

# Social Media Marketing

## How to Get the Most Out of Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Other Social Media Platforms

by Linda Formichelli

*Social media is for kids. No one uses Twitter. Facebook is a waste of time. Blogs are just places for people to whine about their day.*

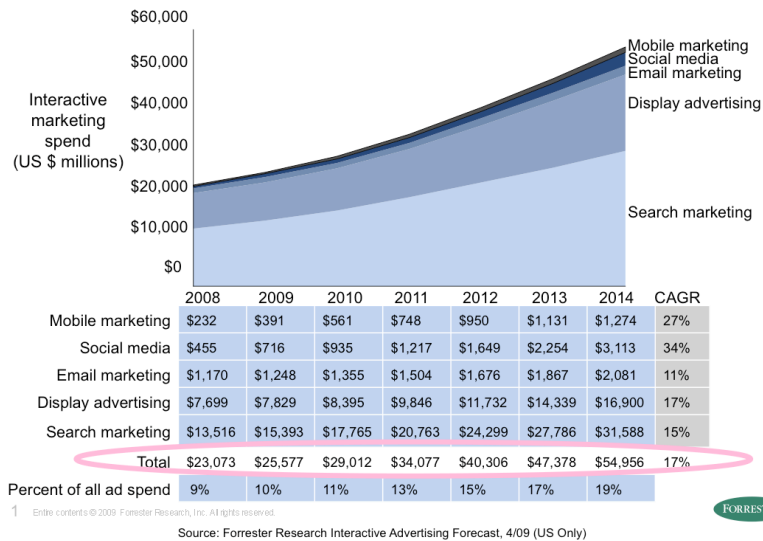
*Social media marketing is a trend that can help you develop positive relationships with your customers -- and sell more of your product or service.*

If these are your feelings about social media, you're missing out on a marketing trend that can help you develop positive relationships with your customers -- and sell more of your product or service.

Here are the numbers:

- More than 100 million people log onto Facebook at least once each day. (Source: Facebook)
- More than seven million people in the U.S. are using the microblogging platform Twitter to connect with friends and colleagues. (Source: Harris Interactive)
- Forrester predicts 34% annual growth for social media marketing dollars through 2014.

- 60% of companies planning to spend more on marketing will increase investments in social marketing. (Source: The State of Retailing Online 2009)



*People of all ages are involved in social media; in fact, the fastest growing group on Facebook is women over 55.*

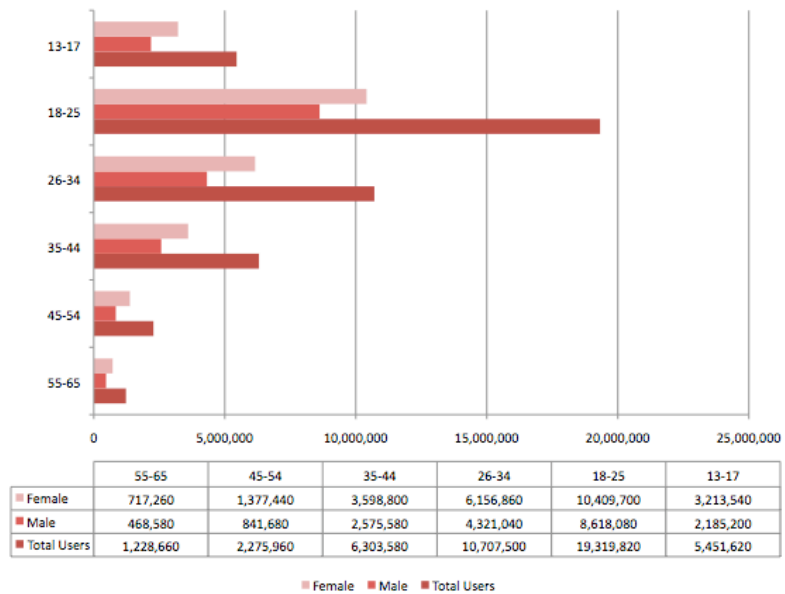
## Who's Using Social Media?

Contrary to what you might think, social media is not a destination for the younger demographic only. Here are the stats:

- Twitter users have a 57/43 percent male/female ratio, and 49 percent of users are in the 35+ age group. (Source: Nielsen Mobile)

- The fastest growing segment on Facebook is women over 55. (Source: InsideFacebook.com)
- Facebook growing faster with women than men in almost every age group. Women comprise 56.2% of Facebook's audience as of February 1, 2009. (Source: InsideFacebook.com)
- 45% of Facebook's US audience is now 26 years old or older. (Source: InsideFacebook.com)

**US Facebook Users By Age Group and Gender (2/1/09)**  
(InsideFacebook.com)



*Examples of social media include Facebook, Twitter, Ning, Digg, YouTube, LinkedIn, MySpace, and Flickr.*

## A Social Media Primer

*Social media* refers to user-generated content and community formed using free or inexpensive software. Here are just a few popular social media platforms and details on how businesses

can take advantage of them.

*LinkedIn is for business connections, while Facebook is more social, so the way you communicate on them will differ.*

**LinkedIn ([www.linkedin.com](http://www.linkedin.com)):** LinkedIn is a professional networking site with 40 million members. Members post profiles that are similar to CVs with work history, skills, and education, and can also include their photo, short status updates, and links to their websites. LinkedIn is a "six degrees of separation" concept where members can find people who are connected to their own connections. The website also includes job boards and question-and-answer forums where members can respond to one another's queries. Members can opt in to get daily e-mails summarizing the changes in their contacts' profiles.

*You can cross-market by posting YouTube videos and links to your blog posts on Facebook.*

Business owners can use LinkedIn to keep connections updated on their business news, link to blog entries, and establish themselves as an expert by answering questions in the relevant Answers section.

**Facebook ([www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com)):** Facebook is a social networking site where you make connections with others by "friending" them, which allows you to see and comment on one another's profiles. Users can post status updates, photos, videos, and more. Facebook is less business-oriented than LinkedIn; keep it conversational, and ditch the hard-sell: post status updates about educational programs you're involved in, events you're organizing, blog posts you've put up, and other news. You can also post photos of events you're involved in and videos you've created for YouTube.

*With YouTube, good content is more important than slick production.*

**YouTube ([www.youtube.com](http://www.youtube.com)):** YouTube is a video sharing site that lets you post and create "channels" of all your videos. Users can comment on one another's videos. YouTube is the ideal platform for educational videos and commercials. Some businesses hold contests among their customers and followers to create the best commercial, and post the best entries for everyone to vote on, which generates positive work of mouth.

To cross-market, you can post YouTube videos on your blog or embed them in your Facebook page.



*To get the scoop on Twitter — who to follow, what to write, etiquette — visit [TwiTip.com](http://TwiTip.com).*

*(Illustration by Matt Hamm)*

**Twitter ([www.twitter.com](http://www.twitter.com)):** Twitter is a "microblogging" platform where people post "tweets" that are 140 characters or fewer. When you tweet, your message appears on your followers' Twitter home pages. There are also free programs

*More than two blogs are created each second of every day. There are about 1.6 million postings per day, or about 18.6 posts per second. (Source: Technorati)*

like TweetDeck ([www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com)) that let you divide the people you're following into categories and that update your tweetstream in real-time -- so it's like being in a crowded restaurant and hearing snatches of conversation go by. In addition, if you tag your tweet with a "hashtag" (such as #jewelry or #lawyers), your tweet will appear in the stream when people search on that keyword using programs like TweetGrid ([www.tweetgrid.com](http://www.tweetgrid.com)). Many people tweet about both their personal lives and their businesses.

**Blogs:** Blogs these days are more than online journals. Many businesses use corporate blogs to educate and market to their customers, and to build a community around their brand. You can create a blog for free at [www.blogger.com](http://www.blogger.com), [www.livejournal.com](http://www.livejournal.com), or [www.wordpress.com](http://www.wordpress.com), and can choose from free designs or hire a web designer to create a custom blog. Readers respond more positively to educational posts than promotional ones; but they understand when you put up the occasional self-promotional post as long as the rest of your content is ad-free.

*Contact Linda Formichelli at [copywriting.lindaformichelli.com](mailto:copywriting.lindaformichelli.com) or [lindaformichelli@gmail.com](mailto:lindaformichelli@gmail.com) to discuss how she can help you with your social media writing.*

## **Getting the Most Out of Social Media**

Social media marketing is nothing like traditional marketing; social media is a, well, social place, where community is valued over slick marketing. Keep these tips in mind when you start your social media campaign.

## Get Help

If social media is a foreign language to you, or if you don't have time to keep up with all the platforms, consider hiring a ghostwriter or copywriter who can serve as the face of your company on social media. Linda Formichelli at

*Think of social media as a party: When you meet someone at a party, do you jump in and start touting your business, or do you get to know the person first?*

[copywriting.lindaformichelli.com](http://copywriting.lindaformichelli.com) is a copywriter, corporate blogger, and social media devotee who knows how to keep followers coming back.

## Market It

There's no point in being active in social media if no one knows you're there. Include your Facebook page, Twitter tag, blog address, and other social media information on all of your marketing materials. One business we interviewed redesigned their website home page to have a section on the right side that says, "Follow us on Twitter, be our fan on Facebook, watch our videos on YouTube, and read our blogs."

*Typing in @name will let you send a message directly to that person; for example, to tweet Linda Formichelli directly, type in @lformichelli before your tweet.*

## Listen First

Get your feet wet by listening to the conversations that are going on in social media before you jump into the conversation; it's a turnoff when businesses join social media platforms and immediately start pushing their product or service. Try searching on keywords that are relevant for your business; for example, Google lets you refine your search to blogs only, and you can go to [search.twitter.com](http://search.twitter.com) to search for keywords in

*Social media is all about connections and personalization. Don't be a faceless corporation!*

Twitter posts. This will let you join conversations that are relevant to your business.

### **Get Involved**

After you've lurked for a while and have an idea of what's going on in your area of the social media space, start contributing to other people's conversations. This will help you garner more followers. For example, on Twitter, if someone responds to one of your tweets, all of that person's followers will see the tweet and also see your Twitter name, which will let them follow you. If you post a comment on someone's Facebook "Wall," all of that person's friends will see your post.

*A good rate is to post on blogs several times per week and social media like Twitter and Facebook at least every other day.*

### **Be Real**

Social media isn't the place for overly-produced marketing campaigns. In fact, too-perfect production can be off-putting. When creating YouTube videos, go for honest over slick. When you're writing a blog post, strive to sound conversational instead of spouting "marketingese."

### **Put a Face on It**

Instead being a faceless business, elect one of your employees to be the face of your business. The selected employee can post his or her photo and add personal details to the profile or bio.

*Don't worry about negative comments on your blog or YouTube video. What's more important than the negative comment is how you handle it. In many cases you can take action (explain/apologize/refute) once and then let the problem go.*

### **Be Consistent**

You need to keep active in social media so members don't visit you and see tumbleweeds. Post on blogs several times per week, and participate in social media like Twitter and Facebook at least every other day. But what's more important than frequency is consistency: If you say you're going to post once a day, be sure that a post goes up daily. The good news is that it takes just seconds to post on many social media platforms.

### **Get Personal**

Social media is a personal space, and people who constantly post about their businesses are labeled as spammers. On Twitter and Facebook, follow a ratio of five to ten personal posts for every business-related post.

### **Moderate Comments**

*Share your knowledge and you'll gain more followers.*

Many businesses using social media worry about opening themselves up to negative comments. If this is a concern, you can set your Facebook page and YouTube videos to not allow people to add comments, and you can also block abusive users in Twitter so they can't see your tweets. But social media is all about community, so it makes sense to allow readers to comment on your blog, which you can moderate to keep out inflammatory comments. If you do this, you need to be fast; it's a turn-off to visitors if they take the time to post a comment and

it takes a day to go up.

### **Cross-Market**

You can use social media to drive people to your website or to other social media platforms like your blog. For example, Facebook has an application that allows your status updates to be automatically transmitted to Twitter, and you can mention your blog posts in your LinkedIn status updates.

*Contact Linda at  
lindaformichelli@gmail.com for  
examples of successful  
brochures, newsletters, and  
more.*

### **Be an Expert**

Social media let you position your business as an expert in topics of interest to your customers. For example, if you're a credit union, you can post money-saving tips on Facebook and your blog, and post educational videos to YouTube. On LinkedIn, you can answer other members' money questions in the Answers section. Spreading useful information to your members will help build good word of mouth.

Social media offers businesses a unique opportunity to connect with members to educate them, get feedback, sell product, spread word of mouth, and build community. Forget fancy marketing tactics and communicate person-to-person instead, and your social media campaign will be sure to take off.

## About the Author

Linda Formichelli ([copywriting.lindaformichelli.com](http://copywriting.lindaformichelli.com)) is a freelance copywriter who has written successful brochures, ads, newsletters, web copy, and more for such clients as ESPN, Bay State Gas, Pizzeria Uno, and Wainwright Bank. She's written for more than 120 magazines, including such top-notch publications as *USA Weekend*, *Redbook*, *Health*, *Business Start-Ups*, and *Wired News*. Linda knows her way around social media, runs the successful Renegade Writer blog, and is a corporate blogger for the Designer Whey website. Contact Linda for your copywriting needs, or to discuss how she can be the face of your business on Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and other social media.