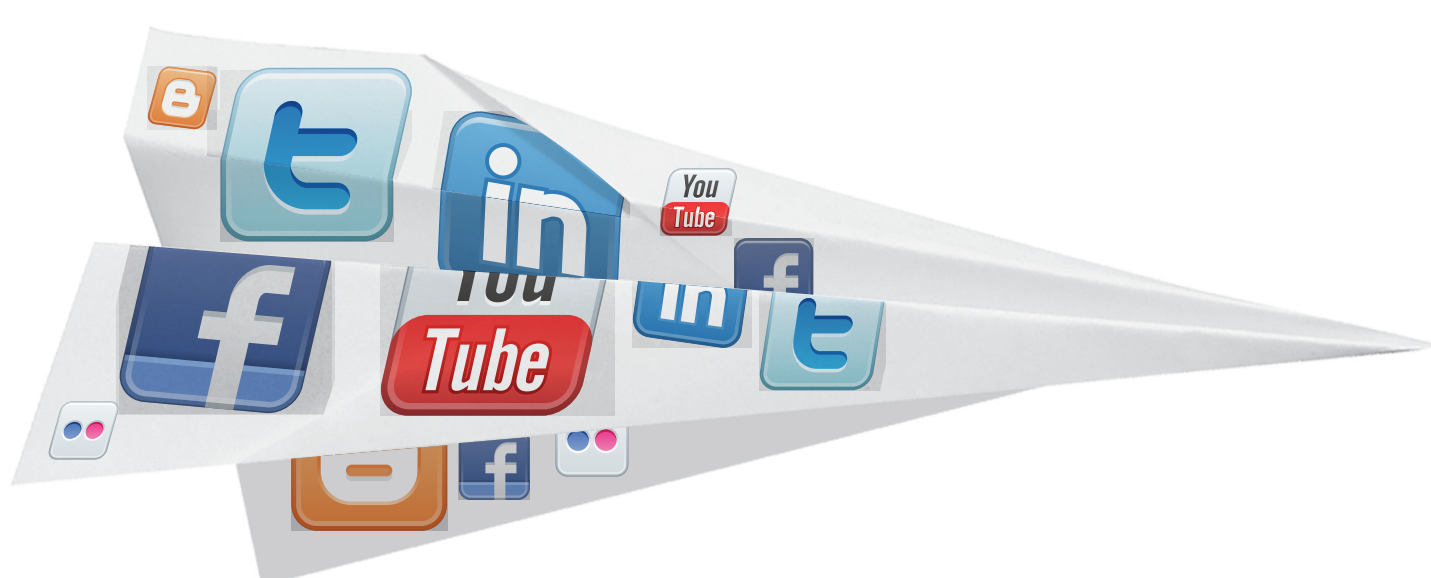


Getting started with social media

The B2B marketing-to-sales process is reliant on trusted relationships. This is the primary purpose of social media: to provide the means for interactions among people – not companies – for building these relationships. The buying cycle is traditionally longer than B2C, so obtaining measured results will take time.



One of the main reasons that B2B marketers haven't started with social media activity is lack of knowledge and experience. In the first of a series, here are some tips to help you get started:

- Ask yourself why you want to use social media as a conversation platform. Only then will you understand what your objectives are. If you don't have a good answer, don't do it – even if everyone else is
- Find out which social platforms your audience use to help you decide which ones are right for you
- Find out what your competition is doing and see which channels and activities you think are most successful – you don't always have to reinvent the wheel
- Find out what your employees are doing online. You will most likely find that they are unintentionally giving away discrete company information. You don't have to be Big Brother, and this isn't a 'them and us' scenario, but you can only manage issues when you know what they are
- Take the time to write a social strategy that ties into your overall marketing objectives and plan
- Decide whether you want to do your own social media activity or outsource it, or both. I believe that social interactions for business need to be done by people who have an intimate knowledge of your products and services
- Write a social media policy and guidelines for employees and train them on the Do's and Don'ts of social media with regard to your brand. More details can be found here
- Listen, listen, listen: don't be hasty to get started in responding to comments on social media. Listen to what is going on long before you respond
- Write a crisis management document - you never know when you're going to need it



And just for a laugh, here's a great video on what Facebook is. Take the 3.18 mins to watch it – it's really worth it:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFKHaFJzUb4&feature=fvw>

Written By Kate Shopper

Kate Shopper is a regular presenter on B2B social media, internet and online marketing (disclosure: she is also a long-term, valued customer and over the years we have completed two rounds of rebranding).

You can read [her marketing blog](#), or join her on other social media platforms

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