

6 Tips for Introducing Social Media in the B2B Space

While the B2B landscape is very different from B2C arena, there is still one underlying fact that should resonate with management teams. It's very simple: If your customers are online, then you need to be online and engaging them. The best way to engage is via social media outlets. David Alston, authority on social media strategy and monitoring stated that, "Social media is changing businesses. It's transforming and evolving processes, customer service, and communication as we know it. Exploring investment return for social media is valid and necessary within a business framework. But equally important is carefully assessing the price for not being involved."

Here are 6 tips for introducing social media in the B2B space:

- 1. Don't push, pull instead**

Sales and Marketing departments should bring new opportunities, supporting the customer decision process and maintaining customer relationships. Social media allows you to gain insight into all of these areas.

- 2. Ask meaningful questions**

Social media is not about re-inventing the wheel. Use social outlets to identify how customers make purchasing decisions. Leverage customer feedback to formulate or refine your current strategies.

- 3. Provide meaningful information**

Users are looking for product and service information, and it's your job to stay in front of them about the issues and trends that matter. They aren't going to be interested in where your management team went on vacation.

- 4. Examine marketing's function**

Tough economic times have led to many companies cutting their marketing dollar. Keep in mind that you need salespeople, but salespeople have a specific function, which isn't about educating your prospects or building your company's credibility. This function belongs to your marketing team.

- 5. Check up on your competitors**

Track where competitors are present in social media and the amount of views, comments, and traffic is generated. Also make sure that you incorporate customer behavior and feedback from networking sites. You gain a better understanding of how to connect to customers as well as get a leg up on your competition.

- 6. Use social media for PR**

Assessing your entire marketing mix is a must. Seminars, webinars, advertising, trade shows, direct mail and PR all play an important role. Ultimately you need to choose the best method to reach your audience with a specific message. Social media may be the avenue you need to jumpstart your marketing strategy.