

# A SHORT HANDBOOK TO THE SCARY



## WORLD OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SOCIAL MEDIA



**SOCIAL NETWORKING  
FOR BUSINESS**

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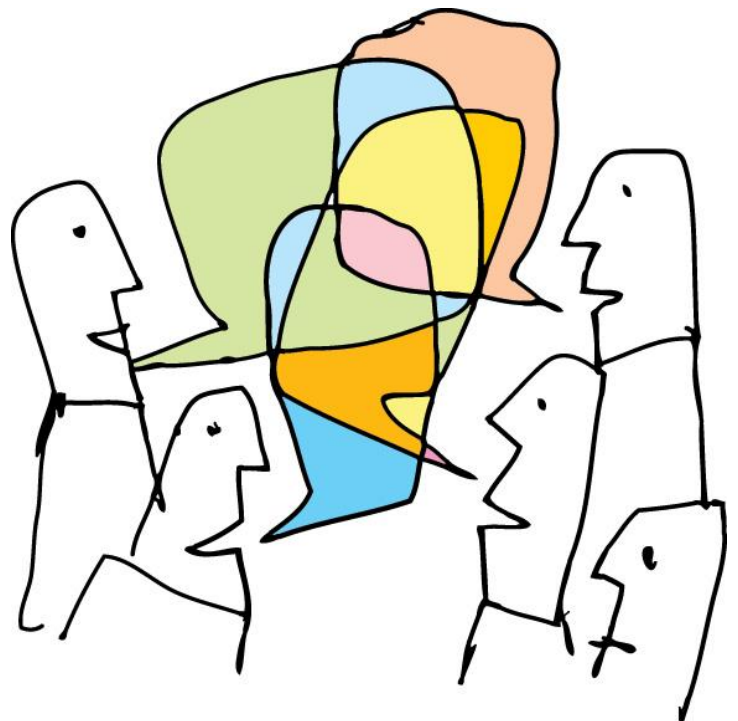
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# SOCIAL MEDIA: AN INTRODUCTION

Social media is a relatively new form of online communication which proliferated in popularity with the launch of [Facebook](#) in 2004. Other major Social Media sites include [Twitter](#), [YouTube](#), [Flickr](#) and [Tumblr](#).

New social media pages are established all the time, but Facebook and Twitter remain the major leaders in online communication and networking. A useful professional networking site however is [LinkedIn](#) where you can share professional knowledge and expertise about either your individual self or your organisation.

Social media is the next generation in communication and it is essential that organisations get to grips with its importance, influence and possibility to avoid being left behind in the online social sphere. Social media is especially useful in creating a broader prospective awareness, and is also great to meet and connect with other people or organisations that you may have a specific interest in, or they with you. At a simple level, social media is a fantastic way to share information in a straight-forward, effective and cost-free way. For example you may have added something to the news section on your website – by simply adding a link to your social media pages, you can easily broaden the spectrum of interest and hopefully promote a greater awareness of your organisation.

Of course in order to do this, you must first build up an online following. By adding social media buttons onto your website, and URL's on any marketing or PR materials, it will allow people to see that you are an active social media user and encourage them to follow and connect with you. Social media should not however just be used as a one-way mechanism, but should act as a two-way communication tool where other social media users can comment you and participate in active online conversations.

Social media can also be used as an excellent form of internal communication. By encouraging staff and service users to follow the organisations social media sites, you can easily keep them up to date with information and events which will show up on their wall feed.

**Social media has opened up a whole new realm of communication possibilities and should not be overlooked or dismissed as a useless piece of technology. It is dynamic and ever changing in scope and potential and can easily be actively incorporated into the everyday functioning of an organisation.**

### 1.1. [FACEBOOK](#)

Having an active Facebook page is a great way to tell people about your organisation and update people about events, activities and news. Facebook allows you to share an assortment of media content such as photo's, video's and links to other websites, as well as letting you update your followers regularly with status updates, posts, messages and notes. You can also link your website and other social media sites to Facebook. All online activity thereby becomes interconnected and can be really beneficial when trying to reach a wider audience.



#### **Facebook Fan Pages**

There are several types of 'page' options available on Facebook. Most individual users opt for a 'profile page' where they can add and be added by "Friends". For organisational use however, a Facebook 'Fan Page' is much more beneficial. Organisations attract Facebook users to their Fan page who can then "Like" the page. Once "Liked", the individual will receive access to the page, as well as regular updates in their Facebook news feed. It also allows organisations to send messages to their followers, which is an excellent opportunity to directly communicate with them. Like all social media pages, a Facebook Fan page needs to provide valuable, on-going

content to their community of followers to maintain interest and encourage more people to “Like” you.

## **How to Interact on Facebook**

Status updates are good for light-hearted interaction and information shared with followers who can then also share a comment. There are also possibilities for more detailed content and conversation. These include:

### **1. Creation of Events Pages**

Facebook allows you to create and share upcoming events with your followers. Along with this, non-fans may also come across your event and be interested in participating.

#### How to?

Creating an event is very simple. On the left side of the homepage wall there are a number of function options including ‘Wall’, ‘Info’, ‘Photos’ and ‘Events’. Simply click on the events button, and on the top right of the page there will be a ‘Create an event’ option. It will then simply ask you ‘What’, ‘When’, ‘Where’ and ‘More info’. Fill these in with the event facts, add a photograph and click ‘Create event’. The event will then appear on your page and the news feed of your followers making them aware of the event.

### **2. Photo’s and Video’s**

You can post links to existing content on other social media sites such as YouTube and Flickr. These do not necessarily have to be your social media pages, but there may be an interesting link you would like to share with your followers. You can also create photo albums and upload your own videos directly onto Facebook. Followers can then view, follow your links and comment. Photo’s and video’s are very important on a Facebook Fan page since they add interest and colour.

### How to?

At the top of the homepage there should be the options 'Status', 'Photo', 'Link', 'Video' and 'Question'. Click whichever you are wishing to add onto the wall and you can either upload photos and videos directly from your computer, or add a URL (from YouTube for example) that will link to another online page.

### **3. Become a Fan**

Become a fan of other successful fan pages that may also be of interest to your page viewers. This will then also allow others who follow their page to find your page and hopefully start following you. You should monitor other successful pages that have lots of followers to observe how they post their content and attract interest.

### How to?

You can either find other fan pages through Facebook links on their website, or you can search directly for them in the Facebook search engine. Once you are on their page there will be a "Like" button at the top to select.

## **1.2. TWITTER**

Twitter was established in 2006 and has since become one of the most successful instant messaging websites online. Today, there are over 200 million Twitter accounts world-wide, and this is growing dramatically on a daily basis. Twitter's success is thanks to its simplicity and mass audience. Twitter updates occur in 140 characters or less – you really can't get much simpler than that! Within the 140 characters you can add URL links to webpage's of interest. You can also upload single photos, but these unlike Facebook, are transitory for a period of time and will not be added to a photograph album.



## 1. Following and Followers



Your interactions on Twitter should be between you and your followers as well as the accounts that you follow. Ideally the accounts that you follow will follow you back, but this is not always the case. As a Twitter user, you need to be a positive and regular contributor in order to gain benefits from it. If you establish yourself as a valuable account for people to follow, then people are more likely to click your links, 're-tweet' your 'tweets', suggest to others to follow you, and participate in a conversation with you through either an @mention or a direct message (DM), which will indirectly encourage their followers to follow you. The more you Tweet, the more followers you are likely to get. Be warned however – TOO MANY TWEETS (i.e. above 30 a day), can be perceived as spam, discouraging people from following you and even causing your followers to 'un-follow you'.

### How to?

Simply find a Twitter account that you would like to follow via their website link, or search for them via the Twitter search engine. When their page appears, simply click 'Follow'. All their Tweets will then appear visible in your news feed. If they do not reciprocate your follow however, then they will not be able to see your Tweets. If you want to un-follow someone, click on their profile and click the 'un-follow' option.

## 2. How to 'Tweet'

With millions of Tweets produced a day, it is very hard to stand out from the fast-moving crowd. It is therefore important to focus on providing your followers with interesting Tweets. Tweets with links and photos are very useful in this respect as it will encourage followers to notice you. Generally, make sure that your Tweets are short, relevant, informative, interesting and have the ability to generate discussion. Don't worry however, if you're Tweets don't generate conversation since merely creating a Twitter presence is highly beneficial. Twitter is very transitory and fast-moving

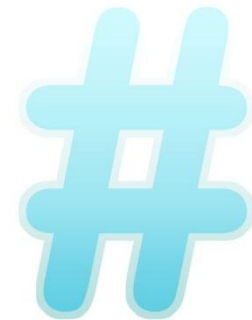
compared to Facebook which has more of an opportunity for online community participation.

Writing a 'Tweet' is very similar to writing a Facebook status. On the home page there is a large box which asks "What's Happening". Simply write your Tweet in there in less than 140 characters and press the 'Tweet' button.

To mention another Twitter user in your Tweet, use their @name. This will then notify the user that you have mentioned them and hopefully encourage them to either reply or 'Re-Tweet' your message. A re-Tweet is simply another Tweet that you have read that you would like to share with your followers. To re-Tweet, click on the specific Tweet and underneath it will appear the Re-Tweet option.

### 3. #HashTags

Hashtag is a key word preceded with a # symbol. A hashtag is used to signify that a tweet is part of a particular topic or conversation, and allows easy and simple searching for other Twitter users. Using a hashtag is a great way to increase your Twitter visibility. However, be aware that hashtags should only be used to add significant values to conversations; do not put a # before every word. Generally, using only one hashtag is recommended.



A popular hashtag is #FF (aka, Follow Friday). This simply allows you to answer the question: "Who do you think your followers should follow this week?"

It is an effective way to promote your followers on Twitter, and also indirectly promotes yourself if they re-tweet your #FF. To participate in Follow Friday, simply include #FF in your Tweet and mention the accounts @name.



### 1.3. YOUTUBE

YouTube is a video sharing website where users can upload and share homemade videos. The video's can also be shared on other social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Video's have the potential to 'go viral' when they get thousands of views all over the world. Large corporations such as Cadbury's create ads and upload them onto YouTube with the intention of them going viral as an effective Marketing strategy. This can be very powerful since it is fundamentally a bottom-up, user-driven process of access and viewing, rather than a top-down advert placed on television during commercial breaks or in a magazine or newspaper. It is also a much cheaper promotion strategy than paying for advertising space!



By actively using and adding video's to YouTube on a regular basis you will encourage other people to subscribe to your channel and add you as a friend. This in turn will help drive greater traffic and more video views to your channel.

#### How To?

To upload video's onto YouTube, you must first create a YouTube channel by entering your email address and creating a password. Once you have created a page you can easily upload videos you have created by selecting the 'Upload' option at the top of the page. Once it has uploaded you can add a title and write a blurb about the content of the video. Share your most recent upload via Facebook and Twitter links to encourage people to view the video and access your channel.

YouTube is on occasion subject to copyright laws which means they have the power to remove a video to prevent other users viewing it. Copyright infringement can include images and/or backing music. This can be frustrating, but is unfortunately unavoidable. If

you do receive a copyright infringement message, then you should edit your video in the options menu to remove the source of the problem (i.e. change or block out the music).

#### **1.4. NOW TRY IT!**

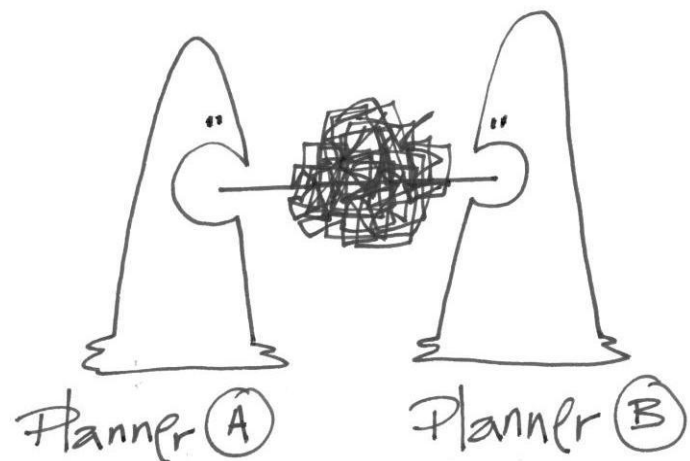
The most important thing about social media is to GIVE IT A GO! It may seem scary and daunting at first, but have a play around with it and once you have a better understanding of what it is and how to use it, its importance and communicative function will become a lot clearer. You may not see dramatic results at first, but over time and if you engage regularly, you will start to see your community and online presence grow.

# COMMUNICATIONS: AN INTRODUCTION

## 2.1. Why Use Communications?

Communications should be regarded as an essential mechanism in any business, no matter how big or small. Communications is an umbrella term used mainly to describe Public Relations (PR), Marketing, and on occasion, Advertising. Whilst PR and Marketing should be regarded as separate functions in their own right, they can successfully be combined to produce effective communications strategies. This is often known as M-PR.

Successful communication is core to any organisation to enable smooth operations. It should be used internally (also known as Internal Comms), to successfully communicate with staff about business operations at all levels, along with externally to communicate with service users, the media and the wider general public about your organisation. This can



include news, events, achievements, and in unfortunate circumstances, crisis comms. External communication is essential if you wish your business to naturally grow and develop since it should hopefully attract a wider audience and interest if carried out correctly.

M-PR strategies include a mix of Marketing and PR functions, including press releases, media invites / photocall notices, fliers / posters, digital communication and branding. For larger budgets, this can also incorporate press conferences, events / exhibitions, competitions and advertising. This of course is not always realistic for smaller organisations. Below are some excellent M-PR strategies that can easily be incorporated into any business with a minimal budget.

## 2.2. Press Releases

A press release is the standard tool of PR practitioners to communicate information to the media. The 'media' can refer to a range of different platforms including television, press, magazine, radio, and internet. Press releases are excellent if you wish to reach a wide audience who might not otherwise be aware of your organisation. Also, because press releases are published by a third party (i.e. a newspaper's journalist), it is judged as more trustworthy and interesting than paying for advertisement, which is not only expensive, but is often overlooked by readers and viewers. On top of this, if you successfully manage your own press releases internally...it is free!

As a rule, the best time to send a press release is either before 10:30 or after 15:30 due to timing schedules of when publications go to press.



Journalist Snarky

### How To?

Press releases should take this general format:

News Release

[IF AVAILABLE, ADD ORGANISATIONS LOGO]

[DD.MM.YEAR]

## **[TITLE OF PRESS RELEASE]**

*[Who, What, When, Where in less than 30 words]*

Content – the most important information should be put towards the top.

Quotes – at least one quote from one person within the organisation should be used i.e. the Chief Executive. If an external organisation / person are mentioned in the press release, it may also be worth including a quote from them

Content- least important information towards the bottom

Try to minimise press releases to no more than 2 pages including notes to the editor.

**ENDS**

For media enquiries or further information please contact:

[Contact details of the person who wrote the release: Name, position, phone, email]

[Contact details of a second person are sometimes also useful as journalists may wish to ring them directly if they require more information, for example, a charity patron, a chief executive etc].

### **Notes to the Editor:**

- In bullet point format, this should include any additional information about the topic of the press release i.e. location details of an event.
- Information about the organisation
- Website
- Social media pages

### **2.3. Media Invitations / Photocall Notices**

If your organisation has a specific event taking place that you would like the media to attend, it is useful to send out a media invitation / photocall notice approximately 5-7 days prior to the event so journalists, if interested, can make a note in their schedule to attend.

Media invites / photocall notices should be structured:

**[TITLE]**

**Who:** [Your organisation]

**What:** [What the event is – what it includes]

**Why:** [What is the purpose of the event?]

**When:** [Date]

**Where:** [Location details]

[Contact details]

**Notes to the Editor:**

- Any additional info you think would be beneficial for the journalist to know

## 2.4. Photographs

Whenever you send a press release or media invite it is always beneficial to attach a photograph. Photographs adds interest for readers, therefore any stories with photographs are always more likely to be picked up.

## 2.5. Flier's

Fliers are good to hand out directly to people. Decent fliers can easily be made on Microsoft programmes such as Publisher, and therefore don't have to cost much to produce. Flier's can also be converted into PDF documents and uploaded onto your website and social media pages which is a simple, inexpensive way to broaden your prospective audience.

## 2.6. Branding

A strong brand gives your business an identity, which, if used consistently on all pieces of communication will be remembered and recognised. Branding at the very least should have a strong, recognisable logo, and memorable phrase. For example, BMW "The Drive of your Life".

