

Leads & Brand Awareness For B2B Manufacturers with Social Media

[\(http://cerasis.com/2013/11/12/social-media-manufacturing/\)](http://cerasis.com/2013/11/12/social-media-manufacturing/)

The internet revolution has drastically changed the way companies do business. Social media today is widely used to increase brand awareness and generate leads. While B2C industries have been fast to take advantage of this change, B2B has been slower, particularly when it comes to B2B industrial manufacturers. Even today you can hear some [B2B marketing managers](#) in the manufacturing space claim that social media is not a relevant platform for reaching their clientele.

The truth is actually the opposite. Today, over 80% of manufacturers use social media for marketing purposes and almost a third intend to increase their use in the next year.

Traditional Vs. Social Media Marketing

Studies show that manufacturers still prefer to use [outbound marketing](#) methods such as networking, trade shows and advertising. Not only are these more expensive, they're a lot less effective. Additionally, research indicates that manufacturers use social media passively – reading and consuming content, instead of creating it. Some 60% read online discussions, while about 30% actively participate and only 7% actually initiate a conversation.

In contrast to [traditional marketing](#) – content marketing takes longer, but results are far better. On average, social media based content marketing produces three times more leads per dollar than traditional direct marketing methods.

Traditional marketing often uses a hard, straight approach to make a sale. Social media, instead of shouting out, entices you in. Customers today make some 60% of their buying decision before even contacting the supplier or manufacturer. They do this by viewing online content about products in which they are interested. So why not build a presence where they are doing their research?

Benefits of Social Media Marketing

At its most basic level you can visit social media sites to find out what others are saying about your company and products – both praise and criticism. Use this information to improve your company's image, positioning, products and policies. You can also see what others think of your competitors and see what to emulate and what to avoid.

Social media also enables interacting with the public. Instead of just posting or reading you can participate in discussions with your business customers, both current and future, and build a relationship. This differentiates your company from others - humanizing it and making it friendlier.

Using Social Media Channels

So how do you start?

Create a [LinkedIn](#) profile and company page, join groups in your industry and take part in the online discussions thereby increasing brand visibility. With just a few hundred connections, your network can reach millions. LinkedIn gives you deep access into what

used to be a company's hidden corporate structure. This can be an excellent way to research and make sales contacts.

Create a [company Facebook page](#) and upload content frequently. Your goal here is to garner "likes" and shares. Concentrate on positive brand-solidifying announcements and upload plenty of product photos and statistical graphs. Customers will become "brand ambassadors" helping spread the word about your product.

Establish a Twitter presence to reach your followers, spread the word, and find out what your competitors are up to. Not sure how it's done? Check out these [9 manufacturers that are making the most out of Twitter](#).

Start a **YouTube** channel and begin uploading videos. These can show products in action, customer testimonials or even a factory tour. Don't worry about professional quality. Today it's fashionable to use amateur style videos to promote companies and products. In fact, cartoon style videos (such as [Powtoons](#)) have become very trendy.

Start a [blog](#). Fill it with interviews, [industry news](#), case studies, FAQs, webinars, white papers and more. Your goal here should be to create a balance between company-related information and general industry updates and opinions. By becoming the go-to source for information in your market, you can strategically position yourself as a thought leader. Once you've built your social media network, use links to generate cross-promotion throughout the different platforms. Also make sure staff includes links to all your social media sites in their email signatures.

In order to successfully create and manage social media campaigns, especially for a manufacturing company, you will need to be highly active. To do so has been quite difficult in the past, but [Oktopost](#) is a fantastic platform to carry out large scale B2B social media marketing. This platform allows manufacturing companies to not only easily distribute content across all social channels, but they can measure the ROI on these activities as well. Having no social media presence is better than a mediocre presence; so make sure to update your sites regularly with quality content. A designated employee responsible for social media policy is critical to success. Also check out how your competitors are using social media and see what works best.

According to [Forrester Research](#), "these inexpensive social media tools can quickly get marketing messages out through interactive discussion and rapid word of mouth and, properly managed, can deliver measurable results."

<http://blog.softwareadvice.com/articles/manufacturing/how-manufacturers-can-use-social-media-to-win-business-1011112/>

Blogs and YouTube Are Information Sharing Hubs

Blogs and YouTube provide manufacturers with the opportunity to do more than simply promote their brand; they provide a place where manufacturers can tell their story and provide industry knowledge using the richer media of long-form stories or video.

It's important to maintain a balance between self-promotion and education on a company blog. In the words of Val Zanchuk, CEO of [Graphicast](#), "waving the corporate flag too often can really turn people off to your message." For instance, Zanchuk recently used his blog to advertise the fact they [just achieved ISO 9001 certification](#). However, Zanchuk also makes an effort to update readers on [manufacturing news](#) by sharing important articles.

YouTube is a highly-effective venue in which to educate buyers while marketing to them using video. Consider making video demonstrations of products and processes, a tour of your factory, or showcasing customer testimonials. The key is to share information in a video format that your customers would find relevant and interesting. For instance, this [CARR Machine & Tool video](#) demonstrates how the company handles customer orders, while implicitly showing the company's dedication to service.

By the way, video production is no longer the daunting technical challenge or costly expense it once was. You could certainly hire a videographer to make polished videos for you, but first get your feet wet with a \$300 high-definition camcorder.