



Social Media's Bad Rap as a Time Waster

“THE ROI OF SOCIAL MEDIA IS THAT YOUR BUSINESS WILL STILL EXIST IN 5 YEARS.”
THAT’S ERIK QUALMAN’S POSITION IN HIS BOOK, *SOCIALNOMICS*. I ENCOUNTERED
THE IDEAS IN A YOUTUBE VIDEO AND THEY RESONATED BECAUSE THEY WERE
IN LINE WITH A MESSAGE THAT THE LATE MARKETING GURU RAY JUTKINS WAS
DELIVERING TWENTY YEARS AGO, ALTHOUGH NOT ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA.

So I bought Qualman’s book. Qualman is an MBA Professor at the Hult International Business School. He has 16 years of experience as an adviser to companies such as Cadillac, EarthLink, EF Education, Yahoo, Travelzoo, and AT&T.

In the 1990s, Ray Jutkins was talking about the importance of the Internet, and specifically the Web, for businesses. He cited some figures about the importance of various media. The comparison involved how long it took for 50 million people to use the technology. Jutkins had the first 3:

- Radio: 38 years.
- Television: 13 years.
- Internet: 4 years.
- Ipod: 3 years.
- Facebook: 3 months.
- Ipod application downloads: A few days. (1 billion apps were downloaded in 9 months.)

The Internet existed as ARPANET starting in the 1960s and didn’t become an open network until 1988, so 1998 is the *starting year* because that was when the general public first had access to it. Likewise, Facebook technically began in 2003 at Harvard and didn’t become generally available until the summer of 2004.

Popularity versus Success

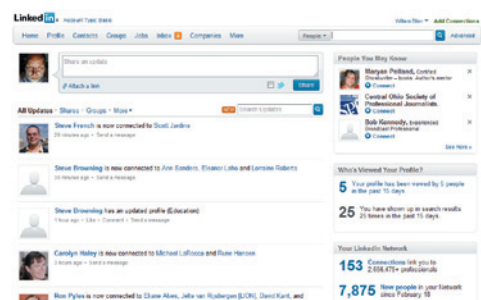
IT’S CLEAR THAT FACEBOOK AND THE OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA SITES ARE POPULAR, BUT DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED TO PARTICIPATE?

I remember when many business owners thought it unimportant for their companies to have a website or for their employees to have e-mail addresses. In the 1980s, a business owner who was having a fax machine installed said that he had no idea what he would do with it. The telephone was

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once considered to be a fad. So were radio and television. And the guy who had no idea what he would do with a fax machine became, within a month, the company’s most prolific user of the device.

What’s important about social media is that today’s high school students, college students, and young professionals are comfortable with using the tools. These are the people who are working for you today and will be your company’s managers in the future.



Most companies use social media for recruiting and LinkedIn is the clear leader.

To put the sheer number of Facebook users in perspective, if Facebook were a country, it would rank third in population behind China and India—with the United States in position 4. As Qualman says, “We don’t have a choice on whether we do social media; the question is how well we do it.”

Senior managers are catching on. Qualman reports that 80% of businesses use social media for recruiting new employees with LinkedIn being the most popular by far. Another indicator that social media demographics are changing is the fact that the fastest-growing Facebook segment is that for users between 55 and 65 years old. Women are adopting Facebook usage faster than men.

Change Is Accelerating

HOW MANY PEOPLE DO YOU KNOW WHO HAVE ONLY A CELL PHONE? MANY OF THESE SAME PEOPLE HAVE ALL BUT ABANDONED E-MAIL BECAUSE IT’S TOO SLOW! TWITTER AND FACEBOOK ARE THE NEW E-MAIL.

People use Facebook posts, Twitter tweets, and other social media postings to report excellent products and services. Think of this as word-of-mouth advertising with a million-Watt amplifier. And if people are displeased with your product or

service, they'll use that same high-power amplifier to condemn you.

More than one third of bloggers post opinions about products, services, and brands. Services such as Angie's List make it easy for consumers to rate businesses. The entire communications landscape is in the midst of a gigantic, quiet revolution. Do you know what people are saying about your company or brand online? What are you doing to position yourself, your product, your service, your brand, and your company more positively?

Trust in advertising is at an all-time low even if people see your ads. Do you know any TiVo or DVR users who actually watch the ads when they play back recorded programs? Newspaper subscription rates are declining faster than ever and even if people see your ads, fewer than 1 in 5 will believe them. At the same time, word-of-mouth advertising continues to be the most believable kind of advertising that you cannot buy.

Social media are about word-of-mouth advertising. Successful companies in social media, says Qualman, act more like Dale Carnegie and less like the characters on *Mad Men*, "listening first and selling second." [Ω](#)

Remembering Ken Olsen

THE ENGINEER'S ENGINEER, KEN OLSEN, IS DEAD AT 84. OLSEN FOUNDED THE DIGITAL EQUIPMENT CORPORATION (DEC), WHICH WAS ONCE THE WORLD'S SECOND-LARGEST COMPUTER COMPANY, SECOND ONLY TO IBM.

In 1957, Olsen used \$70 thousand to create DEC and in the late 1980s DEC had sales of \$14 billion per year. But he made one serious error.

"The personal computer will fall flat on its face in business," Olsen said. He intensely disliked personal computers. In 1992, with the company in serious trouble, DEC's board forced Olsen to resign and in 1998 DEC was acquired by the Compaq Computer Corporation for \$9.6 billion.

Olsen, recognized as the father of the mini-computer, could have been the man who led businesses to desktop systems. Instead, he is remembered as the person who tried to maintain the *status quo* in an industry that's hostile to the *status quo*. [Ω](#)

Driving Traffic to Your Website

AMONG THE ADS FOR "GENERIC" VIAGRA, OFFERS TO ENLARGE BODY PARTS, AND MESSAGES FROM YOUNG WOMEN WHO WANT TO SHOW ME THEIR PICTURES ARE SPAMS THAT SAY MY WEBSITE CAN BE #1 ON GOOGLE.

If you suspect that these offers are not exactly legitimate, you're right. If you want your site to go big, you need to think small about key words. That may be the most counter-intuitive statement you read all week, or at least for the next few hours.

Key words, at least in the Google sense of the term, aren't words; they're phrases. They are what search engines use to categorize your site. Key words are not in meta tags even though that's what many people think about when the term *search engine optimization* comes up. Most search engines pay no attention to meta tags. Instead, they index the words they find on your site's pages and both the words and their position on the site are important to your site's placement in search engine results.

So let's say you're an architect. If you use the key word architect, you'll be competing with about 69.2 million listings. How easy do you think it will be to get your site listed anywhere in the first 100 pages of results, much less on page one!

Conventional wisdom says that most people who use a search engine stop reviewing sites after the first or second page. Does that match your experience? Unless I'm desperately seeking something, I rarely go beyond page two. So you have to find some way to move your listing up.

To do that, think like a client. If you're looking for an architect, you have a location in mind for a construction project. You know what you want to build. Chances are you'll use these terms in your search.

That means that your website's key words need to be more specific. Smaller. More precise. If I search for [*residential architect columbus ohio*]. the result is now 126,000 instead of 69,200,000. That's still too many, but it's something we can begin to work with. Hold that thought. We'll come back to it later in this series.

DMOZ Your Site

DIRECTORY.MOZILLA.ORG (DMOZ) IS A MULTILINGUAL OPEN-CONTENT DIRECTORY OF THE WORLD WIDE WEB. OWNED BY NETSCAPE, IT IS MAINTAINED BY EDITORS. DMOZ IS CRITICAL TO YOUR SITE'S VISIBILITY.

DMOZ is important because Google's underlying database is based on this hierarchical scheme that organizes site listings. Each topic is divided into smaller and smaller sub-categories, so it's important to identify the most appropriate sub-category for your site.

And keep in mind that real live editors actually review each submission. Don't try to game the system because it won't work. Some editors focus on the addition of new listings while others focus on maintaining the existing listings. This includes tasks such as the editing of individual listings to correct spelling and grammatical errors, as well as monitoring the status of linked sites. Still others review site submissions to remove spam and duplicate entries.

Before you get started trying to optimize for search engines, you should understand the basic landscape. What is a search engine, anyway? What's a directory? Which one is most important?

And that sounds like a good topic for next month. [Ω](#)



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