



# **8 Steps for Gaining a Social Media Foothold**

**A Get Started Guide for Social Media Traction**

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## Introduction

You either don't have any idea where to start, or you're entirely sick and tired of going absolutely nowhere with social media. Either way, you're ready to make a change. This guide can help you with both.

This guide is your reset button. It's do-over time.

Follow this guide, and take action on the initial bi-weekly lessons that I'm sending to your email inbox, and you will gain traction with your business in the social media space.

Once you have traction, you'll be ready for the various other options that are available. But it starts here. Just focus on this guide first. Don't get ahead of yourself.

It's likely your time is already crunched, and you're wondering where you're going to fit social media into the big picture. Don't think of social media as something new. Look at social media as an enhanced way of doing the business you're already doing.

Furthermore, there is a threshold when you do the minimum required yet still get the maximum results. Such as boiling water. This is known as the minimum effective dose.

It starts with a series of little two millimeter adjustments that are simple to implement.

These adjustments aren't always much by themselves, but cumulatively, will help you reach that "sweet spot" where you get dramatic results in less time with less effort.

That's should be your goal. That's MY goal for YOU. And if you are sure to begin simply with this guide, and then apply the actionable information I send to your email inbox, you will have it.

Take small steps toward daily habits. This isn't some big overnight epiphany. It's about being consistent.

### **Important:**

**Gaining social media traction starts with a strategy that is rooted in a desire to forge better relationships with your prospects, leads, customers and mostly the audience you seek to be a part of.**

If you have any other intention, you're likely to get impatient and fail.

There are really only five reasons to use social media, so right now, I want you to decide on ONE of the following reasons to use social media. Whichever one you choose, fill on the blank...

To Aide Branding & Awareness for \_\_\_\_\_?

***You'd pick this one if you're entirely new to social media and no one knows who you are. You'd use social media so people start becoming aware of who you are, what you do and why you do it.***

To Build Community Around \_\_\_\_\_?

***You can build community around your blog, your Facebook page, your Twitter profile, or Youtube channel. It could be your product, service or business. You decide.***

To Provide Customer Service Opportunity for \_\_\_\_\_?

***If you already have a product, service or business “out there” where you have customers that are having a conversation then you want to be a part of that conversation, and/or you’ll probably want to be there to provide assistance.***

To Allow for Research or Testing or Collaboration with \_\_\_\_\_?

***This one can be tricky. I’ll teach to this more later, but for now if you’re going to choose this one, be sure you have the following, and in this order: a goal. You need a goal. Then you need an objective to meet the goal, a strategy to implement the objective and tactics to implement strategy.***

To Offer Direct Sales Opportunities for \_\_\_\_\_?

***This is obvious, but you can’t just sell, sell, sell. Nonetheless, placing your products and services into the social media space is a great way to sell more of them.***

In this guide, we’ll outline a few of the strategies and tactics you can employ, and we’ll touch on how each works as the basis for your new social media plan (or use it with what you already have).

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## Educate Yourself

There are thousands of resources across the web about social media about theory and practice. The best thing you can do to get started in earnest with social media is to educate yourself with what's happening out there.

## Why this is important

The same reason that you need a license before you can drive. You have to learn the rules of the road. Immersing yourself in practical knowledge is important to having real world perspective about what works and what doesn't. It's not about theory. It's about implementation. The blogs that I'm going to recommend you read have all implemented.

## How it fits into your plan

You should already be doing marketing anyway. You should always be learning about marketing. These blogs represent the best of the best. Dedicate 25 minutes per day to learn more about social media within the boundaries of these blogs.

## Ways to get started

Social media is the talk of the planet. But where do you go to learn the best tips and tactics? Look no further...If you're looking to reap the rewards of social media, these rich blogs need to be at the top of your reading list.

**[Chris Brogan](#)**: The Elvis of social media and the king of common sense, Chris Brogan is a league of his own.

**[Social Media Explorer](#)**: Social media all-star Jason Falls provides a fresh and interesting take on all things social media.

**[Mashable](#)**: The world's source for social media news. Mashable is the place to go for breaking stories.

**[Convince & Convert](#)**: Jay Baer provides rich content for businesses seeking to embrace social media.

**[Brass Tack Thinking](#)**: Amber Naslund offers a breath of fresh air with smart, inspiring and personal social media insight.

**[CopyBlogger](#)**: The king of engaging content. Brian Clark and his team help businesses persuade in a social media-driven world.

**[Brand Builder](#)**: For businesses looking to dive deep into social media discussion, check out Olivier Blanchard's rich insights.

**[Kikolani](#)**: Looking for great "getting started" social media guidance? Then frequent this blog.

**[Future Buzz](#)**: A nice mix of stories and reviews makes Adam Singer's site one that should be on your radar.

**[Smart Blog on Social Media](#)**: The premise behind SmartBrief is simple: there's too much information out there and too little time in the day to read it all. Smart Blog editors hand-pick the most relevant and important news from all over, summarize it, link to the original sources and publish it on one blog.

**[Social Media Examiner](#)**: Social Media Examiner is a free online magazine designed to help businesses discover how to best use social media tools like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to find leads, increase sales and generate more brand awareness.

**[Social Media Today](#)**: Social Media Today is an independent online community for professionals in PR, marketing, advertising, or any other discipline where a thorough understanding of social media is mission critical.

**More and more great books are being published on the topic of social media too. Here are a few I've read or have been recommended.**

*What I suggest you do with all of these book titles*: follow the link to Amazon and read the reviews; peak at the table of contents and the front and back cover; Google the author and see what you see. Determine if it's a good match for what you're trying to do.

[Trust Agents: Using the Web to Build Influence, Improve Reputation, and Earn Trust](#)

[Engage, Revised and Updated: The Complete Guide for Brands and Businesses to Build, Cultivate, and Measure Success in the New Web](#)

[Social Media 101: Tactics and Tips to Develop Your Business Online](#)

[Crush It!: Why NOW Is the Time to Cash In on Your Passion](#)

[The Thank You Economy](#)

[Poke the Box](#)

[Tribes: We Need You to Lead Us](#)

[Enchantment: The Art of Changing Hearts, Minds, and Actions](#)

[Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business](#)

[The New Community Rules: Marketing on the Social Web](#)

[UnMarketing: Stop Marketing. Start Engaging.](#)

[Content Rules: How to Create Killer Blogs, Podcasts, Videos, Ebooks, Webinars \(and More\) That Engage Customers and Ignite Your Business \(New Rules Social Media Series\)](#)

## **Listen**

Once you begin to understand the Social Media playing field specific to your niche and/or industry, the critical first step is to listen. Notice I did not write, Take Action. You've probably already taken action, and it's likely getting you nowhere.

The all time hockey legend Wayne Gretzky said that he doesn't go to where the puck is, he goes to where the puck will be. That's why we listen-in with social media. We're going to take action in the right places.

The point of listening is to know what's being said about your industry, products, services, top leaders, etc. across the web and then to go even deeper than that.

## **Why this is important**

Conversations are going to happen, with or without you. Social media doesn't create buzz around brands, positive or negative. It *uncovers* it. You want to become good at the "uncovering." It is always better to be an informed participant in the dialogue, and to understand the lay of the land before you take your first steps. Or anymore steps.

In the case of participating online, ignorance is not bliss. Practice being prepared to take a hard, realistic look at Who You Are through the rest of the world's eyes so you can better understand how to talk with them and be a valued conversation partner.

## **How it fits into your plan**

This isn't much different than market research, or simply keeping a pulse on the market you're targeting. Spend 25 to 35 minutes a day pursuing your alerts (see the link to the tutorial below). If people are talking about your industry, products, services, top leaders, etc. pick five posts a week that you find, go there, and respond.

*Grow bigger ears* and set up your own method of listening with Google Reader. I've created an easy to follow tutorial to help you with this. Follow the link to implement your own "listening station."

[How to "Listen" Using Google Reader](#)

## **Ways to get started**

It's as simple as following the directions I've provided here [How to "Listen" Using Google Reader](#)

[Google Alerts](#): Build keyword searches for your company name, your industry terms, and the people/community you want to associate with. Alerts come straight to your inbox, and you can set your preferences for frequency.

[Twitter Search](#): Search for your name, terms from your industry, or terms to see what's being said about you on Twitter. You'll be surprised.

Report about what you learn with others inside the community you seek to be a part of. For starters, simply talk about what it means to you, and then use Twitter and/or Facebook to ask for a response.

### **Product Recommendation**

For something more robust, and advanced, try out HootSuite. I find this tool very useful for real-time search on Twitter and Facebook. They also have a "University" program that I highly recommend. Overall, HootSuite is great for getting the most out of social media, understanding what to automate and what NOT to automate, and social media management.

[HootSuite Social Media Dashboard for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and More](#)

## Find Your Personality

You will not find enjoyment and success with Social Media unless you are excited about doing it, and thrilled to be connecting with people in your target market. Talk to people about their goals, and let them know you're interested to learn about their biggest challenges. Make sure that you're participating from the perspective of connecting with people, not selling them.

### Why this is important

People can see right through insincerity. It's important that you represent yourself as a human. Make business human. Make business social. Start by forging relationships. That creates awareness, and awareness leads to more attention. More attention if it's positive will lead to increased business.

### How it fits into your plan

As you're forging relationships, making connections, keep a close focus on creating content that meets the needs of the people that you're connecting with. Or moreover, focus on learning how to report about how you solved *your own* questions and problems. This is **value**. And because you're making these relationships, people will begin to look for you, and seek you out. You want them to like what they find.

### Ways to get started

It's easy: talk to people – literally. Don't use social media as just another mechanism to try and sell stuff. If you're not dedicated to building the relationships behind the transactions, your social media efforts will scuttle.

Without question I would start a blog and fill it with relevant and valuable content for the community you hope to form.

**Remember – create content that meets the needs of the people that you're connecting with (or want to). And/or focus on learning how to report about how you solved *your own* questions and problems.**

Aim for at least two posts per week to start. I would spend ten times as much time adding value to the five or ten existing communities where your potential community might be hanging out, reading and connecting.

It's not a ploy and it's not a trick—do this because you're genuinely interested and want to engage with the other community members. Those community members will appreciate your contributions and take a chance on checking out what you're up to on your own space (like your blog). That's how it works.

It takes time. Be patient. Focus more on the habit of it than on results for the first 90-120 days or longer.

***Need a blog fast and cheap? [Go here](#)***

## Define Success

You have to know what you want out of this game. Write it down, and tie each goal back to your larger business picture. Put it on your wall, and every time you feel misguided about why you're doing this, go back and look at it. Think long term, and build your "virtual fort Knox" over time (vs. having a short term, transactional effect).

At the beginning of this guide, I recommended that you choose one of the following reasons to use social media. They were to...

- To Aide Branding & Awareness
- To Build Community
- To Provide Customer Service Opportunity
- To Allow for Research or Testing or Collaboration
- To Offer Direct Sales Opportunities

For whichever one you choose, decide on how you'll measure success for it. For example, if I were to choose "Build Community," one way I might measure success would be how many comments I received at my blog posts or on my Facebook page.

Be keenly aware of what success definition you're using for the intentions you have for your social media efforts.

## Why this is important

If you don't understand what success means to you in terms of Social Media, there's no way to measure what you've achieved or where you need to improve. And it's awfully hard to prove your success if you don't know what you were aiming for in the first place.

## How it fits into your plan

If you're in business, you're planning and outlining goals for every aspect of your business – Awareness, Community Building, Service Opportunities, Collaboration Opportunities, Sales Opportunities (eventually). For each area map some of those goals back to your social media efforts to be sure that your involvement in the space is in harmony with everything else you're doing.

## Ways to get started

Assess your current state of affairs. If your business is brand new, try taking the pulse of the people (or businesses) that are where you seek to be, as well as setting realistic but challenging goals that you can measure against later.

Understand who your audience is. Who exactly are you trying to influence with your social media efforts? What do those people look like?

This is all part of the *defining* process.

Where are people in terms of their relationship with you or the brand you're portraying today? Choose from the following:

- Nothing – People who have no relationship with you. There is nothing there. They don't know you exist.
- Aware, With No Action – People who are aware of you, or your products and services or business opportunity, but have never taken action.
- Single Action – There are some people who have taken a single action. They've made a single purchase from you.
- Repeat/Enthusiasts – You have repeat purchasers and enthusiasts.

Pick up to two of these (above) and make sure they're adjacent, and that's where you're going to focus your efforts.

If your choice is devoted to Awareness, you would pick these two, *Nothing* and *Awareness, No Action*.

The next step is who your audience is from a demographic perspective.

How old are they? Are they male or female? Where do they live? How do they use social media? Write out a thorough definition for all of these questions.

## Keep this in mind

- Goals give you direction
- Objectives are used to meet goals and a means for tracking
- Strategies are used to meet objectives (and keep yourself on track)

- And Tactics are how you get it done (it's your to-do list on any given day)

## **Participate**

You have to be part of the conversation, and that means understanding and embracing the culture of social media. Some of the tenets of social media include being human and personable. It also means having a unique voice, being transparent and open to dialogue, and participating through contribution (vs. only promotion).

## **Why this is important**

People forge relationships with other people, not with a “brand” or a business. It's the humans that make connections. Social Media has opened up a world where dialogue is easier than ever before and therefore, expected. Your audience wants to talk to you, and they'll expect you to do so in a human fashion, not by pushing links and promotions and “buy me” stuff at them all the time. Trust is a fragile thing, and it's built on the back of relationships that have been rooted in honest conversation.

## **How it fits into your plan**

Think of this as an extension of who you already are – your personality. Akin to picking up the phone or sending an email, having a meeting, or joining a community organization, it's a touch point for conversation. You're hopefully spending time talking to your customers, leads and prospects already, so work this into your everyday efforts to converse with the people that drive your business. Try three hours a week to start with. And don't forget the follow through. Never leave conversations dangling.

## **Ways to Get Started**

Search <http://blogsearch.google.com/> to find blogs that are of interest to you (in your industry or market). Spend 2 hours each week or more commenting on other blogs, without pitching or promoting your company in any way. Simply add your perspective to the conversation, just like you'd do at a face to face social event.

### [Start a blog.](#)

Focus one level up from your business. Rather than blogging about specific products or services, write about the experiences that drive these products and services. For example, if you're a real estate agent, talk about financial challenges, the current market and best practices for finding a home. Read other blogs in your niche to get a sense of tone, post length, and content that feels comfortable for you.

Build profiles on key sites, using a real picture (not a logo) and using your real name. (It's ok to profile your business in your bio).

## **Facebook**

Facebook is a popular social network used for creating and sustaining personal and professional connections. Best way to learn how to use it? Search for the leaders you respect, and start conversing with the people who are already there.

Now here is something you can apply *right now*.

### **3 Quick Facebook Tweaks You Can Do Right Now**

#### **What:**

Three really smart and fast changes to make within Facebook and your business website.

#### **Why:**

These changes will give your Facebook business page that extra "oomph" it needs to get it noticed and keep it relevant.

#### **How:**

##### **The first change to make as it relates to your Facebook Page and your website:**

1. Let people who travel through your website know that you have a Facebook page by creating adding a social plugin. A Social Plugin is html code that you can add to your website which will render a box with your page's name, the main image, and you can choose whether you'd also like it to show the *stream* of updates.

Within your Facebook page, click "Edit Page," then "Marketing" (on the left), then click "Add A Like Box To Your Website."

2. Make sure the Facebook URL is changed to the one for your Page. Choose your color scheme and check the boxes as you desire. When finished, click "Get Code" and copy/paste the one under "iframe."
3. Apply that code on the main page of your website, perhaps as a graphic on one of the sides of your page so that your visitors know they can follow you on that social network.

##### **The next change requires you to upload a picture for your Page that is 180x540 pixels and does one of the following:**

1. You can use your Page's main picture to let people know about upcoming events. If you are going to participate in a webinar, for example, include text that lets them know when it will take place. You don't have to do this all the time, but every now and then it will help remind people that there's something important going on.

2. If you like your fans to get involved, you can have them submit pictures in which they are demonstrating an appreciation of your product and you can showcase them as part of your picture. Let them know they will be featured, and they will not hesitate to tell their friends to check your page out.

**Finally, remember to update for your page 3-5 times a day.**

Keeping your page updated might take a little bit of time, but it helps you stay relevant on people's newsfeeds. Remember, people are updating constantly, and if you update only once, it is very easy to get lost in the newsfeed of other Facebook users. Updating a few times a day shows that you are relevant and will ensure that your page gets the attention it needs.

## **Twitter**

Twitter is a microblogging platform where users share updates with each other in 140 characters or less. Best way to learn how to use it? Jump in and start conversing with others.

Spend 30 minutes each day checking in on these sites, and interacting with others. Go deep rather than broad. Never worry about doing something else just because someone else is. It's quality over quantity. You don't have to be everywhere.

For both Facebook and Twitter, ignore the numbers. Do not concern with how many people you're following or how many are following you. Don't race to make more "friends."

Now here is a Twitter "tweak" you can apply *right now*.

## **Simple Twitter Tweaks**

If you've already got a Twitter account or you're about to open a new one, here are a few things you can do to get the most out of the time you spend there.

### **What:**

Make a few smart tweaks to your Twitter account so people know you're REAL.

### **Why:**

A meaningful Twitter account can become a really powerful marketing strategy. It will attract active followers and you'll build a reputation that pays off for your business.

### **How:**

The beauty of Twitter is BREVITY.

1. **How To Fill Out Your Bio:** You're allowed 160 characters in your bio, which is only 20 more than your tweets allow. Use them all! Throw in something true about you, then mention what business you represent. For example: *Hi, I'm John and I am raising three great kids. Love to surf and write and I'm founder of .....*
2. **How To Effectively @reply:** When you read the tweets of those you follow, show them you're a real person by @replying them with something relevant to their tweets to show you're not an

automated robot of some kind. This attention goes a long way! Retweet stuff they say and include a comment to show you're not just retweeting arbitrarily.

3. **Leave RT Space** – If you write your tweets too long, it'll be hard for someone to RT you. Leave a few characters available for Retweets on some of your updates.
4. **Upload A Background Related To Your Brand** – Upload a background image that shows up on the left side of your Twitter background without getting cut off by your Twitter feed. Keep it simple and close to the edge.

As you get into the habit of Tweeting and Replying to people, you'll really get the hang of adding your personal commentary to other people's tweets and get some effective communication going. And chances are you are following people who don't follow you yet. Once you start that dialogue, they will take notice and follow you back!

## Measure

There's always the discussion about measurement or Return On Investment (ROI) with Social Media. To start, simply focus on ways to measure the effects that the relationships you build have on your business.

### Why this is important

You can't know if you're succeeding unless you measure against the goals you set. Measurement is the way that you can outline - in concrete terms - how that time is being spent and why it's valuable to your business.

### How it fits into your plan

It's likely that you're already doing some kind of measurement and analysis of sales, website analytics, trends, and/or marketing efforts. If not, you must start.

### Ways to get started

Make monthly or quarterly reminders in your calendar that direct you to do some reporting and analysis of your social media efforts along with your other endeavors.

#### Over time, consider these elements to measure:

- Website Statistics (try [Google Analytics](#) - it's free and powerful)
- Blog subscribers and comments
- Inbound links to your site or blog (use [Google Alerts](#) for this)
- Increase in number of leads/quality of leads
- Mentions in the social media (again, use Google Alerts)
- New customers
- Boxes of chocolate you get during the holidays. (Kidding. Seeing if you're still with me.)

## **Don't Be Afraid to Fail**

Failure is a teacher. It guides us about what we need to adjust in order to succeed. Human communication and interaction is not an exact science. Neither is leading a business to its fullest potential. It takes time, dedication, practice, and the willingness to take risks in order to explore possibilities.

If you screw up, say you're sorry. Fix it if you can. Then dust yourself off and move on. What you learn will make you smarter, more efficient, and savvier than ever before.

Jump in and don't be afraid to make a mess.

***"If I find 10,000 ways something won't work, I haven't failed. I am not discouraged, because every wrong attempt discarded is another step forward."***

*- Thomas Edison*

## Need More Help?



## Contact Me. That's what I'm here for...

Stepping into Social Media is an exciting and very important step for your business.

Hopefully this guide will serve you as an ideal starting point and give you practical food for thought about how social media can work for you.

Your time is limited, but relationships are always a good investment. I can help you figure out where to dedicate your time and how to make the most of your efforts.

If you're ready to take things to the next level and need a helping hand, I'm eager to be your guide. You will want to look for my *Social Media Boot Camp* emails which accompany this guide. I encourage you to click "reply" and ask questions.

If you're interested in a hosting a webinar on this topic for your audience, coworkers, or associates, let me know. I can help you with this.

If you're looking for coaching and/or consulting, I'm available for that too.

If nothing else, be sure to frequent my blog for remarkable content that will help you with Social Media Marketing.

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