

The Competition You Didn't Know You Had

As a company, regardless of size, you've probably taken the time to explore what social media can do for you. You understand that your customers are spending a majority of their online time on social networking sites and that more than ever, customers are looking to connect with the brands they do business with online; they're looking for connections (if you've missed these ideas, check out our previous blogs for a deeper understanding).

This is all true, in fact, we wholeheartedly believe that there is no excuse for a company neglecting to have a presence on appropriate social networking sites. In general, social media networks are the first place customers go to interact with brands, it's where they go to gain an understanding of what a company is able to provide and to get a closer look at how they interact with their community: their customers and potential customers. Time spent on social media activities is valuable and worthwhile in the long run. In fact, companies who take the time to create content and use social media sites receive around 67% more leads than those that do not.

Where Traditional Social Networks Fail

What you may not be considering when you decide to launch a social networking initiative or campaign is that users are not logging in just to interact with your brand. They're logging in to check overall activity. They're checking out photos and videos their friends have posted, they're entering contests sponsored by other companies, they're bombarded by outside advertisements and they're posting statuses about what they're doing.

While your company may come across their newsfeed and they may take the time to visit your page and perhaps comment, they're distracted. What does this mean for you? While your direct competition in the outside world may not be a factor online, the ads, status updates and rabbit trails made possible by traditional sites may become your competition; they're competing for the time and attention of the customers you're trying to attract and engage. They're pulling your target market right out of your hands without you being able to do a single thing about it. Social media distractions are your hidden online competitors.

Why There's Room for Change

Rest assured; there's hope and room for a change, a drastic change. Remember what we mentioned earlier? *Customers are looking to engage brands online.* They truly want to learn more about your company, to connect with you and to connect with others who share the same interests they do. The drive to find true connection is a factor that can become a motivator for your company to establish real online connections away from the hidden competition of traditional social media distractions.

What's the Solution?

So, how do you make it happen? How do you beat out the hidden competition in the form of distractions to produce real engagement and measurable, long-term results?

The answer is an Enterprise Social Network or ESN – a buzzword becoming a common part of the daily vocabulary for social media marketers and businesses across the world. Enterprise Social Networks are social networks established outside of traditional sites by companies to gather groups of like-minded

individuals (potential clients, clients and even employees) to encourage collaboration and participation while fostering relationships and growth.

These are becoming so common that according to a recent study released by Deloitte, by the end of this year, 90% of Fortune 500 companies will have established an ESN. These companies understand that the best way to communicate with their client base is through a distraction-free, branded community that allows them to direct the flow of conversation and to bring focus to the issues that matter to them. It doesn't get much better than this.

While we still encourage the use of traditional social media sites – there is no denying the importance these sites play in building initial interactions and providing opportunities for communication – we believe ESN's can be built to fully integrate with them and to work together for your desired outcome.

ESN's are not just a term to think about in the future, they're something that should become an integral part of your company's marketing operations. They can be as simple or complicated as you'd like and can play a large role in online success leading to tangible leads and even sales.

Interested in learning more about what an ESN could do for your company or organization? Contact Social HubSite today through our site or give us a call at 1-855-4321-HUB to get started.

The potential is unlimited and the time to act is now.