

# KEYS

## To Social Media Marketing

# SUCCESS

BY PAM LONTOS

**S**ocial Media Marketing (SMM) is the latest buzz in the marketing and public relations realm. And as with any new publicity tool, people have a wealth of questions on how to best utilize it.

SMM takes viral marketing to the extreme. Just as you can send friends your favorite jokes via e-mail, with SMM people can spread your message for you, with just the click of a button. It's a good type of "virus" that you hope your message gets infected with.

In order to ensure that SMM works for you in a positive way, you need to employ some keys for success. The following guidelines will help.

### **Put Your Message on the Right sites**

There are literally hundreds, if not thousands, of social media sites online today. What you need to do is determine where your market is and post your media messages on those sites. You don't want to be

on the wrong sites, this would be a waste of your time and potentially even hurt your credibility. If your topic is business growth or personal fitness, for example, you don't want to be on a SMM site that caters to people interested in baking. This simply doesn't make sense. With SMM, being anywhere and everywhere is not the answer. Be strategic and target your specific market for the best results.

Also, realize that your market may change. Just because a certain

Be deliberate with the use of  
**SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING**  
for your business; ensure that you actually project  
the image and message you intend.

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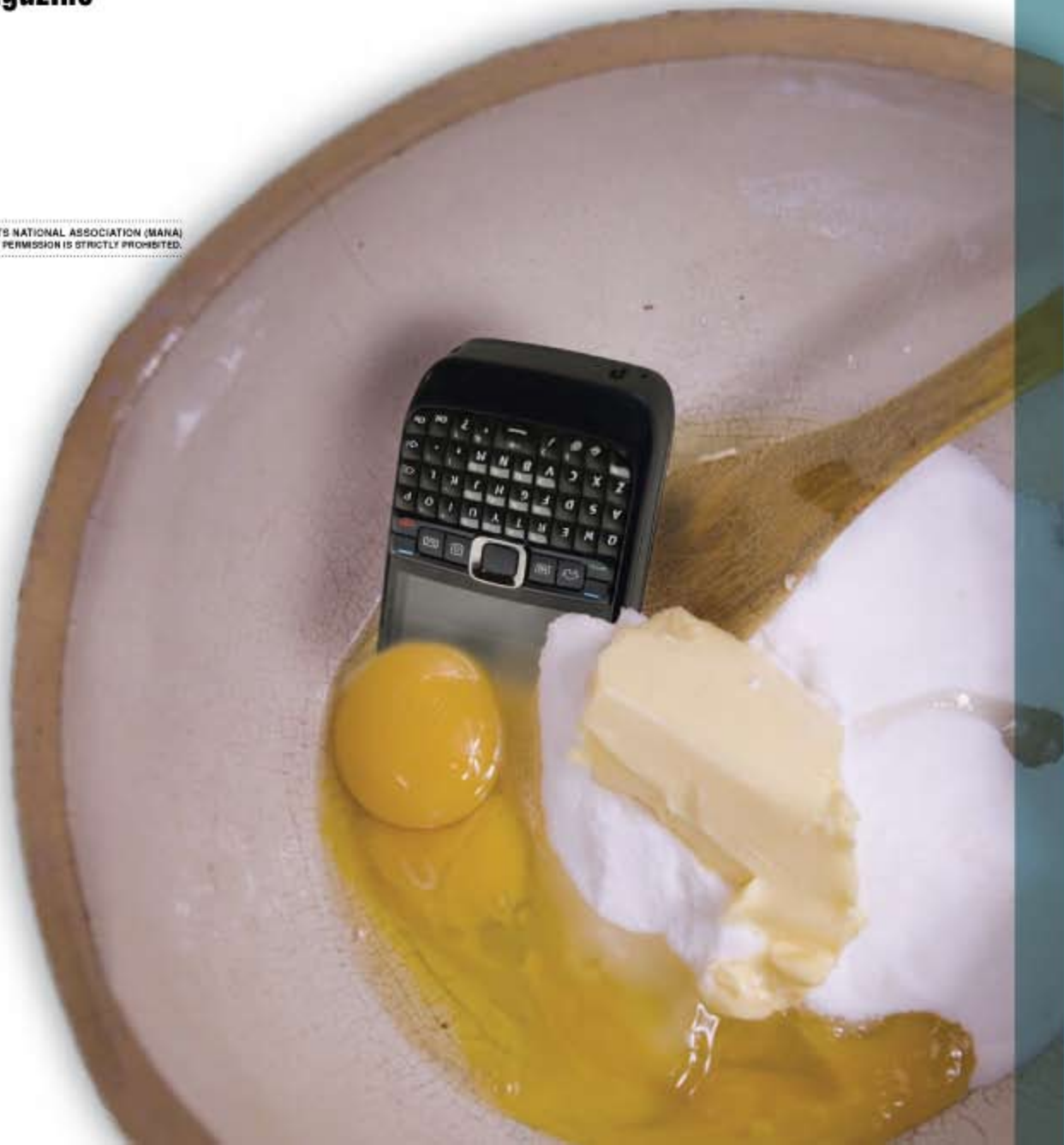
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SMM site attracts your market today, doesn't mean it will tomorrow. People are fickle in SMM and they get bored easily. For example, LinkedIn almost fell out of existence in November 2008. If they had not moved themselves to where their market had shifted, they would not be here today. They are now back to being the largest business SMM site on the Internet, but they had to make a huge shift in the services they provide because of the shift in their market. Once the market moves, it tends to go en masse. If you are not watching your market it may no longer be present on the social site where you're posting your messages – your message goes to the bakers again.

#### **Understand the Purpose of Each Site**

Just as you want to post on the right SMM site, you also want to know the goal or focus of each site. Most people, even those new to

SMM, have likely heard of the big three SMM sites: LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter.

LinkedIn is the leading business-networking site – think of it as a corporate boardroom setting. Facebook is for keeping tabs on personal and business contacts; if you use it for business, think of it like entertaining clients in your living room. Twitter is for short sound bite updates – think of it as your company's billboard message.

A couple of others you may not have heard of, but that are useful for business are Naymz and Plaxo. Naymz is a reputation site. By registering, you are essentially doing a background check on yourself and posting it to the Internet. It's a well-respected site among corporate decision-makers, whom often use Naymz to check out people. If you are well respected on Naymz, it goes a long way for C-level people.

Plaxo is a hub site. It allows you to link and connect multiple

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Internet resources in a single place. People can go there and find their way to learning everything about you, if you choose to allow that. It is one of the sites that nearly knocked LinkedIn off the top last year.

For business purposes, you may want to stay away from MySpace. MySpace often leaves a bad taste in the mouth of corporate America. There have been more internal corporate scandals and sexual harassment suits in the past year over things posted on MySpace than on any other social networking site. If you currently do have a MySpace page, hide it.

### Think in Sound Bites

Anyone who has done any type of communications in the past – print, TV or radio – knows the importance of the sound bite message. The same rule holds true when doing SMM. You want your sound bite message to be original, useful, valuable, fun, problem solving and interesting. And you have to encapsulate your message in 140 characters (not words) or less. Therefore, your message must be succinct.

The 140-character limit is not a random number. The fact is the rule of 140 characters is the international convention for text messages to cell phones. Remember, your goal is for people to take your message and pass it along, or to have it forwarded to their cell phone when your message comes out. You don't want the end of your message cut off because it was too long for the cell phone to display. And don't think you can take your long message and split it up into two or more feeds. That's called giving a double message or a split, and people tend to get annoyed by such tactics. Do that too often and you'll quickly lose all your followers.


### Post Your Messages Responsibly

A common question is: "How often should I be posting messages on these sites? Daily? Twice a day? Hourly?" Unfortunately, many people post too often and abuse the airways. They send too many messages, which has two very negative effects. First, you become an interruption rather than a welcome interlude. People who are following you and having your messages

forwarded to their cell phones are constantly being interrupted by you. Now you're a nuisance.

The other problem is that search engines are designed to ignore these 140-character messages. However, there are strategic ways around that rule so your messages become the alerts. The problem is that the search engines only allow a certain number of alerts per source and it varies per search engine. If the search engines see too many messages coming from you during their standard interval period, they could flag you as a search engine "spammer" and lock you out. So the best posting interval right now is every 48 hours, as that's how long it takes for a message to go through the Internet.

### Take Your Publicity to New Levels of Success

SMM is the wave of the future. When you combine your SMM efforts with your traditional PR avenues, you can create a publicity campaign that gets you noticed by prospects, clients and key decision-makers. The sooner you put SMM to work for you, the more profitable your business can be. 

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Lontos is president of PR/PR Public Relations and author of *I See Your Name Everywhere*. PR/PR has placed clients in publications such as *USA Today*, *Entrepreneur*, *Cosmopolitan* and *Time*. PR/PR works with established businesses, as well as entrepreneurs who are just launching their company. E-mail Pam@prpr.net or call 407-299-6128.