



MARCH 2017

STAND OUT

Social Media

A GUIDE FOR BUSINESSES
AND BUSINESS LEADERS



INTRODUCTION

40% of the global population use the Internet. That's 3 billion people. And of that 3 billion, 2.1 billion people have active social media accounts.

With the rapid smart phone penetration globally – social media is accessible anytime, anywhere.

Social media proves a perfect platform for businesses as it gives access to a large number of people, in a really personal way. It's kind of like it puts your brand in the pocket of your clients anywhere, anytime.

It gives businesses the incredible access to learn about their target market and to speak to them in a conversational and tailored way.

Social media isn't just a space for young people or big brands; it is the perfect place for smaller businesses and leaders to connect with clients in a meaningful and profitable way. It's an affordable media channel; it's responsive and adaptive and puts small brands on a level playing field with bigger brands.

And yet, the number one roadblock that businesses find in standing out on social media, is getting started... and then, getting on with it. It's as simple and as hard as that.

It seems like there's too much to know. It takes too much time. And it's all too much effort. So nothing happens. And the opportunity to stand out is lost.

Kirryn Zerna
KIRRYNZERNA.COM



TOO MUCH TIME

When starting a business or a thought leader practice, there are many competing priorities for your time. From researching the market, developing your product, developing marketing plans, going out and selling and setting up your teams or networks.

Social media can feel like a time waster. Especially when you're not familiar with how it works - the investment of time to get you up and running - doesn't feel as valuable compared to other tasks.

Time is money. A survey by evoice from 2012 asked 400 small business owners what was the most valuable asset of their business. Among the answers were laptop, company website, and 38% said my time. When asked how much was that 1 hour worth to them - 30% said \$100, 24% said \$200 and 25% said over \$500.

Where does your business sit on that spectrum - how valuable is your time?



TOO MUCH TO KNOW

How do you know what platform to use? What scheduling tool to plan it out? What's the best resource for images? Where do you go to find the latest articles to share?

The common complaint I hear when businesses are working out their social marketing strategy is that there's too much information and they're not sure where to start.

If you were to google "how to get followers" you'd receive over 700 million results. There's no shortage of content out there to help you start up and get going on social media. And yet the sheer volume is overwhelming.

Content is not the problem. Finding a solution that will help you to get going quickly, and then implementing it, is crucial to take the pain away.



CAN'T SEE THE VALUE

41% of companies said they had no idea whether or not their social media efforts were actually paying off, a survey from Convince & Convert showed. It seems it's not as clear-cut to understand the dollars earned on a tweet or an instagram post. Many businesses struggle to grasp the returns from social media.

The cold-hard reality is, that it is difficult to measure the value of your efforts on social media. The same way that it is infinitely difficult to measure trust or goodwill in your organisation. I worked in the Corporate Affairs department for one of Australia's largest companies – and it was exceptionally difficult to manage the reputational advantage and risk of the company.

Equally, so it is with social media. If you can't prescriptively measure the return on investment (ROI) from your social media efforts, does it have no value?

Revenue generation is one aspect, but not the single most important reason for using social media.

Its primary business value is that it allows you to deepen relationships with customers and the community. It gives you access to a large number of people, in a really personal way. It's kind of like it puts your brand in the pocket of your clients anywhere, anytime.

Social media is:

- Global: There are over 3 billion active internet users globally (which is 40% of the global population), with 2.1 billion active social media accounts.

- Accessible: With the rapid smart phone penetration globally - it's also accessible anytime, anywhere.

WHY IT'S WORTH THE EFFORT



Insightful: It gives businesses the incredible access to learn about their target market and to speak to them in a conversational and tailored way. They're also able to test out what products or services their community engages with before they invest in big campaigns.

- Social: Service-based businesses are already social; they depend heavily on social interactions with clients and professional colleagues to carry out their work and develop new business. Social media provides a natural extension to generate leads and referrals.

- Affordable: It's an affordable media channel; it's responsive and adaptive and puts small brands on a level playing field with bigger brands.

SELLING A SERVICE ON SOCIAL

McKinsey's says "The professional services industry has the greatest potential of any industry to see huge return-on-investment benefits from social media".

And why? If you're a Service based business you are already social; you depend heavily on social interactions with clients and professional colleagues to carry out your work and attract new business.

Social media provides a natural extension of this behaviour and will help you generate leads and referrals.

Your clients are already going to social to check you out. These days powerful positioning is just as critical as client referrals.

An aerial, top-down view of a crowded beach. People are sunbathing on towels and blankets. There are several lounge chairs, beach bags, and beach balls scattered around. The scene is bright and sunny, with shadows cast on the sand. A large, semi-transparent dark blue circle is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing white text.

**SOCIAL MEDIA
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It's like a real life relationship on social media. How do you romance your readers?

They're real people on the end of those accounts (mostly) and so the same principles apply. First they become aware of you. Then they recognise you. Next they'll have an experience with you, and over time and lots of work they'll become raving ambassadors for you.

In her book Fascinate, Sally Hogshead said "The reward for earning trust, is loyalty." And the reward for loyalty is repeat business and multiplication of your leads. That means lots more business and lots more sales. So how do you start?

1. POSITIONING

"Positioning is what you do in the minds of your prospect", according to book by Al Ries and Jack Trout of the same name. In other words, they

HOW TO STAND OUT ON SOCIAL



frame up who you are and the value you can provide to your existing and future clients, and the community that you create. Is it clear who you are and the value you offer across all of your social platforms? Does your content reinforce that on a regular basis?

2. SERVE YOUR AUDIENCE

If you want your brand or business to get noticed, you need people to know about you and pay attention to you. Those people are your audience - your clients, colleagues, fans, friends and future clients.

You can serve them by giving them great content about what they want, how they want and where they want it. And also by solving their problems. You'll be rewarded for your service by creating a following and a community of advocates. And when they're your friends they'll refer you, buy from you and work with you.

3. DEVELOP A SOCIAL HABIT

When you run a successful business you're so busy managing clients, bills and new projects - social media can be the last thing on the list.

It's a bit like writing a book. "The road to hell is paved with works in progress," said author Phillip Roth. The best way to write a book is little by little, day by day. A daily habit of laying down section by section, until it's done.

Social media is the same. You need to spend the up-front time in the set up phase to establish the systems to scan, store and share and you'll establish a regular rhythm and routine that creates stand out social media.

WHERE TO FROM HERE?

TO LEARN MORE ABOUT
HOW TO DEVELOP A SOCIAL HABIT
OR TO CREATE STAND OUT SOCIAL MEDIA
TALK TO KIRRYN ZERNA.

ABOUT KIRRYN ZERNA

Kirryn Zerna has worked with large and small businesses to create remarkable brand communications for over a decade, and now she builds that capability into the organisations that she works with. She combines her deep experience of corporate communications and copy writing with the latest research of social media management to deliver a tailored approach for her clients. Stay in touch: www.kirrynzerna.com

CONTACT

E: Kirryn@kirrynzerna.com

W. Kirrynzerna.com

M: 1300 751 883

S: [@kirrynzerna](https://www.instagram.com/kirrynzerna)