

## Social Media Marketing part 1 – Introduction

There's no getting away from the fact that if you want to succeed in online marketing today, you are going to have to use social media. The explosion of social media in a very short space of time has granted opportunities to engage with customers like never before. According to a report by We Are Social (<http://wearesocial.net/blog/2015/01/digital-social-mobile-worldwide-2015/>), by the end of this year, it is estimated that a third of the entire population of the world will be using social media. In the UK and the US over half the population already use social media.

So with over half your customers using social media, there is no excuse why you should not be using it.

Many business owners are reluctant to engage in social media for fear that they might get negative reviews, or someone will post nasty things about their company. There are two reasons why you should not be afraid of this: firstly, if someone has had a bad experience of your services, social media gives you the medium to listen to people, and the opportunity to deal with the issues that the client has had. Generally people don't complain about minor things but will tell everyone they know that they have had a bad experience (usually on Facebook and twitter), so you never actually hear what the negative views are directly. Making yourself accessible via twitter or Facebook will not only give you a chance to identify and rectify any issues, but will also make others see that you care about the service you give and make an effort to help customers.

Secondly, if someone decides to make up stuff about you, or post unpleasant things (which is actually quite rare in social media) then you have a chance to reply to their accusations, and in a worst case scenario, you can delete their comments or even get the abusing account banned.

Most social marketing is done on the big 3 of Facebook, twitter and LinkedIn, but there are many, many more than you can use. Some channels are geared to specific industries- a few examples are:

1. isshade.com – accounting industry
2. linkedFA.com – finance and insurance
3. achitizer.com – architects
4. glozal.com – real estate agents
5. tankchat.com – oil and gas industry
6. sermo.com – us based physicians
7. lawyrs.net – guess which one this is
8. researchgate.net – scientists

There are also quite a few for computer programmers and software engineers (unsurprising really). If you work in a particular industry, or your customers come primarily from that industry, then it might be worth looking in to the relevant social media channels to see what opportunities are available to you there.