



Pinoy Entrepreneur 2.0

An Introduction of the Social Web
to Filipino Entrepreneurs

by Rob Angeles



What Is Social Media?

Social media is online content created by people using highly accessible and scalable publishing technologies. Social media is a shift in how people discover, read and share news, information and content; it supports the human need for social interaction with technology, transforming broadcast media monologues (one to many) into social media dialogues (many to many).

It supports the democratization of knowledge and information, transforming people from content consumers into content producers. Social media has become extremely popular because it allows people to connect in the online world to form relationships for personal, political and business use. Businesses also refer to social media as user-generated content (UGC) or consumer-generated media (CGM). (From [Wikipedia](#))



To Jump Or Not To Jump

When the Internet was first released, nobody ever thought of using it for business. But then again, after much exploration, businesses have learned to adapt to it and starting doing business online. We can pretty much say the same for social media.

Why don't we just leave out the music and video industry that benefit from social networking sites like Friendster, and bloggers who earn from paid advertisements, but instead talk about other industries that could really profit from social media?

Among the early users of social media is the marketing industry. These firms took advantage of the similarity of traditional marketing tools and the tools used in social media which are aimed at communicating to the public. Aside from this, social media tools cost less and are pretty easy to use without the need for much expertise.

Using social media to get messages across is great, provided that we don't lose sight of how the different social media tools were crafted to re-humanize technology-assisted means of communication.

Other businesses can also make use of social media tools. There are status and collaboration tools that help with internal project management in terms of project updates, information sharing, and collaboration.



To Jump Or Not To Jump

If you look at the current situation closely, you'll find that not everybody is eager to jump into incorporating social media to their businesses. Some are interested, while some prefer to stay with what already works. But do you think there'll come a time when businesses would turn their business and client interaction tools in-house?

In line with the previous question, do you think it's really a must for all businesses to adapt with the current social-media-for-business trend?

I guess the short answer is that it isn't all about making a business out of social media tools, but rather using the social media tools available to enhance opportunities for your business. Better yet, you can try to find ways for other people to use these tools.



Wake Up And Start Adapting Web 2.0

If you don't know about how big and popular the Internet has become, then you're probably one of the few people who've chosen to stick to the old ways. If you haven't noticed, the Internet has pretty much changed a lot of things that affected our daily lives as TV and other media. It affects everything – from our personal lives to our businesses, so it's best that you don't ignore it.

You can expect company managements to ignore it, even consumers, but not sales professionals. They have a natural talent of embracing new technology and launching it as a necessity in the field. A good example would be cellular phones, they were the first ones to use it as a day-to-day tool for sales and lead generation. They have also been utilizing mass media more than any other profession. You can say that sales professional have mastered the use of technology to their advantage.

With many a Web 2.0 tools available to the public – blogs, wikis, forums, etc. – and very much feasible for business usage, a lot of companies have invested on making Web 2.0-based tools (Sales 2.0) to fit it for sales. You've got social networking sites, wikis, collaborative software, blogs, as well video and music sharing sites to help boost business.



Wake Up And Start Adapting Web 2.0

The old and the new

You're probably wondering what makes Web 2.0 tools better than its older version for business. It's not really that difficult to tell apart. Web 1.0 was more concentrated on being a broadcasting tool wherein communication is only one-way. Somebody says something, and the audience just reads, watches, or listens, much like an online brochure.

On the other hand, Web 2.0 opened the doors of communication, making it a two-way conversation as compared to a presentation. For businesses, this means a channel where they can collaborate with their customers to better their products and services.

Sales 2.0

Unlike Sales 1.0, marketing and sales groups take on a different approach. With Web 2.0 tools, pre-packaged information is out on account that they sound phony. The key to using Web 2.0 is to be authentic, citing real comments as examples. This is the same approach that Sales 2.0 requires from its users.



Wake Up And Start Adapting Web 2.0

Because it thrives on the idea of being genuine with the content you share to the audience, Sales 2.0 presents itself to be a better way of marketing and selling, thereby giving customers a better experience. If people have questions about information, they can easily reach someone online to ask. Unlike with Web 1.0 where customers get information overload from the materials and no one to ask about it.

Now that the channels of communications have been opened, sales professionals now have the ability to help customers discern valuable information from the not-so-important ones. Also, this helps sales people communicate better. Because the lines are no longer limited outbound, they are required to adapt to feed back their get from their customers, thus helping sales professionals immediately know which campaigns work and which ones don't, and continuously improving them.

With using Web 2.0 tools, you have the advantage of having live, user-based feedback about your products. It gives you the opportunity to fix the problem or enhance the product as early as possible without spending so much. Also, with Web 2.0 offering a channel to interact with your customers, you establish a better connection to them. And a better connection often leads to loyalty, loyalty that can mean more business for you. Everything points to your advantage, so why not give it a shot?



Tips To Plan Your Social Media Strategy

1. In planning, you'll need to do research. You have to search for approaches that could work best for your goal, and you won't be able to come up with that through guessing.
2. You'll also need to decide where you want to put your plan on a testing phase or immediately implement it.
3. When you do your planning, you also need to consider the audience you wish to target. Is it going to be for customers, for prospective partners, for your colleagues, etc.
4. You'll also need to take into account whether the social media strategy you wish to incorporate to the business is going to be a good investment in the long run. I don't think any company would like to invest on something that will only be good for them for only a brief period of time.
5. There's also the concern about who'll run the platform. Who will you delegate to do it from within the company? Who shall take on the task of making the blog entries, maintaining the communities, etc. You'll also need to think about whether or not you need to get consultations from someone outside the company.
6. Never forget to solicit opinions from the team. From start to finish, always ask for your colleagues' input. Don't immediately dismiss their ability to pitch great ideas in without even asking.
7. You'll need to designate someone who'll be receiving reports related to the social media strategy you're forming. Who is that person going to be?
8. Eventually, if the strategy works, you'll need to have people briefed and trained about it. How do you plan on going about the training?



Digging Deeper In Your Strategy

Ask yourself what your goals are

How can you make a strategy if you don't know what you want to happen in the long run? If you're planning to get to the goal as you go on your way, you might take a while before finalizing a strategy because there's no single strategy that'll help you achieve everything.

Keep track of your implemented strategies

Even conventional business will attest to the fact that strategies don't always succeed. This is why it's important that you keep track of your own strategies. Crunch up the numbers and see just how effective it is in helping you reach your goal. If it isn't, then you might want to think of re-hashing it.

How about some samples?

I'm going to cite a pretty general goal that I think a lot of people will be able to relate to.

Let's say your goal is to increase your blog's audience base. You might want to try listening in to what most people in your area is interested in and then write content relevant to that, going around the blogosphere to comment on other similarly themed blogs, and exchanging links with other people in the same niche, to name a few viable strategies.



Simply Way To Measure Social Media ROI

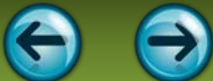
There's a pretty good reason why businesses don't easily agree to using social media for the business. It's because measuring return of investments can be quite difficult without a lot of statistical data to back it up. The lack of standard metrics doesn't make it easier, either. But I think it isn't or shouldn't always be about the empirical data. There's always qualitative data that you need to consider for social media strategies to be considered effective.

It isn't all that easy and it won't come out on its own, but let me give you a simple way to measure social media ROIs.

In terms of results, you won't be able to successfully gauge the quality returns unless you know what it is you want to measure. Are you concerned about the company's reputation, what people are saying about the company, or how people feel about the customer service you provide?

Once you've narrowed down what you need to measure, you can pretty much start measuring the efficiency of your strategies by looking at what you were able to do about those concerns. Ask yourself:

1. Were you able to positively promote the company?
2. Have you participated in any conversations about your company lately?

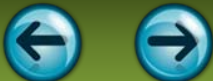


Simply Way To Measure Social Media ROI

These may sound like simple questions to you, but the answers will be able to give you an idea if your strategy is working for you or against you. You may wish to monitor this yourself, but there are companies whose services you can hire to collect these data for you.

Now if you're after empirical, more exact data, like SEO ranking and site visit statistics, several free tools are available for this purpose. Google Analytics, Sitemeter, Feedburner, and AideRSS are only a few examples of free services that could help you keep solid count of page visits, click-throughs, or referrals which can all be helpful to your website.

One good thing to remember before wanting to measure the efficiency of your strategies is that you'll need to find some basis or benchmark for what counts as successful for you. Without that, you really won't have an idea of whether you're doing good or not.



Put It Into Action

Social media platforms have long been used for personal and entertainment purposes. You should know, because you use it too. You probably have a FaceBook, Friendster, Twitter, Plurk or Multiply account to connect to friends and other people.

But you should think more about how you can use it for business purposes. There are small businesses out there that could use a little promoting. So why not use social media? If you're still skeptical and would like to know more about how social media is a great business tool for small businesses, read on.

- With social media, small business can create a brand. You can establish an identity for your business or service.
- Social media helps generate buzz about your product or company. By talking to other people in the social network, you help get the word out about your different services.
- Social media can serve as a online reputation management tool, giving you access to listening tools that gives you an idea about what people think and say about you. This also gives you the opportunity to correct what your customers think is a problem.
- You can establish authority through social media platforms like forums and message boards, by professionally and accurately answering questions posted in the thread. The more questions you answer correctly, the more people will trust you as an expert.



Put It Into Action

- Social media can help spread word about your product from one user to another. How? One satisfied customer can make a great endorsement post on their blog. Other people can stumble upon that entry and pass it on to other people.
- Social media can promote a more personal relationship with your customers and potential clients. Through social media, you'll see their interest and other facets of their personality that you won't see elsewhere.
- Social media can help you connect to other businesses and customers. You have the ability to reach out to millions.
- Social media gives small businesses a fighting chance against big companies. Thanks to social media, which acts as less-costly marketing and advertising means, micro-businesses now have an equal opportunity to market their products online.
- Social media opens your starting business to a world-wide audience. With the Internet spanning the globe, it's no surprise that advertising via social media platforms will widen your potential customer-base.



Put It Into Action

- Social media can help generate traffic to your website. Having your website, or at least one service you offer, noticed in social bookmarking sites like Digg or Reddit can produce as much as 2,000 to 30,000 more viewers.
- Compared to traditional marketing approaches, social media is cheaper.
- Social media provides your company with another means to be accessible. Social media provides real-time, one-to-many response that phone and email support cannot.
- Social media helps you concentrate on a specific niche. Online communities abound the social media world, choose one that you can relate to and talk to them directly. This'll help you generate the right kind of following.
- Social media gives you a channel to explain yourself or your company's standpoint on things.
- Social media can serve as a virtual gallery for your products and service. A good example would be photo-sharing sites like Multiply.
- Social media gives potential customers new ways to find you.



Software and Motives

With more and more people slowly being introduced to the concept of social media, various organizations and companies are starting to feel pressured to jump into the bandwagon. Not only do they get to read about it in mainstream media, but they also hear about it a lot from their PR agencies, who, themselves, are being pressured to learn about the social media culture. But where does one start?

Learning to differentiate the software from the motives

You must first be able to set apart social media as a process from social media as a software before you fully understand it. Knowing what it's for and why it is important enough to learn about is a great start. From there on, you can start getting an idea of who this approach can reach out to on the Internet, as well as how you can use social media to establish a better, collaborative, and creative 2-way relationship with your potential clients.

Finding case studies will help companies better understand how social media can help their businesses in the long run. This will also help back up every information and every example you cite to them about the various benefits of using social media.



Listen Before You Speak

Listening means keeping your “ear” (or in this case, your eyes) tuned into what's buzzing on the Internet. In your specific case, you need to listen and find out if someone or no one is talking about your company.

If you're worried about the tools, there are free and paid tools you can use to listen to who's who and what's what on the Internet. For free listening tools, you have Google Reader and Google Blogsearch that you can use in tandem with each other to find people who talk about you, your product, or any other related item you wish to search for, and add it to your list of subscription to constantly watch. Technorati is yet another free tool you can use for listening purposes.

Like what we mentioned earlier, there are also paid listening tools you can get online. Radian6 is a good example for this. It works relatively the same as Google Reader, but at a more refined level.

Again, after successfully building your personalized listening device, you'll be able to find out if anybody or nobody is talking about you or your company. Whether or not you have someone spreading the word about you and your company should be able to tell you something important that you can use in the future. It is relative to note, at this point, that listening devices like Google Reader is not merely a blog reader. It does more than that. Only when you get over the wrong notion that all it does is show you blogs you can read will you be able to take advantage of its full potential.



Is Blogging The Next Step?

You, along with a lot of organizations who are taking their first shot at using social media, may have been told that blogging is the most logical first step to take to set you on the right path. But it isn't always the case.

You can say that blogging is a relatively big step for a beginner. Kind of like asking a kid to ride an adult-sized bike without having learned from a bicycle with training wheels. It's quite a big leap to take.

Why not start with something smaller, a tumbleblog, perhaps? Do a test run on something that isn't about the organization, just to give the person who's going to be assigned to do the blogging a feel of what to do.

You may also want to search for blogs whose style and tone you'd like to copy. Subscribe to those blogs and mix a little of business-related and entertainment-based content. In order to keep your reader in check, though, you might need to make folders for the different content you subscribe to.

Don't forget that although blogs can empower your business and give a face to your organization, it's also about fun and being able to show yourself for who you are. Don't rush your would-be blogger into the job, let them find their way around it, get comfortable with their soon-to-be task, and then let them do it.



Using Audio and Video

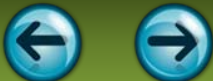
If you think blogging alone is enough to keep your social media afloat, then you thought wrong. Sticking to listening and writing blog posts isn't always the best option. There are other media available that, although time-consuming and with questionable return of effort, can prove beneficial to your organization.

Audio and video are some of the other means used by social media practitioners in place of the usual blogging. And although the written word is a powerful tool to engage people, audio and video seem to form a stronger connection because it lets the audience see glimpse of the person behind the company.

What do you use audio and video for?

There are many ways you can apply audio and video medias to help your organization. For one, it can assist in viral marketing. Two, like blogs, it can help you share a little bit of what you know or what's going on in the business. It can even help you promote job openings or recruiting.

Audio offers a lot of application for organizations. It can serve as an alternative to voicemail in sending out audio status messages to a lot of people. It can also be used to give tips and advices in a more personal and conversational manner.



Using Audio and Video

With video, you can showcase your products by screencasting it, showing your audience how to use it or how it is made. This application seems to be quite popular to viewers. Again, it can also be an alternative to your regular, typed-in status messages.



Social Networks

It's not surprising to find businesses feeling skeptical about jumping the social media bandwagon. It is but natural that they think about how social networks can work for them to gauge whether or not they will use it for their business.

Some organizations may be thinking that social networks are a new approach to traditional marketing strategies. On the other hand, other businesses may be curious about how to do it, what to use, and where to start.

To start off, let's site two of the most commonly used social networking sites.

Facebook

Although many an expert doubt this social network's usability in terms of business, it at least offers you space to build a personal profile on. This profile can serve as another touch-point for the organization online. This also opens you to the possibilities of meeting kindred people. To help you startup in Facebook, here are some helpful tips:

- You might want to make your profile with a bit of personal touch. Go for a more casual photo than a formal one.
- Add applications to your profile but be wise about what you add. Don't jump into a popular application if you're not really one who wants to use it.



Social Networks

- Don't immediately jump into making your own group, join one and participate first. Get a feel of how to work group dynamics.
- Follow the progress of your efforts. There's no use staying in Facebook if you don't actually have a reason to.

Twitter

When used properly, Twitter can be a really effective tool to make your presence known. By keeping a conversational tone in your Twitter posts, you gain more interaction with other people that eventually lead to more contacts you can possibly convert into potential clients. Be it by sharing information, telling people what's currently going on in your life, or asking questions, Twitter is a definitely a great social networking site for businesses to use.

In General

If you think about it, social networks do make for a great tool for promoting awareness, meeting new people, and learning new things. However, it is important to be cautious about using it for the organization because it can also turn on you. This is why it is important to understand why you would want to use it and how you want to use it.



About the Author

Rob Angeles is the founder of Social Media Philippines. He had worked with various multi-national companies and government agencies around the United States carrying different roles from software development, data architecture and project development.

His passion for social media led him in creating Social Media Philippines which aims to become the Philippines' resource hub for social media tips and strategies.

Copyright

The copyright of this work belongs to the author, who is solely responsible for the content. This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 Philippines License](#).

