

Five reasons why we use social media

 By [Molisi Justice Nzimande](#)

20 May 2015

We would all agree that social media platforms are here to stay and it have become a less expensive way to communicate with our friends who are broad and local.

Social media is an umbrella term used for many different aspects of the social Internet from Facebook to blogging forums, and there are so many variants of the same phrase used to refer to so many different elements of the social web.

Bloggers and social media maven prefer to use the phrase "Social Networking" to refer to sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Path, and etc, where people connect with each other directly.

It is so fascinating to see people using social networking as a diary, some to flaunt, brag and haul insults to some brands. I have observed five key points why people use social networking in the past three years.

1. Purely personal reasons

The most common use of social networking sites, and the main reason for them existing in the first place, is for personal reasons. The majority of people using Facebook or Twitter keep to the "social" label. It is used for its original purpose - to keep in touch with friends.

Some people will go on simply to update their status or view their friends' statuses, or to look at photos from the weekend's night out. Some use it to connect to people they've met, a potential girlfriend/boyfriend perhaps, or someone who shares the same interests.

2. Business

With the rise of Internet marketing, social media is being embraced by businesses more and more. Innovative ways of utilising these tools by connecting directly with customers are being found.

Companies are seeing that the best way to conduct themselves online is to speak to their customers directly using these social networking sites, Twitter being especially useful for this.

It increases the reputation of the company, gets them positive reviews and shows that they really care about the customer. It also gives a human face to the large corporation, meaning that customers or potential customers will feel much more comfortable coming back.

3. Networking and lobbying

There is also the opportunity for business types to network and expand their business on the social networking platform. This can take many forms, and take bits of each of points 1 and 2.

To get a deal is all about knowing the right people, and if somebody that you went to school with owns a multi-million dollar business and your company do what he is looking for, using Facebook could have you on to a winner. A random friend request from somebody you haven't spoken to since you were 11 years old could be the key to your company's success.

Social networking sites like LinkedIn exist for this purpose; for people to network within a business environment!

4. Marketing

Another Twitter success story is Dell and their recent Internet marketing strategy. Their outlet site sells refurbished PCs, and they post details about the newest ones on their Twitter feed. They also post special offers just for Twitter users, and they send information about sales, along with discount vouchers to their Twitter followers. The company has generated \$6.5m in revenue from this venture.

NB: please refrain from ambushing your followers with lots marketing and promotions information.

5. Entertainment

Going hand in hand with the 'social' element of social networking, people sometimes go on purely for entertainment purposes.

Instagram and Myspace is a prime example of this, as many famous artists have been discovered through these sites (sort of sounds like marketing, huh?). Music is a big part but also videos, such as YouTube viral offerings, are easily spread on social networking sites.

The newest craze is on Facebook, with all the game applications that have appeared over the last couple of years. The most popular of these is a game called Candy Crush Saga which has managed to acquire 72.9-million users per month.

Now, a site like Facebook has not really been discovered for many of the other purposes of social networking. How many bloggers do you see marketing, connecting with customers or even conducting any sorts of business through the site? Not many I'll bet.

It is very important to know the different usage of social networking sites BEFORE implementing a social media strategy. If you get it wrong and target the wrong people you could be jeopardising your online reputation as well as any time, effort and money put into the project.

ABOUT MXOLISI JUSTICE NZIMANDE

I have a diploma in Public Relations Management from Durban Institute of Technology. I have also worked for Department of Economic Development 2008 -2010 as a Senior Communication Officer. Currently I'm a Chief Communication Officer for Ehlazeni TVET College. Won Twice FMR Africa for being the best visible brand in an education space

▪ Tapping into online marketing - 5 Jul 2015

▪ Five reasons why we use social media - 20 May 2015

▪ Whatever you post on social networks, stays on Google forever - 14 May 2015

View my profile and articles...