

Chapter 7: Social Media Versus Social Networking as a Content Marketing Strategy



By Bill Belew

<http://www.billbelew.com>

Content marketing and social network marketing are not the same thing. Content marketing is creating solid, high-integrity content that attracts prospective business opportunities. Social network marketing is pushing around your friends, family, and the hundreds of other people you do NOT know, but have befriended so it looks like you know a lot of people.

I hear the two terms, Social Media and Social Networks, used interchangeably. But that does NOT make them the same. Nor should they be thought of as the same animal.

Social Media versus Social Networks in Content Marketing

Social Media is creating solid content that people love to read and pass around. There's a best choice medium to do this – the owner's home site via their CMS. I recommend WordPress. People find that home site, leave comments (it's social!) and the owner responds creating a dialog (it's social!) and sometimes commenters talk among themselves on the content owner's site (it's social!). And when the content is really, really good, the content gets passed around to the social networks. (Right again. It's social!).

Social Networking is a tiny form of social media. It might be more accurately called **Social Network Marketing**. There is a medium for publishing content – somebody else's site. And the content does not belong to the owner (it kind of does). But for those who are very active on Facebook, Twitter, Google+ and LinkedIn, after you have created something really cool, wait a week (sometimes a couple of days, and sometimes even a couple of hours), then go back and try to find it. Let me know how that works for you. The average length of time for an update on social media is 3 hours! ([Check out fact number 7 from a recent SEJ post!](#)) Social networking is hanging out with friends and family.

And the last time I checked you don't do business with friends and family.

Anyone doing marketing on the social networks has one aim – to push people to their website. It doesn't work. It's no good. Don't waste your time. The numbers add up pretty fast and they are fun to watch...but those numbers don't equate to more business.

I learned the lesson that social network marketing is a waste of time more than 8 years ago.

Social Network Marketing is a Bust

Here's how I know.

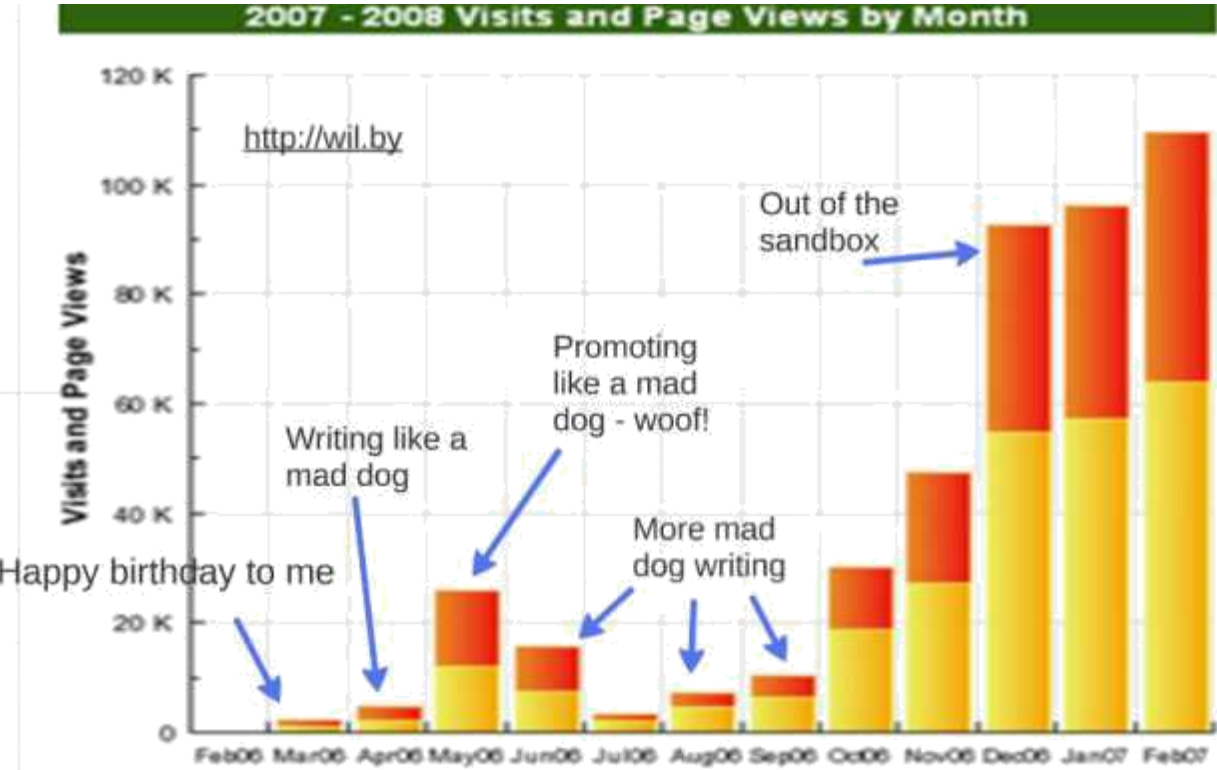
In March of '06 my first website in the [BillBelew.com](#) network of sites was born. After a couple of months of writing like a mad dog I got up to about 2,000 page views in a month. The network I belonged to was using display ads = page views, which is what we were after. And, of course, we wanted clicks so we could get a higher ecpm for our ads.

Two months after my site was born I discovered there were social networking sites where I could promote my work...more or less. I think Facebook still had 'The' in its name. In fact Facebook and LinkedIn EACH still had about 5,000,000 members. Twitter what? G+ what?

But there was Mixx, Newsvine, Reddit, Stumbleupon, Fark, Digg, IndianPad, and a CollegeHumor site that liked my stuff and others of that ilk.

Here's what I did – I promoted EVERY article I wrote EVERY time on EVERY social networking site I could find. No doubt I annoyed some people, but I didn't know any better. Besides, when I promoted my stuff, I got more traffic = they liked it?

How much more traffic? In one month I went from 2,000 page views to 22,000 page views! Remember Sitemeter!



Social Network Marketing Results

What I Learned about Social Network Marketing

When I was promoting, I decided to keep a log of how long it took me. Ten minutes today, six minutes the next day, 14 minutes here, eight minutes there, so that I had a total of how long it took me in terms of time spent to get more traffic. Good number to know, eh?

I also knew how much money I made based on 2,000 page views. And I knew how much more money I made on 22,000 page views. Another good number to know,

If I were to subtract the 2000-page view-month earnings from the 22,000-page view-month earnings and divide it by how much time it took me to make that much money, I could get an idea of what I was working for by the hour.

Drum roll, please.

Results of Social Network Marketing

In approximately 20 hours of cumulative time spent doing the social networking thing – including interacting and commenting and befriending and dealing with Reddit trolls, I made a whopping \$43.20 more!

I worked for \$2.16/hour! **It wasn't worth it.** I got a black marker and drew a big S on my forehead and called myself stupid. Then washed it off because I had learned a very valuable lesson. Working the social networks for marketing purposes as a means to drive/push people to your site in hopes of getting a new customer is a waste of time.

Make no mistake, you can get more people to come to your website by working the social networks, but the traffic doesn't perform. It's a poor return on time invested.

Chapter Conclusion

Social network marketing is a push proposition — you are trying to get people to go where they weren't prepared to go. When that happens you get a poorer result. A much poorer result.

Content marketing, on the other hand, is a pull proposition. Visitors come because they are looking for something and find you because you had what they wanted. You satisfied their query. That's content marketing. That's doing Social Media solid.

Want more clients? Write more and write better content. It's cheaper and more time effective for people to find you than for you to find them.