

## Social Media Marketing and Social Network Advertising: services for companies

**Social Media Marketing** or **SMM** is a subset of Digital Marketing. It is a broader concept than Social Network Marketing: the latter one refers to **non-conventional marketing strategies** carried out through social networks like Facebook, Twitter or GooglePlus; the social media marketing leverages online marketing techniques through all types of social media channels including blogs, forum and any kind of online communities.

Social Media Marketing is a **set of means at companies' disposal** to promote their business on the web and market their products/services online.

In order to better understand the possibilities related to this type of digital marketing is useful break it up in its different **main components**:

- [Social CRM \(Customer Relationship Management\)](#)
- [Viral marketing or buzz marketing](#)
- [Social Network Advertising](#)
- [SMO - Social Media Optimisation](#)
- [Social monitoring and analysis](#)

### [Social CRM \(Customer Relationship Management\)](#)

[Cluetrain Manifesto](#) taught us that **markets are conversations**. At these or, better still, a social reality that recognises the **conversation as the social lubricant** across all spectrum of human interactions from goods design to services selling and beyond. Truth made more evident in the internet and social media era.

If markets are conversations, **enterprises which do not converse become invisible**, losing contact with their interlocutors: the customers.

Especially on social media, conversing means **reinforcing the relationship with customers/clients** so that to satisfy and loyalise them. Somehow Social Media Marketing is the transposition to social channels of:

- **Relational Marketing**. A marketing strategy which aims to increase the client relationship value;
- **CRM (Customer Relationship Management)** which aims at customer satisfaction and retention.

**Relational marketing** represents an overtaking of traditional marketing. The latter focused on

consumers in terms of big aggregate through the analysis of mass consumption data. On the contrary, relational marketing in a time of products and services personalisation, **regains the customer centrality** setting a one to one relationship and putting the brand in a direct and dynamic connection with its target.

Prior to web and social media arrive the relational model was limited by the supremacy of one-way communicational media, like radio and tv. They did not allow the development of two-way communication relationships, while nowadays, thanks to the success of social networks and online communities, we observe a strong reduction in one-way vertical communication replaced by a more balanced model where **the customer can play an active role within the commercial relationship**.

The way social media work forces **companies** to listen to their fans online, engage them in activities and business decisions, assist them with a valuable customer service. This horizontal relationship is a necessity generated by digital media (*the medium is the message* said McLuhan), but it is also a great opportunity to **know the own customers and loyalise them** providing an online service that be an added value for customers.

Through social media firms have the chance to receive comments upon their actions, feedbacks on services and products, even suggestions and ideas to improve them. For sure companies run a risk to become object of criticism, but this risk must be faced with a **complaints and requests management plan**.

**The best strategy is to take up the challenge**, reply with haste to requests, accept critics and putting them right through smart solutions. It is important to react to possible inconveniences caused with **compensating actions** that show in the social media channel the attention given by the company to its clients/customers.



**Social CRM** means thus to be able to provide post-sale support, but also, eventually, manage sales negotiations, identify new contacts and prospects, carrying out PR activities and develop

commercial initiatives. **Social Media** offer huge opportunities: it is necessary to **think of how to leverage them** according to business objectives and characteristics.

A **proprietary blog** allows to start a direct communication channel with the own users and planning content marketing activities - web content marketing and blog marketing - which have positive effects on SEO as well; the blog world in general gives the chance to get attention by means of articles and comments or through business agreement; **forums** are online communities where it is possible to participate in conversations promoting the own company profile and improving reputation and authority.

When these strategies are implemented and optimised several **business objectives** can be reached:

- increase brand awareness;
- build up an online community of followers active in promoting the brand and recommend its products or services to their friends;
- provide new traffic sources to the own website, generating leads and increasing conversions.

**Relational Online Marketing** and **Social CRM** create the basis for the viral success of a company's social media strategy.

## [Viral Marketing or Buzz Marketing](#)

Viral Marketing means also Conversational Marketing since assumes the concept of **markets as conversations**. Viral marketing aims at leveraging **word of mouth** to increase the volume of conversations about a product or service in order to make it more popular and appreciated by a **defined group of customers**.

The word "viral" recalls the ways through which virus spread: contamination and transmission. Likewise, for this kind of online marketing strategy is common to use the word "buzz", which refers to the bees and the ability to target swarms; that is to say consistent groups of people sharing the same interests and tastes about products or services.

Viral Marketing or Buzz Marketing encompasses the set of strategies that leverage the active role played by users in social media, consciously or unconsciously, spontaneously or on incentives, in order to **spread out contents** generated by companies and social media marketing specialists.

Social networks, blogs, forum, photo or video sharing environments, communities of interest, wiki websites and so on, represent environments where occurs conversations to influence with the own discourse. **This is the challenge for the companies**: create contents good enough to

become subject of conversation and word of mouth, contents that pushes users to spontaneously sharing.

Example of viral effect triggered by a promotional video about the movie *Carrie* (2013)

When this result is reached **viral marketing shows its real potential** since companies benefits from a great promotional campaign that allow them to advertise a product or service, gain popularity and improve their reputation altogether. Indeed, viral marketing is also an excellent branding tactic.

Video is the viral marketing main vehicle to spread out messages. In these terms **a successful video becomes a viral video**. There are many examples of social media marketing based on viral videos and they are not necessarily promoted by private companies.

Anti-smoking campaign promoted by the *Thai Health Promotion Foundation*

## [Social Network Advertising](#)

**Social Network Advertising** is a type of [online advertising](#) carried out publishing promotional banners on social networks in order to:

- promote products or services;
- increase brand popularity and awareness;
- advertise the website;
- provide visibility to social media channels;
- leveraging coupons and discounts to push users to buy in the physical shops.

Being a marketing technique which exploits different social networks according to their own features we can define it **native advertising**.

**Social network advertising** is an interesting solution for several reasons:

- **It is not intrusive**. Getting natively integrated in the information and conversations flow within the selected media, social network advertising proves to be discreet and even appreciated;
- **It permits a high control over target**, inconceivable with traditional media. Thanks to the data provided by users and data extracted by their behaviours in the social network the advertiser can count with geographic, demographic, psychographic and behavioural variables, extraordinarily useful to determine an appropriate target for their digital campaign;
- **It is perfectly measurable** through monitoring and tracking systems provided by the same social networks and other web analytics tools if traffic is sent to the website;
- **results can be analysed almost live** getting the chance to make ongoing adjustments

(fine tuning activity).

**Advertisements in social networks get remarkable success** when the advertiser know how to leverage their functional characteristics; the impact of the campaign depends also on how well it is coordinated with the other online marketing strategies planned in the very same social network platform and the website it is associated to.

Ads formats vary according to social networks and campaign needs, they can be:



- textual;
- graphical;
- video;
- rich media and other variants.

The most common **payment models** are *Pay Per Click (CPC)* and *Cost Per Mille (CPM)*.

The social platforms that at the moment offer the **best advertising opportunities** are:

- facebook
- youtube
- linkedin
- twitter

- instagram
- googleplus

**Advertisements** can drive users to a social network internal page (usually the company's profile) or to a website page. In the [eCommerce](#) sector most of the times users caught within social media get sent to the website where visits can be converted into sales at once.

Identifying the best strategy for advertising on social network is a social media manager task. Firms specialised in **retargeting campaigns** can also publish banners on social networks after getting partnership agreements.

## **SMO - Social Media Optimisation**

**SMO** is a subset of social media marketing which consists in **optimising social channels**, especially social network profiles, to make them more visible than others and better ranked on search engines. A well optimised social network has also a **positive impact on the ranking of the website** it is linked to.

Ultimately **SMO is a SEO specular activity** that instead to be unfold to improve website pages' indexation and ranking, aims at achieving similar results for social media and only in the second place impacting positively on the associated websites.

The importance of **investing on social media optimisation** stems from the way search engines work. These calculate websites' ranking based on their relevance to users searches. The evaluation is made through softwares that use mathematical algorithms (like the famous Google's PageRank and later reinforcements: Panda, Penguin, Hummingbird) taking into account hundreds of factors, among which backlinks and social signals.

**Backlinks** are links coming from other websites (included social networks, blogs, forums, etc.) and to search engines eyes represent evidences on the website contents' quality they bring to.

**Social signals** are indicators of the relevance of the social channels they come from in form of links and citations:



- Followers (YouTube channel registered for example);
- Appreciations ("+1" on Google Plus or "like" on Facebook);
- Sharings (retweets on twitter);
- Engagement (comments on blog's articles or LinkedIn posts).

Since search engines measure these social signals to establish the leading position of a website or social channel against its rivals, **it is important to value the own social media making them more accessible and valuable** according to Google and other search engines' ranking criteria.

Thus, **SMO optimisation** aims to furnish to search engines' spiders all the indications useful to increase social websites ranking in the results returned by Google, Bing, Yahoo, etc. For instance, through the appropriate **tagging of posts** and **keywords insertion** in domain URLs, the own social pages gain positions, boost followers, increase the volume of users interactions and engagement. It produces a virtuous circle that ends up benefiting social media and the related website.

Nowadays, a [SEO campaign](#) planned to optimise the company's website should always be accompanied by the related social media optimisation. In both cases (SEO and SMO) these optimisation strategies are more effective if implemented during the website and social media pages creation.

A good social media marketing plan incorporates from the beginning a SMO strategy that, leveraging search engines ranking criteria, can be also considered part of a broader [SEM strategy](#).

## Social monitoring and analysis

For social media marketing to be effective it is needed to activate a system to collect data and analyse campaign results. There are **three fundamental stages to plan**:



- Measure;
- Analyse and Interpret;
- Rework.

**Measuring** means implementing technologies to **monitor online marketing on social media**. The major social networks provide within their platforms monitoring tools for ordinary activities and advertising campaigns. Web analytics softwares, like Google Analytics, allow to gather data and statistics about the traffic coming from social media to the business website.

**Analyse and interpret** implies a notable effort to **prove the hypotheses** the digital marketing strategies are based on. Identifying schemes and recurring events, interaction patterns, cause-effect relations, allows to understand better both market and customers.

**Rework** means turning collected data into information precious to refine digital marketing included social media marketing.

[Tweet "When a company can leverage accrued data to boost its business is on the right way to success."]

## **Social Media Marketing Consultancy**

The variety of social websites and possible digital strategies is such that often a single social media specialist is not enough to manage all the company's channels and it is needed a dedicated team and considerable budgets.



Things get even more complicated for **international companies** who need to manage and coordinate their social communities in multiple country versions. In these cases [multilingual international consultants](#) can help in **managing social media** and online communication so to adapt it to the local contexts.

An online marketing plan, or a more limited social media marketing plan, should **identify priorities based on budget and resources in hand**, always contemplating the possibility for a future escalation of activities and investments following previous success.

For an online consultancy and a price quotation contact *outofseo*.