



Web 2.0 & Social Media for SMEs

Martin De Saulles, University of Brighton
October 2010

About This Guide

This guide offers practical advice for any organisation, particularly SMEs, that want to better understand how Web 2.0 and social media services can help them. There has been a lot of hype and inflated expectations of the potential of these services to improve productivity and this guide will help cut through the waffle to show which services can actually help improve your bottom line. In this guide we will look at:

- ➔ Search Engine Optimisation (SEO) – what you can do yourself
- ➔ Twitter – does it have any practical uses for businesses?
- ➔ Blogging – telling people about your business
- ➔ LinkedIn – finding people, expertise and competitive intelligence
- ➔ Project Management – online solutions
- ➔ Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – sharing data within your company

If you want to know more about Web 2.0 and social media you may wish to join one of the practical training courses run from the University of Brighton. Visit www.infoskills.net for more information.

About the author

Dr Martin De Saulles is a Principal Lecturer at the University of Brighton. He teaches and carries out research in the areas of knowledge management and innovation in web services. You can find out more about Martin by visiting www.mdesaulles.net.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank everyone who generously gave up their time to share their knowledge and experiences.

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Why SMEs are Important

Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) are a vital driver of growth in the UK economy with over 4.7 million companies employing 13.7 million people and generating £1,500 billion of annual turnover. As the table below shows, over 99% of all UK companies are SMEs with 96% of them employing less than 10 people.

Table 1 - Structure of the UK Private Sector – 2008

	Enterprises (000)	Employment (000)	Turnover (£million)
All enterprises	4,783	23,128	2,994,978
With no employees	3,546 (74%)	3,888 (17%)	231,698 (8%)
1 – 9 employees	1,033 (22%)	3,857 (17%)	420,282 (14%)
10 – 49 employees	172 (4%)	3,332 (14%)	442,396 (15%)
50 – 249 employees	27 (0.5%)	2,665 (12%)	406,450 (14%)
250 + employees	6 (0.1%)	9,386 (41%)	1,494,152 (50%)

Source: Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (2009)

If the UK economy is to recover from its current financial problems then these small companies are going to play a large part in terms of creating new jobs and driving innovation.

Why Web 2.0 and Social Media are Important

While the term Web 2.0 may seem rather passé it, along with social media, does describe quite well the new generation of web services and technologies that have emerged since the dot-com bust of 2000. The following statistics show the extent to which the internet is now embedded in peoples' work and personal lives.

UK Households with Broadband Internet Access	71%
UK Population Using Social Networking Sites	40%
Online Time Spent on Social Networks	23%
UK Internet Advertising Expenditure	£3.5 billion

Source: Communications Market Report 2010, Ofcom

Over the last 5 years the web has become an increasingly important place for us to communicate with others, find and share information, buy products and services and have fun. Some of the key implications of these developments for any small business that sells its products and services to consumers or to other business are:

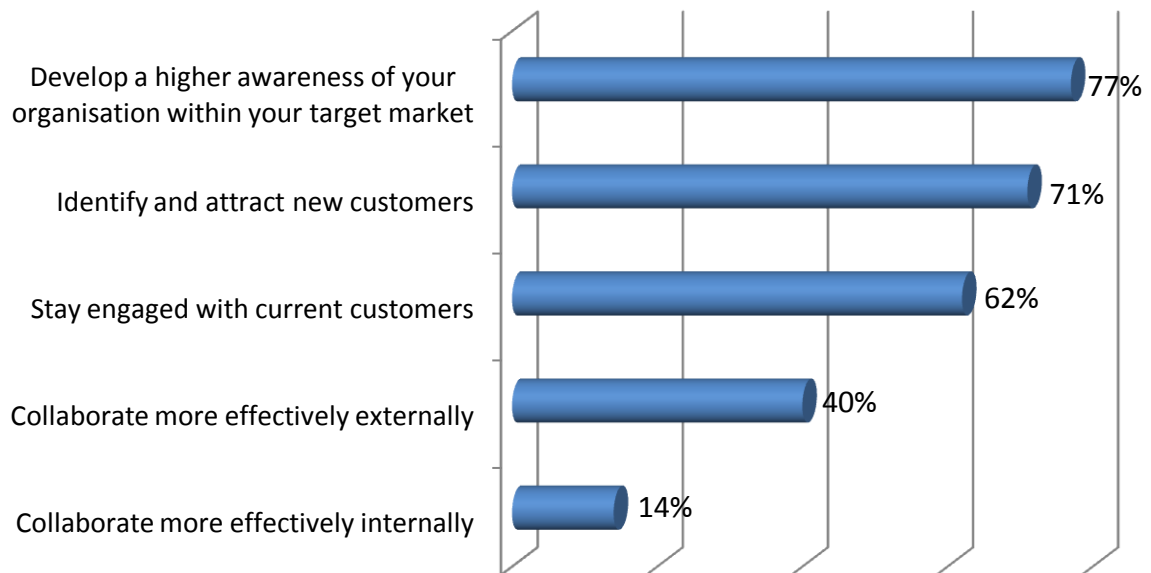
- ➔ Over 80% of all SMEs now have a web presence so your competitors are only a click away;
- ➔ Traditional advertising in local newspapers, trade magazines and business directories (Yellow Pages, Thomson Local) is less effective as potential customers turn to the web and search engines to find suppliers;

- Your company's reputation increasingly depends on what people are saying about you online. If your customers are happy this is a positive thing if they are unhappy there are many web sites where they can vent this frustration;
- The internet opens up potential markets for SMEs to sell themselves and their products and services. However, in a world where most people are online this means other companies can intrude on your local market;
- Online advertising offers a low-cost and effective way to reach potential customers but your competitors can also use these services.

For many SMEs it is no longer an option to ignore these developments if they want to stay in business. The web is here to stay and will become an increasingly important factor in how people and businesses communicate, find information and buy products and services.

However, one of the key problems for small companies is finding the time and developing the expertise to incorporate relevant and useful technologies into their daily workflows. This short guide provides an introduction to some of the key Web 2.0 and social media services and explains their practical uses as well as showing some real examples of how other companies are using them. Too many case studies on the business uses of such services focus on large corporations which have the in-house expertise and budgets to experiment with Twitter, Facebook etc. A recent survey in the US by the University of Maryland showed that many small businesses are actively using social media both to attract new customers but also to build stronger bonds with existing ones. The ability of social media to allow a 2 way flow of information between companies and their customers is one of its strengths over traditional media.

Figure 1 – SME Expectations of Social Media Use – June 2010



Source: University of Maryland

Writing this guide would not have been possible without the help from the 10 companies that agreed to be interviewed and give their experiences of working with a range of web services. The companies range from a single person company providing copy writing services to a company of over 100 people offering legal services. What links them all is their innovative use of the internet in their day-to-day operations.

Table 2 – Participating Companies

	Annual Turnover (£m)	Employees	Physical Locations	Core Business	Legal Status	National Sales	International Sales
The Copy House	<0.1	1	1	Copywriting, Editing, Proofing, E-learning	Ltd Co.	✓	✓
IMR Executive	0.5 – 1	8	1	Recruitment Services	Ltd Co.	✓	✓
Facilitate	>1	11 – 20	1	Medical Communications	Ltd Co.	✓	✓
Mayo Wynne Baxter	9	>100	5	Legal Services	LLP	✓	
Neqstep	<0.1	2 – 5	1	Innovation & Engineering Consultancy	Ltd Co.	✓	
Tourism Destination Services	0.1 – 0.5	2 - 5	1	Tourism Marketing	Ltd Co.	✓	✓
Sigmer Technologies	1	12	2	Ecommerce, Database, Survey & Incentive Solutions	Ltd Co.	✓	✓
Brightwave	3	21 – 50	2	E-learning	Ltd Co.	✓	✓
Preview	0.65	6 – 10	1	Marketing & Creative Services	Ltd Co.	✓	
Clearleft	0.5 – 1	10	1	Web Design	Ltd Co.	✓	✓

Communication and Collaboration

Email is now an embedded communication tool for companies of all sizes and in some ways has become a victim of its own success. It has been estimated that around 250 billion emails are sent every day with approximately 80% of them being spam. Although this means 50 billion emails are “legitimate” a lot of them are the result of unnecessary cc’ing and forwarding leading to many people struggling to keep on top of their inboxes. Email is often the primary communication tool for project management with attached documents pinging back and forwards between individuals, groups and companies. However, there are alternatives which can streamline this process and offer a central place for messages, files and tasks to be accessed.

Service Name: Google Docs
Functionality: Allows you to create office documents (word processing, spreadsheets, presentations) within the web browser
Benefits: Free, share documents, backed up in the Google cloud, good for collaborative working, some compatibility with Microsoft Office
Cost: Free
Link: <http://docs.google.com>




A good starting point for anyone wanting to create an online space for the collaborative production and storage of common documents is Google Docs. The best way to think of Google Docs is as Microsoft Office in a web browser. Text documents, presentations and spreadsheets can be easily created and shared with others. For the collaborative creation of documents this means that all users can be working to the same and latest version removing the problem of outdated versions being emailed around. Google Docs is also useful as a central storage place for common documents that be accessed by anyone with internet access and the necessary permissions. The functionality of Docs is not as sophisticated as MS Office but for most people it is adequate and MS Office format documents can be converted to Google Docs and vice versa. There is also some capability for working with Google Docs when not connected to the Internet. It's also free to use.

“Our iPhone users tend to use Google Docs as it works well. Not all of us are networked when we are out of the office so it is useful for accessing documents on the move.” Laura Winter, Marketing Manager, Mayo Wynne Baxter

“Some of my more techie clients use Google Docs so we use it as a scrapbook to keep all our information in.” Ellen De Vries, Director, The Copy House

In terms of using the web for collaborative working Google Docs is a good entry point but there are other online tools that are more suited to the specifics of project management and team working. The company, 37 Signals offers 2 services in this area, Backpack and Basecamp. Backpack allows users to share files, calendars, lists and notes online. 37 Signals describes Backpack as “an easy intranet for your business. Store, share, discuss, and archive everything that’s essential for your team. Safe and secure.”

<p>Service Name: Backpack</p> <p>Functionality: Web-based intranet for teams</p> <p>Benefits: Secure and easy way to share files, calendars and other digital information online</p> <p>Cost: From free to \$24, \$49, \$99, \$149 per month</p> <p>Link: http://backpackit.com</p>	
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One of the key advantages of Backpack is its ease of use in comparison with more complex content managements systems that many organisations use to perform similar functions. As with all web-based services the user only needs an internet connection and a web browser so there are no installation costs for the company. However, the downside to this is a reliance on the company providing the service. If the company were to stop offering the service or suffer a fatal computer crash then your data may be lost. 37 Signals is a well-established company with an excellent reputation for customer service so this scenario is unlikely for Backpack but it is something to bear in mind when storing information on the web. Many services, Backpack included, allow users to download their data to make backup copies but you should check if this is the case before trusting business-critical information to any web service.

“We’ll be using Backpack for shared documents for the team. We’ll see how it works but it’s got to be easier than sending out loads of emails with attachments.”
Amanda Newby, Director, Tourism Destination Services

Basecamp, also from 37 Signals, is a more sophisticated product than Backpack and designed more specifically for project management. According to the company, “Over 5 million people worldwide have used Basecamp to collaborate on over 4 million projects”. The ability for project managers to assign tasks, monitor progress, track billable hours and share documents makes it particularly attractive to companies with dispersed teams.

“I use Basecamp on my larger projects . For example, last year I had 5 writers working on the same document so it was great to keep track of progress. People got the hang of it very quickly. The clients like it as well.” Ellen De Vries, Director, The Copy House

Service Name: Basecamp
Functionality: Web-based collaboration and project management
Benefits: Central storage of project documents, easy to use, good for tracking progress and assigning tasks, third party add-ons
Cost: From free to \$24, \$49, \$99, \$149 per month
Link: www.basecamphq.com



Managing customer/client information is also an important issue for many companies. While many email programmes allow this type of information to be stored it can become more complicated when you want to share this information between employees. It is possible to do this with Outlook on Microsoft Exchange Server but many small companies don't run this software. Managing contacts on Outlook is also fairly limiting in terms of the types of information you can include and integrating these contacts into a more marketing-oriented customer relationship management system is difficult. However, there are a number of web-based solutions including BatchBook, Highrise, Zoho CRM, Capsule CRM and Salesforce.com. BatchBook is particularly interesting because of its integration of social media information with contact records.

Service Name: BatchBook
Functionality: Web-based customer relationship management (CRM) with social media functionality
Benefits: Easy way to share contact information, email in information, store files, create tagged groups of people, link to social media
Cost: From free to \$9.95, \$19.95, \$39.95, \$59.95, \$99.95 per month
Link: <http://batchblue.com>



BatchBook, along with some of its competitors, offers some key advantages over standalone customer databases:

- All staff with access rights can add information to contact records such as details of meetings, telephone calls and updated contact details. This is particularly useful for sales teams to have a record of previous contacts with clients;
- Emails from and to customers can be forwarded to BatchBook which will automatically add the email to the appropriate customer record;
- Tags can be added to records to easily create groups of customers for marketing and communication purposes.

Marketing

One of the great opportunities that the web offers is the ability to spread your company's message to prospective and current customers in very cost effective ways. Small companies have never been able to compete with large brands when it came to advertising across traditional media as the costs were too prohibitive. However, with over 70% of the UK population connected to broadband and people spending more time online there is now a more level playing field for SMEs to market themselves to domestic consumers and other businesses.

Google has probably done more to help SMEs advertise their products on the Internet than anyone else. Google AdWords can be a very cost-effective way to reach consumers. Google places ads alongside search engine results as well as across other web sites. The key reasons for the success of AdWords is that ads are put next to relevant content and the advertiser only pays for ads that people click on. Advertisers can set the amount of money they are prepared to spend each day so that when their budget has been spent for the day, Google will not show them any more. How successful a Google AdWords campaign is depends on a number of factors including the amount the advertiser is prepared to pay for certain key words and phrases , the relevance the ad has to what people are searching for and the number of times an ad is clicked on. Further resources are listed at the back of this guide to help anyone interested in using AdWords.

"AdWords can work well if you very focussed on what you are trying to do." John Archibald, Director of Operations, Sigmer Technologies

While AdWords can be very cost-effective it does cost money. However, there are a number of other ways for companies to promote themselves on the web that don't cost a penny except for the time spent setting up and maintaining them. Most companies have a website but these are often rather dull, static affairs that do little to engage visitors. Your website is very often the first point of contact that potential customers have with you so it is important it creates a good impression. Blogs can be one way of achieving this. A blog is a website but one which is easy to update, allows visitors to leave comments and which provides a simple-to-use platform for telling the world about your company.

Service Name: Blogger

Functionality: Hosted blogging platform

Benefits: Easy way to create a blog, good integration with Google Analytics and Adwords

Cost: Free

Link: www.blogger.com



However, while there has been a lot of hype over the last few years about the value of blogs as marketing tools any company thinking of using one needs to bear in mind the following:

- Your blog needs to be interesting or people won't read it. Simply telling people about how great your company is will not be enough;
- Setting up a blog needs to be part of your overall marketing strategy so that it is clear to the blog's contributors where it fits in;
- Maintaining a successful blog takes time. Creating original and engaging content is not an easy task.

"Blogs designed for businesses rarely work – they are too boring, there's no passion. You need to engage with your readers and show some personality – offer useful information." Andy Budd, Managing Director, Clearleft

Service Name: WordPress.com

Functionality: Hosted blogging platform

Benefits: Simple way to create a blog, variety of templates to choose from, free help from active online community, option to self-host WordPress software

Cost: Free for basic service (add-ons can be bought)

Link: www.wordpress.com



Despite the caveats noted above, blogging can work for those companies willing to invest the time and effort into creating a blog that offers real value to its readers. Another advantage of blogs is they can help raise your website in search engine results. We looked at "paid search results" with Google Adwords above but more important is "natural search results" whereby you optimise your website so it ranks highly in search engine results. Most people use Google to search the Internet and will not look beyond the first page of results that are served up to them. Therefore, it is important you do all you can to appear on that first page. Search engine optimisation (SEO) is the term used to describe what can be done to achieve this. Google takes into account a number of factors when deciding where to show your website in the search results:

- How relevant the content of your website is compared to the search terms entered. Google indexes the content of web pages as well as the words used in the page title and the URL;
- How many other web pages link to your website. It weights these links according to how important those other websites are which is partly determined by how many other sites link to them – not all links are equal;
- How fresh the content on your site is and how regularly it is updated. This is where blogging comes in. A regularly updated blog with relevant content is rated more highly by Google than a static website that has not been updated in months or years.

"I think most small businesses can and should be doing SEO. I've come across small companies who play around with this stuff in the evenings and weekends and it works." Andy Budd, Managing Director, Clearleft

"We outsourced our SEO at the beginning to learn good practice. We have a definite SEO and social media strategy using Twitter, blogs, RSS feeds." Cheryl Clemons, Communication Director, Brightwave

Although SEO may sound very technical and complicated there is a lot that you can do yourself which can have very good results. Luckily Google offers a range of free tools to help you with this including Google Analytics and Google Webmaster tools. These services help you to optimise your website for search engines as well as monitor who is actually visiting your site, what pages are most popular, who is linking to you and the search terms that people are using to find you.

Service Name: Google Analytics
Functionality: Reporting tool for monitoring your website traffic
Benefits: Sophisticated tool for monitoring who is visiting your website, where they are from, what they are looking at and how long they are staying
Cost: Free
Link: www.google.com/analytics/

The logo for Google Analytics, featuring the word "Google" in its multi-colored font followed by the word "Analytics" in a grey sans-serif font.

While DIY SEO may work for some companies to get them up the search engine rankings it is not always sufficient. This is particularly true for companies operating in very competitive sectors where there are a lot of competing websites doing the same thing. Obvious examples are online retailing, hospitality and financial services. This is where an SEO consultancy may be required and some of these are listed at the end of this guide.

Let's assume your website/blog is up and running and doing well in the search engine rankings. What other web services are there which can help with your marketing efforts? Twitter may be worth considering as it can be a very effective way to get short messages out to a mass audience. While many see Twitter as merely a tool for people to tell others what they had for breakfast, it is increasingly being used by businesses to get messages out as well as to tune in to what people are talking about. In June 2010, the COO of Twitter claimed the service was attracting 190 million visitors a month and generating 65 million Tweets (Twitter messages) a day.

Service Name: Twitter

Functionality: Short message (max 140 characters) broadcasting service

Benefits: Good for sending out messages to interested parties, well integrated with mobile devices, attach web links and photos, useful source of information

Cost: Free

Link: www.twitter.com

The Twitter logo, consisting of the word "twitter" in a lowercase, blue, sans-serif font.

As with blogging, however, simply broadcasting corporate messages will not help your marketing. People need to have a reason to follow you on Twitter and read your Tweets. For a recruitment company this might be Tweeting your latest vacancies, for a retail or catering outlet it might be alerting people to special offers, for business-to-business companies it might be posting links to useful industry information.

“There are a lot of people just broadcasting on Twitter but it is coming of age and people are doing more listening now. I think if you do listen you can get a lot from it. By reading and then retweeting information with an audience that I engage with I have actually picked up work from it.” Nick Broom, Founding Director, Preview

It is important not to just think of Twitter as a broadcast tool. It is also useful as a way of finding out what your current customers, potential customers, competitors and industry experts are saying about you and/or the industry you operate in.

“Main reason for joining Twitter is to follow other people. We want to follow journalists to find out what they are interested in and then be able to approach them with relevant suggestions for promoting our clients.” Amanda Newby, Director, Tourism Destination Services

“Twitter is more of an addiction than anything but I have got jobs from it. It lets people know you’re still there. It’s about being present . It keeps your name in front of people.” Ellen De Vries, Director, The Copy House

While Facebook is a social network primarily for private individuals to communicate, gossip and share photos, LinkedIn is designed for professionals to network and find others with similar interests. Although the site has been around since 2003, it is in the last couple of years that it has seen rapid growth with over 70 million people now registered on the site. Bearing in mind that Facebook has over 500 million users there is still a lot of potential for LinkedIn to grow.

<p>Service Name: LinkedIn</p> <p>Functionality: Social network and people finder for professionals</p> <p>Benefits: Good for finding specific people in organisations, competitor monitoring, networking, joining communities of interest</p> <p>Cost: From free to \$24.95, \$49.95, \$99.95 per month</p> <p>Link: www.linkedin.com</p>	
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There are a number of ways that LinkedIn may be useful to your business:

- Finding specific people in other organisations that may be sales prospects;
- Finding out about people and their backgrounds prior to meetings;
- Finding and vetting prospective employees;
- Monitoring your competitors;
- Finding and sharing information on the LinkedIn Groups.

“We use LinkedIn extensively to advertise jobs and get hold of people.” Peter Oates, Director, IMR Executive

“I got one of my biggest clients via LinkedIn. One problem I have with LinkedIn is that it is not very good for freelancers. It focuses on companies you’ve worked for not worked with.” Ellen De Vries, Director, The Copy House


“We use LinkedIn a lot. Main benefit are the groups – finding people with particular expertise for our projects.” Chrissi Wilkins, Managing Director, NeQstep

“We use LinkedIn to generate leads and it works very well for us.” Alan Bromley, Director, Facilitate

One of the most popular online activities is watching videos, primarily on YouTube. The popularity of YouTube as a Web destination is impressive. The following statistics from a May 2010 report by Website Monitoring show how far the service has come in its first 5 years:

- More than 2 billion views a day;
- More video is uploaded to YouTube in 60 days than all 3 of the major US networks created in 60 years;
- 24 hours of video is uploaded every minute.

While a lot of the content being uploaded comprises home videos and copies of television programmes, there are a number of small businesses that use YouTube as a marketing tool. One of the advantages of using YouTube or other video hosting sites such as Vimeo or Viddler is the ability to embed the video into your own website using the simple embed code provided. Should your video become popular it also allows others to embed the video in their sites as well, spreading your message further across the web.

<p>Service Name: YouTube Functionality: Online video hosting Benefits: Video can sometimes be a more powerful medium for spreading a message than simple text Cost: Free Link: www.youtube.com</p>	
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“Online video is something we have been thinking about. Perhaps to share information about some of our projects.” Chrissi Wilkins, Managing Director, NeQstep

Potential ways to promote your business on YouTube include:

- Demonstrating your product (search YouTube using the phrase “will it blend” to see how this can be done in a humorous way);
- Post videos of testimonials from happy customers (visit the [37 Signals](#) website to see how effective this can be);
- Offer useful advice to your target market to help them get more from the products or services you are selling (visit [Wine Library TV](#) to see how a single entrepreneur has been able to extend his reach through an informative and entertaining video blog)

Of course, shooting and editing a video takes time and some knowledge but with the necessary hardware and software becoming cheaper and with lots of freelance professionals available for hire this need not be a problem. The content of the video is more important than the production values.

“I don’t think YouTube needs to be high end. I want it to look like one of us has done it. It’s about us and our services. We are not video professionals and that’s not what we are about.” Nick Broom, Founding Director, Preview

“Our YouTube channel is a promotional vehicle. It’s really worth having. I think people looking at video online want something that is highly relevant and original rather than just something that is high quality. Authenticity is really important.” Cheryl Clemons, Communication Director, Brightwave

Working with the Web

One of the main issues that small businesses have when thinking about social media and the plethora of new web-based services that seem to emerge on a daily basis is time. Running a small business often means staff and directors have to play a number of roles from managing finance, personnel and marketing to making sure there is fresh milk in the fridge and paper in the photocopier.

“There’s not enough time to play around with these things. They have to be really relevant to our business.”
Amanda Newby, Director, Tourism Destination Services

While there is never enough time in the day to experiment with all the shiny new Web 2.0 tools, one of the benefits of the web is that there are plenty of free, online resources that can help with deciding whether something is worth further investigation. Some of these are listed at the end of this guide. At some point you will probably have to set aside time to explore how services like LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook, YouTube can help your business. It was only a few years ago that many people were dismissing email and the Internet as a fad which had no relevance to them or their business. For most businesses it would be hard to imagine being able to compete now without being online.

“With so many things you need to prioritise what you use. You just have to keep trying things out and see what works and where it fits into your communications strategy. If it does not fit then drop it.”
Nick Broom, Founding Director, Preview

Another concern expressed by companies of all sizes is the issue of trust; trust in the companies providing these web services and trust in their own employees in how they are used. The issue of data security and accessibility was raised earlier in this guide and is an important one. If all your customer data is on a spreadsheet or MS Access database on one of your computers then you have a large degree of control over who has access to it and how often and in what way it is backed up. Trusting that information to a third party is a step too far for many companies. However, the functional benefits of having that data hosted online are compelling in terms of being able to share it across computers and locations and having it backed up in a remote location.

“We looked at other CRM solutions but I am a little bit nervous about web-based software because it is out of your hands. You don’t feel as if you have control as you would if the database was in house. The data is our business.” Alan Bromley, Director, Facilitate

Outsourcing such sensitive information requires careful thought but many hundreds of thousands of businesses now do it and are happy with the results. There are some key questions which should be asked of any provider:

- How accessible is your data in terms of the format it is stored in and your ability to download back-up copies to your own machines?
- How is their data hosted and how often is it backed up?
- How long have they been in business?
- Do they have any customer testimonials and can you follow up directly with these customers?

If it is not possible to get clear answers to any of these questions then you might be wise to reconsider trusting the company with your data.

The other concern that many businesses have when thinking about using social media centres on how staff will use it. Many organisations block access to Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and blogs because they fear their staff will waste time using these services to socialise rather than doing their job. Of course, this may be a real problem in some companies but similar concerns were expressed about email 10 or 15 years ago and it is now a primary means of communication for many organisations. Much of this comes down to trust and it is important to remember that many people can access social networks on their mobile phones should they wish so blocking access on work computers may not be the answer.

“You need to embrace it and say to people ‘ok you can use it’ but if you find people are spending hours a day on it then you will need to review it. Use them as brand ambassadors. If you’re an SME and you’ve got 20 or 30 people who aren’t allowed to use social media at work then how is your company going to be portrayed. If you embrace it and help them to engage with what the business is all about then you’ve got 20 positive voices talking about your company and it is a very different approach. I trust my staff.” Nick Broom, Founding Director, Preview

Related to this is the fear that staff will post inappropriate messages and commercially sensitive information about their employers. This may be more of an issue in certain industries but it should be noted that staff have always had the option to do this when talking to others outside of work and common sense normally prevails. It may be appropriate to have a social media policy that outlines to staff what is and what is not appropriate for them to share over social networks.

“There’s always a fear in recruitment about how much do you let your competitors know about your business because you don’t want them to take your clients and ideas. But I’ve always been of the view that you should let everyone know about everything and assume you’ll be good enough to hold on to your clients.” Peter Oates, Director, IMR Executive

Further Resources

Books

The New Rules of Marketing and PR by David Meerman Scott (2010)

Search Engine Optimization: an Hour a Day by Jennifer Grappone & Gradiva Couzin (2008)

The Social Media Bible: Tactics, Tools, and Strategies for Business Success by Lon Safko and David K. Brake (2009)

Websites

Adwords Help <http://adwords.google.com/support>

Fairly comprehensive set of resources for anyone thinking of using Google Adwords.

Search Engine Watch <http://searchenginewatch.com>

This is a great resource for anyone wanting to know more about how search engines work and to get tips and strategies for improving natural search results.

Social Media B2B <http://socialmediab2b.com>

This blog reports on the latest thinking and research in the B2B social media world with practical advice to business owners.

SEOMoz <http://www.seomoz.org>

Although this site offers paid-for services to SEO professionals, it also offers useful free advice, videos and links to SEO tools such as Open Site Explorer.

SEO/Social Media Consultancies

iCrossing <http://www.icrossing.co.uk>

Leapfrog <http://www.leapfrogg.co.uk>

Nixon McInnes <http://www.nixonmcinnes.co.uk>

Site Visibility <http://www.sitevisibility.co.uk>

Their free podcast is a good way to keep up-to-date with what is going on in this area.

White Hat Media <http://www.whitehatmedia.com>

Training

If you want to know more about Web 2.0 and social media you may wish to join one of the practical training courses run from the University of Brighton. Visit www.infoskills.net for more information.