

# Finding ROI in the Most Buzzed About Social Media Site

## *By Brian E. Whitaker*

"If you've read about social media or been to any marketing conferences, you've probably heard tons of advice like love your customers, engage in the conversation, be yourself, and make friends ... But, there's a problem. Myths aren't real and superstitions often do more harm than good."

*-Dan Zarrella, Zarrella's Hierarchy of Contagiousness*

Many social media 'gurus,' 'strategists,' 'evangelists,' or whatever the in-fashion descriptor is this week, will tell you that social media solves all ills. It's supposed to be a cure-all, an immediate fix-it, an opportunity to be distinctive, to demonstrate your hip, 'I'm cool because I get it' insight and style.

But, that view is disconnected from the hard, fundamental fact of business — activities must demonstrate positive ROI.

Return On Investment.

Why is ROI so important? Because it's a measure of effort vs. impact. It's basically profit divided by expense. And, much social media advice points you toward effort (which is an expense) without benefit.

On the one hand, I'd be delighted to be an hip media pundit, beloved by millions, but on the other hand, without ROI, I won't have much of an opportunity to help my clients.

Many new copywriters spend dozens or hundreds of hours trying to make social media work for them for networking and connecting with potential clients. But, they fail to uncover or demonstrate real value to those prospects. They treat social media as something they just do without assigning an expense to it. To me, that sounds like a hobby that's a fast track to business failure and disillusionment.

I want to help you use social media in effective ways that will help you find clients.

To do that, you need to start delivering value with your social media efforts and start communicating with the right audience of prospects. If you are doing B2B marketing, you need to find B2B marketing managers. **You need to be at the right party.**

Here's a story from long ago. When I started college, my declared major was biomedical engineering. Within days on campus, I realized the engineering school was the wrong place for me. Why? Three reasons.

1. I didn't like artificial limbs. Seriously — I wasn't passionate about artificial limbs. Go figure.
2. I couldn't talk to fledging engineers about the stuff that did interest me — music and theatre and art and science and history.
3. And, the big issue that really confronted me — there weren't any girls.

I was clearly **at the wrong party**. So, I moved to the other side of campus, found something I was passionate about, started having interesting conversations, and occasionally got to hang out with girls.

Looking at the situation from a marketer's perspective — I found an audience where my messages would resonate. What I was, what I said, and how I said it fit the needs and expectations of my new audience.

And, that's the key failing of so many people who start looking for clients with social media. They're talking to the wrong audience.

But, here's an insider's secret. Many companies send their best marketers to a party on a hidden social media site — right now. It happens 24 days a week, 365 days a year. But, it's not any of the sites you'd think to visit.

## It's a party ... on YouTube

YouTube is, by many measures, the second most popular search engine in the United States, and the third most popular social media site.

I bet you don't think of it as a social media site, do you? But it is. Mashable points out that YouTube is the most buzzed about social media service as it delivers something for everyone with very high satisfaction ratings. Like fuzzy bunnies? YouTube is for you. Like scooters? YouTube is for you. Like Infiniband or CRM software? YouTube is for you.

It's one of the best hotspots for B2B and B2C technology marketers today. Think of it as the marketers' favorite hotspot. And, it's been hot for years. YouTube isn't a Friendster or Craigslist or Groupon — it's a stable, beneficial, essential platform for tens of thousands of B2B companies. Why?

## Videos generate ROI

I need you to try something. Go to YouTube, think of a B2B product you're interested in, say Cisco switches or Eloqua marketing automation software. Then, run a YouTube search like "Cisco switch demo."

You will start discovering dozens of videos written by and starring B2B marketers and technologists.

Creating these videos has become a standard practice for B2B companies. Many companies have official YouTube channels to promote these videos to their customers, drive subscriptions, deliver warm sales leads, and educate recent purchasers.

Why? Because video gets results. On one of the dell.com subsidiary sites, 62 percent of the most frequently viewed pages are videos. And, understanding how companies in your niche use video can help you uncover prospects, demonstrate value, and drive success for your clients.

Here are my suggestions on places to start.

- Pick companies you want to target.
- Search for their videos and write down the names of people who appear in the videos. Many of those people will be your target audience — B2B marketing managers.
- Use the videos to educate yourself about the company's technology. This is a good opportunity to build acumen so you can display credibility.

As you educate yourself, you can learn a great deal about how a prospective client likes to present themselves to customers. That research will make you a better copywriter. As you're listening and watching, ask questions like:

- Who is the target audience? Are they talking to users, influencers, or buyers?
- Are they talking about features, functions, and benefits?
- Are they using customer testimonials?
- Do they publish marketing videos or product demos?
- Do they stick with one central idea or are they trying to pack too many ideas into a single video?
- How would you re-write the video to make it more impactful?

In my next article, I'll teach you how to take the next step and use social media tools to find these people and make contact. As an exercise, start working through videos in your niche and see if you can find a list of 20 marketers you'd like to target. In future articles, we'll explore new social media strategies for taking the steps you'll need to find the best B2B clients out there.

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## 2 Responses to "Finding ROI in the Most Buzzed About Social Media Site"

Another very useful piece, Brian.

Reading an article like this, written by a senior B2B marketer (as opposed to a copywriter, no matter how experienced/successful) is very valuable, since the perspective is completely different.

I look forward to the next few articles.

Thanks again, Brian.

*Guest (Rombas)* – over a year ago

I agree with Rombas. I am a former Liberal Arts (English) major who converted to the Engineering world (during school), and I like the Technical Writing flavor of the B2B marketing (and Brian's articles). I never lost my love for the humanities, but couldn't figure a way to make a living! I wish AWAI had opened its doors in the 80s!!

*DebCarr* – over a year ago

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**American Writers & Artists Institute**

220 George Bush Blvd, Suite D

Delray Beach, FL 33444

(561) 278-5557 or (866) 879-2924