

The Black Box Institute

Five Steps to a Better
Social Media Strategy



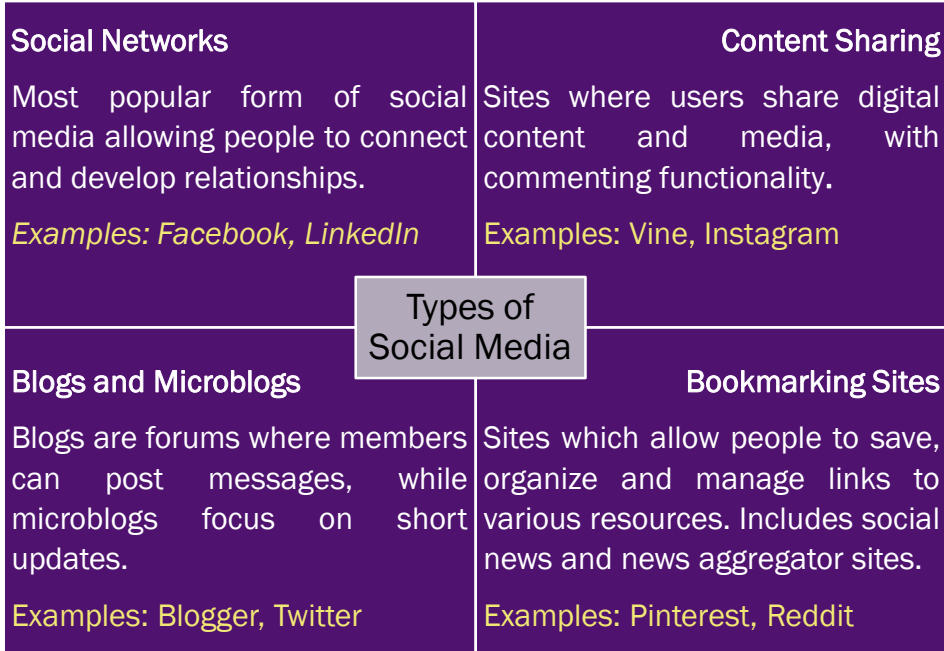
Social Media in 2014

Five Steps to a Better Social Media Strategy

Best Social Media Practices

Social Media in 2014

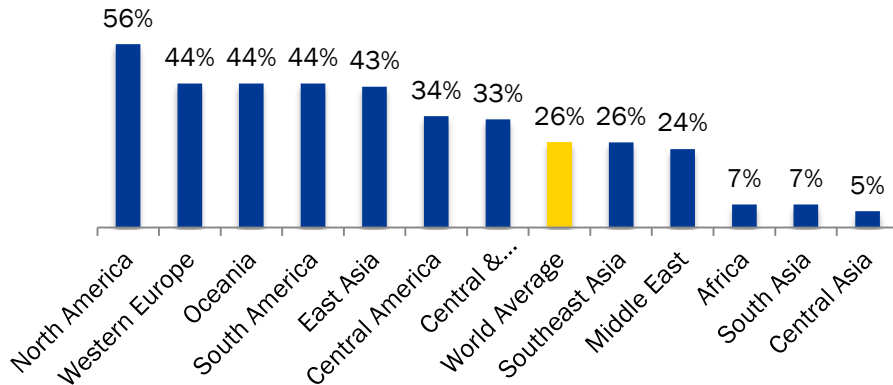




- Social media broadly refers to the means of virtual communication and interaction between people allowing them to connect with others, share content and develop contacts
- Social media takes its origins from BBS (Bulletin Board Systems) in the late 1970s which allowed users to exchange data over phone lines. Modern-day social networks such as Friendster and MySpace emerged in the early 2000s with Facebook launching in 2004
- Today, social media is a much larger and constantly growing industry which can be broken down into numerous categories but the main forms of social media are
 - Social Networks
 - Content Sharing Platforms
 - Blogs and Microblogs
 - Bookmarking Sites
- Similar to internet penetration, social media usage is much higher in more developed regions of the world, with the world average for social media penetration at 26%

Social Media Penetration By Region

(Based on active users of the largest social network in each region)





	Facebook	Google+	LinkedIn	Twitter	Instagram	Pinterest
Type of Social Media	Social Network	Social Network	Social Network	Microblog	Content Sharing	Bookmarking
Site Description	World's largest social network connecting people with friends and family	Social network owned and run by Google. Google+ profile is used to access company's other online services	Social networking site catered to professionals and primarily used for developing business contacts and recruitment	Microblogging service where users post messages that are limited to 140 characters	Media sharing platform centered around pictures and short videos	Social site where users can discover, organize and share visual bookmarks which contain items of interest
Number of Active Users	More than 1 billion	540 million	300 million	240 million	200 million	20 million
Marketer's Industry Focus	B2C	B2C	B2B	B2B/B2C	B2C	B2C
Company Presence	Facebook business page	Profile page	Company page, industry groups and networking groups	Profile page, enhanced profile page	Profile page	Boards



2 hours

worldwide average time spent on social media per day

93%

of marketers use social media to market their businesses

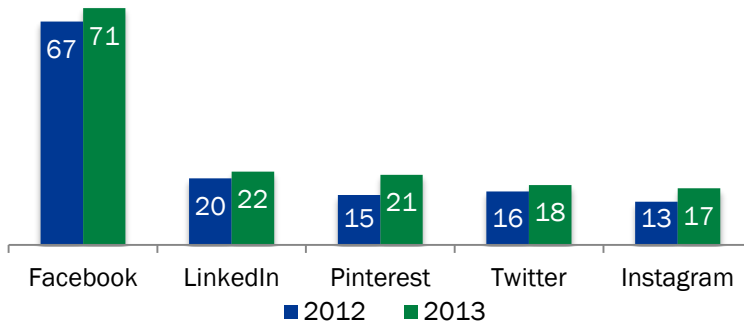
45-54

age bracket is social media's fastest growing age group

Pinterest

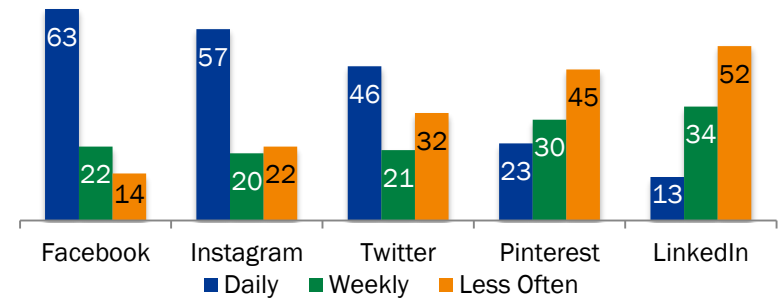
is the fastest growing platform with an 80% increase in active users

% of online adults using a site in the US

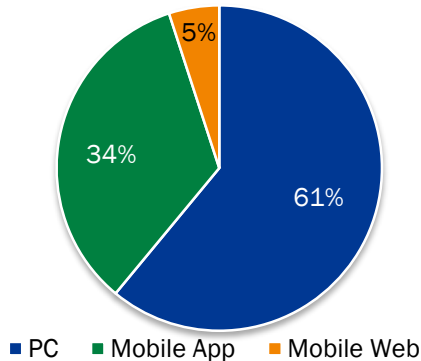


Frequency of Social Media Site Usage

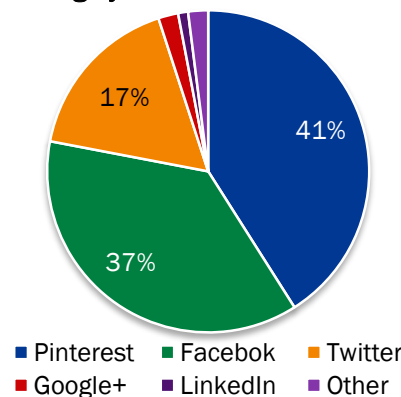
% of site members who use a site with the following frequencies



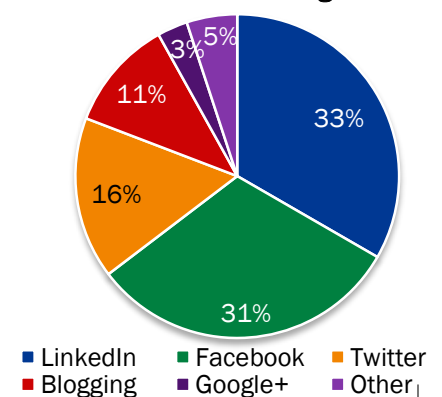
Time Spent on Social Media by Device in the US



Platform of Choice for Content Sharing by E-commerce businesses



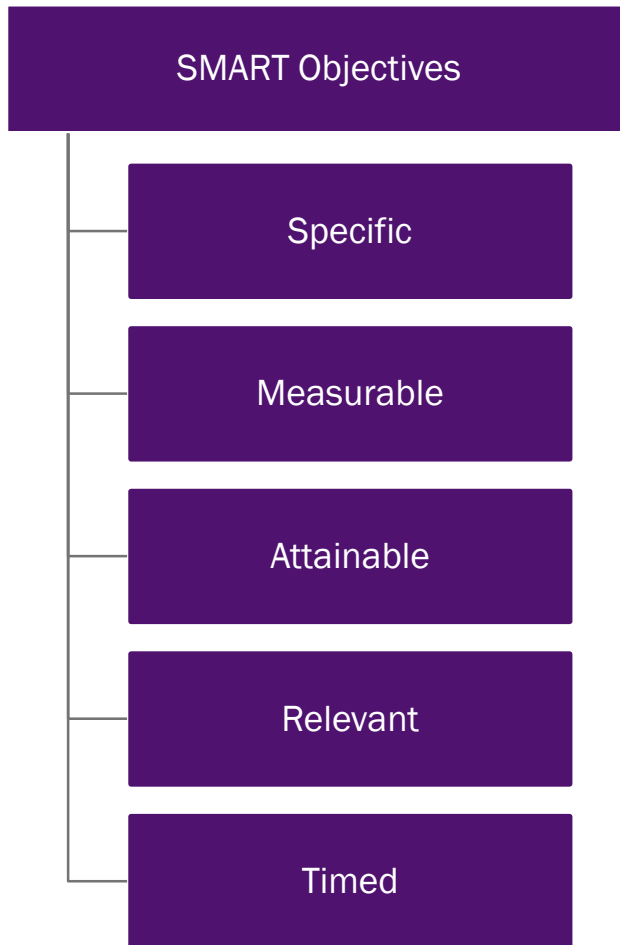
Marketers' Platform of Choice in B2B Marketing



Social Media Strategy



- 1 Outline key goals and objectives for the social media campaign
- 2 Identify the target audiences
- 3 Choose the right content
- 4 Implement effective tactics
- 5 Understand social media analytics and measure performance



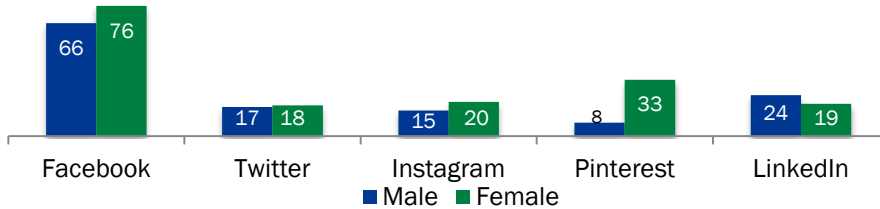
- Social media strategy, like any other strategy, begins with defining goals and objectives
- Goals refer to broader intentions and outcomes, whereas objectives carry more detail and are more precise steps that help achieve major goals
- The SMART framework is a very practical tool for setting actionable objectives
 - **Specific** - “raise brand awareness” is too broad; “raise brand awareness through a targeted Twitter campaign” carries more valuable information
 - **Measurable** - “reach 20,000 followers on the Facebook page” is preferred to “gain more Facebook fans”
 - **Attainable** - “engage with all Facebook followers” may not be as realistic as “reply to 30 questions every day”
 - **Relevant** - for a B2B hardware supplier, improving LinkedIn presence is more sensible than creating an Instagram page
 - **Timed** - incorporate time frames with the objectives such as “reach 5,000 Twitter followers by the end of the year”

Identifying the appropriate set of goals and objectives is a critical first step for consistent internal and external communication as well as for performance assessment.

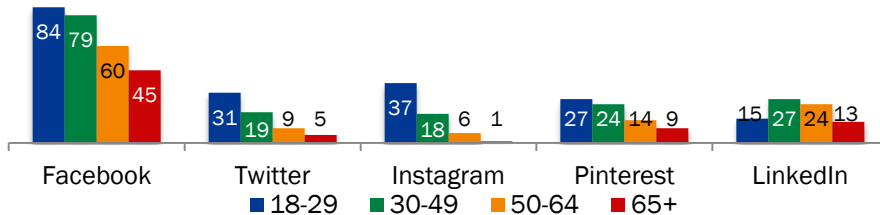
User Breakdown by Site

% of online adults by characteristic using the site

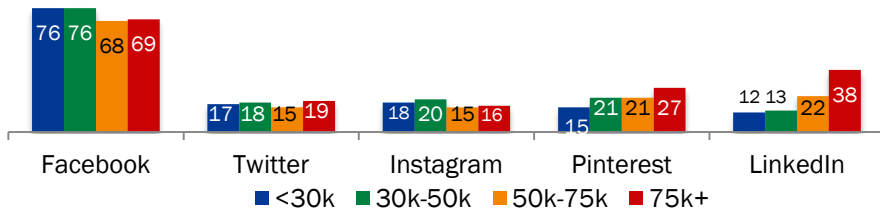
Usage by Gender



Usage by Age Group

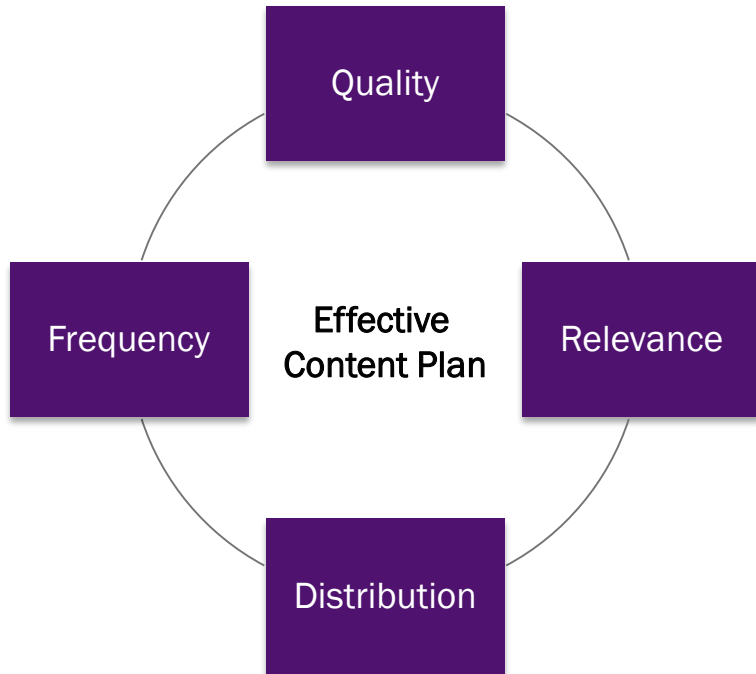


Usage by Income Group



- Familiarity with the characteristics of the target audience and understanding the audience's online behaviour will largely influence the choice of the social media platform and the communication tactics
- Demographics analysis is one of several ways to segment the audience. The charts on the left provide useful targeting insights:
 - Facebook's vast popularity across different user segments often makes it the first choice for marketers regardless of the industry
 - Twitter is more popular with younger users
 - Instagram and Pinterest are more appealing to women, making both platforms a common destination for e-commerce sites, particularly in the apparel industry
 - LinkedIn's professional focus is reflected in that it is the only site with the major age group of 30-49 years old, as well as the only site preferred more by men than women. Also, the platform is more popular with a wealthier user base

Gathering more information on target audience and being fully informed of its traits and behaviours will help marketers efficiently allocate budgeting resources to optimize social media efforts.



- Content should be valuable to the reader and it does not always have to push a company's products or services. In fact, posting useful or educational material that is in any way helpful to followers will increase website traffic through better SEO (Search Engine Optimization) and higher social shares
- Four aspects of an effective content plan are:
 - **Quality** – posting high quality and original material is at the core of a solid content plan. Incorporating images, infographics and other visual media makes a post look more appealing
 - **Relevance** – selecting topics that are relevant to an industry, or relevant to current news or developments, substantially increases visibility and user engagement
 - **Distribution** – disseminating the content requires maximum leverage of personal and professional networks in addition to a thorough knowledge of social media platforms
 - **Frequency** – posting regularly is key as consistency matters for the community and is important for a positive brand reputation. Maintaining an internal editorial calendar can be a practical tool for achieving consistency

Publishing engaging material that is supported by a content plan is what drives social media activity and builds stronger customer relationships.

Capitalize on Major Events

Big events and holidays should serve as a great pretense to connect with the social media community. During these times, the overall social media activity rises resulting in a higher than normal level of engagement

Crowdsource for Ideas

Already practiced by some companies, asking consumers directly for ideas is a great initiative for B2C firms allowing them to precisely understand what products and features consumers want the most

Provide Customer Service

Customer service via social media is rapidly growing to become one of the preferred channels for contacting a company. Consumers find that social media is often more convenient and faster than connecting by phone

Gather Consumer Insights

Social media is a great medium for gaining more genuine information on consumer psychographics and behaviours

Be Authentic and Personal

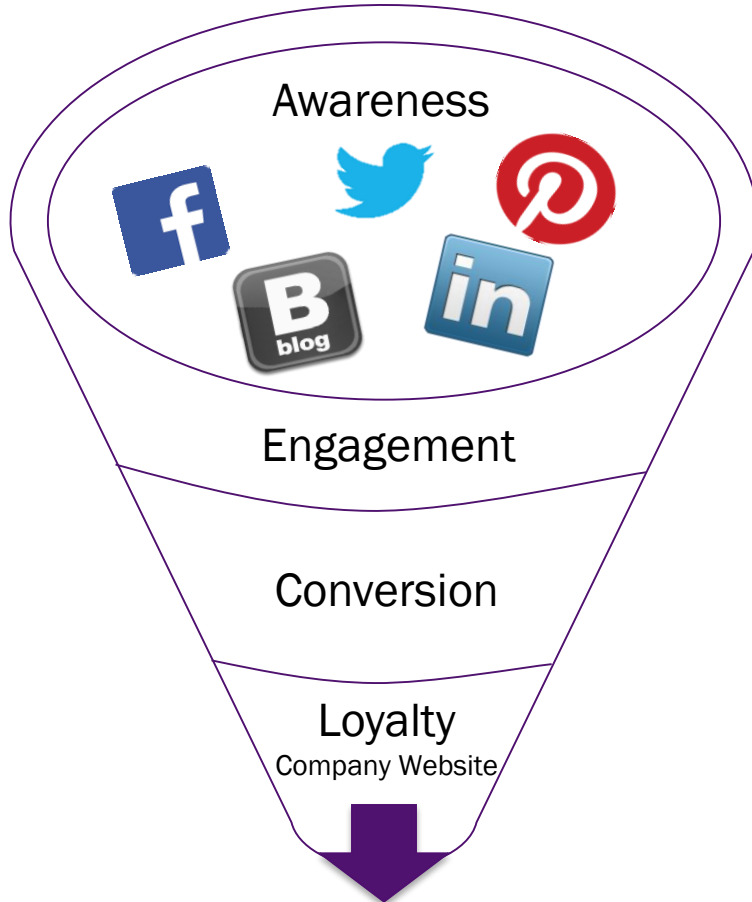
The choice to have a personal feeling and touch to a social media presence is dependent upon brand image. Nevertheless, this approach is often much more effective at building closer ties with customers

Use Optimal Timing

The timing of publishing affects the level of outreach. Each platform has its own best time slot:
Facebook: 1-4pm;
LinkedIn: 5-6pm;
Twitter: 1-3pm

Determining which list of potential social media tactics to use is a matter of experimenting with different approaches and platforms to find what works best.

The Social Media Funnel



- Understanding social media analytics and metrics is illustrated by the funnel depicted in the diagram on the left:
- **Awareness stage**
 - Impressions – total number of people who saw the post
 - Reach – size of the audience to which the post is communicated
- **Engagement stage**
 - Engagement per post – total number of likes, comments and shares per post
 - Engagement per member – total number of likes, comments and shares per follower/fan/member
- **Conversion stage**
 - Conversions – number of people who took a desired action such as a purchase, subscription, trial signup or other action
 - Leads – potential conversions who indicate some interest
- **Loyalty stage**
 - Repeat visits growth – comparison of non-unique visitors today to the same measure in the past
 - Applause rate – how users promote your content through re-tweets, likes, +1s and more

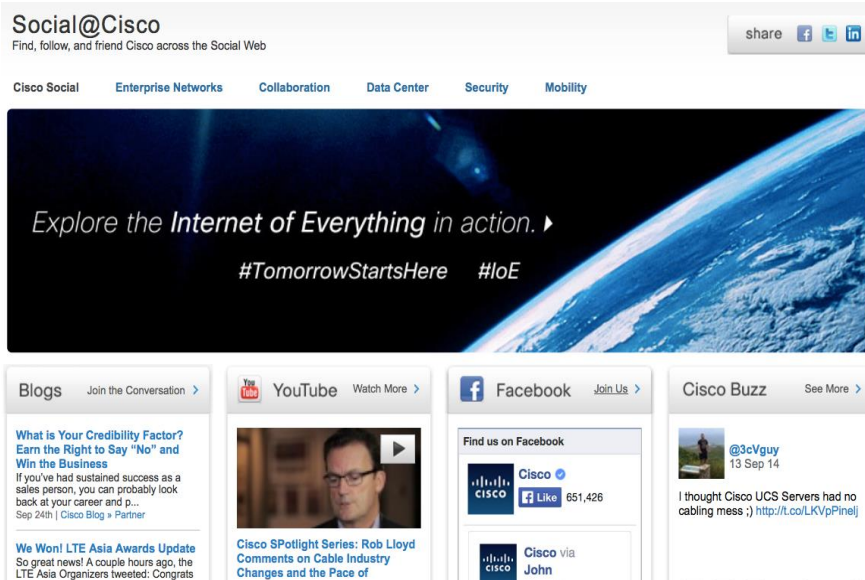
Measuring social media ROI remains one of the most challenging tasks for marketers, yet tracking relevant KPIs is imperative to evaluating effectiveness and efficiency of the allocated resources and efforts.

Best Social Media Practices



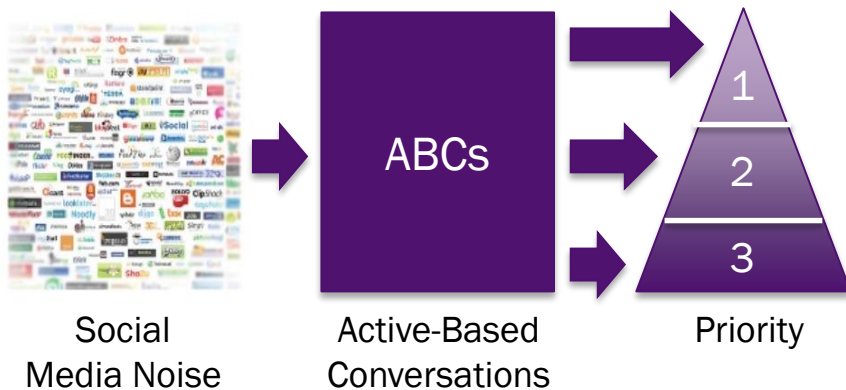


Social@Cisco



- Social media activity varies significantly among B2B companies. Some organizations, often professional services companies and law firms, have a limited presence, while others, particularly companies in the B2B technology space, use it more extensively
- Cisco Systems, a worldwide leader in networking equipment, has a solid online brand presence and effective social media marketing activities. Few features of its social media presence are:
 - *Social@Cisco: central hub for all content:* Social@Cisco is a webpage that serves as a central hub for company's initiatives and different types of content shared across all platforms
 - *Active listening:* In 2012 Cisco launched Social Media Listening Center which monitors social mentions and tracks relevant online conversations
 - *Employee training for social media use:* Social media is nurtured inside the organization. All employees are given clear guidelines on social media usage and those who use social media for work purposes must go through a special Social Media Training and Certification program

Cisco's Social Media Listening Center Framework





Ford's Recent Instagram Post



Ford's Recent Tweet



- Ford is considered to be one of the pioneers in the social media space among large corporations. Scott Monty, Ford's previous Global Digital & Multimedia Communications Manager, was largely responsible for the company's success underlining the importance of having the right person manage social media activities
- Some features of Ford's social media presence pointed out by Scott are:
 - Content is tailored to each platform and audience. Ford's Vine videos are funny, Instagram photos are slick with a vintage touch, and its Facebook content is both entertaining and engaging with ongoing interesting campaigns
 - Listen more, push less. Scott emphasized heavily on paying attention to what customer are talking about as opposed to aggressive advertising
 - Prompt responses and fast customer service replies are especially important for larger companies
- Ford is significantly outpacing GM, its closest competitor, in terms of social media presence:
 - Facebook likes: Ford – 2.7m vs GM – 0.6m
 - Twitter followers: Ford – 515k vs GM – 290k



Social Media Practices for Small Businesses: David's Tea and The Crème Brûlée Cart



David's Tea is a specialty tea retailer with unique shops and creative branding. Their social media strategy is centered around increasing exposure and customer engagement. The business found social media success by:

- Holding personal conversations with its followers on various topics including those outside of its industry
- Staying relevant with promoting a new specialty tea complementing the season premiere of Breaking Bad TV show



The Crème Brûlée Cart is a small business serving crème brûlée out of food carts in San Francisco. The company is using social media in a unique way to generate sales:

- Twitter serves as the primary way for the public to find out the current location of the truck
- Now with over 20,000 followers the company uses Twitter to develop personal relationships with returning customers while operating multiple carts and expanding into catering



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