Organizational Considerations

10

Organizations of all types are waking up to the possibilities of social media. But the overall importance of social media and the tactics you use will largely be based on what your organization is and how it views marketing, customer engagement, risk, and being on the "cutting edge." It will also impact access to resources, who you can hire, how quickly you can act, and what you ultimately need to get things done. In this chapter, we'll look at roles universal to any organization and how different types of organizations can best utilize social media.

Chapter Contents

Roles and Responsibilities

In any organization—large corporations, government agencies, sports teams, startups, and so on—the difference between good and great is in the people who make up that organization. It's critical that people be properly evaluated and that they have the room to make decisions on behalf of the organization based on its goals and management philosophy. So, it stands to reason that one of the most important first steps to making your social media and Internet marketing campaigns succeed is in picking the right people.

Let's first talk about the roles that need to be filled to run a successful campaign. These are functions that someone must fill at various points of the development of a campaign to ensure that different perspectives are heard throughout the process.

The "general manager" The person responsible for overseeing the overall campaign. This person should be able to do any of the business tasks necessary to conduct a social media marketing campaign, although the person doesn't necessarily need to be an expert in all of them. General managers should know enough to manage the process and be willing to learn things they do not know. In larger organizations, this person should also be available to "backfill" someone who is out because of illness, maternity/paternity leave, disability, or another reason.

The "brand manager" The person responsible for the stewardship of the brand. This person is the spokesperson for the brand. The brand manager ensures that the tone of the campaign or social media presence is in line with what the brand represents. This is also the person who makes sure that the campaign doesn't go too far to potentially threaten brand sanctity or customer perception.

The "business requirements gatherer" The person responsible for understanding the broad needs of the campaign across different stakeholder groups in the organization. This person is in tune with things that are happening in the organization and is probably the one colleague who does the best job networking within the organization. This is the person who collects all the feedback and translates it into a product that everyone can enjoy, but sometimes the result of this work is a compromise that nobody really likes. But possibly the most important role of business requirements gatherers is that they can integrate the social media campaign into other marketing efforts for maximum benefit. As we've discussed earlier in this book, you are much more likely to succeed when you use social media to enhance your marketing across different channels.

The "creative" The person responsible for turning rough business concepts into something interesting, edgy, and engaging. This involves a process of brainstorming, concepting, and presenting ideas to management for a new campaign. It's a role that demands both the creation of new ideas and the wherewithal to bring them to life through the use of imagery, icons, graphics, and sometimes copy. The person is oftentimes a loud and

vocal critic of the brand manager, who is decidedly more conservative about the use of organization assets, trademarks, brands, and so on.

The "reporter" The person responsible for gathering statistics on the performance of the campaign across all types of media (social media, websites, others) and for sharing coherent reports on results. This is a role that is highly analytical and almost requires a stats junkie in a best-case scenario. Reporters should have enough skills with spreadsheets and with data analysis to create compelling reports and perhaps come up with some of their own that clearly tell the tale. It is often handy to make this person agnostic to the success or failure of the campaign. Just the facts, ma'am.

The "technical lead" The person responsible for managing staff, consultants, or vendors responsible for custom web development required to support your marketing campaign. Much like the general manager who is responsible for turning out a coherent marketing campaign, this person is responsible for communicating with developers and other technical personnel to ensure that customizations are done as effectively and inexpensively as possible. This isn't necessarily the person you'd invite to your next cocktail party, but the technical lead can help you do amazing things with Facebook apps, Facebook Connect, and your website.

The "executive sponsor" The executive at the organization who is ultimately responsible for the success or failure of the effort. This is a little tricky—in some organizations, failure is defined as an embarrassing problem that results from the execution of the campaign. In other organizations, failure is defined as whether very specific numbers are reached—number of leads, costs per touch, and so on. As you can imagine, in the former case there isn't as much pressure to perform, but there is more pressure to "draw between the lines." In the latter case, there is more pressure from a marketing metrics perspective and more scrutiny over whether social media is a viable marketing tactic. You'll have pressure in your role if you are overseeing your campaign—exactly where will depend on how your organization views social media.

These roles don't necessarily need to be filled by different people—most organizations won't have the luxury of a large qualified staff to handle different roles. But the responsibilities are fairly consistent across just about all campaigns regardless of organization type or scope. And sometimes these roles are filled by third-party vendors or consultants who have specific expertise that is not available in your own organization.

Vendors vs. Employees

Everyone is likely busy at your company. So, you probably have a choice to make: do you assign tasks to employees, or do you hire vendors to fill gaps in your organization? The first and most fundamental question is always, "Do you have enough money and knowledge to hire a vendor that you can trust to do the job?" If you're

lacking the budget, you'll have no choice but to get colleagues to share the workload. There is certainly a risk inherent in that approach—if your project is the lowest priority of a group of tasked colleagues, it probably won't succeed. There are also advantages to having vendors you trust, because you've worked with their employees in some other capacity over the years or because you have gotten a good recommendation from a friend.

But the choice of vendor or employee is really a strategy just like any other. If you believe social media to be the future of marketing as we do, you can easily justify bringing the capability in-house. It's a long-term investment, and it's better to keep that knowledge around the watercooler. However, you can accelerate the learning curve a bit by hiring the right vendor or consultant to share what they know with you and your team. Few people in most organizations have run successful social media marketing campaigns in the past, and even fewer have the breadth of career experiences that make them ideal candidates for a new campaign. But your colleagues probably have skills here and there that easily transfer with a little assistance.

Aside from reasons mentioned, there are a few other considerations for your decision to seek help from a third-party or choose to run your own Facebook marketing or social media campaign. We'll explore these next.

Use In-House Staff

Using in-house staff may be a viable option for your campaign if any of the following are true:

- You have faith in your people to figure it out.
- Social media execution is not critical to your success in the short-term. You can endure some failure and experimentation without significant impact to your business or your brand.
- You want a long-term capability, and you suspect that your employees will not leave. If you think that institutional memory will indeed stay with your company, it's a good idea to invest in your people.
- You think your team can handle it without help.

Get Help from a Vendor or Consultant

On the other hand, you should consider getting outside help for the campaign if any of the following are true:

- You are skeptical about your team's ability to get the job done effectively without assistance.
- Social media is important in the short-term but not terribly important long-term, so you need a quick shot of immediate expertise

- Your employees simply don't have time. Social media maintenance can be very time-consuming if done well. A vendor or consultant can be a good "gun for hire" to help alleviate stress on your people.

- You need insurance—someone who can provide help if it is needed. Of course, you can always use this insurance to deflect blame if you need, although it's rarely a great idea and not generally good business, although I recognize that it happens.

- You've tried but failed to meet business objectives using social media, and you need someone to fix your problems.

If you do decide to hire a third-party to assist with your effort, consider that social media is now established enough that most qualified professionals will have demonstrable success stories under their belts. Find out the companies they've helped. Talk to a few of their clients. Ask difficult questions about expertise, work style, and responsiveness. Keep in mind that a cottage industry of social media professionals has sprung forth over the past few years. Some consultants are truly qualified and can do a great job for you. Others are shameless self-promoters who do a better job of marketing themselves than they could ever do for you. It's far too easy to make a mistake and hire the wrong person if you haven't done your due diligence.

Three Tough Questions for Vendors

The world of social media consultants, experts, and the like can be very difficult to navigate. How do you know you're really dealing with someone who has the skills and talents to help you? Ask three probing questions to get the answers you need, and dig deeper if necessary:

1. "What are your qualifications as a social media expert?" Find out exactly why the vendor thinks they're qualified to represent your business. You're looking for a few things here—time in the business, skills, and third-party validation that you're dealing with a true expert.

2. "What problems have you solved for your clients?" Learn the breadth and depth of the vendor's expertise. Ideally, you'd be dealing with a vendor that has shown the capacity to create innovative solutions for a wide range of problems.

3. "Who have you helped, and can I talk to a few of your former clients?" Success stories usually create rabid fans. Ask to talk to a few of them. When you do, probe to get a sense of exactly how the project went and whether the client and vendor are still on good terms.

A quick search on a popular search engine will also tell you quite a bit of information. Look for blog posts, articles in various web publications, and social media activity. If someone isn't terribly active on the Web and social media, that's probably not the right person to help you. Find out by doing your homework before you agree to sign a contract.

How Facebook Works in Different Organizations

If you've read the entirety of this book, you understand that Facebook marketing and social media can be fairly simple. But typically larger organizations are just now beginning to grapple with social media and the issues of transparency and communications. Legal concerns or approvals can send even the fastest-moving project into the weeds and can significantly impact the customer experience of a campaign. In some cases, it's better to be certain and deliberate than opportunistic and cutting-edge.

Now let's turn our attention to the specific challenges that affect decision making in different types of organizations so you can be aware of the dynamics around you or with your colleagues in other types of organizations.

Government

All around the world, government employees and management are beginning to understand the power and the opportunity of using social media where traditional communications have dominated for many years. The reasons are similar to a lot of the themes we've covered in this book—immediacy of communications, low cost, reach, the ability to edit or change something if a mistake is made, and so on. Social media usage is already as pervasive as e-mail in some demographic groups. All of it makes social media very appealing, especially for communities where citizens are more "tech-savvy."

The meme of Government 2.0 has emerged to cover these issues broadly as the concept grows in popularity. We're in a perfect storm for social media in government for a few reasons:

Maturing social and Web 2.0 technologies Facebook, Twitter, and other social media technologies are ostensibly competing platforms, and they are beginning to mature, so there is less technical risk associated with using these products.

Increased pressure on government to modernize Senior government officials are beginning to read about cases where the private sector has saved money or increased revenues using social media, and they look to employ similar practices for their agencies.

Potential for cost savings New technologies, if properly harnessed, can dramatically reduce the cost of traditional marketing and communications.

Election of Barack Obama It can be argued that the 44th President of the United States was the first elected with the support of social media as campaign officials mobilized millions of people to vote.

But interestingly, government policy has not exactly caught up to the realities of social media, crowdsourcing, and user-generated content. For instance, many government agencies forbid employees from blogging because of the risk that an employee will say something that may be perceived to be official government policy. Then the statement or position taken by the blogger/employee becomes a potential legal liability for

the government. The more you see situations like this, the easier it is to understand that policy makers aren't necessarily trying to get in the way of progress as much as they are trying to balance risk with opportunity while minimizing unintended consequences. But again, overall it is a big weakness of social media that none of us can truly divide our professional and personal lives without a lot of work and care.

So, what types of government projects can Facebook and social media assist? Earlier in this book, we suggested that social media can in some ways be considered as another marketing channel—akin to e-mail, a phone line, or a paper brochure—except that social media is inherently interactive and provides a means for people to communicate with each other inexpensively and in real time. In that sense, the government can use Facebook and social media to quickly and effectively communicate via the social graph—both to citizens and to spread the word from citizens to one another. Take, for example, the work that NASA has done with its Facebook presence; you can find its fan page at `www.facebook.com/nasa.gov`. NASA achieved quite a following with thousands of fans who receive regular updates on what is happening there (Figure 10.1), photos (Figure 10.2), articles, and other information on space and aeronautics science. NASA also shares a variety of links to other sources of information on the Internet and in social media. It uses the Boxes tab (Figure 10.3) to encourage conversation and to link to parts of the NASA.gov website that may have been buried or hard to discover otherwise. But perhaps most interestingly, NASA also shares the Twitter accounts where you can keep up with real astronauts.
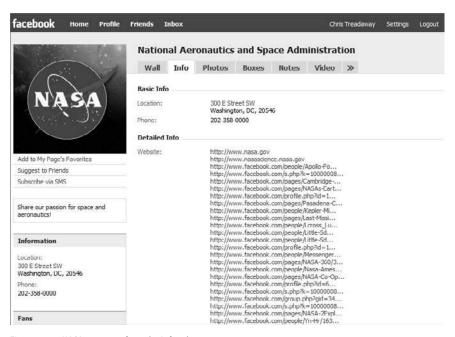
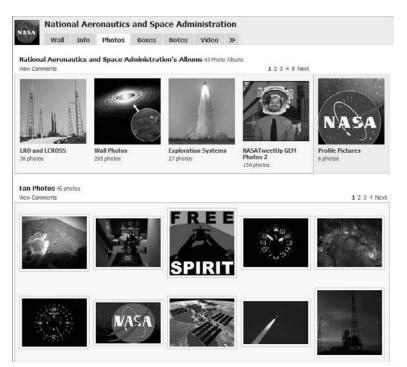**Figure 10.1** NASA resources from the Info tab
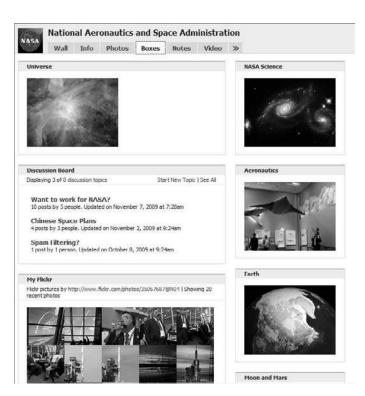
Figure 10.2
NASA pictures

Figure 10.3
NASA Boxes tab

Government 2.0 and Social Media Projects

How can Facebook and Web 2.0 technologies help with common government tasks? Here are a few ways that government agencies can use Facebook, Twitter, and other social media technologies today:

Routine communications Informing citizens of new programs, city amenities, events, changes in traffic, utilities or facilities upgrades/repairs, and so on

Urgent communications Notifying citizens of dangers, the presence of fugitives, details on Amber Alert cases, severe weather, and so on

Decision-making transparency Using social media to keep people updated on important dates and meetings for community decisions, city council meetings, requests for feedback from the community, and so on

Crowdsourcing ideas Keeping tabs on citizen opinions and responses to controversial situations

Compliance and licensing Reminding citizens to pay property taxes, renew licenses, renew voter registration records, and so on, which all happens via old-fashioned postal mail today but could be cheaper and more effective via social media

Similarly, government organizations can use social media as a platform for people to communicate with one another. Take, for example, the U.S. Air Force page at `www.facebook.com/USAirForce`. The page defaults to the Wall, where a variety of people from all over the world comment on their love for the Air Force or their loved ones who are serving. But interestingly enough, there are two U.S. Air Force fan pages currently—the other is at `www.facebook.com/pages/US-Air-Force/134276840326?`. One is apparently backed by folks in the Pentagon, while the other originated from Colorado Springs, the home of the Air Force Academy. One has more interactivity, the other more content. Same organization, two official Facebook fan pages. Hey, nobody said that coordinating efforts is easy and that social media actually brings people to a consensus.

Oftentimes, an early-adopter government employee who uses a social media product will introduce an idea for how the government agency can use Facebook or a competing product. But it may not necessarily have the attention of senior officials because the effort is early, has very few users initially, or just simply isn't on the radar of important issues. A "pilot" project will be run because interested employees have a passion about the opportunity and they want to take the initiative to try something new. This employee will get approval from the manager, who is often a progressive, forward-thinking person.

We've seen it happen numerous times in government agencies that a project like this will then get popular—it will gain traction through citizen usage or appreciation by a supportive niche of citizens. But unlike businesses that may see something like this

as an opportunity and perhaps become overzealous about overusing it as a marketing channel, popularity tends to have the opposite effect in government agencies. A large following or fan count demonstrates success, but ironically senior government officials will want to then step back to ensure that it fits into other government initiatives and that many of the risks are identified and mitigated. The attorneys enter, and ultimately the project looks a lot different than it did originally. In the end, it sometimes then misses the mark with the very people the project was intended to serve.

So, what do you do if you are a government employee looking to inject Facebook or other social media into your outreach to citizens? First, make sure it can work in your community. Although social media is becoming increasingly popular worldwide, your community may not respond well to government communications through social media. Second, talk to citizens, and solicit their feedback as you would for any other new program. Even small focus groups with friends and family can tell you a lot about how people will perceive your ideas for social media. Next, stay focused, and set attainable goals for your effort. Part of the solution is making sure that you are doing things the right way, and as we've mentioned previously, this may require some experimentation along the way. Finally, understand the internal environment in your agency. Anticipating future problems early in the process will help you make good decisions that will benefit you later.

Featured Case: GovLoop, the Social Network for Government 2.0

If you're in a government agency or other organization, you certainly aren't alone as you navigate Government 2.0. In fact, there is a social network available for you to meet other government employees who similarly are seeking interesting ways to take advantage of social media and Web 2.0. GovLoop (www.govloop.com) is perhaps the biggest social network available for Government 2.0 professionals. We took a few moments to talk with GovLoop founder and president Steve Ressler about his site and trends in Government 2.0:

Q: *Tell us a little about GovLoop in your words.*

A: GovLoop is the "Facebook for government" currently connecting more than 21,000 federal, state, and local government innovators.

Q: *What gave you the idea for GovLoop?*

A: I was a public servant for five years working in various departments including the SSA, Department of Education, and DHS. I always saw agencies re-creating the wheel and wished there was a way to connect with other departments on a peer level. With the rise of social networking technology, I saw the way to create the platform I always wanted—and thus GovLoop was born.

Q: *How would you characterize Government 2.0 in 2010?*

A: Government 2.0 is in adolescence. It has seen some success, has generated a lot of buzz, and has great promise. The trick is transitioning into adulthood—how do we go from 30 great Government 2.0 examples in 2009 to 300 in 2010 and 3,000 in 2011?

Q: *As you've observed the Government 2.0 community, where have you seen successes? Have you noticed any common themes for successful stories/projects?*

A: Lots of great successes I see every day on GovLoop. *Armed with Science* is a great podcast out of the DOD. Sensorpedia at Oak Ridge Labs is fantastic. The City of San Francisco does great things with open data and its open 311 initiatives. The common themes I see are strong business need, passionate and amazing leaders, and a willingness to take risk and iterate.

Q: *Where do you see Facebook fitting into the future of Government 2.0? What opportunities do you see?*

A: Facebook fits in well for the future of Government 2.0 as an extremely important channel to communicate with citizens. The purpose of government communications is to reach the citizens—in the past that may have been flyers in libraries or in-person meetings that then evolved into TV ads, radio spots, and government websites. Facebook is part of the next wave of venues where citizens live their lives, and it is important for government agencies to spread their information and act in these communities.

On GovLoop, members use social media such as blogs, videos, and forums to discuss best practices and share ideas on improving government. GovLoop won the 2009 AFCEA Bethesda Social Media Award and was a finalist for the 2009 ACT/IAC Intergovernmental Solutions Award. Ressler is also the cofounder of Young Government Leaders (YGL), a professional organization of more than 2,000 government employees across the United States.

New Military Social Network: milBook

The U.S. military recently launched a social networking site called milBook, a sort of Facebook clone for organizational information. The site has more than 18,000 members, is more oriented toward collaboration than socialization, and has extensive security levels.

The idea behind milBook (which along with wiki and blog tools is grouped into something called *milSuite*) is for the Department of Defense to get a dose of Web 2.0 flavor, said officials for the Army's MilTech Solutions group. "milSuite's aim is to provide those serving our military the same experience they take for granted in the public domain, behind the security of a firewall," explained Justin Filler, deputy of MilTech Solutions.

Nonprofit

Facebook has undoubtedly contributed greatly to a huge surge in nonprofit awareness, fund-raising, and causes. Currently, more than 30,000 nonprofits have Facebook fan pages.

The strategies for successful fan engagement are essentially the same as for-profit businesses: provide consistent valuable information, invite fans to contribute their thoughts freely, respond promptly, add multimedia content, and so on. Plus, you can regularly make fans aware of fund-raising activities, providing clear instructions for how fans can help and get involved more, both online and offline locally.

And, as with corporations and government, nonprofits also need to ensure there are solid policies in place for what can/cannot be shared, who's managing the Facebook content and fan activity, whether there is a voice/face of the nonprofit or simply the organization.

Facebook has a special page as a resource for nonprofits and other organizations for social good at `www.facebook.com/nonprofits`.

To quote Facebook on this special resource page, "We built it to help you harness the power of Facebook and bring positive change to the world. Facebook empowers nonprofits by enabling them to mobilize communities, organize events, increase fundraising, reduce costs with free online tools, and raise awareness through viral networks."

Causes App

Through the popular application Causes (Figure 10.4), more than $16 million has been raised since 2007, benefiting more than 300,000 different causes. Causes has become the leader among a growing number of social networks used by nonprofits. The app is free for nonprofits to use, but it does cost the organization staff time to develop and maintain.

The Causes app is available at `www.facebook.com/causes`. Also see `www.causes.com`.

Through the Causes app, both Facebook users and nonprofit fan pages easily join or create their own cause, invite their friends and network to contribute, chart their impact, create leaderboards, and more.

One great addition to the Causes app is the Causes Exchange (`http://exchange.causes.com`), where users share ideas about how best to use the app. A great example of providing new ideas for fundraising approaches came with the launch of the Birthday Wish, where users were encouraged to ask their friends to support a specific Cause rather than get them a birthday present. This seems such a simple and obvious idea, yet Birthday Wishes alone has apparently generated well over $1 million.
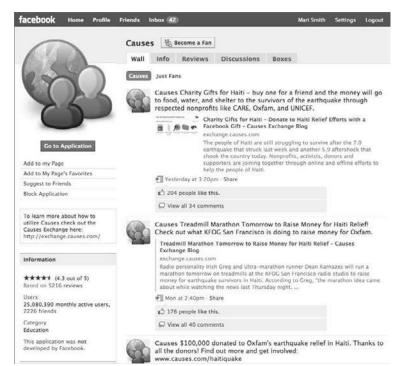
Figure 10.4
Causes app page

Here's an excerpt from the Causes Exchange blog regarding the Birthday Wishes feature:

Brad Sugars says he believes that cancer can be defeated, one birthday at a time.

On his 38th birthday this year, Mr. Sugars, a skin cancer survivor and chief executive of the professional coaching firm ActionCoach, decided to raise money for the Cancer Schmancer Movement, a nonprofit organization devoted to the detection and early treatment of the disease.

With a few quick clicks on Facebook, Mr. Sugars installed a program called Causes on his profile page and asked each of his 3,000 friends on the social network to contribute at least $38. Within a few weeks, more than 50 had given—some generously. By matching each donation, Mr. Sugars raised nearly $8,000 for the charity.

"They make it so easy to do this," he said. "This is a way to challenge people to go do something good."

<small>HTTP://EXCHANGE.CAUSES.COM/2009/11/CLICKING-FOR-A-CAUSE</small>

Example Nonprofits on Facebook

Beth Kanter, a respected nonprofit technology and social media authority, wrote an informative case study on her blog about the Red Cross's social media journey. Red Cross came under public attack for the way it handled disaster relief efforts after Hurricane Katrina. The organization then hired a social media manager (Wendy Harman), who helped to roll out a comprehensive, fully integrated social media policy and develop a powerful operational handbook. You can find the full case study, along with an excellent 109-page slideshow here:

> http://beth.typepad.com/beths_blog/2009/07/red-cross-social-media-strategypolicy-handbook-an-excellent-model.html

The following are several examples of nonprofits of all sizes successfully using Facebook to heighten awareness, strengthen their support, and raise funds:

- *Red Cross*: www.facebook.com/redcross
- *UNICEF*: www.facebook.com/unicef
- *Susan G. Komen for the Cure*: www.facebook.com/susangkomenforthecure
- *LIVESTRONG*: www.facebook.com/livestrong
- *Greenpeace*: www.facebook.com/greenpeace.international
- *Weston A. Price Foundation*: www.facebook.com/pages/Weston-A-Price-Foundation/58956225915
- *Pancreatic Cancer Action Network*: www.facebook.com/JointheFight
- *Modest Needs Foundation*: www.facebook.com/pages/Modest-Needs-Foundation/46172034338
- *Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF)*: www.facebook.com/eff

Featured Case: Kane Swift and One Kid

With the help of his parents, as a fifth-grade science project, Kane Swift set up a fan page to directly support Susan G. Komen for the Cure called "One Kid, One Cure, and the Power of Social Networking." He got more than 1,200 fans and raised $400 in just one week so far. We need more kids like Kane!

www.facebook.com/pages/One-Kid-One-Cure-and-the-Power-of-Social-Networking/244652584233

Education

Given that Facebook started at Harvard University (in 2004 by three Harvard students) and for the first two years of its existence only those people with a .edu e-mail address could access and create a profile on Facebook, it stands to reason that education plays

a large part of the Facebook ecosystem. When Facebook opened its doors to companies and ultimately the general public starting in 2006, many students who were active on the site in those first couple of years were very resistant (at first!) to the masses coming onto the site and changing the overall user experience of this "walled garden." However, as time wore on, tens of thousands of fun third-party applications sprung up, Facebook kept adding useful new features, and the original members found they could expand their network as they wanted and control their experience with the granular privacy settings.

Now, in 2010, with the sheer volume of users, the amount of time they spend on Facebook and the vast range of personal information they share, more and more organizations, including schools, colleges, and universities, will find themselves using Facebook to coordinate activities and distribute information.

Facebook's primary features of events, groups, and fan pages all work just as well for the education field as they do the commercial and nonprofit sectors. With consistent, relevant updates and proper engagement, schools, colleges and universities can easily expand their reach to recruit more students for full classes, boost morale, bolster student/teacher relationships, and even help improve grades.

As with nonprofits, Facebook also has a specific resource page to support educators in making the best of Facebook. See `www.facebook.com/education`.

Featured Case: Emergency Notification via Facebook

Communicating with students via text messaging has been an integral part of school systems for a while. Now, with the prevalence of social networks, being able to reach thousands of students via Facebook and Twitter is more important than ever.

Oregon's Pacific University (`www.facebook.com/pacificu`) integrated student notification via Facebook and Twitter using Ominlert's e2Campus (`http://e2campus.com`). Along with alerts via e-mail, RSS feeds, and text messaging to mobile devices, a service like e2Campus includes the ability for institutions to reach thousands of students and teachers with one click via Facebook and Twitter. As we talked earlier in this section about the sheer amount of time users/students spend on Facebook, with the ability to send alerts via Facebook, schools can increase their outreach for important communication. As reported in a CampusTechnology.com article:

According to Lee M. Colaw, vice president of information services at Pacific University, letting e2Campus contact students in emergencies through Facebook made sense. In fact, students had already requested it. When he conducted follow-up assessments on how the e2Campus system was working, Colaw said, students had suggested that the best way to reach them was via Facebook. Students said that they themselves were already re-typing and sending out university messages via Facebook. "We thought it would be more professional," Colaw said, "if the message came straight from the university instead."

`http://campustechnology.com/Articles/2009/01/23/University-Links-Twitter-Facebook-with-Notification-System.aspx`

Achieving Marketing and Recruitment Goals

Some schools may not be as hip to all the new Web 2.0 and social media marketing strategies. Or, they'll at least have a presence on Facebook in the form of a group or fan page, but the school may not know how to optimize their social network activity to achieve measurable results. There is a fine art to utilizing Facebook to connect with current students, empower teachers, promote the school to gain more enrollments, and track and measure your success. This is a specialty field that we're now seeing specialty services cater to. For example, BlueFuego, Inc., conducts a "social web audit" for colleges and universities to see how they're currently utilizing the social Web, and then it provides a social web strategy, training, and implementation support, with a heavy focus on the Facebook platform. Clients such as Abilene Christian University (`http://facebook.com/welcometoacu`) and Bentley University (`http://facebook.com/bentleyadmission`) are now engaging with hundreds of incoming students, attracting new leads, and providing customer service around the clock! Learn more at `http://bluefuego.com` and `www.facebook.com/BlueFuego`.

Example Schools, Colleges, and Universities on Facebook

Here are a few examples to learn from:

- *Stanford University*: `www.facebook.com/stanford`
- *University of Michigan*: `www.facebook.com/universityofmichigan`
- *Harvard University*: `www.facebook.com/Harvard`
- *Thunderbird, School of Global Management*: `www.facebook.com/ThunderbirdSchool`
- *Sewickley Academy*: `www.facebook.com/SewickleyAcademy`
- *Fresno Pacific University–Graduate School*: `www.facebook.com/graduatedegree`
- *Fresno Pacific University–Student Activities*: `www.facebook.com/pages/Fresno-Pacific-University-Student-Activities/110898556037`
- *SuperCamp, an academic summer camp for sixth grade through college students*: `www.facebook.com/SuperCamp`

Startups

Social media is a potentially huge opportunity for startup businesses, especially those that need to sell or market to consumers. Startups are often the most cost-sensitive organizations of any you'll find. But where startups are poor in cash resources, they are generally willing to try anything and work hard at new things that may help the business succeed. Social media is a good fit because much of it is built to be self-serve. Everything we've discussed in this book is designed to help you cut your learning curve and be effective as quickly as you can.

Generally speaking, marketing for a startup isn't about perception or the basic blocking and tackling associated with communicating messages to customers around the world. It is a much more surgical approach—how do you reach customers who are willing and able to adopt or buy your products and services? It's about transactions and finding qualified leads. It's about introducing new concepts to the marketplace that are bigger, better, faster, or more efficient than alternative ways of doing things. And all of that needs to be done cost effectively.

For unrecognized brands created by new, often unproven startup businesses, it can be very difficult to make a big splash. Consumers generally don't know who you are or what your products do unless they have experience doing business with you. Your brand(s) are not yet established, and they carry little to no meaning once you get outside of the relatively small and friendly group of family, friends, business colleagues, and early customers who keep up with you and want you to succeed.

So, all in all, you are a relative unknown fighting against all the other noise on Facebook, not to mention competitors who may be engaging with customers on Facebook and social media. In that sense, it is relatively easy to get a small and loyal following for your efforts early, but it is decidedly more difficult to scale once you've exhausted people who are at least a little familiar about you. How do you go beyond that first 100 or so people? You'll need much more than 100 people to show the world that your product is at least minimally important.

With a hat tip to Geoffrey Moore, we suggest that the answer certainly begins with your early adopters—people who will appreciate your work well before others realize on their own just how wonderful you and your product(s) or service(s) are. How can you identify and branch out from your early adopters?

Focus to keep early adopters happy Fill a niche, do it very well, engage regularly, and listen intently to your customers. Grow after you do one thing well, and don't get too ambitious early, because it may dilute the message that you are trying to promote.

Ask for support to get them involved A lot of people like to be associated with a success story from its humble beginnings. Appeal to them by asking for their help to promote you or your company to their friends and colleagues. Oftentimes you'll get assistance. Don't be afraid to ask for support—just don't overdo it because you may offend someone if you're too persistent.

Advertise to find and target new people As discussed in Chapter 6, Facebook advertising is perhaps one of the most effective and inexpensive ways available to target specific people based on profile data that they have entered voluntarily. Fortunately for you, this means that you can run ads targeted at people who live in a particular city, targeted at people who work in a company that you are trying to sell, or targeted at people of a certain age who fit the profile of early adopters for your product.

Be consistently useful for the customer first All too often, companies get so focused on their own needs that they forget to focus on the customer. The temptation is too great to

send more marketing messages out through social media, and soon enough the ratio of marketing messages to useful content gets out of whack. Then customers abandon the social media effort. Just be sure to help the customer first and sell last. Make it a soft sale, and you'll do a lot better.

Finally, some companies don't use social media specifically as a marketing channel as much as they use social media to enhance an existing or new product. Social media isn't just the social graph—it is the social context through which you can deliver or receive real-time communications, identify validated users, and bridge between the web and social relationships. In certain cases, use of a product or service that is integrated with social media can help sell the very product you're trying to market. There are also opportunities to create new products and services using the social graph and data that can help modernize old businesses. If you go down this path, just remember that Facebook is similarly looking for new and interesting ways to make money. Facebook will always have competing interests between fostering a healthy, vibrant developer ecosystem and creating economic value for itself, not unlike Microsoft in the early days of the PC platform. You'll have to pay attention to industry news and events to know exactly how and where you can innovate.

Local Business

Local business owners similarly have a real opportunity to market to consumers in new and unique ways through social media. The reasons are simple—communications are easy and inexpensive, local customers can express themselves as a fan or a supporter of a local business or popular local product, and new customers can be found through Facebook's ad targeting features. Savvy local business owners are already using Facebook, Twitter, and other types of social media to promote themselves. In some cases, local businesses are bypassing traditional marketing and advertising altogether in lieu of social media marketing.

One of the primary reasons that social media is so popular with local business is the personal nature of Facebook and the social graph. Many local businesses have built a loyal clientele by getting to know their customers on both a professional level and a personal level. Local business owners aren't just shopkeepers—they are also neighbors, community activists, and friends. As Facebook has become mainstream, more and more people have created profiles and become Facebook friends with clients and business associates. The clear delineation we've had between our professional and personal lives continues to weaken because it just takes too much time and effort to keep everything separated in the world of Facebook.

Perhaps Facebook's communications platform is just as valuable to local business owners as the social graph. One common scenario for local business marketers is the need to prepare an e-mail newsletter weekly or monthly to keep customers informed. Without Facebook, an e-mail newsletter would need to be created using Constant

Contact or another vendor that specializes in e-mail marketing. These solutions typically cost a local business no less than $25/month and involve a steep learning curve. With Facebook, a local business owner can bypass e-mail marketing altogether and route communications through the Facebook fan page or a Facebook group. It's all designed to be self-serve, and it's free.

What other types of things can be done on Facebook? How should a local business take advantage of Facebook today? Many of the themes are the same as we've covered previously in this book, although effective applications may be different based on the type of business and the amount of time a local business owner has for marketing:

Customer interaction Facebook allows local businesses to share interesting stories and anecdotes and respond to random status updates in an effort to be more personable or human.

Customer service Local businesses can use social media to respond to product questions, concerns, or feedback.

Deals, coupons, and offers Facebook offers the opportunity to promote standing or special offers and coupon codes through the Facebook fan page or another part of the social network.

Real-time notifications Businesses can notifying customers of important business news, updates, new items, sales, and other relevant things as they happen.

Personal recommendations Facebook provides a forum for encouraging customers to talk about good experiences or make personal recommendations about your company or your products. This can range from overt compliments delivered via status updates to more subtle approval via your fan page.

Any of these can be executed with fan pages, groups, or even personal profiles on Facebook—and the overall experience can be accentuated by intelligently using other social media tools. Local businesses will want to consider a variety of the previous options that best resonate with customers. It will take time and energy to maintain your social media presence—so don't launch it and leave it alone for weeks at a time. Customers will notice your attention to detail and your commitment to keeping things up-to-date. Over time, you may just get customers responding to other customers' needs—a small community of helpful people bound by a common interest in your local business.

Facebook advertising is a particularly interesting way for local businesses to introduce a new/revamped Facebook fan page or other type of presence to local customers. It's the most inexpensive way for local businesses to target local customers and inform them—and in doing so you target people who you know have a Facebook account as well! Facebook ads can similarly point to websites, Twitter accounts, or other online destinations, so they're a good tool to gain customer awareness for just about anything you want to do online.

Where are things headed in the future? Facebook is certainly going to become more location-aware, especially as the social media experience becomes a mobile social media experience. Most smartphones are currently equipped with GPS technology, and so as long as they are web-enabled Facebook and other applications can know where your customers are. Expect the worlds of social media and location-based networks to continue to advance, giving local businesses new and increasingly effective ways of reaching connected consumers.

Some Final Tips on Facebook for B2B Marketing

Another consideration to keep in mind is the type of product you are selling. Take, for example, two cases—one an enterprise software product startup and the other a hamburger at a new fast-food restaurant. One requires a business-to-business (B2B) campaign—marketing business products/services to an audience driven by business goals (make money, save money, and so on). The other is a campaign targeting consumers who are mostly motivated by some combination of needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs (`http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow's_hierarchy_of_needs`). One transaction is tens of thousands of dollars. The other is five bucks. The sales cycle in one is very long—months if not years. The sales cycle in the other is the time it takes to drive by a restaurant.

Clearly, there are obvious differences in these two campaigns. Business-to-business marketing is more trust-oriented. A company and its stewards simply won't make a decision to adopt your product or work with your company without a pretty good idea that you can deliver on your value proposition. Consumers, on the other hand, will take a chance on a new product, or a new hamburger in this case, if they like what they hear. There is far less at stake over a $5 decision than a $50,000 decision. You won't get fired over picking the wrong hamburger over lunch, but you may get fired for choosing the wrong enterprise software product for your company.

So, how do you address this with your campaign? For B2B marketing, you're looking to use social media to establish a position in the market—a voice that speaks to specific pain in the marketplace. You should have a perspective on industry events, news, and developments. Commentary needs to be professional, on message, and consistent. Conversation should be encouraged, and metrics should track the amount and the depth of this conversation. You don't (and really can't) execute this type of marketing strategy without social media technologies—blogging, blogger engagement, Facebook fan pages, Twitter, and so on. Social media is the means by which you communicate your unique perspective to the world, and it is where you make your mark as a startup.

On the consumer front, you're tapping into a different need entirely—what former *Wired* journalist Brad King refers to as "The Cult of Me" (`www.thecultofme.com`). It is the notion that Web 2.0 technologies and social media have made everyone a

"publisher." People use this capability to express themselves, so much so that egocentrism has to some extent gone mainstream. "Power users" on social media use status updates, shared links, photos, videos, associations with brands/companies, and so on, as a new form of self-expression that is both interactive and influential. People see what their friends like/dislike, and they form their own opinions based on what friends say and do. It isn't unlike trends in fashion—but it's far more encompassing, and it is part of our new digital lives.

In fact, a new term springing up now is *people to people* (P2). Some say we are moving away from business to business vs. business to consumer, and now everyone is in the business of people to people. You may hear some social media pundits saying, "People don't make friends with a logo, a product, or a bricks-and-mortar building… people make friends with people." This is the fundamental shift caused by social media prevalence. The more open, transparent, engaging, and genuinely caring a company—of any size—can be, the more success it'll glean from its social media/Facebook marketing efforts.

So, in closing, keep the following rules in mind as you build your campaign:

- Entertain your followers.
- Interact with customers.
- Maintain your social media presence.
- Inform people.
- Reach out to new customers or markets.

And perhaps most important: Fight the urge to oversell.

People won't engage with you unless they really like the product and you're providing the user with some value—entertainment, utility, or personal identification with your brand/company. Good luck!