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## INTRODUCTION

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**T**his book is a comprehensive guide to an important topic that is impacting your business, your customers, your coworkers, and everyone connected to them. That topic is *social media*, also referred to as *Web 2.0* at times. We hope you can use this book to accomplish three of the most important goals in business:

1. Increase your revenues.
2. Improve your profitability.
3. Ensure that you remain relevant, competitive, and alive in your industry.

If you own, manage, work for, or invest in a business of any kind—this book is for you. If you collaborate with coworkers to solve problems or create systems, services, or products that make your organization more competitive or more valuable to shareholders—this book is for you. If getting more customers or selling more to current customers is important to your business—this book is for you.

Using the systematic approach presented in this book you can learn how to:

- Increase your company and brand value by engaging people in new forms of communication, collaboration, education, and entertainment.
- Determine which social media tactics you should be using with your customers and employees.
- Evaluate and categorize the tools and applications that constitute the rapidly evolving *Social Media Ecosystem*.
- Make social media tools like Facebook, MySpace, YouTube, Twitter, blogging, podcasting, and hundreds of others a part of your business strategy.
- Do a social media SWOT analysis inside your company to improve internal operations and outside your company to create and monetize relationships with customers and prospects.

- Implement social media micro and macro strategies to give your business the competitive edge it needs to survive and thrive.

## Experts and Authorities

Anyone claiming to be an authority on everything in the *Social Media Ecosystem* should be placed under a doctor's care. We can't imagine how anyone could be an absolute authority on "everything social media" given how fast new players and applications are appearing. However, we have assembled a group of people with special expertise and insights on particular aspects of social media. (A list of our experts, along with their brief bios, appears in the Biographies of Our Experts section in the back of this book.) In several chapters in this book you'll find Expert Insights in which our experts offer their perspective on the topic at hand. These selections have been edited and abridged from more extensive interviews that you can listen to in their entirety on this book's web site.

As authors, we think we're good at identifying what kinds of things you need to know about social media in order to make it work for you. In essence, we're facilitators who have a lot in common with our readers. Like you, we have people to manage, products to launch, payrolls to meet, and customers to wow.

When we began assembling this book, we asked ourselves what would make this book truly indispensable? The answer seemed clear. We needed to ensure that every chapter began with a compelling story or the best "What's In It for Me?" (WIIFM) we could summon. We decided we wouldn't include the chapter if we couldn't begin with a strong story or a compelling WIIFM. You're busy. Your time is valuable. You shouldn't have to wonder "What's in it for me?"

We are always looking for experts and authorities to contribute to the next revision of *The Social Media Bible*, new projects, and the web site, [www.theSocialMediaBible.com](http://www.theSocialMediaBible.com). We invite you to go on the web site and apply to become a contributor.

## The Audience for This Book

The audience for this book is fairly broad. You may be in sales, marketing, operations management, or human resources. You may be an entrepreneur or small business owner. Perhaps you're a senior executive at a major company (the C Suite). You could be an educator or in educational administration. (Social media, by the way, is changing the way we deliver and consume education, and this book can help you develop meaningful strategies for your institution.) You may be an investor or someone who researches particular companies or industries. It's entirely possible that you fall into

more than one of these categories. We call these categories *audience personas*, and we've tried hard to make sure that the book keeps these personas in mind as we focus on those three crucial business goals.

### Increasing Your Revenues via Social Media

The primary goal of any business is to make money. This generally means selling more goods or services to a growing customer base. Selling, advertising, and promoting what your business does is crucial to your success, and you'll find hundreds of helpful hints, tactical tidbits, and expert advice in these areas. Making money also depends on creating innovative products or offering compelling services that solve new problems or old problems in a new way. Developing, positioning, and perfecting products and services requires something different from sales and advertising; it requires good *marketing*. Too often people confuse marketing with advertising and sales. There's more to it than that.

### Your Customer as a Collaborator—A New Way of Thinking

One of our heroes is Dr. Robert Lusch at the University of Arizona. Since the late 1990s, Dr. Lusch has advocated a new way of thinking in which you view your customers as “co-producers” of your products and services. Actually, Lusch doesn't say products and services as much as he says “offering.” Your *offering* is the combination of product and service that constitutes the *complete customer experience*. By converting your customers (and potential customers) into collaborators, you are creating the optimal environment to increase your profits. Social media enables this new way of thinking.

### Improving Profitability via Social Media

Compared to making money, saving money may not seem like fun. Saving money, however, is what successful businesses do when they employ strategies to maximize their profitability. If your business can implement ways to reduce your operating costs, you'll be able to keep more of every dollar that comes in the door.

Can social media help you save money? Absolutely yes! At one of our companies, we instituted a company *wiki* to help geographically dispersed teams share insights and best practices. The wiki has become a training tool for new employees and contractors, but it also has functioned as a virtual water cooler where people meet and share ideas. Has it saved the company money? You bet! We were able to take on more clients with fewer human resources; our initial training time has decreased by 50 percent; and our

employees feel a collaborative spirit that has positively impacted moral. It's great to see talented people collaborate to identify and solve problems that, when left unsolved, cost time and money. Social media is impacting all of these *functional groups* and more within an organization.

### Remaining Relevant, Competitive, and Alive

Social media is a relatively new phrase in our business vocabulary. It's probably at the same point in its evolution from jargon term to everyday word as the term *e-commerce* was in the mid-1990s.

Many of the world's best business schools changed their curriculum and even their school names to reflect the impact they thought e-commerce was having on the world of business. There was a scramble to understand how to harness the power of e-commerce. You could hear the heartbeats of entrepreneurs as they ran toward this new frontier. There was discernable fear among the established brick-and-mortar folks. There were sages and cynics. It was an exciting time to be sure. What did all of these people have in common? They wanted to make sure that their organizations remained relevant and competitive in a world where the rules were changing.

So here we are with social media, and the same thing is happening. There's a scramble to understand. But social media encompasses a much broader range of players, activities, and rules than e-commerce ever did. Arguably, e-commerce is a component of social media. In a 2008 survey conducted by Content Connections, 67 percent of the 664 people surveyed did not feel as though they could offer an exact and meaningful definition of social media. Yet, 99 percent of them felt that social media was going to impact their lives and the way we all do business.

It doesn't require an MBA or years of business experience to conclude that when people can't define something, but overwhelmingly believe it will impact their lives and the business environment around them, perspective becomes crucial to success.

So how do we aim to offer you perspective? By organizing this book and its companion web site in a way that will help you digest the basic facts, terminology, history, and applications of social media and then help you develop and implement a social media strategy that is customized for your organization.

## The Organization of This Book

We hope you'll read all of this book, but the way you read it will depend on what you're looking for and how quickly you need to find it. The book is part *reference work*, part *how-to manual*, and part *business strategy* book. You can

begin with any part of the book and then go to those chapters in other parts of the book that have a natural connection. If you're relatively new to social media, we suggest that you spend some time going through each part in order.

Part I introduces you to social media and gives you a helpful framework for understanding how various social media tools and applications are categorized. You'll also get some practical and tactical tips for using some of these tools. Part II introduces you to over 100 social media tools and applications in 15 different categories. You'll get a quick exposure to the features and functions of tools that can become part of your social media strategy. We include a handy *tool scorecard* for each group of tools to help you assess their value to your company. In Part III, you are provided with mini exercises and assessments to help you conduct a social media SWOT analysis on your company. You are then guided through a process of crafting and launching social media strategies that you have customized to the unique needs of your business.

### The Web Site—An Interactive and Evolving Extension of the Book

This book and its web site, [www.theSocialMediaBible.com](http://www.theSocialMediaBible.com), have been designed to work together to *organize* and *present* useful information that extends the material in the book. More importantly, the web site is an effective way to *experience* and *share* information among our community of readers. Here's what you'll find there:

- Examples of *best practices* from people and organizations who are already living in the social media ecosystem. What could be more valuable than first-hand reports highlighting successes and failures with different social media applications and strategies? Some of these take the form of case studies, and some are more casual, random even.
- *Links* to blogs, podcasts, and other resources that make it easier for you to capture and employ new strategies and tactics.
- *Interviews with people mentioned in the chapter*: We recorded many of our research interviews via digital audio or video. We edited them and posted them for relevant chapters. Some of these will have appeared already in a podcast, but we archived them for your use. We'll do the same with our user-generated content whenever possible. That is, we'll welcome, vet, and post interviews done by members of *The Social Media Bible* community.

- *Downloadable forms and templates:* If you're involving other people from your organization in any of the activities in this book, you'll find the downloadable exercises, forms, and templates from key chapters helpful.

## Explore and Experiment

You need to explore and experiment with social media. We encourage you to proceed with a creative and collaborative spirit. Let us know what you think. Share your experiences with others. We encourage you to participate in the exploration of this new and evolving world.

Finally, we recognize that this book is not perfect. In writing a comprehensive guide to a topic that is as rapidly evolving as social media, we expect, unfortunately, that there will be errors and omissions. We may also offer a perspective in some chapters that is different from what others in this space might have already said. Heck, as authors we didn't always agree with each other. (Lon was the more passionate promoter of "everything social media" and David was the occasional skeptic, looking for the second and third order consequences of using a specific social media application or employing a particular tactic or strategy.) If our words should invite debate among readers and experts, we welcome the dialogue. Social media is about conversation. Social media also creates an atmosphere of self-correction. The wisdom of the many really is greater than the wisdom of the few. Although many people have reviewed and commented on the content in this book, we especially welcome your comments. We have set up a special online review for this book at [www.theSocialMediaBible.com](http://www.theSocialMediaBible.com).

Thank you for joining us on this exciting journey into the new world of social media.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

**T**his project was the largest and most passionate undertaking of my career and using social media to create a book on social media was by far the most enlightening.

When I first created the plan to write a book on social media, I thought it was going to be another typical business book; 250 pages, 20 plus chapters 50,000 words, the typical business book formula.

Then I realized that it was not only in my best interest to use social media, but also in a way I was required to use social media to create this book. I knew that if I asked the business community what they wanted in a book and wrote it that way, the book would be successful. What I didn't know at the time was the magnitude of the journey I was about to take.

We brought the initial concept of the book on social media to more than 1,000 people. They were mostly professionals with annual incomes over \$100,000; most had college degrees, from Associates up to PhDs.

Of more than 1,000 surveyed, 66.4 percent said that they could not define what social media was, while 99.1 percent said that they knew social media would have a significant effect on them and their businesses. Let me restate this, two-thirds of these professionals didn't know what it was, but nearly 100 percent knew it was going to affect them. This is whom this book is dedicated to.

By using user-generated content and feedback, I also learned that the business community didn't want just another vertical business book; they wanted something much more comprehensive. They asked for a book that first explains, What are all of these things we keep hearing about? What's a blog, a vlog, a podcast? What is a "trusted network" and "wisdom of the crowds"? What is LinkedIn, MySpace, Flickr, and YouTube? So this became the blueprint for Part I, which in itself is a business book on the tactics of social media.

They then asked for a guide. They asked, Who are the players? Where do I post a video, or a podcast? What's the most used photograph-sharing site? So this became the second business book, or guide to the social media players. This section is Part II, the Tools.

Finally, they wanted a book that could pull all of this together answering the questions: “How do I use social media in my business? How can I incorporate this in my business plan? How do I make money using social media? Where’s the ROI? How will this change the way I do business?” This became Part III of the book, Strategy.

We approached John Wiley & Sons, Inc. with a concept of three full-sized business books (two business books sandwiching a guide). They trusted the “wisdom of the crowds” and the result is *The Social Media Bible*.

*The Social Media Bible* is an aggregation of blogs, vlogs, podcasts, wikis, e-mails, and conversations. *The Social Media Bible* is a collection of other books and resources. It’s a collection because I could never profess that I am an expert in all of the 15 social media categories identified including all of their nuances. I can’t even profess that I am an expert in any one category. What I have done is pulled together information that many people have contributed.

Thank you to Jimmy Wales for creating Wikipedia and the Wikimedia Foundation and to all of the people from around the world who have contributed to Wikipedia providing such a valuable resource of cumulative human knowledge.

I want to personally thank all of the nearly 50 corporate partners who shared their expert insights both in the book and their executive conversations at [www.theSocialMediaBible.com](http://www.theSocialMediaBible.com).

A heartfelt thank you goes out to my company partners and closest friends Geoff Clough and Linh Tang who picked up the slack at the company, allowing me to write and often to vent. Thank you also goes to Evo Terra for his *Podcasting For Dummies* book, bloggers like David Risley for his top 50 blog tips, and to my friends and colleagues: Steven Groves for all of his ideas; Francine Hardaway, Dan Nienhauser, Steve Zylstra, Joan Koerber-Walker, and Doug Bruhnke for their introductions; Amanda Vega for her help with PR and insights; Dan Willis for persevering through Microsoft red tape; Sean Tierney for inspiring me to do podcasts; Glenn Batuyong for helping with the web site and his technical edits; Cindy and Steve Bauer for their cabin hideaway in the mountains of Pinetop, Arizona, which prevented my writer’s block from setting in; Joanne Zimakas for her incredible transcription skills and attention to detail of the more than 24 continuous hours of executive interviews; and to Nancy and Bill Lauterbach at Five Star Speakers who were willing to book me to speak about social media even when no one knew what I was talking about.

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and fighting for this unusual book; Kim Dayman for her marketing and design insights, which really put the polish on the design; Shannon Vargo for her incredible author wrangling skills, which allowed the book to be published; to Christine Moore for her insightful and meticulous editing talent, which made this book intelligible; Beth Zipko for pulling it all together to make the book complete; and Lauren Freestone for making this book look good!

And I want to mostly thank my wife Sherrie for working so hard both at work and around the house, for without her painting the deck, trimming the bushes, and taking care of business, I never would have been free from distraction and able to write. Forever and for always . . .

I hear the orchestra beginning to play, signaling that my time is up. So . . . THANK YOU!

—Lon Safko

On a warm Saturday morning in July of 2007 Lon Safko and I met at a bagel shop in Phoenix, Arizona, where we both live. We had never met before, but a mutual friend, Joan Koerber-Walker, had suggested that we get together. Lon wanted to write a book on social media; he could see the wave approaching and wanted “to be on the front end of it,” as he told me. Joan knew that my company, Content Connections, specialized in helping publishers and authors use social media to develop, hone, and promote their content. From Joan’s perspective it seemed like a perfect match.

What began as a favor for a friend turned into a pro-bono research project and then a co-authoring opportunity that has been one of the more interesting experiences of my life. (I will never look at a bagel quite the same way.)

This book is the result of a lot of hard work by a lot of people, and Lon has already thanked many of them. As for me, let me first thank Lon for his passion about social media. As an experienced book publisher it was a rewarding challenge for me to harness that passion. As a coauthor it was an educational though sometimes bemusing experience to get two different world views and working styles to mesh. As Kurt Vonnegut refrained in his masterpiece, *Slaughterhouse-Five*, “so it goes.”

I’d like to thank several people without whom this book would not have been possible. First, there are several people at Content Connections who worked behind the scenes to get this book completed. On a daily basis Content Connections helps publishers create and engage a community around content. The folks at “CC” certainly helped me on a daily basis, and I appreciate their efforts. They include Holly McAllister, who runs the AuthorBound program. (AuthorBound is a division of Content Connections

and specializes in working with individual authors to help them realize their dream of successfully publishing a book. The AuthorBound program has helped several authors secure publishing contracts with major publishing houses as well as navigate their way through a social media ecosystem that is changing the publishing world. You can learn more about how the AuthorBound program works by visiting them at [www.authorbound.com](http://www.authorbound.com). Holly is always ready to do whatever needs to be done to make a project successful. I would like to thank the senior management team at CC, Craig Beytien and Roland Elgey, professional colleagues yes, but experienced publishers and good friends who took on extra assignments (that would have gone to me) so I could have the time to work on this book. Holly, Craig, and Roland also gave me a lot of input and numerous timely articles and tidbits from the media on the topic of social media.

Scott Lunt and Margaret Thompson provided insight, support, and contributions to the book for which I am grateful. A small team of researchers and writers helped me compile the profiles in Part II of the book. They include Miachelle DePiano, Dawn Davis, Sarah Wray, Brandon Billings, Katie McAllister, Haley McAllister-Birkeland. Many thanks guys.

Finally, I'd like to thank my family for their ongoing support. Thank you Kristy, Aisling, Sydney, Adam, and Matthew. A lot happened in their lives as I worked on this book, yet their love and encouragement was always there. Writing a book is a process with a beginning and an end, but families are forever. Indeed.

—David K. Brake