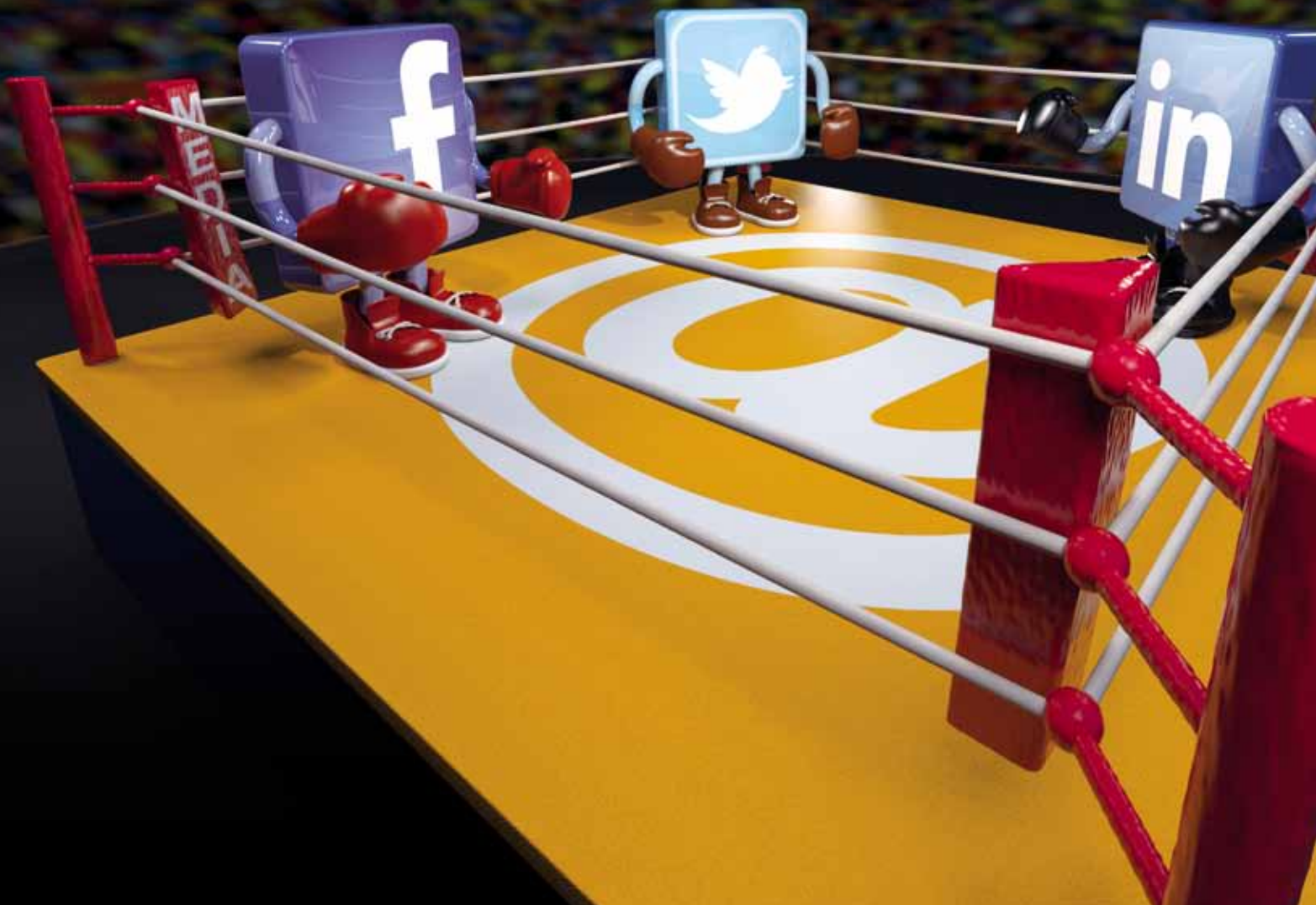




QUICK-HITTING

Social Media

MARKETING TIPS



 **Jennifer Culbertson**

Did you know that social media adoption by small and mid-size businesses has doubled in the past year? Did you know that people are spending an average of 25 percent of their time with/on social media and blogging? No matter the size of your business, you should be integrating ongoing social media activities into your marketing mix.

Just like other marketing tactics, social media has its own benefits, advantages, and shortcomings, so you want to play to its strengths. Here are some quick-hitting tips for smart social media integration, whether it's with your existing campaigns or ongoing marketing efforts:

- » **Place your Twitter feed on your website and LinkedIn.** If you place your Twitter feed on your site, you are simultaneously updating your site as you tweet. This is quite useful for small updates that you want to disseminate, yet they aren't big enough to warrant a homepage update. Integrating Twitter with your LinkedIn account keeps your professional contacts up to date on your company's promotions and progress.
- » **Use Facebook to start conversations with your "likers."** These topics can be as light as "What's your favorite new feature of Microsoft Dynamics® CRM 2011?" It engages customers, allowing them to respond with their input and recommendations. Customer replies are also great fodder for marketing messages and tweets.
- » **Keep your followers updated on your marketing campaigns on Twitter.** A follower who wasn't interested in the first phase of your campaign may be very interested in your second promotion or offer. Keep your followers up to date with the campaign's progress; you never know who may retweet your offer to his/her followers!
- » **Send out a special newsletter to spread the word.** You already have a mailing list, so use it! For instance, you can make a special edition of your newsletter for events such as Convergence.

Highlight your promotions, include updates on the show's progress, make special announcements, and provide links to register for special drawings and offers. Be sure to include a link to the newsletter on all your social media channels.

- » **Survey your customers.** This can be through a quick Facebook poll, an email survey, or by tweeting a link to an online survey. Report the results through your social media networks and integrate responses into other marketing messages and campaigns.
- » **Blog about the progress of a campaign and what you're learning along the way.** Blogging is a great way to keep the conversation going with customers and/or prospects. Blog about how well people are responding to your messages and why.
- » **Post your videos on YouTube.** You never know who might pick up on one of your inventive campaign videos. YouTube is a great way, beyond your website, to post videos in order to gain more views. As always, link to your videos from Twitter, Facebook, your landing page, and LinkedIn.
- » **Offer new whitepapers or guides.** Whitepapers and guides are great ways to engage a variety of audiences. And it's even better if a whitepaper is inspired by your customer feedback from a social media channel or a survey! Providing knowledge and insights in the form of how-to guides and whitepapers is a great way to show off your offerings with supporting data and testimonials.
- » **Follow the news and integrate it into your efforts.** Sometimes everyday news plays right into your hands. If you come across a news article or story that talks about better business practices or technology tips, be sure to pass it along. This is a strong — and interesting — way to make content relevant to your audience while promoting your knowledgebase and business at the same time.
- » **Get some free press.** Press releases are quick to write and easy to disseminate. Whether you

announce a new product, service offering, or project win, press releases are a great way to get the word out. As with viral videos, you just never know whose attention you might catch.

- » **Offer special discounts or incentives to current customers so they aren't left out.** Sometimes it's easy to take your current customers for granted. Use your social media channels to offer them an incentive to show your appreciation for their loyalty while keeping your business front and center stage. It's win-win!
- » **Put together an online chat session.** In a chat session, you can communicate with your customers and prospects in real time. This can take place on Twitter, on Skype, in a chat room on your site, or in a Live Meeting session. You can glean valuable information from the questions and comments you receive.
- » **Respond promptly to comments on all of your channels.** If you post a question on LinkedIn encouraging discussion but don't respond promptly when you are asked a question in reply, it discourages engagement and delays the conversation. Delay too long, and the conversation has most likely moved on without you. Be prompt in monitoring and responding to tweets, messages, and blog comments.
- » **Be sure your website content is consistent with your social media messages.** Your company website is still a very important source of information for interested parties, so be sure that your website messaging reflects what you are communicating on social media sites. Nothing is worse than driving your followers to your website where the information is outdated, irrelevant, or hard to find.

Use these tips to play up your market efforts and help keep your business in the forefront all year round. Social media is about engaging your customers and prospects in a variety of ways and across channels to see what takes hold. It's the combination of these activities that could turn into great marketing moments! 🌐

Jennifer Culbertson is owner of Looking Glass Marketing and specializes in working with Microsoft VARs and ISVs to build and execute marketing strategies that drive results. With her 18 years of marketing experience within the channel, coupled with her understanding of Microsoft Partner needs, she can help take your marketing to the next level. For more information, contact Jennifer at Jennifer@lookingglassmarketing.com or 614-453-5927.

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