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Introduction: What is Social Media and What is Social Media Marketing?

Unless youâ€™ve been trapped in an ice-locked cave for the past 15 years, chances are you are already well acquainted with social media, whether you understand the term or not. Social media refers to the hundreds of websites on the Internet designed to facilitate and promote social interaction, sharing and networking. Sites such as Facebook, Twitter, MySpace, Digg and the great many more have gained incredible popularity over the past five years resulting in social media becoming a primary means for communication! With your average user spending at least an hour a day on one or even more of their social media accounts, businesses have come to see the vast potential for advertising using these online platforms. And this has given rise to social media marketing: â€œA form of Internet marketing which seeks to achieve branding and marketing communication goals through the participation in various social media networks.â€•

But social media marketing does not involve the use of adverts in the traditional sense. Enterprises canâ€™t simply buy space on these sites to display and promote their products and services. No; social media enables businesses to â€“ just like you and me â€“ establish a profile and use it to connect intimately with a much wider and relevant target market. But just like any business endeavor, using social media to market your brand involves more than just updating your status every few days! In order to reap the maximum benefit from social media marketing, you need to have a strategy and a plan for execution. This five part article series provides a beginnerâ€™s guide to using social media to provide a solid online platform from which you can promote your brand name and identity.

Soâ€¦ where do you start?

The Goals of Social Media Marketing

Embarking upon a social media marketing strategy first and foremost requires a definition of oneâ€™s goals. You need to lay out what it is you want to achieve and design a corresponding plan of action before you simply start signing up with scores of social media and networking sites! What do you wish to reap from such an endeavor? And what can social media marketing do for you? Quite simply, social media marketing can help the modern business (whether it is large, medium or small):

Increase the number of people visiting their website

Increase the conversion rate from web user to paying customer

Increase the exposure (and thus effectiveness) of oneâ€™s business ads

Promote brand awareness and recognition

Promote and maintain a positive business reputation, or a positive brand association (social media marketing is great for reputation management)

Reach out to a much larger and diverse target market

Develop the business without geographical or temporal boundaries

With all of these fantastic benefits just ripe for the taking, social media marketing has really become

an indispensible tool for the modern business enterprise. What you now need to do is learn how it is you can achieve these goals with the use of social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter, Digg, MySpace and YouTube.

Social Media Marketing: Stay Tuned

For more information on how social media marketing can greatly increase your web traffic, lead conversion and sales, stay tuned for the second installment of this five-part series.

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Noel Linda is associated with the a Social media world for over a decade. She has been researching to identify how a Social media marketing can be used most effectively for better ROI for years. Keep reading her articles to know more about best social media techniques.

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