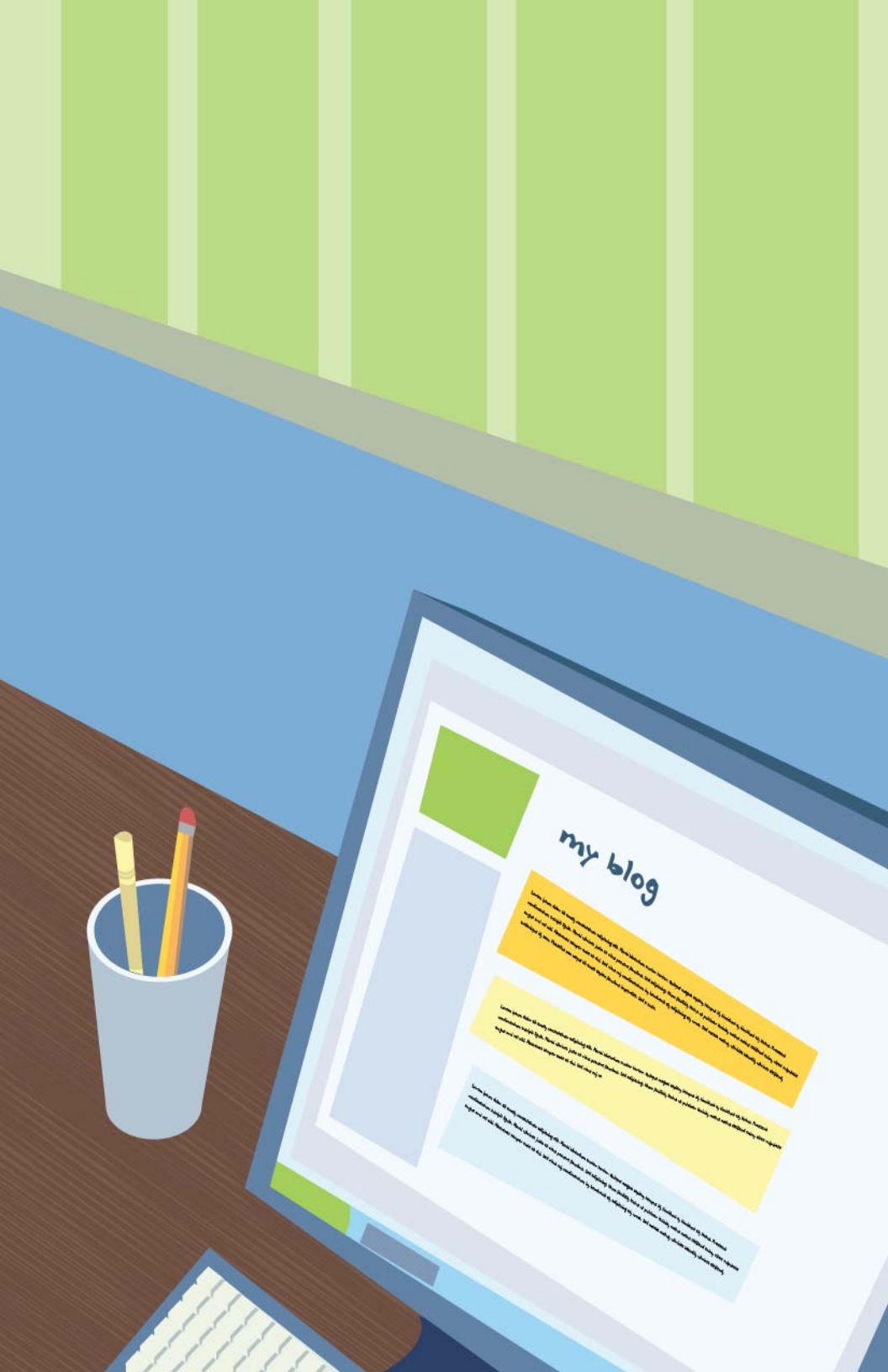


Conversation Starters

Social Media Marketing
in the HR Marketplace

HRmarketer
publicity. traffic. leads.
Services ➤



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benefit from reading it.**

Look for our Social Media eBook Blog coming soon to www.HRmarketer.com/conversationstarters where you can add your own commentary and success stories.

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Conversation Capsule



Southwest Airlines launched their blog Nuts About Southwest in 2006 and have since broadened their social media strategy with a six-person team maintaining various social media channels.

Paula Berg, Southwest's Emerging Media manager, said of their blog:

"It's become a place to make and break news. It's a place to tell the rest of the story when the media doesn't have the time or space to do it. It's a virtual focus group. It's a place to get immediate feedback."

Six ideas Southwest used to emerge as a social media leader:

- 1. Take advantage of what's already out there.** Blogging, Twittering and maintaining Facebook fan sites are all opportunities to directly reach an audience, says Berg.
- 2. Spark a discussion.** Social media allows companies to engage their customers in dialogues. Use those exchanges as a virtual focus group to gauge the public's reaction to new developments or find out what they think about your current operations.

- 3. Divvy up responsibility.** Giving individual employees ownership over a particular social media tool gives that tool a consistent voice that its readers can become familiar with. "It makes each channel more personal," Berg says.
- 4. Keep your channels distinct.** Use the blog to delve into issues, Twitter to break or tease news and Facebook to highlight promotional events. By spreading the content around, it forces your audience to poke around your different outlets rather than focusing on just one.
- 5. Become an early adopter.** Look out for new social media tools and experiment with them when they appear. "When these things are new, expectations are low," says Berg, "so you can figure out how you want to use [them]."
- 6. Have fun.** "As a team, we're having so much fun with what we're doing," says Berg. "And it shows in the work we're producing."

Introduction



A few months ago, one of our longtime HRmarketer.com members emailed us and asked a series of simple questions with elusive answers:

What is this social networking thing all about?

Can I really use it to promote my organization?

How do I get started?

The answers are elusive because, although social media marketing and social networking are such the rage these days, many would argue there's still too much "social" in the marketing mix and not enough direct, measurable return for businesses. I still hear many HR suppliers, business owners and executive management teams completely disregard the power of social media marketing.

And that's a mistake. Unfortunately, too many marketing, PR, business development professionals and even business owners and executive management in the HR marketplace are still convinced that their products and services are the best in the biz and that they can control their message to that point, convincing prospects to knock on their doors blindfolded and ready to buy.

Just as David Meerman Scott outlines in his book, [World Wide Rave](#): Nobody cares about your products except you.

They really don't. What they care about is improving their workforce management and their bottom lines.

Outside of the HR marketplace, major brands like Southwest, Ford, Best Buy, Kraft, and Coca-Cola are finally getting the fact that they no longer control their marketing and PR messages; prospects and influencers are blogging about their company, commenting on review sites about their company, tweeting about their company, posting comments on Facebook about their company – all with the sometimes unadulterated grace of teenagers on Red Bull. These major brands "get it" and have jumped in full force executing their own social media marketing strategy that includes blogging and beyond.

That's the not the case within the HR marketplace – with the exception of a handful of firms like EmployeeScreenIQ, SuccessFactors, CollegeRecruiter, KnowledgePay, TriNet, Spherion, CareerBuilder, HRchitect, iCIMS, Arbita, AthenaOnline and others – most HR suppliers still aren't participating in social media, so they're not being talked about within online HR circles, and that creates a false sense of security that they actually control all their marketing messages.

Although I did come across these Tweets about specific HR suppliers and products:



I'm going to lunch. Ceridian time tracking system, you can kiss the fattest part of my a&%!

Talking w/unhappy Vurv user who doesn't want to switch to Taleo. SmartSearch #ats offers free data migration for Vurv & VurvExpress users.

Not what Ceridian or Taleo wants to see come up on Twitter or anywhere online, especially if and when they start popping up in aggregate. It's time for Ceridian and Taleo to proactively join the conversation before they're forced into crisis communications. The same goes for all of us in the HR marketplace.

That's why the title of this eBook is "Conversation Starters". It's about initiating and engaging in an honest and transparent (openly substantive, not shallow) online conversation with your buyers, influencers and yes, your customers too, about who you are and why you're in the business you're in. It's about wanting to partner with them to help them grow their businesses and to keep that you partnership flourishing because of people, not products.

We've been blogging since 2004 and have seen tremendous growth in our readership, but not just because we blog consistently (and

sometimes intelligently) about marketing, PR and business topics in the HR space. It's because we read other blogs and make comments and spur honest dialogue – we participate in transparent conversations about our business and offer resources and commentary for others to profit from, paying it forward so to speak.

In turn, we've seen our thought leadership grow and in turn our business grow (in conjunction with other traditional and Web 2.0 marketing activities).

In other words, we've got good street cred, and it pays great dividends. Remember, trust is the currency of social media. Without it, your social media marketing efforts will fail, and fail miserably.

Blogging is only the beginning.

But instead of participating in these conversations and building trust, too many still choose to pitch the controlled "embargoed" PR, send out overly-promotional and transparent (the shallow kind) direct marketing email campaign, conduct the Webcast with canned questions, all in hopes that the other conversation will just go away, that they'll hypnotize their prospects into buying.

Stop the
methodical
marketing
madness and
start a
conversation.
Get a little
messy. It's real
and it works.

Sigh. Stop the methodical marketing madness and start a conversation. Get a little messy. It's real and it works.

This paper is our long-awaited chance at HRmarketer.com to talk about how you can start these conversations with your buyers and the media in the HR marketplace. It will hopefully give you an idea of what's out there today in social media marketing and networking, and how your company can start using these services to your benefit (without thinking of them as a waste of time).

By no means are we the first to talk about this subject. There are many social media marketing thought leaders whom we recommend you listen to as well: David Meerman Scott, Todd Defren, Chris Brogan, Laura Fitton, David Henderson, Jason Falls, and C.C. Chapman. And so many more.

And then closer to HR home: Joel Cheesman, Jason Davis, John Sumser, Kris Dunn, Bill Vick, Maren Hogan, Jessica Lee, Laurie Reuittimann, Bill Kutik, Josh Bersin, Jim Holincheck, Sharlyn Lauby, Steve Boese, Peter Clayton, Libby Sartain. And so many more.

The good news is that, according to our [Trends in HR Marketing report: Where HR Suppliers Spent their Marketing and PR Dollars in 2008 and What's Ahead in 2009](#): *Social networking continues to be popular among HR suppliers, with 60% saying they participate in social networking. In fact, nearly 80% of HR vendors said their participation in social networking and social media marketing increased in 2008 and will continue to increase in 2009.* (Look for our next supplier report in early 2010.)

Conversation Capsule

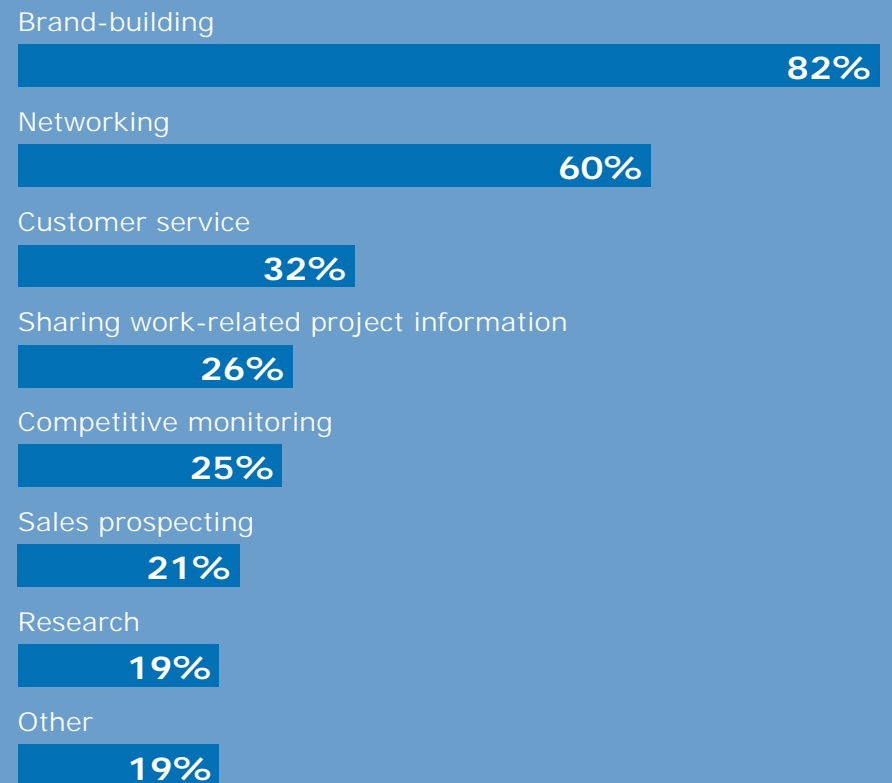


According to a recent article from [eMarketer](#) and a white paper from [Russell Herder](#) and [Ethos Business Law](#) titled “Social Media: Embracing the Opportunities, Averting the Risks” – US executives have come to value social media very highly to enhance relationships with customers and build their company’s brand.

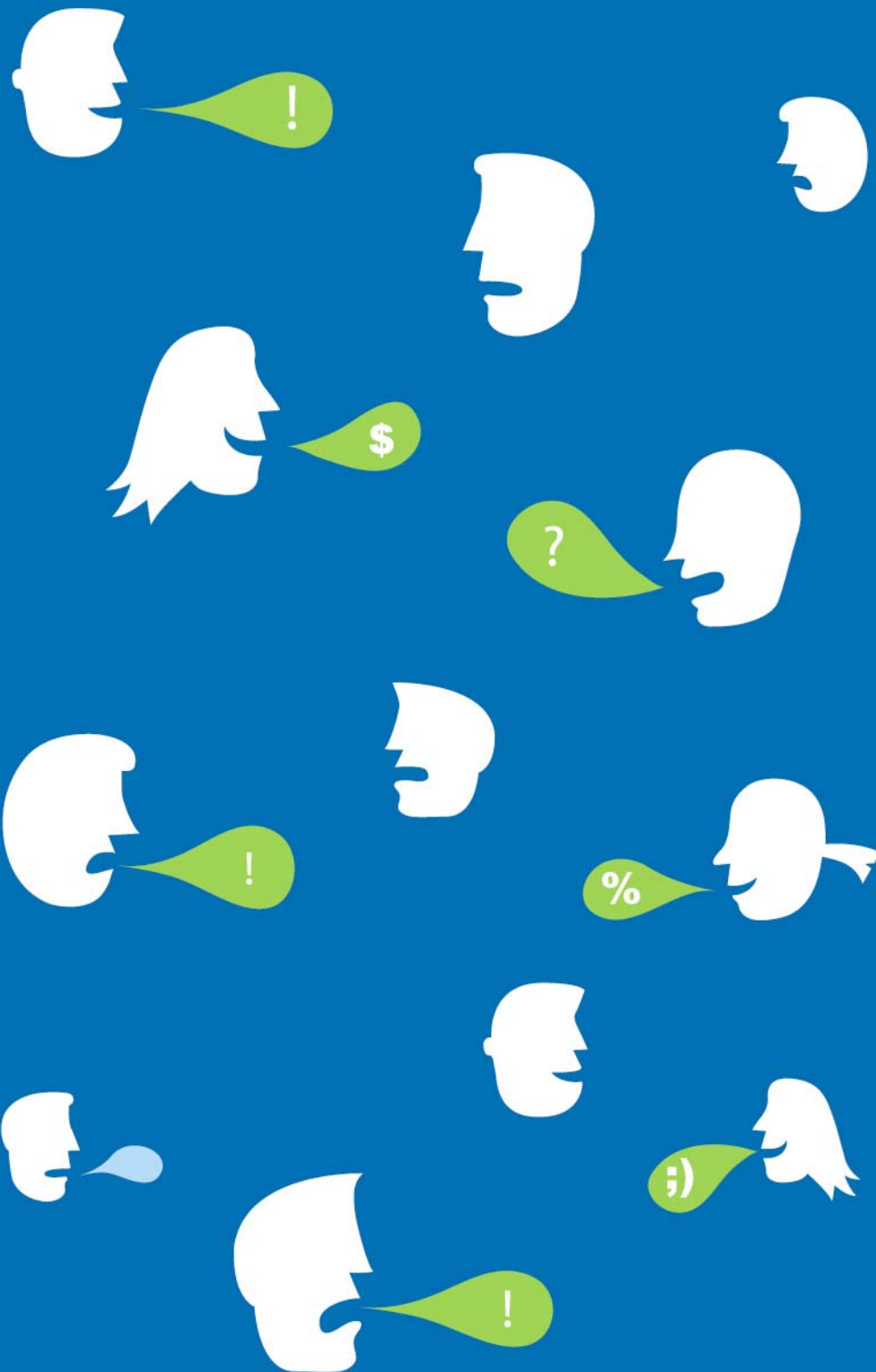
More than eight in 10 management, marketing and HR executives responding to the July 2009 survey cited relationship- and brand-building as benefits of social media. Execs also considered social media a good tool for recruitment (69%) and customer service (64%), and 46% thought it enhanced employee morale.

Respondents reported using social media most for brand-building, followed by networking, customer service, and various research- and information-related activities.

Reasons that US Executives* Use Social Media July 2009 (% of respondents)



*Management, marketing and human resources executives



With the exception of webcasts and podcasts, every service we talk about in this paper is absolutely free to use. It just takes planning, staffing and time.

So after we review what social networking and social media marketing is all about, and after sections on the lost art of listening, content marketing and overall marketing strategy – all before you dive into the messy but effective world of social media marketing – this eBook will ultimately outline what we do at HRmarketer to promote this eBook and all other content we produce via social media marketing channels.

How much fun is that?

Let's go start a conversation.

Kevin W. Grossman, President, HRmarketer.com

Find Me on [f Facebook](#), [t Twitter](#), and [in LinkedIn](#).

What it's all about



So what are social networking and social media marketing all about anyway?

Marketers, salespeople and recruiters have been networking since what seems like the beginning of time. The Rolodex was the most prized possession – the bigger the better. They went to events, parties and galas; met in restaurants, bars and coffee shops; joined professional organizations, charities and clubs; all to meet and greet and be social and network with like-minded individuals.

And to market and sell products, services, companies and candidates.

The very nature of marketing is a social exercise in spreading the word about your products and services. You've been doing it your entire career with traditional tactics. Maybe you've also experimented with a white paper download or two, a Webcast or a podcast or a blog, or you've done some paid search engine marketing.

But in social media marketing, if you want people to know about your new talent management technology or your online wellness coaching service, you have to get the word out about why talent management automation and wellness coaching are so valuable to organizations today.

Not why your products and services are valuable. At least not until you've established a relationship. Make sense?

You've got to be a conversation starter.



Twitter is now being used by more HR practitioners, thought leaders and suppliers alike than ever before. HR suppliers such as EmployeeScreenIQ (Twitter name @employeescreen), StepStone US (Twitter name @StepStoneUS), TriNet (Twitter name @TriNet) and i4cp (Twitter name @i4cp) are sharing original content. They're also driving traffic back to their Web sites, sharing others' relevant content, creating good will, and building relationships with prospects and influencers while strengthening customer relationships.

The top three social networking services HR vendors use, according to our research:

- LinkedIn
- Facebook
- Twitter

Here's a look at the top 25 social networks according to Compete.com from earlier this year (ranked by monthly visits, January 2009):

Rank	Site	UV	Monthly Visits	Previous Rank
1	facebook.com	68,557,534	1,191,373,339	2
2	myspace.com	58,555,800	810,153,536	1
3	twitter.com	5,979,052	54,218,731	22
4	flixfster.com	7,645,423	53,389,974	16
5	linkedin.com	11,274,160	42,744,438	9
6	tagged.com	4,448,915	39,630,927	10
7	classmates.com	17,296,524	35,219,210	3
8	myyearbook.com	3,312,898	33,121,821	4
9	livejournal.com	4,720,720	25,221,354	6
10	imeem.com	9,047,491	22,993,608	13
11	reunion.com	13,704,990	20,278,100	11
12	ning.com	5,673,549	19,511,692	23
13	blackplanet.com	1,530,329	10,173,342	7
14	bebo.com	2,997,929	9,849,137	5
15	hi5.com	2,398,323	9,416,265	8
16	yuku.com	1,317,551	9,358,966	21
17	cafemom.com	1,647,336	8,586,261	19
18	friendster.com	1,568,439	7,279,050	14
19	xanga.com	1,831,376	7,009,577	20
20	360.yahoo.com	1,499,057	5,199,702	12
21	orkut.com	494,464	5,081,235	15
22	urbanchat.com	329,041	2,961,250	24
23	fubar.com	452,090	2,170,315	17
24	asiantown.net	81,245	1,118,245	25
25	tickle.com	96,155	109,492	18

What better way to do this than to go online? Every year our research shows that, second to their peer networks (i.e offline social networks), the first place HR buyers go to research products and services is online.

Social media marketing is all about combining the power of online marketing and social networking so that you converse openly with your buying universe about your firm – good, bad and all in between. Social media marketing uses social networking services as a means of doing just that.





But can I really use these social networks to promote my organization?

Of course, Facebook alone is adding millions of users per month to their already more than 250 million active users. MySpace has more than 130 million.

Twitter is growing by leaps and bounds and, because of the souring economy, LinkedIn (the granddaddy of social networking services) has also seen unprecedented growth.

Professional Ning networks in the HR marketplace – RecruitingBlogs.com, RecruiterEarth.com and HRM Today – are but a few of thousands of professional networks online today.

And don't forget the industry-standard HR networks like HR.com, ERE.net, SHRM, Human Capital Institute, Knowledge Infusion and more!

According to HRmarketer's last HR Buyer Report, the most popular "business" social networking service for HR buyers is LinkedIn, with 47% of HR buyers using this service on a regular basis.

Other social networking sites used regularly by HR buyers on a widespread basis include Facebook and MySpace. Interestingly, Twitter made our list for the first time last year with just under 5% of HR buyers saying they use this service on a regular basis. Plaxo also made the list for the first time, with just over 1% of respondents using this social networking service.

The fastest-growing demographic of many social networking services and professional networks is the 35-year-old and older folk, who are most likely the HR professionals, management and other influencers and decision makers of their respective organizations – you know, your buyers.

What you need to do next is listen to where your buyers are playing – i.e., what social media services they frequent.

The lost art of listening



But whoa Nelly, you really shouldn't just jump right in, set up a Twitter account and start tweeting randomly about your products and services.

Remember? These online strangers don't care about your products and services.

You must first listen. Yes, listen. And learn. I pushed out finishing this eBook multiple times because I listened all summer to the smart social media marketing folk out there today.

While this eBook is primarily about participating in the great online experimental conversation in order to organically generate more publicity, traffic and leads, you need to answer some not-always-so-simple questions first:

- Who are my target influencers and buyers? (i.e. – HR, IT, executive management, industry thought leaders)
- Where are my target influencers and buyers congregating online? (i.e. – social networking services, key industry blogs, professional networks)
- What are my objectives? (i.e. – drive blog readership, website traffic, content downloads, lead generation)

- Who in my organization will manage and measure our social media marketing efforts? (i.e. – marketing, business development, PR)
- Who in my organization will participate in our social media marketing efforts? (i.e. – marketing, business development, PR, executive management, other employees, all of the above)

If you're already a successful business blogger with growing and participatory readership, then you know how important it is to know these answers, and it all plays the same in social media marketing.

It's very important to define these answers and then start listening to your target influencers and buyers online:

- What are they talking about?
- What types of industry information are they sharing and why?
- What are the hot HR marketplace topics driving extended conversations?

After you start
“playing” and
“listening,” you’ll
identify where
your target
influencers and
prospects are
playing and
listening as well

Now, if you’ve answered all these questions, started listening and already have accounts set up in the various social networking channels already mentioned, then you can skip ahead to what to focus on in social media, developing an integrated marketing strategy (that includes content marketing and relationship building) and reap the benefits therein.

If you haven’t, then we’ll cover the main social networks briefly from a business perspective later on in “How to get started on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and beyond.” While our descriptions are certainly not the definitive user manuals, they’re enough to get you started.

After you start “playing” and “listening,” you’ll identify where your target influencers and prospects are playing and listening as well, and those are the services and communities you’ll eventually focus more of your social media mojo.

Note to self: where are your current customers playing online?

The cacophony of marketing: Make a focus list for social media



Every Saturday there's a farmer's market down the street from where I live. My family loves to go mingle with the neighborhood folk, shop for locally grown fruits and vegetables, and listen to some live music.

A cacophonous community of organic conversation. Kind of like social media marketing, or at least the way it's supposed to work.

In the old-school rules of marketing and PR, there were very definitive processes about direct marketing, PR, advertising, and measuring their return on investment.

But social media marketing is messy and not as clear on how to track results, and that can be both freeing and frustrating.

However, we don't go to the market without a list of things we need every week – our objectives – and HR suppliers invested in social marketing shouldn't go without one, either.

My friends at the leadership development firm Glowman Consulting Group shared a great tip with me recently about making two lists (a brief segue that plays into social media planning):

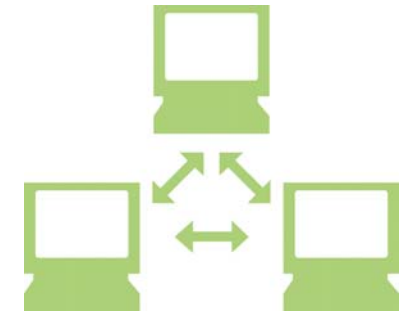
List 1: Your Focus List (the road ahead)

What are you trying to achieve? What makes you happy? What's important to you? Design your time around those things. Because time is your one limited resource and no matter how hard you try, you can't work 25/8/370.

List 2: Your Ignore List (the distractions)

To succeed in using your time wisely, you have to ask the equally important but often avoided complementary questions: what are you willing not to achieve? What doesn't make you happy? What's not important to you? What gets in the way?

These lists are more work/life lists than anything else, but when immersing yourself in social media, it can all be quite overwhelming. How much time do I invest? How much information do I have to try to consume every day? There's a lot of stuff out there, a lot of noise, and a lot of crap to wade through.



Make a focus list that includes:

The people you want to have "marketing" conversations

with. Yes, there are all the services and communities I've already mentioned, but remember you're trying to identify where your influencers and prospects are (probably where many of your current customers are as well) and that's where you want to focus your time.

Building your network connections organically. Listen to what your "peeps" are talking about. Comment on it. Share information of your own. Just don't force your marketing rap on them from the get-go; you can't game social media, because it can and will game you right back.

This isn't like direct marketing, so if you aren't hanging out and chatting and sharing information and paying it all forward – being authentic – then these folks are going to get that quickly and your connections will dissolve.

Contextual posting of information. Remember, your social media marketing "conversations" can and should be contextual and aren't always for every audience. For example, I'll submit this eBook via Ping.fm because I want my entire HR supplier social media collective – from LinkedIn to Twitter to Facebook – to see it

because it's relevant to them; you are my buyers (more on Ping.fm later). But if I was letting my social media marketing hair down, which I often do for those who know me, I probably wouldn't include every service or network I belong to. Maybe it'll be a fun work-related message to my personal and professional friends in Facebook, or it'll just be an obscure Tweet for the Twitterverse.



LinkedIn has been the premiere networking service for employers, recruiters and job seekers for many years. Now with LinkedIn Groups section growing rapidly, more HR suppliers like Arbita, AthenaOnline, Taleo, KnowledgePay and Salary.com have launched groups with like-minded participants and insightful HR marketplace discussions. Yet another way to build relationships with prospects and influencers while strengthening customer relationships.

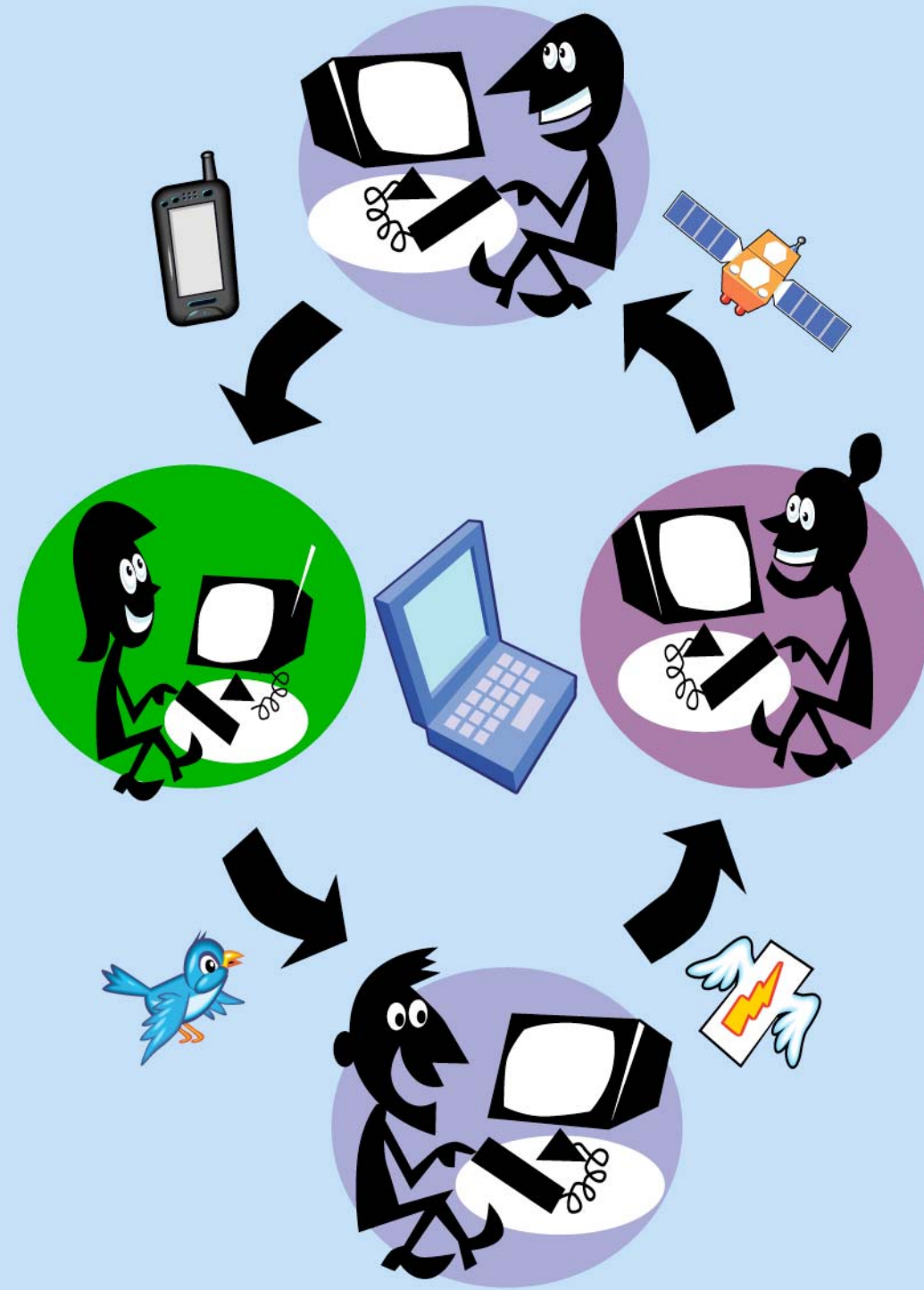


Listening to the thought leaders and influencers in the HR marketplace. There are too many to list here, and I'm not including a lot of valuable supplier blogs and resources, but if you're targeting HR and executive management, here are some folks across the space I try to "listen" to regularly:

- [Benefits Buzz](#)
- [The Bill Kutik Radio Show](#)
- [Bill Vick's XtremeRecruiting.tv](#)
- [BlogERP: Jim Holincheck's HCM Software Blog](#)
- [Cheezhead](#)
- [Domestic Violence in the Workplace](#)
- [Fistful of Talent](#)
- [The HR Capitalist](#)
- [HR Technology Blog](#)
- [HR Bartender](#)
- [Human Race Horses](#)
- [johnsumser.com](#)
- [Josh Bersin's Blog – The Business of Talent](#)
- [LeadingBlog](#)
- [Libby Sartain's and Mark Schumann's Brand For Talent](#)
- [Peter Clayton's Total Picture Radio](#)
- [Punk Rock HR](#)
- [Steve Boese's HR Technology](#)
- [Todd Raphael's World of Talent](#)
- [Winning Workplaces](#)

How much time you want to invest. Other HR marketers have told me they invest on the average 30-60 minutes per day. That's a good average that I invest as well. Don't spend hours on Twitter. Really, don't. Also, if you have a team assigned to social media marketing, make sure there is a team leader orchestrating the others' efforts for consistency, and again focusing your efforts on where your buyers play.

Tracking publicity, traffic and leads. Well, prospects can download your content all day long and still not want to have a conversation with you, so I would argue: don't focus so much on measuring traditional metrics. Social media opens the door for more "starter conversations" that can grow into real business discussions over time. That's value for me. Not pushing more downloads. But you can still see who's sharing your contextual contributions. Who's retweeting you? Who's quoting you in their blogs? How much website traffic are you generating from your content marketing in social media circles? How many folks are downloading your content from your social media efforts? You can measure all these things.



Whether or not you want to hire a firm to help you with social media marketing. Recently David Meerman Scott wrote:

There is really only one question to ask your prospective social media agency. It doesn't matter if they are your existing ad agency or PR agency or a potential new agency. Ask the prospective agency to show the agency social media presence. Ask about such things as blogs, Twitter feeds, YouTube videos, Web site(s), Facebook profiles, eBooks, and any other stuff they have. Make it an open-ended question. This is not to say that an agency needs to do everything. But they should be out there.

Yes, they should be out there (and we are). Because if they're not, then instead of being a social media player as the kids today say, you're being played. Enough said there.

Content marketing and relationship building is where it all starts



With social media marketing, you're either "feeding the beast" – providing content to your target audience, or you're fostering relationships that may turn into business relationships over time. In fact, you should be doing both.

Quality content distributed online gives your prospects best practices and tips they can apply to their organizations today, and over time you become a trusted source of information. At some point, a percentage of those prospects are going to be in the market for your products and services, and you want to be at the top of their credibility list.

It's important to call out blogs here because not only do they provide an inexpensive way to deliver content to your customers, prospects and influencers – *they also have virtually unparalleled value for search engine optimization*. Search engines love blogs. As long as you're posting regularly, it's fresh content that gets indexed regularly, plus your readers can easily subscribe via RSS feeds – and blogs play well in social networks.

An important point to make here is that developing and distributing original content is our first priority from a marketing perspective – and getting your networks to share your content as well. But that doesn't mean you can't share others' content that you find of value and relevant to your own networks.



What started off as a fun way for family and friends to connect and reconnect online has now become another platform for HR suppliers to reach a new audience. Firms like HRchitect, JibberJobber, MeritBuilder, CollegeRecruiter.com and SuccessFactors have attracted hundreds and hundreds of "fans" to their Facebook pages where they can share content, news, upcoming events and webinars, and other relevant information for their fans – i.e., prospects, influencers and customers.

Like I mentioned earlier, you want to be conversational, transparent and real, as non-promotional as possible (with the understanding that sharing your content is promotional), sharing others' content, commenting on others' content – participating in the broader marketplace conversation.

Trust is the
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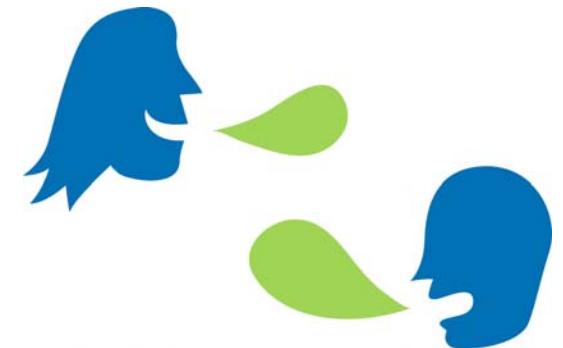
That's what counts in social media circles. Your friends, colleagues, influencers, prospects and customers will reciprocate.

And that's why the relationship-building in social media marketing is so important. Like I said, trust is the currency of social media. Without it, your social media marketing efforts will fail – and fail miserably. If you showed up at a cocktail party and announced how cool you are and that everybody should be your friend, you'll probably be ignored or asked to leave.

In other words, while social media marketing does have value at the front end of the sales/marketing funnel, it has even greater potential in the later stages where you and your prospects are now known to one another; you don't need to convert them into a lead any longer (the subject of our previous eBooks and marketing articles from our [white papers and research section at HRmarketer.com](#)).

However, you do need to listen, learn, and inform with good "conversation starters." Lead nurturing in social media terms is relationship nurturing.

Next round's on me.



Social media marketing strategy



Social media marketing strategy integrates with the greater marketing good.

In our marketing eBook titled [How to Reach and Engage Human Resource Buyers and Convert Them to Leads](#), we discussed in detail our three-step guide for increasing your publicity, Web site traffic, improved SEO and number of HR sales leads.

These steps included:



Strategy, Messaging and the Search-Optimized “Marketing” Web site

Before engaging in any marketing, you need to have a strategy – a long-term plan of action designed to achieve a particular goal and the messaging to drive that strategy. Then you need a Web site with a strong online presence that is search-optimized to improve the volume and quality of traffic to a Web site from search engines via natural (“organic”) search results.



Content. Content. Content.

A primary goal of your Web site is to convert visitors into leads. But without site traffic, you have no lead. In addition to SEO, the best way to drive traffic to your Web site is by providing great content. (More on that later.)



Promotion

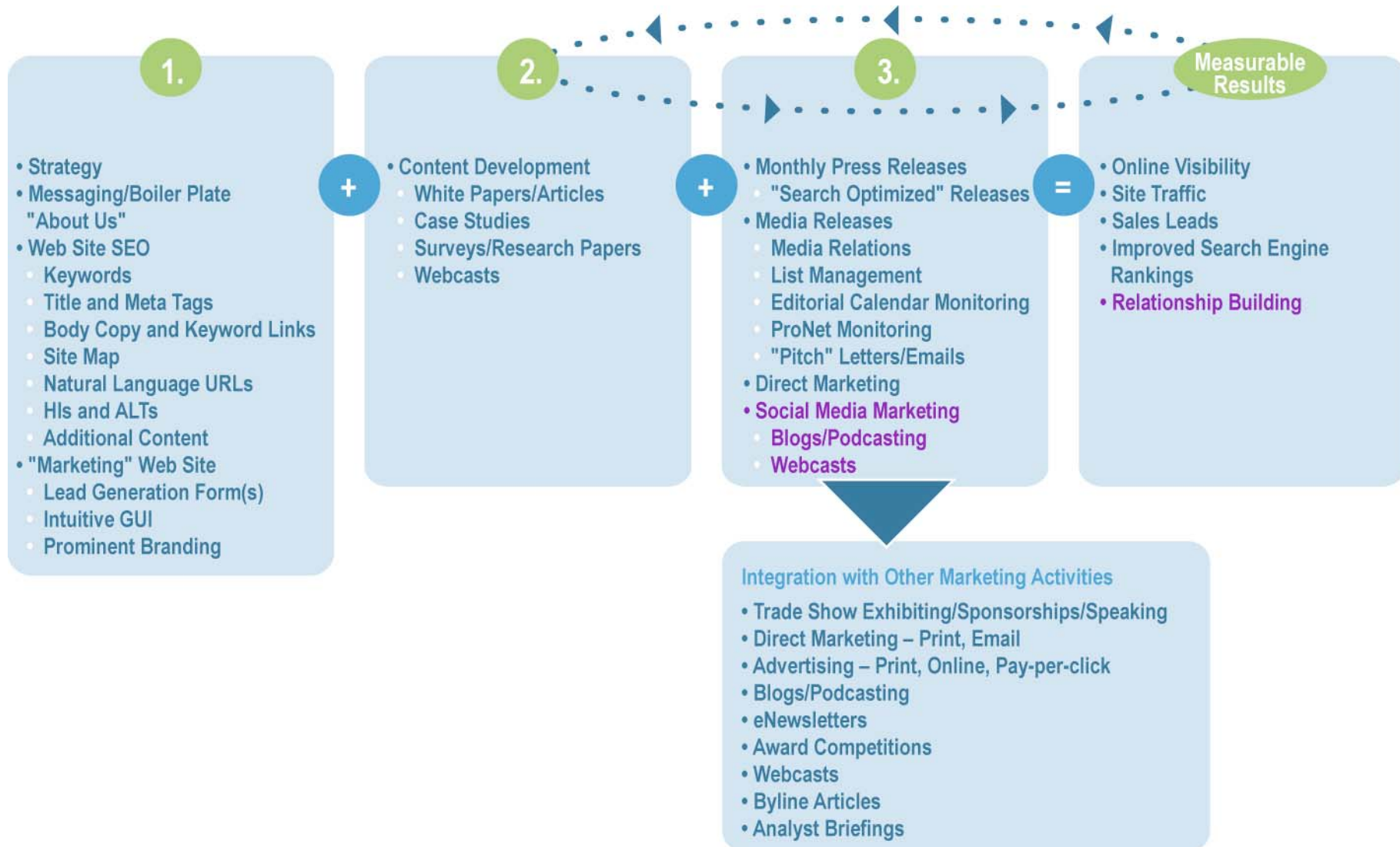
You have a winning strategy, powerful messaging, and a great Web site that is search-optimized. And you have lots of content and processes in place to generate fresh content on a regular basis. Now you’re ready to promote and distribute that content to generate leads.

The Marketing PR Lead-Gen Processsm



As you can see from the Marketing PR Lead-Gen Processsm flowchart, there is a series of regular marketing activities you should be engaged in to generate publicity, traffic, leads and improved SEO.

Now take that same flowchart and add in social media marketing under column 3 – Promotion.





That's what your new integrated marketing strategy should look like. Let's make it happen!

Wait, who's gonna make it happen?

You're probably asking yourself (and me) who's going to own social media in your organization. Since I'm recommending that it become part of your greater marketing strategy, more than likely the first to own it will be marketing.

That's going to be tough if you're a business owner with no marketing team. If you have a marketing/PR team on retainer helping you with all of the above, your direct investment in social media will most likely be relegated to blogging (which you should be doing) and maybe a few of the other tactics outlined in this eBook.

If you're a larger organization with at least one primary marketing person on the payroll, then that person should own the strategy, recruit and train your insides sales team and possibly work in conjunction with an outside marketing firm.

Much larger organizations that have multiple marketing and/or PR staff internally should assign a primary owner of social media, more than likely a seasoned marketer, to ensure all those involved in

social media, from the CEO to sales to every other employee, convey a consistent message.

Using this eBook as a road map, the keys to building a social media team include:

- Make the business case for social media to secure support from the business owner, CEO and upper management.
- Determine what your social media marketing objectives are – develop a strategy.
- Assign and/or hire the right people to execute the social media strategy as integrated into your marketing lead-gen process.
- Develop consistent collaboration and communications plans in order to manage strategy execution effectively.

Remember, if you're considering hiring a marketing/PR agency to help with any and all things marketing, including social media, make sure they're actively engaged in social media themselves. Otherwise, don't hire them. Walk away and look at the next firm.

Now let's make it happen!

How we'll use social media to promote this eBook



In the realm of content marketing, it's important to discuss how to do that with the fruits of your content labor (like this eBook). Remember to always integrate your content into all your marketing and PR activities, including social media marketing, in order to increase your publicity (visibility), drive traffic to your Web site, capture sales leads and improve your search engine rankings.

The key is always connecting your content back to your Web site (the more inbound links the better).

Let's get to it – here is our checklist for promoting this social media marketing eBook. It's pretty darn simple, but again takes time and consistency:

- Set up a new eBook landing page on our [white papers and research page](#) with no registration required (only require registration for premium content and only for "cold" marketing campaigns).
- Queue up the traditional activities of news releases, search-optimized press releases and direct marketing email to our house lists and other list rental opportunities, and print hard copies to have at upcoming events.
- Launch the traditional marketing/PR campaign.
- Update our HRmarketer profile in our [HR Directory](#) with the new eBook – where each month thousands of HR buyers visit to review HR supplier profiles and tons of content (almost 3,000 white papers, research reports, articles, webcasts, podcasts and more).
- [Blog](#) about it (which may include a series of posts sharing excerpts).
- Podcast about it in our HR Market Share series (which may include an interview or two with social media experts).
- Launch a Webinar to promote the eBook content.
- Post a blurb and a link to the new eBook via [Ping.fm](#) to my LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook networks (a service that allows you to update all your social networks at once – another service like this is called [Pixelpipe](#)).
- A blurb post example would be: *New HRmarketer eBook: Social Media Marketing in the HR Marketplace – URL.*
- Offer the eBook via our Facebook and LinkedIn groups and pages, submitting a taste of what it's all about (a few-sentence excerpt).



- Share on our profile in other professional networks we belong to. (However, when participating in other professional network discussions, we'll ensure that any reference of the eBook is relevant to the discussions taking place – not just blatantly plopping the piece down in front of them.)
- Have any and all staff members do the same to their social media and professional networks – re. tweeting, reposting, sharing, etc.
- Again, all links link back to one place – our Web site landing page where the eBook can be easily downloaded.

Shampoo, rinse and repeat – that's what we do for every content marketing campaign we launch.

The investment of time and staff that's required to create and promote the content will almost always be recovered. We've seen it time and time again for our content campaigns and our clients' campaigns that we manage.

Measuring social media marketing results: How the heck do you do that?



Something else I mentioned in the intro that's worth repeating here: *Stop the methodical marketing madness and start a conversation. Get a little messy. It's real and it works.*

I'm a big fan of the softer outcomes such as familiarity and trust and sharing our valuable content and that of other influencers, customers and prospects. The more familiarity and trust I build with my customers, prospects and influencers, the more valuable my company becomes to them.

And that helps us grow our company. We hear it anecdotally again and again of late.

However, I get the fact that in order to know if your social media efforts are helping your grow your company, you don't want touchy-feely bunnies, unicorns and rainbows.

You want ROI measurement.

You want definitive returns from their activities, and measurement should always be tied back to what your marketing objectives are in the first place. So while most marketers would agree that measuring return on social media marketing staffing and time investments can be difficult, these are the ultimate metrics we tout

that you should track throughout all your marketing efforts, even in social media. They are:

- Publicity
- Traffic
- Leads
- Improved SEO

Publicity

Just as you measure how often your direct marketing and PR efforts are paying off for you online – how many times your emails are opened and clicked through via an email service provider, and how many search-optimized releases are being touched and read by whom and where as tracked by our Direct2Net distribution service (PR Web) – you can do the same for your social media marketing efforts.

There are specialized online services – [Radian6](#), [Viralheat](#) and [HRmarketer's new "My Company News" e-Clipping service](#) that track your "company" and "brand" across the Web and social media (think of Google Alerts on steroids), providing analytics as to how many mentions you're getting, what the mentions are, and where and who they're coming from.



At the very least you can set up and monitor Google Alerts to see where you're appearing online, and use a Twitter software tool like [TweetDeck](#) or [Seismic Desktop](#) to monitor how many mentions and retweets your "tweets" get over time. There's also the [Twitter search](#) tool where you can search for your company mentions (don't forget to use the hashtags!). You can also monitor how much conversation you spur in Facebook, LinkedIn, and the other professional networks you're a part of.

Yes, no matter what tools you use, your time investment will increase, but it's the only way to truly know what your visibility looks like in social media.

Traffic

All content marketing links should link back to one place – your Web site landing page where the eBook can be easily downloaded.

The majority of Web traffic is driven by the major search engines – Google, Yahoo! and MSN/Bing. If search engines cannot find your Web site, your prospects cannot find you – and this means lost business. In fact, HRmarketer.com research shows that HR decision makers turn to the Internet first when researching new HR products or services they wish to purchase. As a result, SEO and driving traffic should be a top priority for all companies – strategically and

tactically. Simply stated, search engine traffic can make (or break) your organization's success.

The more content marketing you do, the more inbound links you create online that will drive traffic to your Web site, your blog or wherever you want them to go. Whether you use [Google Analytics](#), [Webtrends](#) or [Site Meter](#), by using a Web analytics tool you'll be able to track your traffic, including where it's coming from. You can also set up specific landing page referral URLs in order to better track exactly where the "hits" are coming from per each campaign you send out – i.e., posted to Twitter specifically.

This is important because you'll be able to track which content campaigns are driving more social media traffic to your site and where that traffic is coming from. You can then adjust your content strategy accordingly to continue to increase traffic to your Web site.

Leads

When it comes to all B2B marketing in the HR marketplace, it's important to differentiate two things:

- Content marketing to cold prospects (prospecting)
- Content and product/service marketing for warming leads (lead nurturing)



We've managed hundreds of marketing campaigns for clients big and small, and if there's one thing that never changes, it's this question:

How many leads can we expect?

Let's get one thing clear – just because someone downloads your white paper, research report, signs up for your Webcast, etc., that doesn't mean she's a lead. For that matter, developing a relationship with someone in LinkedIn doesn't mean he's a lead either.

Content marketing warms prospects up to you and your products/services more than a demo or other pure-play marketing campaigns.

Marketing and PR is hard work. You must continually include your "prospects" in your content marketing campaigns – but at some point your sales teams will need to introduce your products and services and ask them for the sales dance.

This scenario plays out again and again with companies, and even I get excited about new prospects from our own HRmarketer downloads, whether we require registration or not. But they still aren't warm leads.

Social media marketing with quality content builds confidence and trust with your prospects and grows your credibility, but the point at which they become a true lead is when they're willing to have a product/service conversation with you based on their organization's needs.

Improved SEO

The more publicity, traffic, and relevant inbound links you generate with all your marketing efforts, the more you're going to improve your search engine rankings over time.

Besides generating regular content for your Web site and blog, links to your Web site from other Web sites are probably the single most important component to effective long-term SEO (it's a good indication of your Web site's popularity).

Ideally, these links should use variations of the primary keyword phrases from your Web site – specifically, from the page the link points to. This is the only component to SEO that you have less than 100% control over and you can waste a lot of time attempting link exchanges that achieve marginal results – or are short-lived.



Per our [SEO Center](#) tips (our SEO Center is a tool that tracks your search engine rankings across the major search engines), the following must be a part of your ongoing marketing and PR:

- Creating quality, unique content that will be of interest to your visitors and that will add value to your site (e.g., white papers, articles, research, etc.). Search engines love Web sites that get updated frequently with content that supports your keywords. The more content-rich your site, the more valuable it will appear to the search engines (and human visitors, such as other webmasters who will be more inclined to link to your website). Creating good content can be very time-consuming, but it will be well worth the effort in the long run.
- Sending one or two “search optimized” press releases per month. These are releases that contain relevant keyword links back to your Web site. You can use HRmarketer.com’s Direct2Net feature to send these.
- Participating in social media marketing (which is what this whole eBook is about).



Probably the most iconic and widely-read news and opinion blog about human resource and recruitment issues, Joel Cheeseman launched [Cheezhead](#) in 2005 to promote his search engine optimization consulting firm [HRSEO](#).

Prolific and in-your-face, Joel created a powerful personal brand with his blogging that resulted in growing a successful SEO business. Add in a savvy staff, Twitter, Facebook and other social media channels and the now trusted and familiar Cheezhead brand recently went up for sale and was bought by [Jobing.com](#) for an undisclosed amount.

The HR marketplace social media Cinderella stories have only just begun to be written.

Conclusion



What is this social networking thing all about?

Can I really use it to promote my organization?

How do I get started?

I hope this eBook helped answer these questions and more. Again, you no longer control your message; prospects and influencers are blogging about your company, commenting on review sites about your company, tweeting about your products and services, posting comments on Facebook about your latest video – and you need to be part of that conversation.

Trust is the currency of social media. Without it, your social media marketing efforts will fail – and fail miserably. Stop the old school marketing madness and start a conversation. Get a little messy. It's real and it works.

Remember, your social media marketing should include:

- Identifying the people you want to have "marketing" conversations with and where they play
- Building your network connections organically

- Relevant original content and shared content
- Contextual content marketing and relationship building
- Specific staff and time investments (daily, weekly, monthly)
- Tracking marketing metrics like publicity, traffic and leads (or not)

If nothing else, I hope this eBook convinces you of the importance of participating in social media marketing. The investment of time and a little money that's required to participate in social media will definitely come back to you in the form of familiarity, trust, thought leadership and credibility with your customers, prospects and influencers.

Now, go start a conversation and help grow your company.



How to get started on Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and beyond



There's been a lot of buzz about Twitter – the ever-exploding micro-blogging social network service that some have called the 27/7/365 noisy networker – with over 6 million users to date.

HR suppliers can really benefit from sharing original content and others' content on Twitter. It's also a great way to build business and personal brands and develop relationships with prospects and influencers while strengthening customer relationships.

Here's what you need to know to get started:

- Sign up for an account at [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com). We recommend individual accounts for your participating marketing team members, executive management, customer service reps and anyone else involved in social media on behalf of your company. Although we don't currently assign a Twitter account for "HRmarketer," there are suppliers that have their own company accounts like iCIMS, Silkroad, Halogen Software and HRM Direct. (I prefer to know the person behind the company.)
- If you're going to have a company account, then make sure you use a company-branded Twitter background.
- You have to start "following" other users (other HR vendors, journalists, thought leaders, analysts, etc.) in order to build your following. Following refers to the act of clicking "follow" on another's Twitter profile. Once done, you'll start seeing their tweets in your feed. (HRmarketer tracks journalists and analysts who use Twitter.)
- Find out who your current industry friends on Twitter are following and start following.
- Search for more HR marketplace folk at [Twellow.com](https://twellow.com) (a Twitter directory).
- Start following those people.
- Check out who they're following.
- And start following all those people.
- Listen, listen and listen some more. Don't worry so much about the quantity of followers – focus on the quality of conversations with relevant followers.
- Remember, you can only post "updates" up to 140 characters in total at a time. That's it.

Twitter allows you to quickly build a large audience that you can converse with openly about yourself and your organization.

- Your tweet frequency will vary but be consistent. Don't overdo it with dozens of irrelevant tweets a day.
- You need to be a trustworthy source of information about your industry, marketplace topics, your company and yourself. No charlatans allowed. (More on this in the content marketing section.)
- Use hashtags (#) in your tweets to send people to a [Twitter search](#) page for your company – i.e., #hrmarketer.

In its simplest form, here are the "The Five Steps of Twitter Success" a fellow Twitterer shared with me:

- Follow
- Reply
- Retweet
- Share
- Repeat

For more information on how to use Twitter for business, you can't go wrong checking in with social media marketing expert [Chris Brogan](#).



LinkedIn allows you to grow your professional network and brand and offers a great business Q&A section where you can let your expertise shine.



LinkedIn is the granddaddy of the new millennium professional social networking services with over 35 million users. I like to call it the “ladies’ and gentlemen’s gentleman” professional networking service. It’s one of the more serious business networks online today and should be approached this way when participating (Plaxo is a similar service).

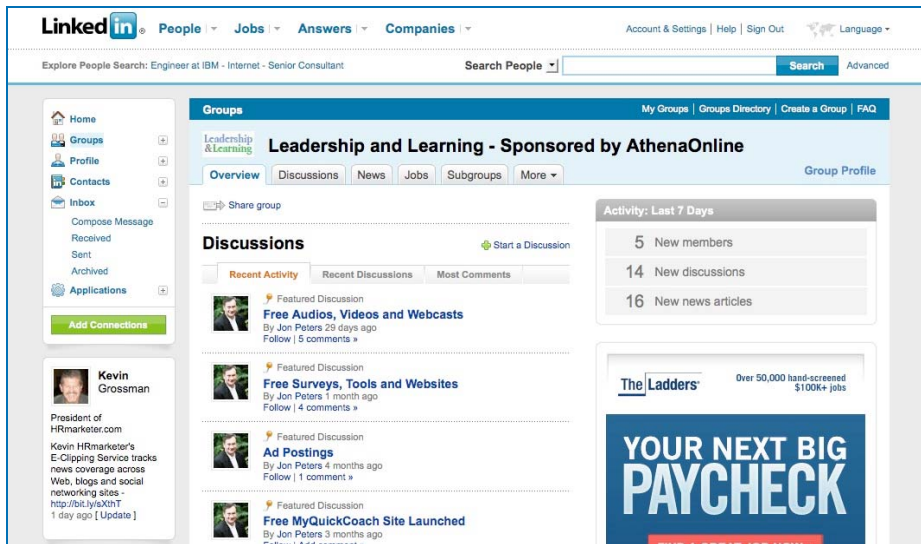
HR suppliers can really benefit from networking on LinkedIn. Like Twitter, it’s also a great way to build business and personal brands and develop relationships with prospects and influencers while strengthening customer relationships.

Here’s what you need to know to get started:

- Set up an account at LinkedIn.com.
- Establish a professional and personal brand. Create an online profile that includes areas of interest, expertise, and work history.
- Upload your address book.

- Invite the contacts you have existing relationships with to join your network.
- Invite other HR marketplace folk you have existing relationships with to join your network.
- Update your “what I’m doing” status at least a few times per week.
- Listen, listen and listen some more.
- Participate in the question and answer section to share your industry expertise.
- Join relevant Groups and listen, listen, listen. (Join our [HRmarketer.com group!](#))
- Launch your own group and invite your network to join. Launching your own group in LinkedIn allows you to start and moderate valuable marketplace discussions with your prospects, influencers and customers.

For a complete overview of how to maximize LinkedIn, read Jason Alba’s book, [I’m on LinkedIn, Now What???](#)



Facebook is currently one of the hottest properties in social marketing. The estimated number of active users is over 250 million, with more than half of those users outside of college, while people 35 years old and above are the fastest growing-demographic (from Facebook Statistics:

<http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics>). Initially set up as a network for Harvard students, it quickly expanded to other universities, then high school students and eventually, in 2006, it was opened up to anyone over the age of 13.

HR suppliers can also benefit from networking and sharing content on Facebook. The only caveat is that many Facebook users still prefer to keep their personal and professional lives separate, although I've personally seen that line dissolving, and many more "company" profiles are being launched. Like Twitter and LinkedIn, it can also be a great way to build business and personal brands and develop relationships with prospects and influencers while strengthening customer relationships.

And it's a lot of fun!

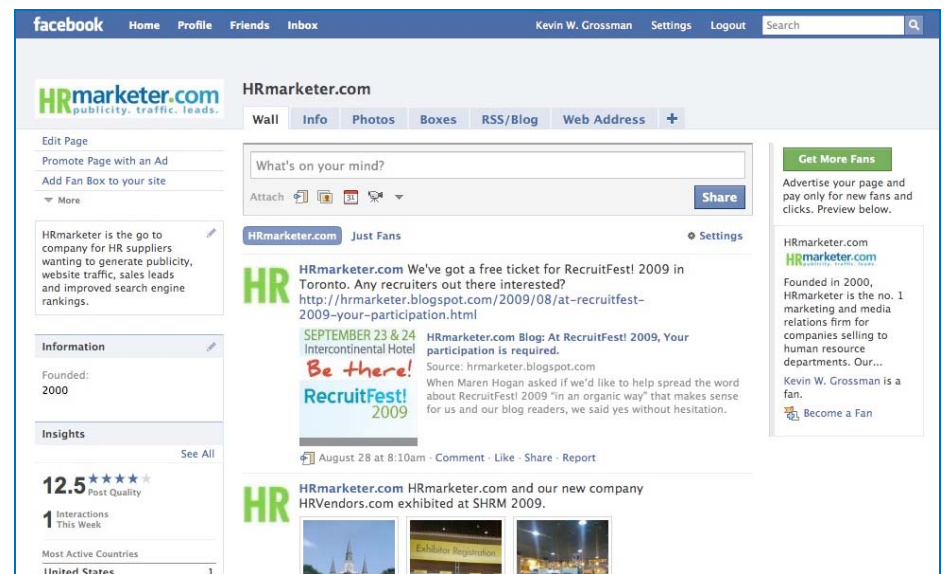
Here's what you need to know to get started:

- Sign up for a personal profile account at Facebook.com.
- Pick networks you want to be affiliated with. Networks can include a school, work place, city or region.
- Make a list of those professional contacts you want to "friend" on Facebook, locate them in Facebook and send them invites.

Facebook allows you to create group and event pages that friends, colleagues, prospects, the media and more can join and participate in.

- Make sure you've thought through the balance between personal sharing and professional sharing if you're already on Facebook with friends and family. You can also create separate lists of personal and professional "friends."
- Update your "what I'm doing" status updates regularly and mix personal and professional (don't overdo it).
- Listen, listen and listen some more.
- Set up a Facebook group and a fan page for your organization. On your fan page include your logo, photos of your team, photos from events, etc.
- Join other relevant Facebook groups and fan pages for your organization. (Join our [HR Vendor Group](#) and become a fan our [HRmarketer.com page!](#))
- Since Facebook pages are public (your personal profiles aren't), make sure to search-optimize your pages with keyword combinations you want to be found for.
- Promote your events on Facebook (user groups, webinars, etc.).

For more information on how to use Facebook for business, check out the [Hubspot eBook. *How to Use Facebook for Business.*](#)



The screenshot shows the Facebook interface for the HRmarketer.com fan page. The page header includes the Facebook logo and navigation tabs: Home, Profile, Friends, and Inbox. The user is identified as Kevin W. Crossman, with links for Settings and Logout, and a search bar. The page content includes a status update area with a "What's on your mind?" prompt and a "Share" button. Below this is a "Just Fans" section featuring a post from HRmarketer.com about a free ticket for RecruitFest! 2009 in Toronto. The post includes a link to a blogspot page and a "Be there!" graphic. To the right of the post is a "Get More Fans" section with an advertisement for new fans and a "Become a Fan" button. The left sidebar contains an "Edit Page" section with options to promote the page and add a fan box, an "Information" section showing the page was founded in 2000, and an "Insights" section showing a 12.5 Post Quality score and 1 interaction this week.



While it's at least worth mentioning the fact that the "fun-loving hipster" social networking site MySpace has over 130 million users, with the exception of scoring big with paid display advertising compared to other sites, it's not really a site where HR suppliers are reaching HR buyers via social media marketing. If you know any different, please let me know!

Other Human Resource Professional Networks and Communities (Ning and more)

Online message boards and professional networks have been around longer than the Internet as we know it today. And just as social networking services we do know today are based on the currency of trust, these groups play the same way.

Before you join any of these HR industry groups, make sure you remember the golden rule – listen, listen and listen some more and then converse but DO NOT join to blatantly pitch. You'll be blocked and booted quicker than you think.

The key here for HR suppliers is that these communities and networks are all about developing relationships with prospects and influencers while strengthening customer relationships. You can really raise your thought leadership here if you do it right.

By the way, many of these same organizations have a group presence on LinkedIn and Facebook.

The following is a list of professional networks in the HR marketplace you should review and consider joining (depending on your target demographics):

[SHRM Connect](#)

SHRM's new social media feature helps HR network with other HR practitioners. Members of SHRM can login, join a group, start a group, make connections and so much more. The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest association devoted to human resource management. Representing more than 250,000 members in over 140 countries, the Society serves the needs of HR professionals and advances the interests of the HR profession. Founded in 1948, SHRM has more than 575 affiliated chapters within the United States and subsidiary offices in China and India.



[HRM Today](#)



HRM Today is an interactive social networking site for over 1,300 Human Resources professionals and practitioners – created by Lance Haun, Jenn Barnes, and Laurie Ruettimann. The site includes two areas: a main page with HR blogs that are known for excellent and thoughtful content, and a related social networking site, formerly known as HR Bloggers, that is built on a NING platform.

[RecruitingBlogs.com](#) – [TalentBar](#)



RecruitingBlogs.com (TalentBar) is a recruiting community made up of over 18,000 Recruiting and HR professionals. Started by Jason Davis, the network is home to over 11,000 blog posts and discussions, 800 videos and almost 300 specialty groups. From live chats and customizable pages to video tutorials and international events, RecruitingBlogs.com has given recruiters all over North America a place to discuss their craft, get and give advice, research products and learn new skills.



[RecruiterEarth.com](#)



RecruiterEarth is also a recruiting community made up of over 11,000 Recruiting and HR professionals. It's a site for HR, corporate and executive recruiters, staffing professionals, researchers, and candidates to connect, share ideas, educate and entertain.

[ERE.net](#)



ERE (Electronic Recruiting Exchange) contains thousands of pages of content relating to recruiting and continues to drive traffic from over 58,000 members, most of whom receive its publications in their inbox each day. Having established a strong brand associated with the cutting edge of the recruiting industry, the website continues to add new content and functionality regularly. The audience of ERE represents a mix of corporate and third-party recruiters who take advantage of its many free services.

*Long-term time investment is key.
Professional network relationships only
flourish when you invest the time and join
their conversation, not push yours.*

[HR.com](#)



HR.com is a free website that is in business to help build great companies by connecting them to the knowledge and resources they need to effectively manage the people side of business. As the largest social network and online community of HR executives (over 188,000), HR.com provides thousands of worldwide HR Professionals and Suppliers with easy access to shared knowledge on best practices, trends and industry news in order to help them develop their most important asset – their people.

[Human Capital Institute](#)



The Human Capital Institute is a think tank, educator, and global professional association dedicated to the advancement of talent management practices for individuals and organizations. HCI serves as a catalyst for innovative thinking in integrated talent strategy, acquisition, development, engagement, management, and measurement. Through research and collaboration, HCI programs collect original, creative ideas from a field of the brightest thought leaders in talent management. Those ideas are then transformed into measurable, real-world strategies that help its members attract

and retain high-performing people, build a diverse, inclusive workplace, and leverage individual and team performance throughout the enterprise.

[Knowledge Infusion Center of Excellence](#)

Knowledge Infusion is a human resources and talent management technology consulting firm that helps to



drive human capital management business value. Formed in 2004, they provide strategic management consulting services together with thought leadership, trends, market intelligence, and analysis from the Center of Excellence. Complementing each other, the on-site consulting and Center of Excellence offer an unparalleled source of services and information for the HCM Community with a common goal in mind—maximizing the strategic direction HR has on an organization.



How We Can Help You Grow Your Business

HRmarketer helps companies in the human resource marketplace grow their business by providing marketing services and products, including HRmarketer.com, the most widely used online marketing and PR software service in the HR industry. HRmarketer, a company of Fisher Vista, LLC, was founded in 2000 and is one of the largest and most well-respected marketing firms in the HR marketplace, having worked with nearly 700 HR and employee benefit businesses. Our services include:

⇒ **Memberships**

⇒ **Services**

⇒ **List Rentals**

⇒ **Advertising**

⇒ **Lead Referral Program**

For more information, visit the [What We Do](#) section of our Web site, email info@hrmarketer.com or call 831-685-9700. If your company sells to the healthcare marketplace, we invite you to learn more about HRmarketer's sister product, SeniorCareMarketer.com, for companies targeting Boomers and/or selling products that relate to the aging population.

HRmarketer.com – No other marketing or PR firm understands the HR marketplace better than we do.

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