

THE B2B Social Media Book

**Become a
Marketing 
Superstar**

by Generating Leads with
Bgging, LinkdIn,
Twitter, Facebk,
E-Mil, *and More*

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Inbound Marketing Strategist, HubSpot

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E-Mail, and More

Kipp Bodnar and Jeffrey L. Cohen



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*For my parents who taught me how to learn and teach.
And for Tera, who constantly makes me better at both.*

—K.B.

*For Peter and Grace, even though you are not B2B
marketers, you wound up in my book.*

—J.L.C.

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Foreword

This is the book I've been waiting for.

Does that sound like a bloated overstatement? It's not. It's true.

Ever since social media tools started to emerge in the business world, they've been simultaneously pilloried and championed, scorned and lionized—depending on your point of view or the kind of business you're in.

And that's part of the problem, isn't it?

Social tools and platforms have helped sell airline seats on Southwest, shoes on Zappos, T-shirts on Threadless, or laptops on Dell.com. But those high-profile consumer-based success stories are easily dismissed by business-to-business (B2B) types who don't see the same link between social media and B2B sales.

How can a set of tools that puts butts in airline seats actually make a difference in the B2B world? How can a platform that racks up T-shirt sales matter to me? What works so well for one can't possibly work for the other, right?

Wrong. This is why I started this foreword saying that this is a book I've been anticipating. (And I'm thrilled that it's here and that you're now reading it, of course.)

The truth is that social media can be as perfectly aligned to B2B sales as a ball bearing is to its groove. And here's why.

B2B businesses don't facilitate one-off deals like T-shirts or flip-flops. Rather, they build relationships for pricier, more complex, and longer-term sales. They educate their prospects and act as a resource to them throughout the decision process. In short, they lay the groundwork for a long-term relationship, not a one-off transaction.

In that way, as a B2B marketer you are way ahead of the curve—or at least your business-to-consumer (B2C) brethren. You are already in the business of generating leads and nurturing them. You already have a crystal

clear understanding of who your customer is. You already have the kind of in-house expertise you need to create content that will resonate with your prospects because it's what they crave. You already have a perspective and point of view that differentiates your brand.

Social media, then, is an opportunity—not a burden. Social media gives you a new way to reach more people, to hone what you already know and share it with your audience in a new way, to amplify what you already are saying, to engage and be enjoyably interesting, to be human, to have a little fun—and so to connect with your prospects and customers in a powerful way.

I didn't use the phrase *enjoyably interesting* lightly in that last sentence. Creating fun and interesting content and amplifying its reach with social tools can humanize your business. It can give you an opportunity to show personality and point of view in an appealing, engaging way that sets you apart from your competitors. Since your content is often on the front lines—it's what reaches your prospects even before your sales team—"enjoyably interesting" can be a differentiator in the B2B space. (See the stories in this book for more specifics on what I'm talking about.)

I didn't use the word *powerful* in that previous paragraph lightly either. Because I believe that social media does indeed have the power to transform your B2B company in significant ways. The problem is that many companies get caught up in the tools: How can we possibly sell solder paste on Twitter? What's the use of a Facebook group for our enterprise software solution? But the tools are merely that: tools. The real benefit—as with any other gizmo—comes from how you use it.

And that's where this book comes in. This is the book that strips out the hype surrounding tools and platforms and shows you—with how-to blueprints and frameworks—how you can generate and nurture business leads through social media. It shows you how you can integrate social media with your existing programs. It shows you how you can use content you create to educate and nurture prospects. And—*bonus!*—it spells out how you, the B2B marketer, can be the hero at your company because the marketing department will be contributing to the bottom line in a tangible, measurable way.

As someone who has spent most of her career as a writer and editor for B2B publications, I'm practically allergic to content that doesn't deliver on the how-to. I'm talking about books or articles or any kind of content that's all strategy and theory and never quite manages to offer a blueprint or implementation framework.

Theory has its place, of course. But in my experience, businesses are more anxious to know *how* to do something (*how* to build a client base, *how* to create momentum, *how* to grow revenue) than they are interested in knowledge for the sake of pure intellectual curiosity.

Kipp Bodnar and Jeff Cohen are doers, and they deliver on their promise to show you *how*, not just *why*. I love that.

You're going to love it, too. But more important, you're going to use it. It's going to matter. It's going to make a difference. So . . . get to it!

—Ann Handley

Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs;

Coauthor of *Content Rules:*

*How to Create Killer Blogs, Podcasts, Videos, Ebooks,
Webinars (and More) That Engage Customers and Ignite
Your Business* (John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2011);

Monthly Lead Gen columnist, *Entrepreneur Magazine*

Introduction

We Didn't Wake Up One Day and Write This Book

Welcome business-to-business (B2B) marketers! The book you are reading didn't happen overnight. We are so excited we can barely hold back the whoops and the high fives.

In a moment we will tell you how we got here, but to start we wanted to address two things.

First, for those of you who are considering buying this book, if you are happy with the status quo at work, don't want to get noticed, and are not interested in adding to the bottom line of your B2B company, this book isn't for you. We would rather you not buy this book than get frustrated with the possibilities of a future that you are unwilling to invest in. For the rest of you, again, welcome to the most important book you will read this year.

The second thing is to answer the question, Why? Why in the digital millennium, when everything is online, would two online guys write and distribute a traditional book about an online topic?

Even with all the changes that the social web has brought to marketers, from tools to opportunities, there is something comforting about a book. It can sit on your shelf. It can sit on your desk. You can read it at home or on a plane. You can easily share it with a colleague. You can share it with your boss. You can give a copy to your partners, vendors, and customers.

In the current work environment, traditional business books still make sense. The numbers from our publisher bear this out, but of course it is available in an electronic form as well.

How We Got Here

The story of this book starts in the fall of 2008. That's more than three years ago. Think about that in the context of your social media planning. What was your B2B company doing with social media back then? Unless you work for a technology company or a marketing agency, it is unlikely that social media marketing was on your radar.

And what were we doing? After several years of being active in social media on a personal level, both of us were working for B2B marketing agencies, starting to explore how they could use blogging for business. We both knew that most B2B companies had not adopted social media strategies but that it would be coming. Kipp registered the domain SocialMediaB2B.com. Jeff was monitoring Twitter for mentions of B2B. There were only a handful every day.

Early in 2009 we discussed the possibility of starting a blog at Kipp's domain. We were both marketers with a great understanding of social media. We knew that one way to influence adoption by B2B marketers was to share best practices, examples, and new ideas and platforms that could be leveraged for success. We also talked about how the blog could lead to speaking engagements at conferences. And one day could lead us to write a book. The book that we once dreamed of is the one you are holding right now.

We launched the site about a month later to little fanfare. Early posts were thoughtful but uneven as we tried to find both our voice and our audience. Some companies that were profiled at that time are included in this book (Boeing and Indium, to name two). So when we advise marketers that you need to start writing and power through the idea that nobody but your mom is reading, we did it too. Of course, our blog was about B2B marketing, so even our moms didn't read it.

The more we wrote, the more we developed an audience. We started getting traffic from search. Our domain name was the topic of the site. We also made sure that post titles featured keywords. The audience continued to grow, and our voice as experts on social media for B2B companies began to spread. In the spring of 2011 we decided it was time to write this book.

Adoption of social media by B2B companies did not happen as fast as we had expected. Many companies that had started using social media didn't understand why. They didn't understand how to determine the

return on investment (ROI). That's because they weren't focused on lead generation. If you are not driving revenue, or leads as their proxy, it is difficult to measure the return. That's why lead generation is the cornerstone of this book.

If you don't want to increase revenue, this book is not for you.

There are many things that social media can do to help a company, and there are many functions that can be enhanced by a social media approach. The problem is that management might not pay for it. Or they might not be able to afford it. If you can start by showing that social media can generate revenue, now you are onto something. Executives understand dollars.

This Book Is an Offer

The biggest difference between our blog and the lessons you will learn as you read this book is that we were focused on education on the blog, not our own lead generation. Our blog posts did not include offers and calls-to-action for almost three years. But guess what? If you bought this book through our site, you might have clicked on one of those calls-to-action. This book is now our offer, and you chose to accept it in exchange for your hard-earned dollars—and now your attention.

We spent three years giving away remarkable content and building an audience for that content. So when we released this book, its purchase became an easy exchange to pay us back for sharing our thoughts and knowledge about social media. The cost of this book is a small price to pay for up to three years of hundreds and hundreds of blog posts that have helped you understand social media in a B2B context.

This book is actionable, including exercises to complete along the way. Because of this, we hope that you will keep this book on your desk, not your bookshelf. We don't want to be only top of mind, but top of desk. This will make it easier to make sure you are completing the steps to marketing superstardom.

You Want More Examples?

Many social media books are filled with interviews and examples of social media success. A good portion of this book establishes the framework and the fundamentals for using social media for lead generation. The examples

and interviews we included represent those B2B companies and marketers who understand not just what they are doing but why they are doing it.

The adoption curve for social media for B2B companies has been a lot longer than we anticipated three years ago. On top of that, few companies are successfully using social media for lead generation. If you can master the ideas in this book, marketing superstardom is in your sights.

What Did We Miss?

Just over a month before we finalized this manuscript, Google launched their social network, Google+. It roared out of the gate with huge adoption and many wondered if it was a Facebook killer or a Twitter killer. Incorporating elements of both, plus a requirement to organize your connections from the start in a series of circles, many people enjoyed the experience of building personal profiles and sharing content with their new networks. Part of its early success was due to users' familiarity with social networks. Others wondered where they would find the time for another social network.

Businesses were asked not to set up personal profiles, as robust business profiles were coming soon. As you are reading this, you probably know about business profiles, if Google stuck to their announced timeline. One of the compelling elements of publishing information on Google+ is that you can segment your information by using circles to divide prospects, leads, and customers. The principles of driving business through social media do not change with every new social network that opens.

Are You Ready to Go?

Get ready to learn how social media can change your business and make you a marketing superstar. This book focuses on social media for lead generation. We provide theory, strategy, and tactics, as well as actionable steps to get you started.

These are not small steps. They may be the biggest ones you will take in your career. They will change your perception of marketing. They will change others' perception of you. Self-actualization and career advancement will be achieved through social media lead generation. Those are pretty huge goals for a book. We did our part. Now it's your turn. It may not be an easy journey—and it won't be a short-term prospect—but it will be worthwhile.

As you are reading the book, go to B2BSocialMedia.com. Oh yeah, we registered the complementary domain to our blog along the way. Seems like the perfect site to support a book called *The B2B Social Media Book*. All the endnotes and examples are on the site and organized by chapter. This way you can easily click for more details about reference materials and company examples. While you are there, subscribe to our regular updates to stay informed on the most recent B2B social media trends.

We have a second offer for you. Go to B2BWorkbook.com for a companion workbook to take the lessons from this book even further. If you want to learn to work even smarter, we have more information and guidance for you. Go get the workbook now!

We held back on offers for so long and they just keep coming. Join an exclusive group of B2B marketers who are willing to stand up and call themselves superstars. Go to B2BSuperStars.com to sign up for access to exclusive webinars, bonus material, and the ability to collaborate with other B2B superstars.

And finally, thank you. Whether you have been following our blog since the early days or you bought this book without having heard of SocialMediaB2B.com, we really appreciate you letting us share these ideas with you.

We would love to hear what you think about our approach to social media lead generation. Please use #B2BSM whenever you mention the book online. This will let us easily find references to it, and will also start to link common conversations about B2B social media. And we definitely want to hear about your transformation into a marketing superstar. Please reach out to us and let us know how you liked the book.

We would also appreciate if you shared a review of the book on Amazon (<http://amzn.to/b2bsm2>).

Thank you!

—Kipp Bodnar

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PART

I

The Fundamentals of Social Media Lead Generation

Why B2B Is Better at Social Media Than B2C



Be a marketing superstar. It isn't any more difficult than being ordinary. As a business-to-business (B2B) marketer, you are a core contributor to the growth and success of your company. It is your hard work, balancing the demands of generating quality leads on a limited budget that helps fuel the sales team. Unfortunately, this hard work and diligence often goes underappreciated.

Seventy-three percent of chief executive officers (CEOs) believe marketers are not able to demonstrate how their strategies and campaigns help increase their organizations' top line in terms of more customer demand, sales, prospects, conversions, and market share. This is according to the "2011 Global Marketing Effectiveness Program"¹ by Fournaise Marketing Group.

End this false perception today!

B2B social media marketing is a new set of marketing tools that integrates with existing marketing strategies to help you work smarter instead of harder. When done well, social media marketing can reduce marketing expense, increase lead volume, and provide a clear and measurable return on investment for your marketing dollars. Don't fall victim to the marketing status quo.

The Marketing Status Quo

For decades, B2B marketers would start the year off with a marketing budget and then divide it among print publications, industry trade shows, and some direct mail campaigns. This process involved renting attention from someone else. Renting is expensive.