



# Social Media 101

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Farmers Market Federation of New York

## What Is Social Media?

Social media is participatory online networks. Social media allows us to communicate and interact with others about our thoughts, opinions, beliefs, and ideas to friends, fans and followers through online social media networks.

## What is the Goal of Social Media?

The reason for using social media is different for everyone. Goals can vary from reaching new customers, keeping in contact with friends and family, or discussing issues and current events with like-minded people. Social media can be used to reach organizational goals as well. For instance, one of the goals of the Farmers Market Federation of New York is to support local farmers, and to improve relationships between local farmers markets and consumers. The Federation could use social networking sites, such as Twitter and Facebook, to create online conversations with consumers, teach them more about the benefits of eating local foods, and show them where farmers markets are located in their area.

## Who is Using Social Media?

The short answer is: everyone. Just to give you an idea, here are some statistics from Socialnomics, a social media blog. Over 96% of Generation Y, those born between the 70s and 2000, have joined a social network. While it took radio 38 years to attract 50 million users, Facebook has garnered 200 million users in less than a year. If Facebook was a country, it would have a population large enough to be the world's third largest country. The fastest growing segment on Facebook is currently 55-65 year-old females. 80% of companies use social media in some way. These numbers are growing by the second.

## Social Media is important because it gives you...

**The ability to converse and educate.** With social media, you can have online conversations about your products, such as why it is important to eat local foods. You are interacting with people rather than just informing. You can share stories and ideas through photos and video, and instead of just sending those messages, you can listen to responses and interact with those that are interested.

**A way to connect with your audience.** You can use social media to get new people involved in your product or organization, and to give people a reason to care about you.

**A stake in the "word of mouth" cycle.** Now instead of purchasing an item, you can talk to others online about a product before buying it. As a business, this gives you the opportunity to see what people are saying about you or your product, and allows you to respond in a positive way.

## Do I Have the Time and Money for Social Media?

Yes. Most social media websites are completely free. The cost to you is the time you put into it. Once you start using social media, the upkeep of websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, or Foursquare, is relatively minimal. Although you may have to update your page daily, you can do so quickly and easily. In terms of hours per week, you can choose how much time you wish to spend updating your sites. Just remember, the more you put into it, the more you'll get out of it.

## Types of Social Media

Of the thousands of types of social media, you must recognize which will be most effective for you. Many businesses commonly use Facebook, Twitter, Foursquare, and YouTube for promotional purposes. Below are some categories of social media that may be helpful to you.

<b>Tool</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example Websites</b>
Publishing Tools	Allows you to publish articles online such as blogs or articles	Blogger, WordPress, Wikipedia
Sharing Tools	Shares pictures, videos, newspaper articles, etc.	YouTube, Flickr, Slideshare
Discussion Tools	Allows you to Interact with others privately or in a group	Google Talk, Skype
Social Networks	Connects you with others via website	MySpace, Facebook, LinkedIn
Microblogs	Connects you with others using quick blurbs	Twitter, Teepeek, Plurk, Twixtr

## **A Few Tips on Getting Started**

### **1) Ask yourself: Why should I be using social media?**

Pinpoint whom you are trying to reach, and what you think you or your business will gain from social media. If you can answer this question, you are ready to effectively use social media.

### **2) Evaluate the social media services available to your business**

Not every online service is best suited to communicate your message or meet your goals. You must recognize which sites will benefit your organization the most.

### **3) Do a communications audit.**

Sound tricky? It's not. Google your organizations name, and see what pops up. Type your name and relevant keywords into sites like Foursquare, LinkedIn, Facebook, and Twitter to see if your organization has generated online conversations. Don't be fooled, the Internet knows more than you think. No matter how small or big an organization, people are always talking, and there is a good chance that someone is talking about you. It is important to know what kind of presence your organization already has on the web.

## **Still Not Convinced? Check Out These Links.**

Everyone has a place in the social media world. The hardest part is finding out where that place is. Below are some links that may help you better understand social media, and why it should be important to you.

<http://smallbiztrends.com/2010/06/9-things-to-do-before-entering-social-media.html>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IFZ0z5Fm-Ng>

<http://blogs.forbes.com/work-in-progress/2010/06/14/social-media-twitter-facebook-linkedin/>

<http://dannybrown.me/2010/07/03/cool-facts-about-social-media/>

[http://dannybrown.me/2010/07/18/using-social-media-right-way-for/?utm\\_source=Arkayne.com&utm\\_medium=Plugin&utm\\_campaign=Danny%20Brown](http://dannybrown.me/2010/07/18/using-social-media-right-way-for/?utm_source=Arkayne.com&utm_medium=Plugin&utm_campaign=Danny%20Brown)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpIOCIX1jPE>