

# Social Media Marketing

*The Next Generation of Business Engagement*





## Praise for *Social Media Marketing: The Next Generation of Business Engagement*

*“Social media has become a primary tool for higher levels of fan engagement, directly driving lead generation through interaction and content sharing that is especially relevant to media companies. Social Media Marketing: The Next Generation of Business Engagement deconstructs the tools and techniques, showing you how to apply social technology to your business.”*

—JOHNI FISHER, CEO, Looppa, Buenos Aires

*“Innovation is not a one-way street where you walk alone! Take your customers on the journey, and see the difference. Social technologies, clearly explained in Dave’s book, enable you and your customers to work as a team.”*

—KAUSHAL SARDA, Founder, Uhuroo, Bangalore

*“Rigorous, measurable quality improvement is critical for getting social media and word-of-mouth working for your business. Dave’s book highlights quality programs that work, and shows you how to implement them in your business.”*

—JEFF TURK, CEO, Formaspace, Austin, TX

*“What’s so appealing about social media is its power to reach not just one consumer at a time, but a huge network of friends through the open graph. Businesses must learn to do this or risk losing their connection with consumers altogether. Social Media Marketing: The Next Generation of Business Engagement shows you how.*

—ROGER KATZ, CEO, Friend2Friend, Palo Alto, CA, and Barcelona

*“Dave provides a practical approach for leaders who want to harness the power of social media to cost-effectively transform their business and catapult themselves ahead of the competition. At the same time, Social Media Marketing: The Next Generation of Business Engagement is extraordinary because it is a fun, genuine, and inspiring resource that sets a new standard for social media insights.”*

—IAN GILES, Vice President, Strategic Services, Thindata 1:1, Toronto

*“Dave takes social media from concepts and theory to concrete, simple steps that make it easy to implement social technology in your business.”*

—MARCO RONCAGLIO, Director of Online Marketing, Personal Care, Philips Consumer Lifestyle, Amsterdam

*“Purchase decisions are now influenced by complex networks of friends, family, and peers. The new market winners will be the companies that excel at identifying and engaging with their customers’ influencers across the Social Web.”*

—PAUL MAY, Founder and CEO, BuzzStream, Austin, TX



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The Next Generation of  
Business Engagement

**Dave Evans**

**with Jake McKee**



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Best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Neil Edde', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Neil Edde  
Vice President and Publisher  
Sybex, an Imprint of Wiley

*For my family and friends, and the business executives and organizational leaders I've had the pleasure to work with. I've learned from all of you. Thank you.*

## Acknowledgments

This book is, first and foremost, an acknowledgement to the collective contributions of professionals, business executives, organizational leaders and an entire “social media” industry that has dedicated itself to delivering on the opportunities that the Social Web offers: the opportunity to understand, first-hand, what markets are saying, the opportunity to identify specific influencers and to quantify the impact that social media has as a result on markets and the businesses and organizations that serve them, and the opportunity to learn faster, to adapt more quickly, and to build and bring to market the next generation of globally acceptable, sustainable goods and services.

Following the founding principles of the Web, I've built on shared knowledge: There is barely a page that is 100 percent “mine.” Instead, this book is my point of view and my insights—shaped by my experiences largely in business—in the context of a growing, collective body of knowledge that is itself available to all via the Social Web. For the professionals whose names appear inside I am indebted: It is my hope that I have likewise contributed.

In particular, I'd like to acknowledge Starbucks and Dell, both of whom I am passionate about and whose products I buy. Their work in redefining their own business processes—driven by marketplace realities that emerged through the Social Web—which they have then shared openly so that others may benefit stands as testament to what can be accomplished when customers and their points-of-view and willingness to collaborate toward the betterment of the brands they love are fully recognized. As well, an acknowledgement to my friends at SAS Institute, Lithium Technologies, Alterian, and each of the professional services and consulting firms I often work with.



On that note, a special acknowledgement for the people I have had the pleasure of working with around the world: For Sunil Agarwal, Gaurav Mishra and my colleagues at 2020Media and 2020Social in New Delhi and across India, for the experiences gained with Austin's Z3 Partners, FG SQUARED and Social Web Strategies, Marco Roncaglio and the Philips' Consumer Business Units in Amsterdam, Johni Fisher and the Looppa team in Buenos Aires, Ian Giles and Thindata in Toronto, and Clara Nelson with the American Marketing Association my sincere appreciation: You have shaped my understanding of social media as it applies to business and cause-related marketing on a global scale. And of course, Austin, Texas—to Jim Butler, Gary Kissiah, John Harms, Hugh Forrest and the staff of SXSW Interactive, and to Hal Josephson and San Francisco's Multimedia Development Group, who inspired me in 1994 to have Austin declared—by charter—as friendly to the emerging Internet technologies that would come to define both cities.

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Social technology has been, for me, a truly collaborative learning experience. As you read this book you'll find dozens of references to the people who are helping to take the founding concepts of the Web and bring them to strategically sound, quantitatively expressed tactical implementations that create genuine, long-term competitive advantage. Take the time to explore their work and their points of view as you strengthen your own understanding of Web 2.0. For they are the experts: I am simply the narrator.

# About the Author

The author of *Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day* (Wiley, 2008), Dave is involved with the development of products and services that extend social technologies to business. Dave consults with firms and professional services organizations through Digital Voodoo, a consultancy he cofounded in 1994. Dave is currently working with Social Dynamx, a technology firm based in Austin that is focused on the development of tools to measure the value of social media and quantitatively tie insights from the Social Web to what actually drives business.

Dave has extensive social media marketing and advertising experience, having worked with public relations agency 2020 Social and its clients including the Bengaluru International Airport, Pepsi, Dell, United Brands and Intel in India, with Social Web Strategies and Philips in The Netherlands, and advertising agency GSD&M | Ideacity in Austin, Texas, and its clients including Southwest Airlines, AARP, Walmart, and the PGA TOUR. Dave served as well as a Product Manager with Progressive Insurance, and as a Telecom Systems Analyst on the console in Mission Control with NASA/JPL for the Voyager I and II deep space programs.

Dave holds a B.S. in physics and mathematics from the State University of New York/College at Brockport and has served on the Advisory Board with ad:tech and the Measurement and Metrics Council with WOMMA.

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# Foreword

My phone rings on a sunny January morning.

A friendly voice—the chief content officer from ad:tech, the world’s largest digital marketing conference, has an offer I can’t refuse.

He asks me to run a Marketing Masters double session at the next event to review the state of the industry for social technologies, all current trends and data, and to present case studies and best practices from smart brands—all in *two hours*.

I say, “Sure!” (I know I have an ace in my pocket.)

The ace in my pocket is Dave Evans.

Dave has a “catalogic” perspective of social media. *Catalogic* is a word I’ve made up to describe Dave. He’s that unique. Catalog + Logic = Dave Evans. He has indexed and organized social technologies and strategic approaches. He has dissected exactly how to measure this world, from ROI to KPIs to quantifying the Intangible Value of social marketing. His experience working with brands and at an enterprise level to integrate social strategies results in straightforward, no-fluff processes you can use to get your social business plans confidently organized.

With the help of speakers from Toyota, Levi’s, and New Belgium Brewing, and especially from Dave, we satisfied the hundreds of eager social strategy seekers in the audience at ad:tech that day.

Think about this social networking phenomenon as a big, black stallion that used to be owned by marketing. Now it’s kicked down the fence—and HR, Ops, Customer Care, and the CEO are out there in the field, all trying to get Social Stallion back in the marketing paddock.

Social Stallion ain’t gonna go back: Instead it’s taking over your entire business.

The Internet and search engines have fundamentally altered biz ops, and now social networking is the next gale force to blow us forward. As football moms in Australia and tribal chiefs in Tanzania get on Facebook, or one of hundreds of thousands of other niche social networks, and bring their opinions and their contacts with them, the way we connect with customers hits a whole new dimension of complexity, yes, but more importantly, opportunity.

Social media marketing seeks to engage customers where they naturally spend their time. As Dave says in this book, “Social business picks up on what customers are talking about and connects this back into business where it can be processed to create the next round of customer experiences and hence, the next round of customer conversations.”

Yet social business goes beyond listening to your socially distributed customer feedback loop that’s spread across Twitter, a zillion blog posts and social network profiles. There’s a larger change afoot, the concept of applying social technologies to your *whole business*.

No more sweeping consumer's problems under the rug in your Customer Care department—active social listening, understanding consumer sentiment, and having a social policy are baseline smart business practices in the twenty-first century. This book will teach you how to create internal applications with social technologies so you can transform customer insights (and complaints) into useful ideas and practical business processes.

That's "social business."

Suddenly, by using social platforms internally, Ops, HR, Customer Care, the CEO, and Product Development are networking cross-organizationally, and vendors and customers are an integral part of your business conversations. Now business decisions take into account customer intelligence to generate customer-driven and collaboratively designed products that are simply more successful and profitable.

This book will reveal to you the tools, platforms, and technologies to operationalize and capture collaborative activities. That's the whole notion of social business. Simply put, use social platforms internally and with vendors and customers to listen, collaborate, and then measure the effectiveness for growing revenue, cutting costs, or both.

Dave says, "The Social Web is, in a sense, the great equalizer between large brands with big budgets and small brands that simply "do it better." No matter what your size, social business tools are affordable and mandatory to stay competitive in today's global market.

You are the Social Stallion, kicking down the walls in your organization, the walls between you and your vendors, the walls separating you from your customers. It's time to do the internal schmoozing and get the buy-in to rework the very way you do business. It's up to you. You have chosen to read this book. You have nominated yourself to be the social business vanguard. It's an imperative.

There's bigger work to be done here. It's not just about kicking down the walls around our own organizations, it's about creating social technologies that unite business and people to light the way for the challenges ahead of us.

We must become skillful with these social platforms so we can leverage our collective global input, to create better solutions for humanity. People need access to information, water, medicine, and sources of income. Camfed, oDesk, Kiva.org, and Care2 are philanthropic organizations making tremendous headway because of their use of social business technologies. Make your business a social business, and then apply your talent and experience to humanitarianism.

Start to work on things that matter.

*Ring...Ring...*

It's for you.

It's Social Stallion saying, "Let's go kick down a few walls."

—SUSAN BRATTON

CEO, Personal Life Media, Inc.

# Introduction

*“If you have questions, go to the store. Your customers have the answers.”*

SAM WALTON, founder, Walmart

*The challenges facing global businesses and the people who lead them are now, more than ever, intertwined in the direct empowerment and involvement of customers and stakeholders. The World Wide Web—described by Sir Tim Berners-Lee as “an interactive sea of shared knowledge...made of the things we and our friends have seen, heard, believe or have figured out”—has dramatically accelerated the shift to consumer-driven markets. For millennia, power has rested with those resources: first with land, then capital, and most recently, information. In a socially connected marketplace, shared knowledge is now emerging as the ultimate resource. Information wants to be free, and in these new markets it is: free of constraints on place, free of control on content, and free of restrictive access on consumption.*

Social technologies, on a mass scale, connect people in ways that facilitate sharing information, thereby reducing the opportunities for marketplace exploitation—whether by charging more than a competing supplier for otherwise identical goods and services or charging anything at all for products that simply don’t work. Sunlight is a powerful disinfectant, and the collective knowledge that powers the Social Web is the sunlight that shines in these new connected marketplaces. The Social Web dramatically levels the playing field by making information plentiful, just as it also levels businesses and organizations that operate on the principles of making information scarce.

The Social Web exposes the good, the bad, and the ugly, simultaneously raising up what works and putting down what doesn’t without regard for the interests of any specific party. Web 2.0 technologies—expressed through social CRM, vendor relationship management, collective ideation, customer-driven support forums, and communities where participants engage in all forms of social discourse—act together to equalize the market positions of suppliers, manufacturers, business and organizational leaders, customers and stakeholders. To again quote Sir Tim Berners-Lee, “If misunderstandings are the cause of many of the world’s woes, then (we can) work them out in cyberspace. And, having

worked them out, we leave for those who follow a trail of our reasoning and assumptions for them to adopt, or correct.”

So whether supporting Unilever, P&G, and Nestlé, all working *with* Greenpeace to ensure supplier compliance in the use of sustainable palm oil and thereby reducing environmental damage in no-longer “far away” places like Malaysia, or just making someone’s day run a little more smoothly by preventing a coffee stain through a simple innovation like Starbucks’ “no splash” stirring stick, the businesses and organizations embracing social technologies are delivering better solutions—developed through direct collaboration with customers and stakeholders—to the world’s woes however large or small they may be. Contemporary businesses, cause-based organizations, and governing authorities are increasingly meeting the challenge of “opening up” and *operating with their customers and stakeholders*—often through a similarly empowered and connected workforce—to deliver self-evident value *that gets talked about*. For these entities, their customers, suppliers, and stakeholders are the new source of future innovations and “marketing,” and therefore also the drivers of long-term growth and success. This is what social business is all about.

### **How to Use This Book**

This book has three parts: Taking a tip from one of the reviewers of my prior book, I’ve written this one so that *you don’t have to read the whole book!* I recognize that you were already busy *before* you purchased this book, and that the true cost of any social media program—at least at the outset—very much includes the opportunity cost of your time. So, here’s how the book works:

#### **Part I: Social Business Fundamentals**

At just over 100 pages, Part I will get you up-to-speed quickly on the primary aspects of social technology and how it applies to business. Its four chapters include plenty of examples and references to experts and thought leaders freely accessible via the Web, along with a set of “hands-on” exercises that will provide you with a firm grasp of social technology, applied to business.

#### **Part II: Run a Social Business**

Part II takes you deeper into the application of social technology to your business or organization, showing you how business decisions are informed through collaborative software and surrounding processes. Part II provides a starting point for measurement and, like Part I, includes references and pointers that quickly take you further as you develop your specific social business programs and initiatives. Part II concludes with a set of tips and best practices, along with a couple of things not to do—and what to do instead.

### Part III: Social Business Building Blocks

Part III takes social technology as it is applied to business down to its basic elements. More abstract than Parts I and II, Part III includes cases and examples that bring the essential core social concepts to life. Engagement and Customer Advocacy, Social CRM, social objects, and the social graph are all covered (and defined) to give you a solid understanding of the principles of social business and the use of social technology. Each of the five chapters in Part III presents one key concept, in depth and again with hands-on exercises and additional pointers to online references and thought leaders.

### Appendices

Appendix A (key definitions), Appendix B (thought leaders and resources), and Appendix C (hands-on exercises) *are applicable to anyone reading this book*. They provide a handy way to quickly locate key terms, find thought leaders, and revisit the hands-on exercises presented at the end of each of the individual chapters.

### What This Means

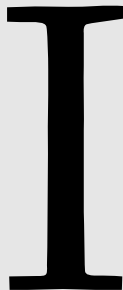
- If you read Part I, you'll understand the basic concepts well enough to participate on a team that is suggesting, planning, or otherwise requesting your involvement in a social business initiative for or within your organization. If that's you, you can stop at the end of Part I. Of course, you may not want to, but then that's your choice.
- If you read Part II, you'll be informed well enough to question or guide a specific implementation of social business practices. If you are a business or organization executive, or a process leader within one that is championing a social business initiative, you should consider reading at least through Part II, and especially "What Not to Do" in Chapter 7.
- If you read Part III, you'll have a solid handle on the underlying concepts along with the resources and pointers to actually plan and implement social technologies. You'll be prepared to actively participate in the design of social-technology-based solutions for your business or organization. If you are responsible for such an implementation, or if you are planning to undertake a project like this yourself, you should read through Part III.

Above all, enjoy this book. Use it as a starting point and reference as you define and specify the way in which your firm or organization will adopt social technologies, and to then use them to *engage* your customers and stakeholders. Social media is the next generation of business engagement.



# Social Business Fundamentals

*Arriving at Bengaluru International Airport in India in June 2009, I found my checked bags on the luggage carousel within seven minutes. Wow! I tweeted that. Leaving Seattle in April 2010 I discovered that I'd mistakenly requested a flight on Wednesday, but showed up on Tuesday expecting to fly home to my son's Little League game in Austin that evening. Continental Airlines made it happen, without charge, in less than 30 seconds. Wow! I wrote a blog post about that. This is social business in action: Running your organization in a way that generates the conversations you want. Read on to find out how these businesses did it, and how you can too.*



- Chapter 1 **Social Media and Customer Engagement**
- Chapter 2 **The New Role of the Customer**
- Chapter 3 **Build a Social Business**
- Chapter 4 **The Social Business Ecosystem**





# Social Media and Customer Engagement

*Given the visible impact of Web 2.0 in marketplaces around the globe—or more correctly, the marketplace of the globe—social technology is now considered a “given” in business. So many have assumed that social media and a presence on the Social Web are “must haves” that a sort of land rush to build communities and create brand outposts in places like Facebook and Twitter has resulted, too often without fully understanding the long-term organizational impact and the business opportunity that these efforts—done in a systematic manner—actually offer. This chapter tackles the basics of what makes social business work.*

# 1

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## **Chapter Contents**

The Social Feedback Cycle

The Social Web and Engagement

The Operations and Marketing Connection

## The Social Feedback Cycle

For a lot of organizations—including business, nonprofits, and governmental agencies—use of social media very often begins in Marketing, public communications, or a similar office or department with a direct connection to customers and stakeholders. This makes sense given that a typical driver for getting involved with social media is a slew of negative comments, a need for “virality,” or a boost to overall awareness in the marketplace and especially in the minds and hearts of those customers increasingly out of reach of interruptive (aka “traditional”) media. In a word, many organizations are looking for “engagement,” and they see social media as the way to get it.

The advent of Web 2.0 and the Social Web is clearly a game-changer, on numerous fronts. Given the rush to implement, and the opening focus on marketing specifically versus the business more holistically, many “social media projects” end up being treated more like traditional marketing campaigns than the truly revolutionary ways in which a savvy business can now connect with and prosper through collaborative association with its customers. As a result, the very objective—engagement, redefined in a larger social context—is missed as too many “social media campaigns” run their course and then fizzle out.

Whether that’s right or wrong is another matter, and the truth is that a lot of great ideas have given rise to innovative, effective, and measurable social business programs. But these are still the exceptions, which is unfortunate as social technology is within the reach of nearly everyone. The collaborative technologies that now define contemporary marketplaces—technologies commonly called “social media,” the “Social Web,” or “Web 2.0”—offer a viable approach to driving changes in deeper business processes across a wide range of applications. There is something here for most organizations, something that extends very much beyond marketing and communications.

This chapter, beginning with the Social Feedback Cycle, provides the link between the basics of social media marketing and the larger idea of social technologies applied at a “whole-business” level. As a sort of simple, early definition, you can think of this deeper, customer-driven connection between operations and marketing as “social business.”

Beginning with the emergence of Web 2.0 technologies—the set of tools that make it easy for people to create and publish content, to share ideas, to vote on them, and to recommend things to others—the well-established norms of business marketing have been undergoing a forced change. No longer satisfied with advertising and promotional information as a sole source for learning about new products and services, consumers have taken to the Social Web in an effort to share among themselves their own direct experiences with brands, products, and services to provide a more “real” view of their research experience. At the same time, consumers are leveraging the experiences of others, *before* they actually make a purchase themselves. The impact on marketing has been significant, to say the least.

Figure 1.1 shows the classic purchase funnel, connected to the Social Web through “digital word-of-mouth” (aka social media). This loop—from expectation to trial to rating to sharing the actual experience—is now a part of most every purchase or conversion process. Whether consumer-facing, B2B, for-profit or nonprofit, people are turning to people like themselves for the information they need to make smart choices. These new sources of information are looked to by consumers for guidance alongside traditional media; advertising and traditional communications are still very much a part of the overall marketing mix. The result is a new vetting that is impacting—sometimes positively, sometimes negatively—the efforts of businesses and organizations to grow their markets.

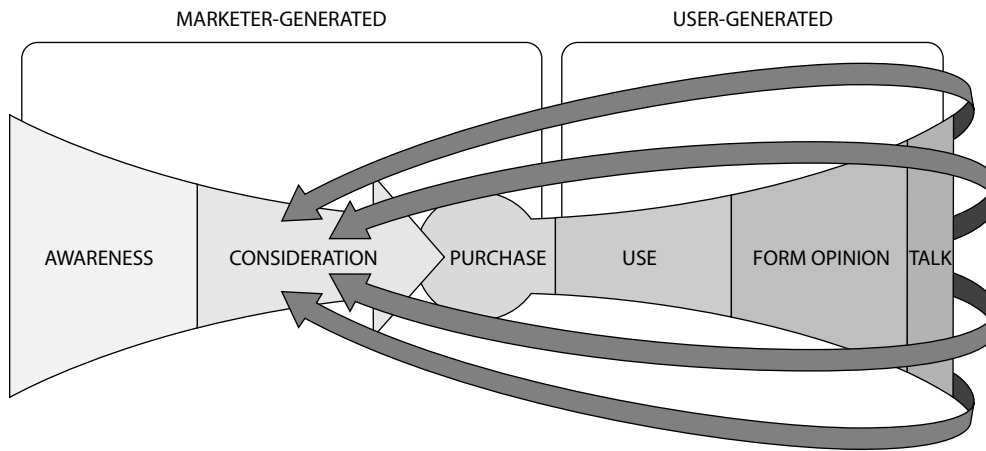


Figure 1.1 The Social Feedback Cycle

### Open Access to Information

The Social Feedback Cycle is important to understand because it forms the basis of social business. What the social feedback loop really represents is the way in which Internet-based publishing and social technology has connected people around business or business-like activities. This new social connectivity applies between a business and its customers (B2C), between other businesses (B2B), between customers themselves, as is the case in support communities and similar social applications, and just as well between employees.

As such, this more widespread sharing has exposed information more broadly. Information that previously was available to only a selected or privileged class of individuals is now open to all. Say you wanted information about a hotel or vacation rental property: Unless you were lucky enough to have a friend within your personal social circle with specific knowledge applicable to your planned vacation, you had to consult a travel agent and basically accept whatever it was that you were told. Otherwise, you faced a mountain of work doing research yourself rather than hoping blindly for a good

experience in some place you'd never been before. Prior to visible ratings systems—think Yelp.com here—you could “ask around” but that was about it, and “around” generally meant “nearby,” friends, family and perhaps colleagues

The travel agent, to continue with this example, may have had only limited domain expertise, lacking a detailed knowledge of rental versus hotel properties, for example. This knowledge, or lack of it, would be critical to properly advising you on a choice between renting a vacation property and booking a hotel. Austin's Homeaway, which brings tens of thousands of rated and reviewed vacation properties within a click of booking, has built an entire business around empowering consumers looking for vacation rentals as an alternative to hotels and resorts, a market that itself only blossomed post-Internet 1.0.

Even more to the point and beyond the issue of specific knowledge, an intermediary in a transaction may or may not have *your* best interests in mind when making purchase recommendations. The same certainly applies to a company or organization wanting to sell you something. This has long been an issue—correctly or incorrectly—that has dogged pharmaceutical and insurance sales: Is the recommendation based on the needs of the customer, the incentive offered by the drug's manufacturer or insurance underwriter, or some combination? From the consumer's perspective, the difference is everything.

At Progressive Insurance, where I worked for a number of years as a Product Manager, we implemented a direct-to-consumer insurance product as an alternative to policies sold through agents. We created this product specifically for customers who wanted to take personal control of their purchases. This made sense from Progressive's business perspective because the degree of trust that a customer has in the sales process is critical to building a long-term *trusted* relationship with its insured customers. While many insurance customers have solid and long-standing relationships with their agents, it is also the case that many are seeking additional information, second opinions, and outright self-empowered alternatives. This reality is now commonplace across a range of businesses, and it is driven by the choice that easily accessible, web-based information brings.

Where information beyond what was provided to you at or around the point of sale was relatively difficult to access only 10 years ago, it is now easy. Look no further than the auto sales process for an indication of just how significant the impact of scalable, connected self-publishing—ratings, blog posts, photo and video uploads—really is. It is this access to information and the opinions and experiences of others, along with the outright creation of new information by consumers who are inclined to rate, review, and publish their own experiences that is driving the impact of social media deeper into the organization.

### **Social Business: The Logical Extension**

Social business follows right on the heels of the wave of interest and activity around social media and its direct application to marketing: Social business is the logical extension of

social technology throughout and across the business. Social business takes social concepts—sharing, rating, reviewing, connecting, and collaborating—to *all* parts of the business. From Customer Service to product design to the promotions team, social behaviors and the development of internal knowledge communities that connect people and their ideas can give rise to smoother and more efficient business processes. Social business—viewed in this way—becomes more about change management than marketing. That’s a big thought.

Take a step back: Social media marketing—properly practiced—seeks to engage customers in the online social locations where they naturally spend time. By comparison, social business picks up on what they are talking about and what they are interested in and connects this back into the business where it can be processed and used to create the next round of customer experiences and hence the next round of conversations.

It’s important to understand the role of the customer—taken here to include anyone “on the other side” of a business transaction: It might be a retail consumer, a business customer, a donor for a nonprofit organization, or a voter in an election. What’s common across all of these archetypes—and what matters in the context of social business—is that each of them has access to information, in addition to whatever information you put into the marketplace, that can support or refute the messages you’ve spent time and money creating.

But, as we say, “Wait. There’s more.” Beyond the marketing messages, think as well about suggestions for improvements or innovation that may originate with your customers: As a result of an actual experience or interaction with your brand, product, or service, your customers have specific information about your business processes and probably an idea or two on how your business might serve them better in the future.

Consider the following, all of which are typical of the kinds of “outputs” a customer or business partner may have formed after a transaction, and will quietly walk away with unless you take specific steps to collect this information and feedback:

- Ideas for product or service innovation
- Early warning of problems or opportunities
- Awareness aids (testimonials)
- Market expansions (ideas for new product applications)
- Customer service tips that flow from users to users
- Public sentiment around legislative action, or lack of action
- Competitive threats or exposed weaknesses

This list, hardly exhaustive, is typical of the kinds of information that customers have and often share amongst themselves—and would readily share with you if asked. Ironically, this information rarely makes it all the way back to the product and service policy designers where it would do some real good. Importantly, this may be

information that you don't have, information that precisely because you are so close to your business you may never see. Collecting this information and systematically applying it is in your best interest.

For example, someone may find that your software product doesn't integrate smoothly with a particular software application that this customer may also have installed. How would you know? This information—and the ensuing pleas for help expressed in online forums—is something you can collect through social analytics (tools and processes). It can then be combined with the experiences of other customers, as well as your own process and domain knowledge, to improve a particular customer experience and then offered generally as a new solution. This new solution could then be shared—through the same community and collaborative technologies—with your wider customer base, raising your firm's relative value to your customers in the process and *strengthening your relationship* with the customers who initially experienced the problem.

The resultant sharing of information—publishing a video, or writing a review—and its use *inside the organization* forms the stepping-off point from social media marketing and social analytics into social business. From a purely marketing perspective—as used here, meaning the MarCom/advertising/PR domain—this shared consumer information can be very helpful in encouraging others to make a similar purchase. It can enlighten a marketer as to which advertising claims are accepted and which are rejected, helping that marketer tune the message. It can also create a bridge to dialog with the customer—think about onsite product reviews or support forums—so that marketers can understand in greater detail what is helping and what is not.

Prior to actually making process changes, this listening and information gathering—treated in depth in Chapter 6, “Social Analytics, Metrics and Measurement”—falls under the heading of “more information” and so drives a need for enhanced social analytics tools to help make sense of it. It's worth pursuing. Access to customer-provided information means your product or service adapts faster. By sharing the resulting improvement and innovations while giving your customers credit, your business gains positive recognition.

Although customers can provide an invaluable source of information, you should be aware of the impact anonymous—and often negative—comments can have. It is imperative to understand the role of your customer as both a recipient and publisher of the content that circulates on the Social Web. Is a specific voice within a conversation that is relevant to you coming from an evangelist, a “neutral,” or a detractor? It is important that you know. Is it coming from a competitor or disgruntled ex-employee? The same holds true: You need to know, so that you can plan your response. While the overall trend on the Social Web is away from anonymity and toward identity, it's not a given—at least not yet—that any specific identity has been verified. This means you need to dig deeper.

This persistent anonymity opens the door for “comment and rating abuse,” but social media also provides for a general raising of the bar when it comes to establishing

actual identity. More and more, people write comments *in the hopes that they will be recognized*. With this growing interest and importance of actual identity, in addition to marketplace knowledge, social business and the analytical tools that help you sort through the identity issues are important to making sense of what is happening around you on the Social Web. Later sections tie the topics of influencer identification and the use of the “social graph,” the inner working of the linkages that connect people and the status updates that tell you what they are doing now, into business formally. For now, accept that identity isn’t always what it appears, but at the same time the majority of customer comments left are done so for the dual purpose of letting you know what happened—good or bad—and at the same time letting you know that it happened to someone in particular. They signed their name because they want you (as a business) to recognize them.

“As people take control over their data while spreading their Web presence, they are not looking for privacy, but for recognition as individuals. This will eventually change the whole world of advertising.”

ESTHER DYSON, 2008

### **Social Business Is Holistic**

When you combine identity, ease of publishing, and the penchant to publish and to use shared information in purchase-related decision-making processes, the larger role of the Social Feedback Cycle and the practice of social business emerges: Larger than the loop that connects sales with marketing—one of the areas considered as part of traditional Customer Relationship Management (CRM)—the Social Feedback Cycle literally wraps the entire business.

Consider an organization like Freescale, a spin-off of Motorola. Freescale uses YouTube for a variety of sanctioned purposes, including as a place for current employees to publish videos about their jobs as engineers: The purpose is the encouragement of prospective employees—given the chance to see “inside Freescale”—to more strongly consider working for Freescale. Or, look at an organization like Coca-Cola: Coke is reducing its dependence on branded microsites in favor of consumer-driven social sites like Facebook for building connections with customers. Coke is also directly tapping customer tastes through its Coca Cola Freestyle vending machines that let consumers mix their own Coke flavors. Comcast and many other firms now use Twitter as a customer-support channel. The list of examples of the direct integration of collaborative and shared publishing applications in business—beyond marketing—is growing rapidly.

I explore all these applications of social technology in business in greater detail in subsequent chapters. For now, the simple question is, “What do all of these applications have in common?” The answer is, “*Each of them has a larger footprint than*

*marketing.*” Each directly involves multiple disciplines within the organization to create an experience that is shared and talked about favorably. These are examples not of social media marketing, but of social business practices.

Importantly, these are also examples of a reversed message flow: The participation and hence marketplace information is coming *from* the consumers and is heading *toward* the business. Traditionally, over mass media it’s been the other way around. In each of the previous examples of social business thinking and applications, it is the business that is listening to the customer. What is being learned as a result of this listening and participation is then tapped internally to change, sustain, or improve specific customer experiences. When subsequently tied to business objectives, the practice of social business becomes holistic indeed.

### **The Connected Customer**

The upshot is that the customer is now in a primary role as an innovator, as a source of forward-pointing information around taste and preference, and as such is *potentially* the basis for competitive advantage. I say “potentially” because customers having opinions or ideas and actually getting useful information from them and then using it are two different things. Here again, social business and the related technologies step in: Where social media marketing very often stops at the listening stage, perhaps also responding to directly raised issues in the process, social business takes two added steps.

First, social business practices provide formal, visible, and transparent connections that link customers and the business, and internally link employees to each other and back to customers. This is a central aspect of social business: The “social” in “social business” refers to the development of connections between people, connections that are used to facilitate business, product design, service enhancement, market understanding, and more. Second, because employees are connected and able to collaborate—social business and Web 2.0 technology applies internally just as it does externally—the firm is able to respond to what its customers are saying through the social media channels in an efficient, credible manner.

Before jumping too far, a point about fear: fear of the unknown, the unsaid, the unidentified, and even the uninformed saying bad things about your brand, product, or service that aren’t even correct! Fear not, or at least fear less. By engaging, understanding, and participating, you can actually take big steps in bringing some comfort to your team around you that is maybe more than a bit nervous about social media. Jake McKee, a colleague of mine and the technical editor for this book, attended one of Andy Sernovitz’s way cool social media events. The group toured an aircraft carrier *while it operated in the Pacific*. One of the things Jake noted was that even though the deck of an active aircraft carrier—considered among the most dangerous workplaces on earth—was to the untrained eye chaotic and therefore scary—it was surprisingly



fear-free. Everyone knew their place and everyone watched out for each other (and especially for Andy's tour group). F-18s were launching 100 feet away: Average age of the crew? 19. Fear? Nope. The point is this: You can overcome fear with structure and discipline—on the deck of an active aircraft carrier or in business on the Social Web. Chapter 5, “Social Technology and Business Decisions,” Chapter 6, “Social Analytics, Metrics and Measurement,” and Chapter 7, “Five Essential Tips When Starting Out,” provide insights into the organizational adoption of social technology along with the best practices and essential quick-start tips to put you at ease.

## The Social Web and Engagement

This next section provides a conceptual starting point in understanding how the critical activities of engagement and response are enabled through the adoption of social technology and supporting processes. Beware: It's a different viewpoint than that which applies to “engagement” in traditional media. Engagement is redefined by consumers when acting in an open, participative social environment. This is a very different context than the “read-only” setting in which traditional media defines “engagement,” so take the time here to understand the four stages of engagement.

Engagement on the Social Web means customers or stakeholders become *participants* rather than viewers. It's the difference between *seeing* a movie and participating in a screening of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show.” *The difference is participation.* Engagement, in a social business sense, means your customers are willing to take their time and energy and talk *to you*—as well as *about you*—in conversation and through processes that impact your business. They are willing to participate, and it is this participation that defines engagement in the context of the Social Web.

The engagement process is, therefore, fundamental to successful social marketing and to the establishment of successful social business practices. Engagement in a social context implies that customers have taken a personal interest in what you are bringing to the market. In an expanded sense, this applies to *any* stakeholder and carries the same notion: A personal interest in your business *outcome* has been established. This applies to customers, to partners, to employees, to anyone and everyone who can express and share an opinion or idea somewhere along your path to market.

Consider the purchase funnel shown in Figure 1.1. As customer conversations enter the purchase cycle in the consideration phase of the sales process, there is a larger implication: Your customer is now a part of your marketing department. In fact, your customers and what they think and share with each other form the foundation of your business or organization.

The impact is both subtle and profound: Subtle in the sense that on the surface much of “social business” amounts to running a business the way a business ought to be run. Businesses exist—ultimately—to serve customers through whose patronage the founders, employees, shareholders, and others derive (generally) an economic benefit as

they are ensured a future in running that business. At times, however, it seems the customer gets dropped from that set. The result can be seen on Twitter most any day by searching for the hashtag #FAIL.

It's also a profound change, however, in the sense that the stakes in pleasing the customer are now much higher. Customers are more knowledgeable and more vocal about they want, and they are better prepared to let others know about it in cases of over-delivery or under-delivery. On top of that, not only are customers seeing what the business and the industry are doing, they are building their own expectations for *your* business based on what *every other* business they work with is doing. If Walmart can quickly tap Bazaarvoice and put ratings and reviews on any product it sells, the expectation is that American Airlines will prominently place customer ratings on every flight it flies. Think about it: If flight attendants, by flight, were rated according to service and demeanor by past fliers and that information was used to make future flight choices in the same way as on-time performance, how would the flying experience overall change? It happens in restaurants: We all have a favorite waitperson. If this seems a stretch, consider that Southwest, Alaska Airlines, and Continental have all placed emphasis on exactly this service point, and they enjoy higher than average Net Promoter scores partly as a result.

Social business, therefore, is about equipping your entire organization to listen, engage, understand, and respond directly through conversation and by extension in the design of products and services in a manner that not only satisfies customers but also encourages them to share their delight with others. If social media is the vehicle for success, social business is the interstate system on which it rides into your organization.

Share their *delight*? What scares a lot of otherwise willing marketers is the exact opposite: sharing dismay, or worse. The fact is, negative conversations—to the extent they exist, and they do—are happening right now. Your participation doesn't change that. What does change is that those same naysayers have company—you. You can engage, understand, correct factual errors, and apologize as you address and correct the real issues. Watch out for what Paul Rand has labeled “Determined Detractors.” See the sidebar “Respond to Social Media Mentions” for a response flow chart. It's simple, and it works. Be confident, Grasshopper.

### **Respond to Social Media Mentions**

Wondering how to handle a negative mention or whether or not to say “Thank You” for a nice compliment? The United States Air Force developed a flow chart that formed the basis of Altimeter's recommended responses in various social media scenarios. You'll find the chart here:

<http://www.web-strategist.com/blog/2008/12/31/diagram-how-the-air-force-response-to-blogs>

**To'lig'ini sotib olish!**