

The Dynamic Duo: Email Marketing and Social Media

Introduction

Social media marketing (SMM) gets a lot of press these days – and companies are feeling pressure to jump on the bandwagon. But if you're like many marketers, you may be unclear about the benefits of SMM and how, exactly, you should use it to your best advantage. Without a clear strategy and specific goals and objectives, SMM can be a low-ROI time sink and it may undermine your other marketing efforts – even email. While [email marketing](#) and SMM can be a dynamic duo, you need to ensure these two powerhouse marketing tactics are working together in order to achieve results that are greater than the sum of their parts.

The Dynamic Duo: Email Marketing and Social Media Guide will provide you with beneficial information on:

- Social media: What is it? Why is it everywhere? And how has it changed the marketing landscape?
- SMM's core tenets and how email marketers can use them to their best advantage.
- Why SMM is critical to your company's marketing arsenal – and the potentially high cost of excluding it from your marketing mix.
- Getting started strong at combining email and SMM.
- SMM and email: Putting the dynamic duo to work to dramatically increase your ROI.

- **Bonus materials:**

- **SMM Guide for CMOs:** The business case for SMM and getting your organization on board to participate.
- **SMM Guide for Email Marketing Managers:** Getting buy-in on SMM and practical tactics to execute SMM well.

What Is Social Media?

There are a lot of new terms being thrown around about social media. But what is social media exactly? According to Wikipedia.org, social media is “online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies ... It's a fusion of sociology and technology, transforming monologues (one-to-many) into dialogues (many-to-many) and is the democratization of information, transforming people from content readers into publishers.” Because the power of mass communication is being put into the hands of the individual (democratization), the adoption of SMM is skyrocketing – virally permeating our personal and professional interactions. Individuals and businesses are creating, sharing and receiving content in exponentially increasing amounts over highly interactive mediums. These mediums are fundamentally transforming the landscape of how consumers interact with each other and, ultimately, with your company. This interaction can be leveraged in very powerful, yet simple, ways to extend the visibility of your email campaigns.

The most popular social networks – and those that marketers should spend time on and familiarize themselves with include Twitter, a microblogging social network, LinkedIn, a business-

oriented social network, Facebook and MySpace, personal/consumer-oriented social networks, and blogs. However, in the past several years, there has been an intense proliferation of niche social networks that can focus on anything from French bulldog owners to coffee aficionados to women in technology, and everything one can imagine in between.

Why Is It Everywhere?

According to the [Pew Internet & American Life Project's survey of 2,253 adults](#), adoption of social media is soaring. Just over one third (35%) of American adult internet users having created a profile on an online social network. This is four times as many as three years ago. The rapid adoption of social media is evident – just type “social media adoption” in Google to view over three million results that all point to its rapid integration into our daily lives. But despite the rapid adoption, social media is creating challenges for marketers who try to use this medium.

How Has It Changed the Marketing Landscape?

With the advent of social media, marketing has become a conversation – an active interaction. Since social media site users are co-creators, marketers can't (and shouldn't) control content. So, while social media can create new avenues for open communication and learning, it can also pose risks to your brand integrity and reputation. Your email campaigns and other outbound communications are up for critique the moment they're deployed – not to mention the products and services these messages support.

Social media's runaway momentum – driven by users, not marketers or brand experts – has many email marketers playing catch-up. Various reports available in the public domain suggest that the biggest roadblock in the adoption of social media marketing is lack of knowledge about the medium and how to integrate that medium into email and other marketing initiatives. Regardless of this fact, many marketers succumb to the hype. They rush headlong into SMM without proper planning and without considering:

- How it can assist in supporting their overall strategy.
- The commitments that SMM requires to be successful.
- How to best combine SMM with their email and other marketing initiatives.

You've undoubtedly heard the horror stories of how powerful, big brands have fumbled their SMM campaigns and alienated their customers, tarnishing their good reputations and losing significant opportunities and money by rushing into SMM.

But email marketers have a substantial opportunity to learn from the mistakes of those brands. Email marketers can combine the best of both email and SMM to create dynamic campaigns that can exponentially increase their overall marketing success.

SMM not only creates a place for email marketers to share their email messages with a mass audience, but *invites a response* that is shared with the *whole* audience. Therefore, the message that marketers provide must be highly meaningful and valuable in order to begin positive dialogues that the target audience cares about. This positive dialog creates trust with an audience. And that trust builds the brand and contributes to more successful campaigns.

To guide email marketers through the landmines of SMM marketing, we have created a handy list of “core tenets” to follow. They will help you get the most out of your SMM efforts.

SMM's Core Tenets and How Email Marketers Should Use Them

The rules and etiquette of SMM are unique and not to be taken lightly. Violation of this unspoken code of conduct can backfire. Traditional marketing communications are push communications, in which the feedback is measured by metrics like open rates, click throughs and conversions. But SMM is different in that the content is driven by all participants, not just marketers. With this in mind, email marketers wishing to employ SMM must apply several core tenets to reap the most

benefit and reduce the risks associated with leveraging SMM in their email marketing efforts:

- **Focus on the needs of the consumer.** Much like email marketing, SMM requires that the needs of customers or prospects come first in all communication. If you deliver a message that touts the greatness of your company without showing how you can address the needs of your audience, your message will fall flat. Don't stop communicating your company's value proposition, but make sure all communication focuses strongly on the benefit to those in your audience.
- **Develop trust with social media participants by listening to, engaging with, and delivering real value to them.** SMM's one-to-many communication capabilities require that email marketers step beyond the Inbox and create an open dialog with their audiences. Commit to becoming a valuable member of the communities with which you wish to communicate by listening to participants and then communicating appropriately with information that is of value to them. Before you post something for your company, make sure it passes the "who cares" test. Artful insights create good blog and forum comments. Broad, brand-based statements may not. So save your "PR speak" for releases. Don't break SMM netiquette by breaking into a thread to deliver a hard sell message. Do listen, engage, and integrate yourself into a conversation. When the time is right, deliver your message in a way that enhances and adds value to the conversation.

Also, responsiveness is absolutely imperative. If the discussions become uncomfortable or if there are negative comments about your company, be prepared to respond quickly and positively. Don't ignore commentary just because the conversation isn't going your way. Remember that criticism is a means by which to gain powerful insights into how your company can better serve its market.

Through these actions, you'll build an invaluable trust that only millions in email and brand spending could match – and that can bring faster results.

- **Humanize your business.** SMM is a virtual face-to-face conversation. Obviously, you have to maintain a professional tone and be careful about the answers you provide. But take advantage of the personal nature of the medium and match your tone to it.

Why SMM is Critical to Your Company's Email Marketing Arsenal... and the High Cost of Excluding It from Your Marketing Mix

Despite the hype and potential risks, SMM is a vital addition to the email marketer's toolbox. Here are four common objectives that email marketers must regularly achieve, and the ways in which SMM can add value:

- **Brand building:** SMM provides the opportunity to refine messaging, expand reach and engage the target audience more deeply. The result contributes to build brand equity and loyalty.
- **Customer acquisition:** SMM can be a low-cost way to obtain opt-in names for email campaigns and newsletters, as well as for lead generation. It can also enable continual acquisition between each discrete email send date.
- **Customer retention:** SMM allows deeper engagement and emotional investment by the customer. And the SMM feedback loop enables your company to refine and make your products more relevant to existing customers.
- **Product launches:** SMM reduces, and can even eliminate, the need for expensive research by giving you faster, cheaper and more immediate access to the opinions of your target audience.

Even with these potential upsides, a marketer's discomfort with a new medium can prevent its use. You might have heard these objections to SMM, "Better to stay away from it than risk brand damage," or "traditional media and audiences are still bigger; we'll stick to the big mediums." But keep in mind that there is a cost to not incorporating SMM into your marketing mix: *whether or not you participate in social media, your customers – and your competitors – will.*

Don't miss the opportunity to meet customers and prospects proactively. Through SMM, you can hear their concerns, address them, benefit from their feedback and harness the viral power of social media. As a result, you exponentially increase your email reach, frequency and relevance. Even if you're new to SMM, by following the guidelines below, you can integrate SMM with your email marketing campaigns and reap the benefits of combining these two dynamic marketing mediums.

Getting a Strong Start at Combining Email with SMM

Taking the first step to combine email marketing and SMM can be straightforward if you simply apply your existing core marketing strategies (but not tactics) to SMM:

1. Determine whether SMM is the right medium to further your email marketing campaign objectives.

You're savvy enough to know that the success of your email marketing programs starts with a solid business objective. So before you start, take the time to determine if SMM is going to help you meet your overall email marketing goals. Then ask yourself these questions:

- Is the goal to add names to your opt-in email lists?
- Are you looking for a better way to gather customer feedback and engage with your target audience?
- Are you looking for a fresh way to extend customer service and loyalty?
- Or do you want to improve search engine optimization (SEO), build brand buzz or drive website traffic?
- Is the goal to maximize the effectiveness of your email campaigns?

These are all realistic ways to utilize SMM in combination with email marketing and other elements of your marketing mix to attain your goals. However, if your only goal is to sell, sell, sell by talking at your audience, SMM isn't the right fit.

2. Find your customers

Do your research. Find out what social networks your customers participate in and how they participate in them. Find demographics on each social network, if you can. If that's not easily available, contact a sample of your customer base and locate them, using their email address, on the different social networks. From here, you can conclude which contain a significant number of your target audience and invest your time and energy on those sites.

3. Determine your resource needs

SMM is easy to implement and low cost in terms of technology expense. Anyone with a computer and internet connection can leverage SMM. In order to be successful, though, you still do need resources, knowledge and commitment. Carefully weigh the human or time costs associated with SMM. You can't just post content once and call it done. It requires daily (and often more frequent) monitoring and communication as well as a dedicated (even if it's part time) staff member to manage your initiatives. Anyone can actually post the content, but the person who writes the content must be deeply familiar with the company's vision, messaging and culture in order to put an accurate "face" on your organization.

The very nature of SMM is viral – what you post can easily explode into wild distribution. This means successful communication can be far reaching. But it also means your mistakes have that same potential. Before you start, ask yourself:

- What exactly is required for set up? Who will be responsible for managing the initial set up?
- Who (or what team) will be responsible for ongoing updates and maintenance of social media accounts?
- With what cadence will you monitor and post to social media sites to make your investment in this medium scale appropriately? Who will manage target audience responses and what is the process for engaging?
- Who will manage customer inquiries/issues that need to be addressed quickly? What is your standard with regard to response time?

- Who is responsible for content creation? What is the criteria or standard for the type of content that your company will and will not post? Do you have an editorial guide for this? If not, what would it take to create one?

You may want to consider a cross-functional team approach – including representatives from corporate communications, PR, product management, sales, marketing and executive staff who can represent your company from a 360 degree point of view.

4. Determine metrics for success and measure

As email marketers in today's economy, we all know that ROI is king. Before you get underway with SMM, determine what will constitute a successful effort, create the infrastructure you'll need to measure that success and use the right tools to measure it. As results come in, use SMM's unique "real time" feedback loop to optimize and course-correct not only your SMM efforts, but your email campaigns, as well. As far as measurement tools, ideally your Web analytics solution can track SMM. You'll want to know who is coming to your site from different points of entry and, more importantly, what they're doing once they get there. Your email solution may even have enhancement tools that allow you to track response to an email offer via the most common social media sites. Measuring this impact is a gradual process that is likely to get more meaningful over time, but a good place to start includes:

- Number of followers/fans.
- Number of visitors to your Website from social networking sites.
- The relative popularity of different content.
- Whether people are re-posting or re-tweeting your content, and if they are, how many times and across how many venues.

It's important to remember that Web analytics are only part of the puzzle. There are other things that can be more difficult

to measure such as customer sentiment and word of mouth. Know, though, that positive Facebook or Twitter endorsements of your company can be seen by hundreds or thousands of followers – and it's worth investing time and money to inspire these. Some qualitative things you can measure include:

- Whether your fans are commenting back or starting a dialogue.
- Whether the feedback is favorable and, if it's not, how well your company response to unfavorable feedback is received by the audience.
- If customer service requests dip or if customers are using SMM to answer basic questions.
- If prospects and customers are linking back to your email campaign landing pages (or other pages on your Website) and spending more time on more pages.
- If you have influenced sales leads or deals.
- If more people are talking favorably about your company or message online, including the press.

SMM and Email – Putting the Dynamic Duo to Work for Increased ROI

SMM builds trust. Email marketing has become a sophisticated staple in any marketer's toolbox. But email marketers are also facing challenges. Spam filters and deliverability issues can translate to fewer emails reaching the Inboxes of your prospects and customers. List churn, list quality and list cleanliness can also reduce ROI.

But the dynamic duo of email and SMM used together can conquer those challenges. SMM brings email into the interactive realm of two-way communication. Once connected via SMM, you build a relationship and important trust with your prospects and customers. Email that arrives from a trusted source gets higher open rates, better response rates, quicker conversions and higher ROI.

SMM adds valuable functionality to email. By enabling recipients to “tag” newsletters or promotional emails and allowing your message to be spread virally with little or no investment on your part, your email programs can extend far beyond the Inbox and the scope of your opt-in list. Here are just a few examples of how SMM enhances and extends email marketing:

- Free SMM widgets increase the “shareability” of your email messages.
- Posts or tweets about your relevant email marketing content across your social networks encourages fans/followers to repost on LinkedIn, Facebook, or Twitter.
- Discussion threads started on social networks (where you have a following) can fuel relevant and compelling email content and offers. You can also use this content to refine your search engine marketing (SEM) initiatives for more effective organic interest. Additionally, this content can affect your product development efforts and help bring improved products to market faster.

How else can SMM help you extend your email marketing reach? You can increase your list building, lead generation and customer acquisition success by using SMM to:

- Build email opt-in lists organically, reducing your dependence on, and costs associated with, list rental.
- Execute email with added “share” buttons to social media sites.
- Promote email campaign offers.
- Stimulate newsletter or blog registrations.
- Collect ideas on offers or content that may be particularly relevant to your target audience and, before deployment, solicit quick feedback on offers or content.
- Listen in as campaigns unfold to optimize and make quick course corrections.
- Expand the reach of each email (beyond your list) by getting your offer discussed on blogs and social networks.

- Gain opportunities to get cheaper, faster sources of opt-in names and continually build your list between email “sends”.
- Promote Webcasts, podcasts and events.

You can also maximize customer retention and loyalty and minimize pressure on customer service by:

- Creating a presence on social networks to engage with customers who can evangelize to others in their community.
- Reviewing discussions to identify possible customer service issues or frustration with your product or company.
- Responding to concerns and clearing up points of confusion.
- Adding feedback functionality (such as a comments section on blog posts) to messaging to create a deeper engagement with your prospects and customers.
- Allowing customers to become more engaged by interacting with your brand and reading about the positive experiences of others.
- Listening to what your customers are saying about you and adjusting quickly to meet their needs.

Additionally, you can use SMM to more effectively launch products and services by:

- Seeding new ideas within social media sites and monitoring the reaction that the community has to those ideas.
- Inviting social media participants to panels/forums to discuss relevant topics regarding your products, services or market space.
- Presenting product features/functionality to social media participants to get feedback.
- Pre-testing launch campaigns.

- Launching your product with social media site evangelists – if you've included them in on the process, they will likely spread the word about your product.
- Managing “buzz” (positive and negative) immediately.

Key Takeaways and Tools

The world of SMM has opened up an entirely new medium for savvy marketers. And one of the strongest partner pairings today is SMM and email marketing. The dynamic duo of email marketing and SMM can be joined to a) build brands, b) acquire new customers, c) retain existing customers and d) secure successful product launches. This guide provides a lot of the core tenets and tips that will help new SMM marketers achieve success. Now it's time to give it a shot!

About Lyris

With Lyris HQ, marketers are now able to leverage their email marketing campaigns into social media – empowering recipients to share and discuss new and relevant topics with colleagues, fans and friends on popular social networking sites including Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and MySpace. Lyris HQ is an integrated online marketing suite that combines email marketing, social media, deliverability tools, content creation, search marketing and mobile marketing into one solution. For more information on Lyris solutions, visit www.lyris.com.

Free Tools

For free guides, tools, webcasts and best practices on email marketing, social media and more, visit the [Lyris Resource Center](#).

Bonus SMM Guide for CMOs

Why SMM matters to CMO's:

- You're directly and ultimately responsible for the customer experience.
- In a challenging economy, you're expected to do much more with much less.
- You need to know what people are saying about you – including your prospects and customers, your competitors, bloggers and so on.
- Your customers and prospects are participating in social media. You can pinpoint where your target audiences are in the social sphere and deliver relevant messages directly to them.
- Your competitors are using social media – staying ahead of the curve in social media will keep your company competitive.

Winning Buy-in from Your CEO and Board of Directors:

- SMM is a measurable and low-cost method for increasing marketing efficiency and ROI. Marketing must be as efficient as possible, especially in a down economy. When managed properly and integrated with the complete marketing mix, SMM is a low-cost medium that can dramatically amplify overall marketing ROI.
- Traditional media vehicles scale up linearly dependent on budget increases – and they often have diminishing returns. Social media activities scale up with the size of the community (independent of costs) and can have compounding returns.
- Social media can generate buzz, loyalty, trust, and business.
- (If you are an SMB) SMM can enable your company to look “bigger” through a comprehensive and engaged online presence.
- (If you are a large company) SMM can help your company become more personal and more accessible, creating brand loyalty and trust that millions in marketing spend can only rival.
- Social media engagement can yield a deeper understanding of consumer needs and sentiment. At a fundamental level, it's free market research that can be used to guide corporate direction, messaging and product development.

Bonus SMM Guide for Email Marketing Managers

Why SMM matters to your management:

- SMM, especially when combined with email and other outbound initiatives, is a low-cost way to increase quality leads and amplify ROI exponentially.
 - SMM can extend email reach and frequency, and can generate viral uptake of messages, offers, etc.
 - SMM can help you grow your email opt-in list with little to no effort on your part – and for free.
 - Responsibility for SMM can be shared amongst a cross-functional team vs. committing one dedicated resource to managing the entire effort.
 - SMM enables your company to influence the influencers. Through strategic relationship building with vocal and visible members of a community, influencers can become powerful evangelists (read: salespeople) for your company, your products and your services.
3. Determine who will be the owner of your social media efforts.
 4. Create methods for measuring your progress against attainment of these goals and objectives.
 5. Do your research and determine the social networks in which your target audience participates.
 6. Spend time listening to the conversations on your target social networks – the tone, the information communicated and so on.
 7. Start participating in conversations on those social networks by providing value-added comments, suggestions and information. Once your online identity is established and you are a trusted contributor, you can start posting your email marketing messages and offers, company announcements and other company-related information.

Getting Started: 10 Steps to Combining Email Marketing with SMM:

1. Determine your goals and objectives – for both email campaigns and SMM.
2. Get management buy-in and approval on what can and cannot be communicated in the social sphere.
8. Find ways to encourage your social network to opt-in to your email lists. Try newsletters, free offers and other tools that encourage your desired SMM community to welcome a further relationship with your company.
9. Measure.
10. Optimize and repeat.