

### 3 Reasons Why Your Small Business Social Media Marketing Is Failing And 3 Ways You Can Fix It

A recent study released by Manta, a social network for small businesses, revealed 61% of small businesses don't see any return on investment from social media. Despite these results, the survey also indicated almost 50% of small businesses have increased their time spent on social media marketing while only 7% have decreased their time spent.

I noticed these study results in a [USA Today](#) article and I was so intrigued by the examples of business owners who hadn't seen success with social media that I just had to dig a little deeper. Both companies cited in the article complained of a lack of results with the owner of Terry's Fabric Cottage stating she spent 5 hours a week updating her platforms but only achieved 60 Facebook likes. Regina Hartt, of Hartt's Pool Replastering said she only gets 4 jobs out of 200-300 per year from folks who've seen them online. Regina felt Facebook likes wouldn't help given all the disreputable construction companies she's competing against.

After reviewing the websites and social media profiles of both businesses, I reached some important conclusions about why social media hadn't worked for them.

1. Lack of Quality Interaction – Social media interaction has two elements: conversation and emotion. The conversation starts with a question or a request to share. Emotion can be incorporated in the questions or through the art of storytelling. Neither Terry's nor Hartt's Facebook page asked a single question or made any sharing request. They talked at their audience instead of starting the conversation. Now how is that social?

For an example of excellent at visitor interaction, check out [FAGE Greek Yogurt](#) on Facebook. Note how they take questions for celebrity chef Bobby Flay and ask visitors for favorite recipes.

2. Lack of Consistent and Useful Information – By supplying social media visitors with information that benefits them, with no strings attached, you build loyalty. Terry's Facebook page delivered information about a promotion, a quilting show and classes while Hartt's did a little better by providing links to sources for tile finishes and colors. However, after visiting Hartt's Facebook page and website, I still don't know what pool replastering is. Tragic...

For a company sharing useful information the right way, take a look at [Lowe's](#) Home Improvement Centers Twitter account. It's a tip a minute over there.

3. Lack of Perseverance – Both businesses gave up on their Facebook pages after only a few posts. Hartt's posted in April 2012 then never again. Terry's posts were few and far between covering a six month span. Neither company's Twitter profiles are still there and a couple of the Hartt's can be found on LinkedIn. Social media marketing is a marathon, not a sprint. There are no

instant riches to be found. Only through regular relationship building will your small business find success.

The conclusions above are a bit misleading. I'm not suggesting that by persevering, providing consistent and useful information and by facilitating quality interaction success in social media marketing is guaranteed. You can still do all these things and not garner large amounts of Likes and Followers. Before even creating social media profiles there are three principles you must have a complete understanding of.

### **Social Media Principles to Live (Or Die) By**

#### **1. End Game**

In the same Manta study, when small business owners were asked what they were trying to get out of social media, 36% said their goal was to acquire and engage new customers, 19% said to gain leads and referrals, and 17% said to boost awareness. All these things can be accomplished through social media with effective strategy, solid execution and a long-term mindset.

If you've entered the social media space because of the hype or because of fear of being left behind by the competition – stop, drop and roll. These are the two worst reasons to embark on a social media campaign. There are small businesses all around you succeeding without giving social media a second thought. Get involved in social media only if it's a good fit.

Small business owners who are successful with social media have determined it's a viable way to reach their customer base and will help them achieve their long term goals. They have a genuine desire to reach out and communicate with the people they serve. They know it's a long haul and are willing to invest the time needed to produce returns.

#### **2. Social Media as a Marketing Channel**

Social media was never designed as the be-all-and-end-all of small business marketing. Companies who enter the game believing social media is the cheap cure to their marketing ills will be disappointed. Social media is just one component of a company's overall marketing strategy – think of it as nothing more than another marketing channel.

A great example of a larger company using social media as a key element of a well-defined marketing campaign is [Macy's](#). Their current marketing campaign, "American Icons", uses weekly circulars, print ads, television commercials and in-store signage featuring the distinctive logo, tagline and color scheme. Visit their website, Facebook page, Twitter home, and YouTube channel and you will find a cohesive presentation that supports the campaign.

Each social media platform is used in accordance with its greatest strengths. Their [Twitter](#) account features tweets linking back to their website and questions that invite replies. Their [Facebook fan page](#) features great images and the same type of questions and informative posts with links. The [YouTube channel](#) features a video about Macy's support of Got Your 6, the military support charity, narrated by Alec Baldwin.

You may be thinking to yourself, "I don't have the money to shoot videos or create custom Facebook pages so how does knowing what Macy's is doing help me?"

This isn't about Macy's resources, it's about their strategy. Regardless of your budget, you can incorporate social media into your existing marketing campaign or take this opportunity to create a new campaign and determine how you'll execute in all the channels you commonly use.

### 3. You're Only as Good as Your Help

Status updates on your personal Facebook timeline and the occasional tweet do not make you a social media expert. Creating a Facebook fan page for your business and posting about your sales a couple times a week will not earn you an avalanche of Likes. A LinkedIn profile that is connected to everyone you know in town will not drive referrals. Social media marketing is marketing and if you struggle in this area, you need the advice of an expert.

The web is chock full of different perspectives on social media marketing. You can learn quite a bit in just a few hours of "Googling". Some of what you'll learn will be very useful and some will be utter rubbish. Will you know the difference before it's too late?

You'll find "social media consultants" on every corner ready to take your money and set up all your accounts for you, then charge you for every add-on service under the sun. Will you know if your social media consultant is truly adding value to your business before it's too late?

To get the most bang for your buck, you need expert advice from someone who understands how social media fits into your entire marketing strategy. You need someone who is not just good with social media but is accomplished in all facets of marketing. All great marketing is based on understanding the psychology of why people buy which comes to our basic human emotional needs. Make sure the expert you choose is a master of human needs psychology.

Armed with a full understanding of these principles your next step is finding a partner who can help you position social media within the context of an overall content marketing campaign. Penetration Media will help you start the conversation, provide useful information, and hang in there while your fan base grows. We are the experts in understanding why people buy. Everything we do centers on connecting with your customers, fulfilling their needs and building loyalty to your brand.

Join us and we'll show how to deliberately create a content marketing strategy that appeals to the modern consumer and sets you apart from your competition.