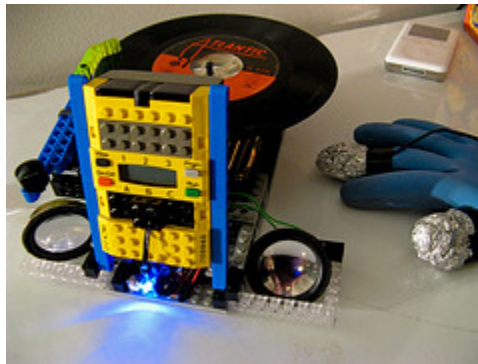


www.scottmonty.com

Monday, March 01, 2010

[Study: Most Effective B2B Social Media Tactics are IT 'Lite'](#)

Guest post by Ben Hanna, VP of Marketing for Business.com, the Web's leading portal for business owners.



According to a new study involving more than 1,700 small business leaders, companies marketing to small businesses would be well advised to focus on social media tactics requiring little IT investment, such as webinars, podcasts and establishing a presence on top social networking sites, before pursuing more IT resource intensive initiatives such as creating a company-managed online community. The study, conducted by [Business.com](#), finds that that four of the top five most effective social media tactics for engaging small business decision makers do not require significant IT investment or involvement. The exception – company blogs – should be backed by both a strategic content strategy and the resources necessary to create this content on an ongoing basis before it allocating IT resources to blog creation or management.

The [small business social media study](#) examined the social networks and other social media resources small business owners and managers turn to for business-relevant information. In contrast to the common perception of social media as inherently “social” or interactive, study participants using social media for business were much more likely to use resources which don’t require interaction, such as webinars and podcasts (67%) or reading product reviews (63%), than they were to participate in online discussions (29%). The top five social media resources used by small business leaders are:

1. **Webinars / Podcasts** – small business leaders consider webinars and podcasts to great resources for professional development, industry research and learning about potentially-relevant products and services, saving them the time and expense of attending in-person training.
2. **Ratings & Reviews** – provide useful input into the business buying process, particularly those ratings or reviews provided by other small businesses using the product or service.
3. **Company / Brand Pages on Social Networking Sites** – [social network participation](#) is now mainstream for U.S. adults, with 46% using sites such as Facebook and 25% participating weekly. Small business leaders are increasingly turning to these sites to find the latest information about important vendors, products and services.

4. **Company Blogs** – small business leaders praise company blogs – at least, those that are “well written, current and with good thought leadership articles” – as great sources of information about business-relevant products, services and the underlying character of a company.
5. **Social Media Search** – while some of the business-relevant information on social media sites can be found through general search engines, a great deal cannot. Realizing this, over half of small business leaders using social media search for business-relevant information directly on sites such as [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Business.com Answers](#), [SlideShare](#) and many more.

B2B social media marketing initiatives require Marketing and IT to work closely together to prioritize projects, allocate resources, manage execution and maintain new systems and features. One key implication from this study for companies marketing to small businesses is that Marketing can, and should, actively pursue B2B social media initiatives which require little IT investment before taking on more resource-intensive projects.

For example, rather than placing a company-managed online community the core of the emerging social media strategy – a community where, according to this research, it will be very challenging to build participation by small business leaders – establish a company presence on one or more social networking sites and focus initial community development efforts on those sites. By focusing first on external, IT ‘lite’ social media opportunities, companies marketing to small businesses are more likely to reach a far larger portion of their target audience in the short run, begin developing a following and learn key lessons that inform what social media features and functionality are actually necessary on the company web site.

For more details, the complete research report, “*Engaging Small Business Decision Makers Through Social Media*,” can be downloaded from the Business.com web site at <http://www.business.com/info/engaging-small-business-through-social-media>.

Photo credit: [p_kirn](#)

Ben Hanna most recently led the Business.com 2009 Business Social Media Benchmarking Study, and is a specialist in B2B online social media and marketing solutions. He can provide your readers with key insights into the emerging trend of how to leverage social marketing as a key business driver.

Labels: [b2b](#), [corporate blogging](#), [guest post](#), [social media](#), [study](#)

Posted by Scott Monty at 4:20 PM

 [Comments](#) |  [LINKS TO THIS POST](#) |  [Bookmark/Share](#)

Read more: <http://www.scottmonty.com/#ixzz0gyKsQrNd>