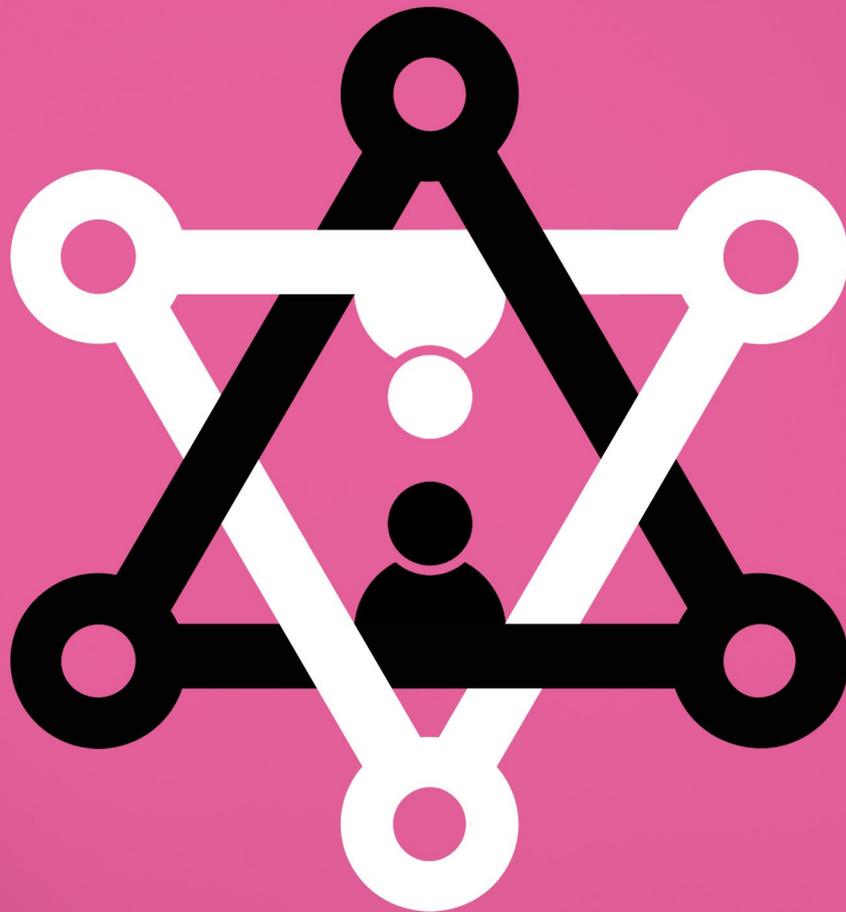




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Getting  
**GOOSEBUMPS**



**Chapter 7** part 2

# Future of social ebook



## The Future of Social is Getting Personal

A lot of online conversations lack context. It's all too easy to forget that behind every social media profile is a living breathing human being with needs and unique interests.

Marketers need to change the way they think about social and start appealing to the humans – not the statistics. Instead of churning out dry sales messages and conducting scripted conversations, it's time to realise the potential of social media and use it to drive powerful, personalised experiences, for every user.

## Start With Your Database

Every business should have a marketing database – a segmented list of all customers, leads, blog subscribers, influencers and so on. What most businesses don't have, however, is a database, which includes their social following.

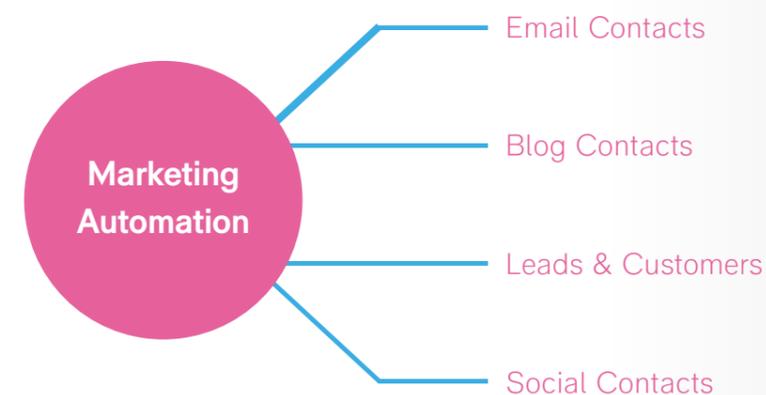
By integrating your social contacts into your database, you're integrating social media information into the rest of your marketing efforts and strategy. A unified database adds a layer of social media insights into your existing contacts, thus gaining valuable information to target messages, nurture leads and attract new contacts to your business.\*

## Social Database vs. Email Database?

Your email database should be a compiled list of all contacts who have subscribed to your email notifications and newsletters. All of these contacts have opted in to receive information from you and should be interacting with your content on a regular basis.

You should think about your social database in the same way. All of your social contacts have actively followed you and opted in to see your updates online. They are interested in your brand and should be engaging with you regularly and sharing your content. Your social following should consist of users who have the potential to become customers – with the right persuasion.

The future of social media requires that you capitalise on the context that has been provided by these social platforms. As you grow your social following, you'll continue to add more and more social intelligence into your marketing database – intelligence that will actively help you to personalize your marketing and sales conversations.





## Grow your following and find influencers

To create a diverse and intelligent social database, you'll first need to grow your following. The key to growing your following is content creation.

You should be creating relevant content, which is appropriate to your brand, and sharing this with equally relevant and appropriate people to gain traction and maximise your online reach. The better the content you create, the more likely it will be to travel well beyond the current followers you have.

### The social media machine

HubSpot illustrates a fantastic visual representation of the Social Media Machine. This diagram shows you exactly how your social media content spreads.

You should however, be aware that simply creating and posting content is not enough. You should be actively engaging with your followers on a regular basis to ensure your content is seen.

## Connecting with humans, not profiles

As we mentioned before, brands need to consider the person behind the profile and create personalised content targeted to those people.

Here are the top five ways you can connect with people, not profiles.

### 1. Lighten up!

People don't browse social media for sales messages. They're looking for a little fun, something to add entertainment to their day. If they enjoy something they're far more likely to share it – right?

You should be creating content/posting on a daily basis with a sole purpose of making your followers smile, alongside your regular strategy (but make sure you're staying true to your brand values!).

Delta airlines do this well - check out their simple post from last year - it gained hundreds of retweets and favourites!





## 2. Get Visual

As a marketer, you should know that the brain processes images faster than text (60,000 x faster to be precise). You should be thinking visually whenever you create content, whether it's a blog post or a social update, think about the imagery you use to propel your content. Social posts with images are also more likely to get shared!

## 3. Educate

Although users are looking for easy to digest content, there's value in creating content that will educate too. Users love to share and re-post content that benefits them and their audience – or simply makes them look smart. If they see there is educational value in content you post, they will gladly repost it to their own networks – extending your reach.

## 4. Share Internally

Your employees all have their own networks, which you should be actively utilizing to extend your reach. Send your employees pre-crafted tweets that they can copy/paste into their newsfeed, or ask them to retweet your content.

## 5. Utilise Influencers

Influencers should be a key part of your social media strategy. Influencers can be anyone from experts in your field, repeat customers or active community members. You should check their following and the kind of content they regularly engage with then find ways to incorporate them into your messaging and content. You should be actively encouraging them to share your content, retweet and spread the word about your brand. You can use Twtrland to find these key influencers.

## What Next?

Once you've identified your influencers, you need to keep up a good level of engagement with them. You should be identifying and creating key pieces of content which your influencers will enjoy and share whilst also thinking about ways to actively engage them with your other messaging. You could also consider giving them the 'inside scoop' before public announcements or before releasing content. If you're giving them an active reason to engage they will be far more likely to become positive brand ambassadors.

## Using Social Intelligence to Create Context

By now, you should have built your social following, identified and reached out to key influencers within your field, but what do you do with your new contacts?

This is where you start to implement your unified marketing database. You should be using your follower information to segment your messaging effectively – and to the right people. A good example of this could be a specific email, which is sent to only your active fans on social media, perhaps to thank them for being a follower.



## Content is King – but Context is God

Let's go back to the beginning. We started off this eBook by reminding you of the importance of humanizing your content - a fantastic example of this comes from Gary Vaynerchuk, our keynote speaker from IMUK 2014.

Vaynerchuk spoke to the audience about Twitter being a holy grail for context – he stated: "Twitter is a cocktail party – you don't go into a cocktail party and start using your business card like a ninja star... Twitter is about listening".

So what does this mean for growing your business and humanizing your content?

Vaynerchuk told us an anecdote about how he used social context to win business:

[Watch his IMUK 2014 talk here](#)

First, he identified who it was that he wanted as a client, then using LinkedIn and Google, he found out the name of CEO of that company and his Twitter handle. Vaynerchuk followed him – and here's the important part – he started to listen...

Vaynerchuk noticed a pattern in his social media conversations; he was regularly tweeting and posting about the St. Louis Cardinals Baseball team and in particular, he seemed excited about a new player, Kolton Wong.

Vaynerchuk seized the opportunity to draft Kolton Wong into his fantasy baseball league then waited until the guy he had been following posted a tweet about him. As soon as he had posted, Vaynerchuk leapt onto the conversation, asking him how he thought Wong would perform as he had just drafted him to his fantasy league. This started an initial conversation and seamlessly brought Vaynerchuk into his world.

## Humanising Your Conversations

A few days later, Vaynerchuk posted a tweet about Wong's real time performance and of course, the guy he had been following replied. From there, the guy checked out Vaynerchuk's profile, realized who he was and saw an opportunity to start a conversation. Using a direct message, he contacted Vaynerchuk to talk about his social media performance with his current agency. Telling Vaynerchuk he felt they had an affinity, because of a shared interest, which has nothing to do with business, Vaynerchuk managed to secure a pitch and eventually win \$4million dollars of business.

As Vaynerchuk summarized: It took 13 minutes of engagement time to strategise his social plan, followed by 22 minutes of engagement in the upcoming month. This led to \$4million dollars of business – all because he used social media to find context for his conversations. It's not rocket science, it's simple human conversation – conversation which is backed and firmly rooted in context.

**We've broken down his method into steps that you can follow too:**

1. Start by identifying who it is you want to become visible to
2. Do a Google/LinkedIn search for relevant people from that company then use their details to find their Twitter/Facebook details
3. Listen, listen, listen!
4. Find shared common ground
5. Become visible in their circles/communities – relating to this shared common ground
6. Find ways to engage, but keep it natural (as you would offline)
7. Once you/they have made initial direct contact, follow it up and don't let it go!
8. Win, win, win!

# Final thoughts on social

## Just be human

Being human and 'real' is the most important lesson any marketer can learn. Remember to think about how your social conversation would look offline – if it doesn't seem natural or it's out of context then rethink your message. Context is the heart and soul of all of your marketing messages, without it, you're simply another cog in the media machine. Remember that social media is exactly that – social.

We hope you've found this PDF useful. Don't hesitate to contact us for more information and to discuss how we can help you discover and develop your employer brand. Visit [www.ph-creative.com](http://www.ph-creative.com) for details of our UK and US offices, or simply email [liverpool@ph-creative.com](mailto:liverpool@ph-creative.com)