

Social Media COO
Chief Operating Officer



Engage. Inspire. Grow!™

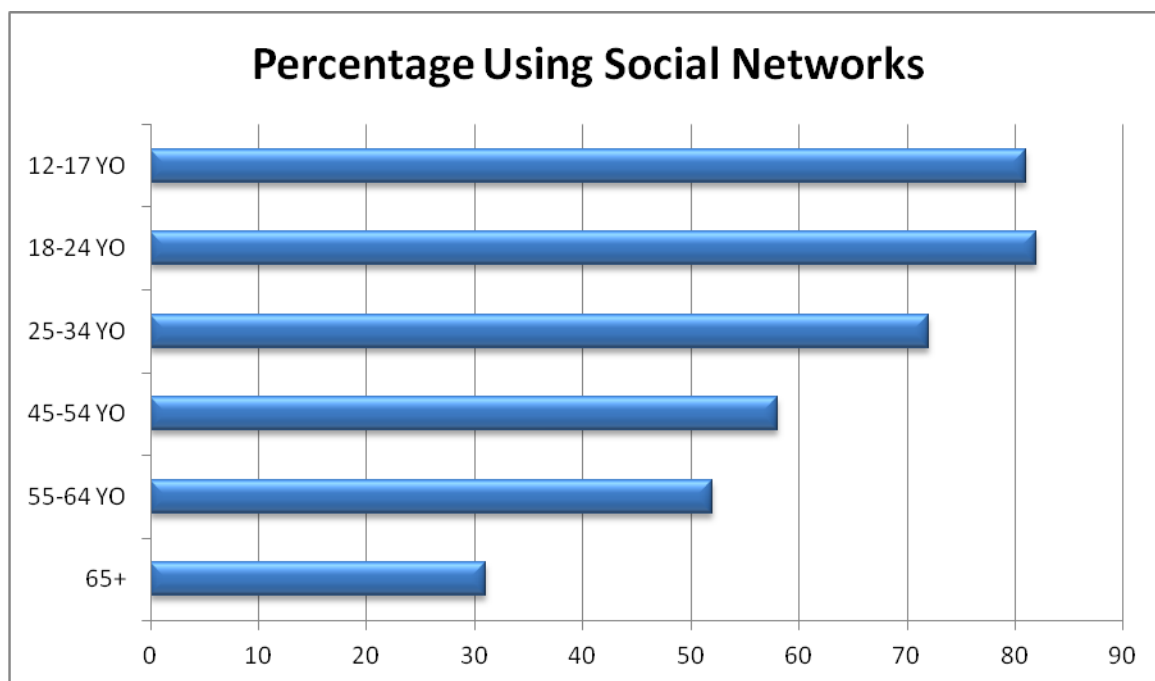
FOUR SOCIAL MEDIA MISCONCEPTIONS

You hear a lot of opinions about social media.

Whether it's the self-proclaimed social media guru or the small business owner that thinks social media is for teenagers, people always have something to say about our business. Some opinions are clearly misinformed. Let's talk about a few of those misconceptions and how a social media management company like Social Media COO can help your business.

Misconception #1: Your Customers Aren't Using Social Media

Thankfully, this mindset is rapidly changing, but I still talk to potential clients who believe that their customers aren't using social media. It is true that social media was at one time an arena dominated by young adults and teenagers, but as the table below illustrates, that is changing.



Not only are people using social networks, they are using them for extended periods of time. People spend an average of 4.6 hours per week on social networks. That is more time than they spend on email, news, games, or anything else on the Internet.

In fact, 1 out of every 8 minutes online is spent on Facebook. In addition to following their Facebook news feed to keep up with their friends, people now use it as a gateway for many internet activities that once took place elsewhere. Messaging and media sharing are more efficiently done through Facebook than email. People use Facebook to get their news, play games, and shop for products and services.

In the same way that every business needs a website, you now need a social media presence. You went to the Internet to meet your customers where they were. Now they're on social media. They use it at home, on their phones, and even at work. You can't afford to be left out of the conversation.

Social Media by the Numbers

- **93%** of US adult internet users are on **Facebook**.
- Over **150 million** tweets post on **Twitter** every day.
- **LinkedIn**, the leading business to business social network, has over **100 million** registered users.
43% of those users are **over the age of 35**.
- **FourSquare**, a popular location based social network,

Misconception #2: Social Media is Free

While the social networks do not charge for entry, establishing an effective social media presence is not free. The primary cost is the labour. You will need people to:

- Build your pages and profiles
- Plan a strategic engagement plan
- Create, update, and share content
- Interact with your customers and
- Monitor the success of your social media efforts

A new breed of professionals is now specializing in completing these tasks. The social media manager can handle all of these tasks for you. Many companies now have several social media managers on staff. Typical salaries range from \$50,000-\$80,000 a year. Depending on the size of the company, a business may require several professionals to execute these tasks.

In addition to the cost of labour, companies that dive in to social media really need to purchase software for customer relationship management (CRM) to effectively execute and measure their social media campaigns. Social media data, when collected in a meaningful way, can be a roadmap to satisfying your customers. CRM software comes in many different varieties, but a package that includes campaign management, post scheduling, brand monitoring, and a robust analytics engine can cost thousands of dollars per month.

It's not free, but . . .

The average cost of a lead generated through social media is **62% less** than one generated through traditional outbound marketing.

Social media marketing efforts average a **95% ROI**.

The actual spend for a particular company will vary by the type of business, but many companies are reallocating up to 25% of their marketing budget to social media. This percentage is rapidly increasing as more customers become involved in social networks and companies see the return on investment from their social media efforts.

Misconception #3: Social Media is Like Every Other Marketing Medium

Social media marketing is different than traditional marketing. In the past, you reached customers by pushing information through ads or relying on customers to actively search for keywords related to your brand. With social media, your message can organically spread simply through connections in the social network. The more your existing customers interact with you, the more potential customers will see your message. This is spontaneous lead generation. The potential customer wasn't even thinking about buying your product or service, but now he or she is seeing your message because of a friend's interaction.



Crafting effective marketing messages and public relations definitely play a role in engaging your customer through social media, but social media management is about much more than just marketing your brand. It's really about engaging your customer in a conversation.

Ask yourself, "Do I like having a conversation with someone who is constantly talking about himself?" Of course you don't. That's how customers will feel about your company if you're constantly pushing a marketing message through social media. I'll talk more about content in

What does it mean to engage through social media?

- Initiate new conversations
- Participate in existing conversations
- Educate and entertain your customers
- Appreciate positive comments
- Quickly resolve customer concerns

the next section, but, in short, it's not about pushing your message. It's about drawing people in to hear what you have to say. This doesn't happen overnight, but once the relationship is built, the depth of information you can share is far more meaningful than what you could share in a traditional ad.

Not only are you talking about your brand, you're listening to what your customers need and what they think about you. The information you gain by listening to the social conversations about your brand, industry, product or services can strengthen product development and

customer service. Think of it as a constant flow of digital comment cards submitted for the whole world to see. The difference is that you have a chance to quickly respond and show your customer commitment to your entire network of fans.

Misconception #4: You Need Content to Get Started

I've often heard, "We know we should be involved, but we need to figure out who on our team is going to create all of the content." There is no doubt that content is king in social media. Fans tune in because of what you have to offer. That doesn't mean you have to reinvent your company to develop free content for your customers.

48 hours of video are uploaded to YouTube every minute. 150 million blogs are online. Best of all, content creators love it when you share their work. They want views. That's why the content is open to all who can find it.

I'm not saying that there is no value in creating your own content. Sharing your own content is a great way to establish trust and expertise, but so is sharing the quality content of others.

When we look at a piece of content to share, we consider these factors:

- Is it relevant to our client's customers?
- Is it from a respected source?
- Is it in alignment with our client's business goals?
- Is there an opportunity to add further value and personalization by commenting on the content?

The average Facebook user creates **90** pieces of content each month.

Notice that I did not say that the content has to be about your business. It doesn't. It doesn't have to be about your industry either. Subject matter is wide open as long it speaks to your audience and paints your business in a positive light.

Beyond sharing and creating content is the ultimate content solution. Encouraging customer-created content is one of the best ways to engage your audience and provide value to your fans. It inspires brand loyalty and can often provide valuable intelligence about brand perception and customer desires. Of course, it has to be monitored closely, but remember, when your fans engage with your page it can spread awareness of your brand in a hurry.

Overcome the misconceptions. Outsource your social media.

Once you understand the true power of social media, execution becomes the issue to overcome. For the small to medium size business, carving out the time and budget to do social media right is challenging. As I mentioned before, large companies can dedicate substantial resources to the

"Social media levels the playing field for small businesses, giving access to the exact same audience that the big brands have."

Network Solutions CEO

effort. Instead of building a social media infrastructure in-house, businesses can hire an agency that serves the social media needs of several companies. An agency can share expertise and software across multiple projects. As a result, an agency can provide enterprise-level service at a much lower cost.

Additionally, an agency dedicated to social media is more attuned to the subject matter that is attracting conversation. It's our job to watch the daily trends and get your business involved. At our agency, we focus on developing an overall understanding of your company's voice so we can quickly engage when the opportunity arises.

Social Media COO specializes in social media management for small to medium sized companies. We will

- Create a social media strategy aligned with your business objectives
- Create and share content
- Monitor, filter, and respond to user content and
- Measure and report results

Our dedicated staff can give your business a dedicated team at a fraction of the price of hiring in-house. Best of all, we let you do what you do best – run your business.

Contact us today for a free consultation.



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