INTERNET MARKETING RULES!
A Playbook of
Game Changing Strategies for Marketing Your Business Online

by Lane Jones, Content Strategist
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Game Changer #1
It’s All About Relationships: Transparency is the New Norm

Have you noticed how major brands are not only listening to their customers but taking it a step further and actually allowing customers to tell their own stories on their websites, social media pages and even in paid television ads? You might even have noticed how CEO’s are more visible in the advertisements of their companies and are making it a point to be the face in front of the brand instead of hiding behind it.

Yes, the time has come when we humans are waking up to the reality that we need to know who we’re doing business with. We demand to do business with real people.

So what does this have to do with you? How does this affect marketing as we used to know it? It’s simple: Customers are demanding transparency and the managers, executives and staff who are not afraid to show their faces and build real relationships (real/ationships) with their customers are the ones that are dominating their markets. And you, as the business owner or manager have the opportunity to rise to the top of your niche by making it your business to establish a real connection with your customers, clients, supporters or donors. And the beauty of real/ationships in business is this: you’ll never have to do conventional marketing again! Why? Because your customers will gladly market your business for you when they get to know you and build a rapport. Which brings us to Game Changer #2: The Amazingly Effective Power of Social Media.

“If you don’t engage in the conversation, you risk losing your customers.”
— Kym McNicholas, Forbes.com
Game Changer #2
The Amazingly Effective Power of Social Media: Let Your Customers Do The Marketing

The words Share, Like, Comment, Tweet, Post, and Status Updates are music to an internet marketer’s ears. Social media has completely changed the marketing game. Marketing managers and executives are realizing every dollar spent on television, direct mail or online advertising means nothing if they don’t back it up with personal interaction. That is why businesses big and small are embracing social media because it has proven to be the tool of choice for customer interaction, engagement, and - most importantly for businesses - social media is the “thing” to do when it comes to spreading the word about a favorite product or service. Word of mouth has never been so effective. Is your company effectively taking advantage of social media? Let’s look at a few effective ways to use some of the major social media platforms.

Facebook

The new Facebook Timeline for Business Pages are a unique opportunity to promote your business and interact with your customers. Through Facebook Apps, you can now link your website, blog, product store, service page, free offers all to your page so your customers can connect with you beyond social media. Plus, the new Timeline measures the level of engagement so the more interaction you have, the more people you reach. The more people you reach, the more likely your stories are read and shared by others. Remember, it’s about realtionships. So it’s not just about what you share but how you respond and engage with your customers. Want more “Likes” on your page, start checking in with your customers more often, and invite them to connect with you.
Game Changer #2
The Amazingly Effective Power of Social Media: *Let Your Customers Do The Marketing*

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**Twitter**

Products and services like yours are being mentioned every hour of the day on Twitter.

**Here’s a priceless tip:** Go right now to [Twitter.com/search](http://twitter.com/search) and type in a keyword related to your business.

Can you see the impact you can have if even just a few of the people already tweeting about your industry were actually talking about, tweeting, and sharing your company? Want more Twitter followers? Get connected with the people - consumers, referral partners, media sources - already talking about your industry and start tweeting with them.

**Pinterest**

Yes, Pinterest! The new kid on the block has edged out some of the more popular platforms in just a few short months. Businesses are taking advantage of Pinterest to share images of products and services that are relevant to their existing and potential customers. Home improvement, fashion and small business help are some of the more popular boards. Curious about all the interest in Pinterest? Let’s just put it this way: In recent surveys, Pinterest is now generating more website traffic than the top two social media platforms (Facebook and Twitter). Want to check it out? You’ll need an invitation to join. Just message me on [Facebook](http://facebook) and I’ll send you one. 😊
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LinkedIn
I love the quality of connections that I have on LinkedIn. This platform is ripe for making real connections with executives, doctors, attorneys, insurance agents, bloggers, entrepreneurs and other professionals. If that’s who would be an ideal customer or a good business connection for you, LinkedIn is the place to connect. One of the best ways to establish real relationships on LinkedIn is by joining groups and participating in discussions to genuinely share your expertise with others who are looking for help. And if you’re already using LinkedIn and you haven’t taken advantage of LinkedIn Company pages, STOP reading this...

Click here: http://learn.linkedin.com/company-pages/ and go set up your Company Page right now.

And in case you chose to ignore me and keep reading here’s why I’m so adamant that you set up your page: LinkedIn Company Pages are the perfect way to showcase your business and increase your chances of being found when potential customers (or even future employees) search the LinkedIn database for products and services. To me, this screams PRIME MARKETING OPPORTUNITY since most of your competition isn’t even aware that LinkedIn Company Pages exist. So please, go there now and set up your page and share it with everyone you know. Yes, I’m begging you. And while you’re there, stop by my profile and add me to your network. You can also follow our company, Freshtake On Content and use our profile as an example for how to set up your page. Feel free to share you new Company page. I’d love to connect with you. Go on over to LinkedIn. I’ll be waiting.
Game Changer #2
The Amazingly Effective Power of Social Media: Let Your Customers Do The Marketing

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Google+

I had to include Google+ since it certainly holds its weight when it comes to social media for business. In a recent Forbes.com article, Google’s Larry Page referred to Google+ as the company’s “social spine, the one thread that connects all of its other offerings with a social layer.” What does that mean? It means Google+ isn't going anywhere and the businesses that take advantage of it also have access to all of Google's services including YouTube, Google Places, Google Voice, Google Docs, Gmail, Picasa and other Google social sharing tools to make it easy to connect with people. Are you taking advantage of Google+?

G+ Quick Tip: Use their search tool here: http://www.plus.google.com to find out if your existing (or potential) customers are hanging out on Google+ and connect with them. The Google+ culture consumes content. So if you plan to share content (blog posts, articles and videos in particular) regularly, Google+ may be just the right platform for you.

YouTube

I’ll keep this brief: Video sells!
That’s right. The popularity of YouTube for Business is due to the positive results of video marketing. Videos allow people to instantly connect because they can see you, hear you and get a feel for who you are, so feel like they have met you in person even if you’re thousands of miles apart. Use tools like Camtasia or Screenflow and your computer’s webcam or your smartphone to capture interesting videos to share on all of your social media platforms. Are you using video to promote your business? Do share! Post one of your videos my Facebook page and I’ll subscribe to your YouTube channel. How fun!
Game Changer #2
The Amazingly Effective Power of Social Media: Let Your Customers Do The Marketing

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In case you can’t tell, I’m all for using social tools to market your business online - mostly because that is exactly how I started my business. Before I even had a business card, I had a facebook page and a LinkedIn profile and as soon as I deemed my website “ready,” I submitted freelance inquiries and proposals all digitally. No paper, no phone calls, just email and links to my digital portfolio and social media profiles. That’s how I landed my first 3 major projects, how I got a call from a boutique firm in Hawaii whose CEO saw my business on Facebook, and how I still write for a start-up based in Charlotte, North Carolina (2 hours away from me) and I’ve never met the owner in person.

And yes, there are way more social media platforms than what I listed. This list of social media sites can go on for days, but here is the single, most important Game-Changing and Game-Winning Tip of All: Do what makes sense for you and your customers. Not every social media platform is necessary in order for you to make social media work for you. In fact, it may be best to narrow it down to just one platform before you try to have accounts all over the place. How will you ever really build real relationships with people if you can’t stay on top of all of your interactions?

Please allow me to reiterate: You do not have to try to master all the social media platforms at once. Whew! Isn’t that a relief? Now that I’ve just saved you from “being on social media” all day, read the next section for some strategies on what it really means to be an internet marketing success.
Game Changer #3

You, The Internet Savvy Marketer

Marketing your business online should be both fun and rewarding. I completely understand when marketers are concerned with the ROI (return on investment) from internet marketing and social media - I get it. You want to know if it’s worth it, how soon will you see any money from being on Facebook, is that pay-per-click ad going to bring in any profits. These are all valid concerns. I would want to know the same thing, especially since I majored in business and finance and the words “going concern,” “profitability” and “long term sustainability” are programmed into my brain. Even with all of that education, here’s what I know about social media that I never ever learned in a classroom or from a textbook:

1. Even the smallest businesses are winning with social media.
2. If you’re not going to be transparent, personable and willing to take a risk and put yourself out there so your customers will experience the real you through conversation, don’t play the game.
3. YOU can do this.

YOU are the one who will change the game to make this work for your business. YOU will be the one to invest time, and yes money, into learning about your customers, what they want, and how they interact online and make a deliberate effort to be there for them. Be present. Be involved. Be considerate. And most of all care. That’s how you’ll change the game. That’s how you will be rewarded with long term success. Your customer relationships are the biggest return on any investment you will make in marketing.

So here’s another Game Changing Tip: Consider your relationships your business assets.
Game Changer #3
You, The Internet Savvy Marketer

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Based on your relationships with your customers, how much is your business worth? What would your customers say about you and your business to their friends? That’s the real measure of how well you’re doing in this new customers-will-tell, social media economy.

Are you a game changer?

Here’s to your long term relationship-filled business success!

About The Author
Hi, I’m Lane Jones: content strategist and content manager for business professionals who want to build real relationships with their clients through social media and content marketing. I love it when my clients win with proven business strategies that work. I unashamedly confess that I love making money and most importantly I love showing other people how to make money too. It’s a win-win situation. When you need someone to help you execute game-winning marketing strategies in your business, I’m your girl. Let’s win together.

Visit my website at www.freshtakeoncontent.com for realtionship-building content strategy and content management services and the Freshtake Daily Blog. You can also connect with me live every day on Facebook at Facebook.com/contentwithlane. Stop by my page and say hello. I’d love to meet you.