



we simplify
the Internet

Inside Edge

Online Social Media is Thriving

Get Your Face in the Book, Cast a Net on the Tube

Welcome to August 2008 edition of the Inside Edge--your monthly report on Internet trends and advancements that can turn your business into a more profitable e-Business. Video sharing and social networking although still widely used for infotainment purposes are gradually gaining mainstream significance in the Internet marketing field. Statistics show that media like YouTube and Facebook have made rapid strides in adoption and usage. More importantly, the use of these modern day media for commercial purposes has made businesses sit up and take notice of their innovative uses. **How can you enhance the quality and increase the reach of targeted communication using video and social networking tools?** Read on to find out...

The marketing opportunities that the Internet provides never cease to amaze. From humble beginnings where websites became another showcase of brand identity, email addresses got corporatized, search toolbars were branded and now videos and online profiles take on brand significance. The best thing about top social media channels is that you can customize your account or profile or video channel to give it a personalized (for an individual) or branded (for an organization) look; for example: A Facebook Page. Customization offers you a sense of ownership over the community that you reach out to and network with using social utilities.

Social utility site, Facebook originally started in 2004 as a networking site for youth. Today it has over 90 million active users and is the 4th most trafficked site in the world (source: comScore). With over 15 billion page views monthly, the site is an emerging marketing armoury and a powerful one at that. Little over a year ago, the site launched the Facebook Platform allowing third party applications to run within its interface. This hugely increased the potential to use Facebook for effective viral marketing. Facebook's news feed is quickly gaining popularity as a way to keep audiences informed about a company's activities, new product launches, seasonal promotions, and so on. How do companies use Facebook to market online?

From hosting events to sharing videos, posting pictures and news articles, to writing notes, Facebook users are virtually living by its description – "Facebook is a social utility that connects you with the people around you". The key word here is '**connects**' - making the connection, spreading your message, maintaining engagement levels and creating positive reactions – these are the valuable uses of powerful media like Facebook. The 2008 US Presidential Election has seen a striking example of people forming groups to share their voices online, simply writing notes on Facebook as part of the "One Million Strong for Barack" group.

Just like any other marketing technique, the purpose of video marketing is to attract maximum exposure and impressions. With that goal in mind, marketers using video tools like YouTube work towards a goal of adding as many friends to their network as possible and then nurture that network by posting videos of interest to the group. A smart way to start is to post videos on YouTube channels that already have a good volume of subscribers. Accessing an active group of users is a quicker way to build an expanding network of "friends" who will accept your requests to connect online and can be leveraged to virally spread your video message through sharing. YouTube also offers a further step of email marketing. You can send out an email announcement to let people know that you have posted a new video. What must you keep in mind when using video sharing as a marketing tool?

Stephan Spencer on MarketingProfs.com gives these 6 top tips on YouTube marketing:

1. Focus on something fun, something that people will want to share with friends.
2. Clearly demonstrate the product you are marketing.
3. Make sure the video is real; no tricks, no "smoke and mirrors."
4. Encourage viewer participation and support, i.e. — "make your own video like ours."
5. Take advantage of YouTube tags; use adjectives to target people searching based on mood; and match your title and description to the tags.
6. Experiment!

An example of a hugely successful commercial viral campaign on YouTube is "Will It Blend?" for a company called Blendtec. The campaign was a video series on various household objects that are run through a Blendtec blender—including marbles, rake handles, and even iPods. These were actual demonstrations of "extreme blending" being done by the company. Blendtec saw a dramatic increase in sales of at-home and commercial blenders.

If your business is not leveraging the power of social media, you are losing out on this inexpensive, mostly free Internet marketing tool. Get in touch with your local WSI Consultant today and get your Face in the Book and Your Video on the Tube! And don't just stop at that... make it part of your ongoing Internet business strategy to utilize social media for brand awareness and customer outreach.

About WSI – we simplify the Internet:

WSI leads the global Internet industry offering best of breed Internet marketing solutions to suit the needs of multiple industries. Through the adoption of international best practices, use of world class technologies and strategic industry partnerships, WSI delivers online business success to its customers worldwide. The company has the world's largest Internet Consultants' network of over 1500 offices in 87 countries and a 150 person strong head office in Toronto, Canada. In 2007, WSI is the proud recipient of 3 Standard of Excellence Awards at the Annual WebAwards Competition organized by the Web Marketing Association (WMA). The company has held the Number 1 spot in Entrepreneur Magazine's Franchise 500 listing for over 7 years in a row. With the support and cooperation of its customers, franchise network, employees, suppliers and charitable organizations, WSI aims to help make child poverty history through its global outreach

program. For more information about WSI's offerings and business opportunities, please visit our websites at www.wsicorporate.com.