Facebook is 55-65-year-old females
- It took 13 years for television to reach 50 millions users. Facebook added over 200 million users in less than a year.

So, if you want to join the 21st century communication revolution, expand your client base, talk to people interested in what you do and how you do it whilst increasing your sales, consider adding a social media strategy to your marketing plan. I'll leave you with a few handy hints.

- If you join a social media site, ensure you

make the time to update your pages. One easy trick is to create your Facebook page and link your updates through to your Twitter page.

- Don't bang on and on about your company, products and services. A ratio of 1 in 4 references to your business is a good rule of thumb.
- Have some fun... it's not all about work, work, work.

If you sign up on Twitter, follow your competitors and your competitors' followers, as well as your clients and prospective clients. It's an education and you'll be amazed at the amount of information that is shared.

Don't forget to interact on Twitter by 'retweeting' and replying to tweets. Everybody wants to know that what they are writing is being read and it's also a great way for people to get to know you.

And finally, if you're still not convinced by all this new fangled technical stuff, have a look at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9lp0IWv8QZY>. It's had more than 93 million hits globally, created a world-wide phenomenon and single-handedly revived the beauty industry in Scotland!

This old dog is off to bury her bone.

**To find out more about the social media revolution and all things marketing follow Emily at [www.facecook.com/storymarketing](http://www.facecook.com/storymarketing) or on Twitter at [storystories](https://twitter.com/storystories).**