

# The effect of social media in the business world

[Media](#), [Social Media](#)



The Effect of Social Media in the Business World Imagine, for a moment, you are an employee in a business setting. Do you find yourself on Facebook, Twitter, or Pinterest during work? Perhaps you are reading information on Wikipedia or watching videos on YouTube? These are all forms of social media. Today our world is engulfed by it. These sites can be great tools to advertise for a business or to access information, but they can also be abused. In the workplace, social media can be a distraction to employees and make them less efficient.

In today's world, employers are always looking for a process to limit the abuse of these tools and to find means to utilize it instead, all while remaining cost efficient in terms of Hardware and Software. The research that follows uncovers the pros and cons of social media within a business. In addition, social media will be defined and facts will be included as to how many employees utilize these sites on a daily basis. It is also important for the owners of a company to discuss the legalities and hidden costs associated with the social media sites, in relation to businesses.

**Social Media Defined** Social media is defined as a two way communication stream where the publisher and the reader can interact with each other (Nations). The most popular social media sites are Facebook, YouTube, and Twitter. Facebook is an online community that allows people to connect with friends, family, colleagues, and classmates. Facebook can also allow businesses to create profiles for advertising purposes. YouTube is a social media site that allows people to publish videos that anyone can access.

This has become a way for people to get their name out there if they are waiting to be discovered in the music industry, comedy world, sports, and many other things. Twitter is a type of blogging site, where an individual records opinions or information on a regular basis. Twitter is called micro blogging because the users write short posts that are 140 characters or less (Senior Net). There are also Wiki sites. Wiki sites allow the users to write and edit the content contained on the site. The most common Wiki site is Wikipedia. Wikipedia is a very useful tool for learning information about a certain topic.

Though is not a very reliable source for citing information because it is written by internet users (Senior Net). Social Media Use Is on the Rise Social networking sites have become part of most Americans everyday lives. According to Joanna Brenner of Pew Internet, " sixty nine percent of online adults use a social networking site. " The most common site used by internet users is Facebook. This includes employees during the working hours. According to Janie Smith of The City Wire an average person checks their email or Facebook 34 times a day collectively.

This number is substantial compared to years previous; and if the employees of a company are checking social media sites during the work day for personal reasons, it lessens productivity. Many companies have put in social media policies to restrict the use of the sites during the day. According to a study done by Benjamin Shipley III a lawyer for Cross, Gunter, Witherspoon and Galchus P. C. , the largest problem is: " fifty percent of employees ignore these policies and check their sites. " Mobile Devices make it easy for the employees to still access social media sites during the work day.

In a study done by Pew Internet & American Life Project, forty six percent of Americans are now using smartphones, making these sites accessible right at the employees' fingertips. Facebook sites can be open for anyone to see and social media sites are starting to become a place that future employers will look when they are doing background checks on possible future employees. A study done by Benjamin Shipley III states, " it has become a common practice to check out the future employees social networking sites before hiring them. Sixty percent of employers currently observe this practice. With that being said, it is very important that individuals are more cautious to the information they are exploiting to the world. Legalities Surrounding Social Media The battle of between the appropriateness of published information on social networking sites has started to take off. People do not understand the difference between freedom of speech and defamation. Freedom of speech is the right to express opinions without censorship or restraint, while defamation is a false or malicious accusation of someone's words or actions (Merriam-Webster).

Many lawsuits have arisen because of this misunderstanding. Social media sites have affected employees' style of communication, productivity, and separation of work and personal. Today there is not as much face-to-face communication in the work place because it is faster and more efficient to communicate over the internet. A huge risk factor of using social media in the business world is the safety. Social media is not very secure so it is very easy for private company information to be shared. Companies need to have plans in place how to deal with problems that arise from social media (Rauzi).

**Positive Uses of Social Media Businesses** Although many people and employees view social media as a bad thing within the workplace, positive aspects do exist. Social media sites such as Facebook and LinkedIn are great tools for companies to get their name out in the public eye. It is a very easy way with little cost and advertising to acquire a new circle of contacts. With social networking, the company can create a pleasing image of themselves by creating their own professional page. Social networking being virtually free is one of the greatest advantages to using the sites.

Businesses can pay thousands of dollars in advertisements but with social media the only cost is paying the person who keeps the sites up to date (Kelleher). The sites are also useful tools for gathering public opinions on the product that a company sells. In a study done by McKinsey Global Institute, “ninety percent of the 4, 200 businesses surveyed said they benefit from social networking in some way.” Brand awareness and sales are increased by social media sites because the name is out in the business network.

Social media helps bring the customers closer to the business because they know more of what is going on within (Rauzi). **Overlooked Expenses of Social Media for Businesses** Many businesses see social media as a free tool, but there are many hidden costs that are not considered. As mentioned previously, staff is paid to keep the sites up to date. If a company wants their social media sites to be successful, they need an excellent marketer that will always keep the sites up to date, which costs money. Paid marketing will be needed to initially get the companies name noticed.

For example, having a paid advertisement banner on Facebook costs money (Compare Business). There is also the cost of equipment. Most companies

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have up to date computer software that would support the use of social media, but not all do. The server needs to be large enough to handle all the traffic going through it. If a company wants a very successful internet campaign, the annual cost is approximately 210, 600 dollars (Compare Business). Sometimes, a company needs to spend money to make money. Conclusion Social Media is a very useful tool for the business world as long as the employees do not abuse it.

The benefits do outweigh the risks of having a social media friendly company. Employers just need to set boundaries for their employees so that they know what acceptable use of the sites is. Along with setting the boundaries, the employers also have to enforce them so that they will be effective. Social media is not a free way of advertising, but it is very low cost in comparison to other techniques. Overall social media is a very useful tool for companies, especially as business continues to be in a digital world.

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