

# Social Media Marketing on a Tight Budget – Sample

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Starting a small business is always difficult. Looking for customers and retaining them through competent products and services can lead to a nervous breakdown, if you are not careful. However, with the rise of Social Media Marketing (SMM) it became much easier for small entrepreneurs and young startups to promote products and services, attract more clients, and enhance customer retention.

Social Media Marketing, like traditional marketing, has its secrets. Even if a business owner has the right resources, mistakes can still show up along the way, so it is important to learn about the ropes of Social Media Marketing to avoid being encumbered by marketing adversities.

## Basics of Social Media Marketing

Social Media Marketing refers to the use of Web marketing resources, specifically the social media, to promote products and services, build ideas and concepts, raise Internet visibility, increase brand awareness, and gain more market. To achieve these goals, entrepreneurs or marketers use a number of media, such as **blogs, podcasts, references, topical articles, online videos, message boards, and social bookmarking, media, and networking websites.**

Contrary to what most people know, Social Media Marketing is not all about promotion. The real value of Social Media Marketing is to be able to assertively advocate the products and services via the Internet while building partnerships with clients and social media facilitators at the same time.

The Web offers many vehicles where a marketer can promote products and services. Here's a sample rundown of the Web tools one can use to market a business:

1. 43 things
2. Wetpaint
3. Furl
4. Frappr
5. Ning
6. Wikihow
7. Squidoo
8. LinkedIn
9. Yahoo! 360
10. Ma.gnolia
11. Yahoo! Answers
12. MySpace
13. Technorati
14. StumbleUpon
15. Newsvine
16. Reddit
17. Flickr
18. Wikipedia
19. Del.icio.us
20. Digg

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These sites are often the favorite of entrepreneurs because they focus on specific groups of people across the world, i.e. on a broader scale. Once the specific target audience is established, it becomes easier for a company or group to find the right outlets for its advertisement placements, since these websites have an audience that are inclined to listen.

## How Social Media Marketing Can Save and Give You Money?

Social Media Marketing is quintessentially the most affordable yet effective form of product and service advertisement. The Internet is a huge place where a business owner can promote a business, and it offers unlimited ways on how one can attract clients. The above-mentioned websites, for instance, offer free services to people who want to increase the demand for their businesses.

A business owner does not need to spend large sums of money to promote a business. As far as Social Media Marketing is concerned, what an entrepreneur has to do is to **come up with a material that is original, creative, informative, and entertaining to get the attention of social media users.**

But how can Social Media Marketing ensure that a product can really become a hit in the market?

### Blogs and Press Releases

Topical articles that contain high-quality original content capture customer's attention. However, press releases and blog entries must have useful information and not just a collection of keyword-stuffed sentences. Web viewers are not impressed with materials that do not offer anything except pure advertisements. The materials must also be credible, which means that they must be well researched and highly factual articles and not just blog entries with unsupported statements or claims.

To gain more traffic, marketers should incorporate backlinks in their content, but do not pepper blog entries and articles with too many of them. Readers are smart and can easily see through an article that only aims to advertise. In addition, links to other relevant and credible websites will give web visitors a notion that the writer of the article has done his/her homework. **Digg, Blogger, Wordpress, and Technorati** are among the many tools that marketers use to post articles and press releases.

### Videos, Picture, and Graphics

Images, videos, and colorful illustrations make Social Media Marketing very appealing and persuasive. When planning on using such tools, it is crucial that the images and videos are highly entertaining and original. Simply put, they must capture the users' attention and interest to be persuaded to visit the marketer's website. **YouTube.com, Multiply, and Livevideo.com** are only some of the user-friendly tools where you can broadcast your product and service ads. You can employ cool, funny, and wholesome videos for your advertisements. To add more traffic to your website, you can put the watermark of your site URL to the videos.

### Social Networking Sites

MySpace is not only a venue to meet people. It is also a useful tool where you can gain friends, clients, and business partners. You can get the attention of MySpace users and generate more leads by creating an attractive profile and putting useful content on your page. You can also use **Friendster, Multiply, and Facebook** if you want to reach out to more audience using social networking.

### Forums and Message Boards

Forums are tricky places for advertising since most moderators and administrators remove any post or

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thread that is endorsing a certain product, service, or website in it. However, the good thing about forums and message boards is that they already have specific audiences who have varying needs. If you are planning to use forums as your marketing venue, you must first register with them and post replies while taking care not to appear like a “spammer” (advertisers are considered spammers on forums). It will help if you create posts without links and get to know the members of the site first before pushing your real objective.

Social Media Marketing is a very powerful vehicle that requires user responsibility. To further learn about the benefits of this vehicle, it is also recommended to read Web articles and books devoted to it. Thomas McMahon, the author of the article, “*Session: Big Ideas for Small Sites & Small Budgets*”, has provided these sample tips on how to maximize the use of Social Media Marketing for small businesses:

1. Ignore algorithm chasing as well as forget about the magic formulas commonly used like % of a certain keyword on a page.
2. Linking is of importance.
3. Consider click backs as important. Should someone click on a listing in Google, but then it returns a few seconds later back to the results for the same search engine, it only means that the ranking is not the right match for that person.
4. Instead of only focusing on optimizing for search engines, also learn how to interact with customers by speaking their language.
5. When using paid-per-click campaigns (PPC), remember that data is more useful in gaining new customers and not just clicks.
6. Be more creative and work smarter.
7. Find customers instead of waiting for them. These people can be found in various social networking sites.
8. Learn to build credibility on social media sites. Do not hard-sell; instead, become a story teller and a friend.
9. Know which social media websites to visit to get more links and exposure.
10. Know how to set goals that are reasonable and feasible.

Social Media Marketing is a great vehicle for business owners with tight budgets to effectively promote their products and services without shedding a lot of money (in fact, you can do that without spending any money at all, if you are willing to invest all the time). Creativity, imagination, and sheer determination are the key traits a marketer should have to take a full advantage of such a wonderful marketing media – social media.