Social Media Maturity Guidelines

Below is a list of social media maturity criteria which were part of the maturity test you took. These maturity criteria are factors that influence your social media use and can play an important role in the progress and success of your company’s use of social media.

Top management support

The support of the top management/owner within the SMEs will lead to successful E-Marketing adoption (1). “Commitment from the organisation to support social media is a must-have; organisations that engage in social media without backing from the business will continually struggle” (2). If the owner/Manager is enthusiastic and supportive about using social media in the company that would facilitate adopting it and progressing in use it in the long term. It is important that the owner/Manager understand the usefulness of social media in order to support it.

Strategy

Strategy is who you are targeting and what you want to achieve (3). Social media must have a clear plan for what your company do and why, “a sound social media strategy will provide validation for your social media activities and a reference point to keep your company on track” (2).

A social media strategy needs clear social media objectives: Why do you use social media? What do you want to achieve? How using social media will help your company achieve its business gaols. Then from these objectives you start to think of the tactics (activities) that you will make to achieve this objective.

It is important to align the business goals a company is trying to accomplish with the social media objectives (3). Also, know and understand your target market and followers: their age, gender, preferences.

A mature use of social media must have a clear strategy, a strategy must be based first on by clear objectives aligned to business goals, a planned tactics and content creation based on the social media objectives and understanding who your followers and customers are.

An example of how to align social media objectives to business goals and tactics to formulate a strategy for social media is in table (1) bellow:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business goal</th>
<th>Social media objective</th>
<th>Tactics (How will you achieve the social media objective?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) My business goal is to increase sales</td>
<td>To increase the leads through social media to 70 lead per day</td>
<td>To run an offer through facebook and twitter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) My business goal is to expand to another market</td>
<td>Generate brand awareness</td>
<td>Paid advertising campaigns through facebook targeting only people in (the country or city you want to expand to)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: An example of how to define your social media strategy

**Budget**

Financial budget dedicated to social media activities is very beneficial. The budget can be spent on graphic design to create visually attractive and engaging campaigns and content. Also, budget can be spent on social media paid advertising campaigns through Facebook, twitter or Instagram and other channels. In addition, investing in staff training is very important to improve skills and knowledge on how to use social media successfully in your business. Studies show that spending in staff training is vital to a successful e-business implementation and practice in small companies (4)

**Policy**

Since social media is accessible to a lot of employees in your company, there should be a shared understanding of what is allowed and what is not, this is why a corporate social media policy is a necessity for any organisation. (2)

A basic social media policy/ guidelines, provides a framework that regulates your employees’ online behaviour. It is a statement explaining how your association and its stakeholders will use social media tools and techniques to achieve your goals and what are the potential risks and how to deal with these risks once they happen. (5)

Social media policies should be part of a co-ordinated and well documented human-resource management strategy. (6)

(5) have creating a white paper that includes everything you need to know in order to create a social media policy for your own company: [http://www.socialfish.org/wp-content/downloads/socialfish-policies-whitepaper.pdf](http://www.socialfish.org/wp-content/downloads/socialfish-policies-whitepaper.pdf)
**Measurement**

Larson & Watson (2016) state that without being able to outline and measure the consequences and results of your social media strategy, it will be difficult for your company to align its social media activities with its overall business goals and eventually create business value from social media. “There are some common elements that are shared across social analytics, these include collecting data, performing analysis, reporting results and driving actions” Larson & Watson (2016)

Social media channels such as Facebook, provides an integrated and free analytical tool for business pages. These tools automatically track the performance of your posts in terms of engagement and reach etc. You can extract data from these analytics as excel document that contain details of your social media page such as likes, posts, engagement, reach etc. to measure your social media activities you need to have data to start conducting useful analysis to your page activities. Through these data you can create “insights” that result in offering recommendations and taking actions that will finally be valuable to your company and customers. (2)

According to (2) “Each campaign on social media (post, tweet etc) can be measured as an individual project and evaluated on its own performance over time or against comparative campaigns. This allows you to have a definitive time period for data analysis and enables you to learn from and improve on each measurement campaign. KPIs are the measures that map back to specific objectives and define progress toward those objectives. KPIs should be the first thing you check when you login each day and they should be monitored constantly to determine the status of your programs. KPIs when established correctly provide context for your social media progress, they set expectations for what to expect, and they mandate actions when things aren’t looking so good. Launching into social media with a well-defined strategy that includes the metrics necessary to quantify your desired outcomes is exceptionally better than jumping in with a half-baked effort”. (2)

So according to this you can plan which KPIs to measure for each social media objective, for example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Business goal</th>
<th>Social media objective</th>
<th>Tactics (How will you achieve the social media objective?)</th>
<th>KPIs (which metrics to track to see if you achieved the objective)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1) My business goal is to increase sales</td>
<td>To increase the leads by 70 lead per day</td>
<td>To run an offer through Facebook and Twitter</td>
<td>- Click through rate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| 2) My business goal is to expand to another market | Generate brand awareness | Paid advertising campaigns through Facebook targeting only people in (the country or city you want to expand to) | - Reach  
- Share of voice  
- Brand mentions  
- Brand proposition mentions  
- Positive mentions |
It is always good to compare campaigns (posts) results in terms of engagement, reach sentiment etc. so you can understand what content is popular and works best for your followers.

**Tools for measurement (Analytics)**

“Social media analytics is the practice of gathering data from blogs and social media websites and analysing that data to make business decisions. The most common use of social media analytics is to mine customer sentiment in order to support marketing and customer service activities". (7)

Analytics are the tools that gather data related to each post on social media and who your followers are. There are different types of analytics, some are free and integrated within your business social media channel and others are offered through third party websites. There are also paid analytics that offer you advanced tracking and reporting services.

Click here for a list of some free and paid analytical tools: [http://www.netbase.com/blog/12-free-social-media-analytics-tools/](http://www.netbase.com/blog/12-free-social-media-analytics-tools/)

**Process**

A successful participation in social media needs people to deliver, manage, and interact with the outside world. Small companies can be fine with a limited number of employees dedicated to social media. (2)

Dedicating a team and roles for social media management is important. “Process dictates how procedures related to social media are created, how they are socialised and shared and how they’re implemented within organisation. Further, process ensures that all efforts are measured and that they support the strategic initiatives set forth by the organisation. Process brings together the appropriate stakeholders to ensure that programs can be evaluated in a business context”. (2)
References


