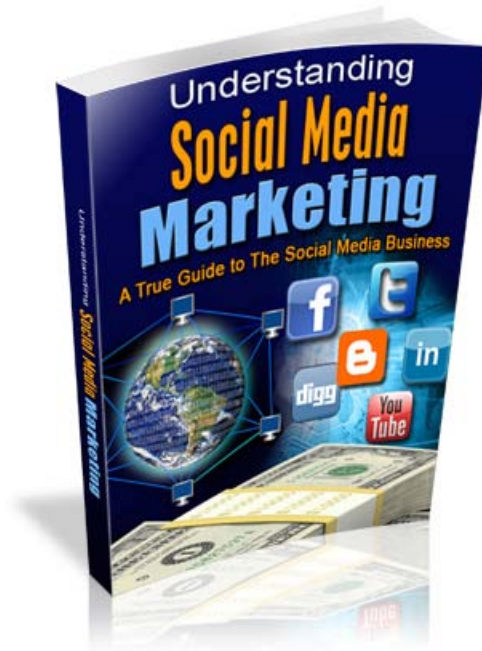


Understanding Social Media Marketing



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What is Social Media?

Social media is certainly the buzz of today, but what is it, how can it benefit you, and why do you really care? Glad you asked. First, let's stress that if you think social media is a fad that's going to disappear you couldn't be further from the truth. Social media is a phenomenon and it's taking the internet by storm.

Those who were quick to jump on the bandwagon and take the time to understand social media marketing have already taken their businesses miles ahead of the competition. Over the next decade, we can expect social media's role in marketing and business to grow by leaps and bounds.

So what is social media? By definition (Wikipedia), social media refers to the use of web-based and mobile technologies to turn communication into interactive dialogue.

So how big is social media? It's huge! To give you an idea of how huge here are some recent stats.

- There are more than 750 million active users on social networking site Facebook.
- There are more than 156 million blogs.
- There are more than 490 million YouTube videos.

Social Media by Characteristics

The best way to understand social media is by grouping by characteristic.

- **Openness:** The majority of social media venues promote leaving comments, voting, sharing information, and removing barriers making content open to everyone.
- **Connectedness:** Social media thrives on being connected with other people, resources, sites, blogs, etc.
- **Conversation:** Traditional media is one way communication whereas social media is more of a two-way conversation.
- **Participation:** Social media promotes everyone to contribute and provide feedback. Media and audience blur together.
- **Community:** Social media sees communities quickly sprout up based on common interests.

5 Basic Forms of Social Media

If you're wondering when we are going to get to the meat and potatoes of social media marketing, we are already on our way. To get the most out of this e-book and concepts we'll discuss, you need to understand social media and its components. If this is all rather boring to you we encourage you to skip forward.

There are five basic forms of social media. Let's have a look at them.

1. Social Networks

These are sites where people build personal and business web pages and then connect with their friends and/or family to communicate, share content and share photos. There are many social networks although most of us think of Facebook right away.

2. Forums

Forums came before social media and were an important predecessor that remains important today. These are sites where online discussions are around a specific hobby, topic, or interest. Information is shared and exchanged and online communities are built.