

best platform for your business.

There's no doubt that social media has become an essential marketing tool to help increase exposure for businesses, but it requires constant interaction and can be a full-time job on its own, explains Michael Kava.

Is there a day that goes by when we don't hear the term 'social media' being used? Whether it's seminars we go to and listen to social media 'experts' telling us to get 'social', or it's the newspaper you pick up telling you to do the same, SME business owners are overawed with the amount of social media commentary out there, either as advice or general chatter. SME business owners want it real, not sugarcoated.

Social Media is not rocket science. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or YouTube, all of these Gen Y driven phenomena are all just another new vehicle by which we are able to communicate our business, and our lives for that matter, to the outside world.

Each medium has its own way of addressing their audience. Like radio, websites, newspaper ads, flyers, workshops, events, they are all a tool of communication. The uniqueness that social media brings to the technologically savvy society is the way we can communicate with it. Social media tends to be more informal. It generally creates a dialogue with members and quite often can generate discussion.

Social media creates an opportunity to keep in contact with your clients, current and prospective. So the question is, how much of your business do people want to know? How much contact is too much, and how much is not enough? I can't tell you what the right answer is for your business because I'm not one to give blanket suggestions or advice, but these questions would be some of the bits and pieces you need to ask yourself if you're going to spend resources on using social media as a communication tool for your business.

Not all social media platforms work for all types of businesses, and some work better than others depending on your industry. Things that need to be considered are who is your audience and are they social media savvy? If your target market is older, social media is likely not to be as effective. If you are a small business with a young clientele, social media will be very effective for you – if executed properly.

When social media is a right fit for your business, some of the things it can be great for are updates on new products, new brands, new recruits, new events, photos, videos, client wins, opinions, debates, blogs, forums, discussions and general exposure.

Certainly, get onboard the 'social media' train to Graceland. Create a profile, but don't be overcome by all the endless possibilities, just get in there and get involved if you think it's relevant to your business. LinkedIn and Facebook are other great examples of how you can promote your business. By creating a company profile you cannot only advertise your brand and its services, but also post relevant information, create discussion boards, advertise jobs available and much more.

Small business owner you have the advantage of having a more targeted approach and a more defined audience on social media, so use this to your advantage and start communicating in this new era now.

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