

## Social media framework

Social media— such as blogs, forums and online social networks—will expand the marketing reach of organizations and strengthen consumer relationships by creating a dialog between them and their most valued consumers.

The perception and use of social media is not, however, consistent. Many organizations that could benefit from the promises of social media have not integrated it into their digital ecosystem, while others are pursuing social media initiatives because they feel pressured to do so. They understand conceptually the benefits of social media, but they have no framework from which to make development decisions.

Many organizations equate social media with social networks—but while social networks are certainly the big fish of the social media ecosystem, they are not the only social media solution; neither are they necessarily the best solution.

The social media framework, presented in this paper to help organizations make these decisions, is divided into four categories based on revenue generation models and user needs. Revenue generation is divided into two very broad categories—advertising and commerce. User needs are divided into relationships and information. These last two categories are based on primary research conducted by Razorfish as well as secondary research, which indicates that users are primarily interested in using the Internet to connect with existing relationships, to build new ones or to find information.

### Quadrant 1 | Social networkers

The first quadrant is all about the **user**. Its main draw is that it enables users to connect with others online.

Social networks—sites such as MySpace, Facebook, Gather and Eons—should be considered by organizations that primarily generate revenue from advertising. If implemented correctly, social networks attract a large number of users, creating a platform from which to reach a certain segment of users and keep them coming back.

#### **Problem:**

Many organizations are challenged by the vast array of social media options and by implementing the best solution for their business goals and consumers' needs.

#### **Solution:**

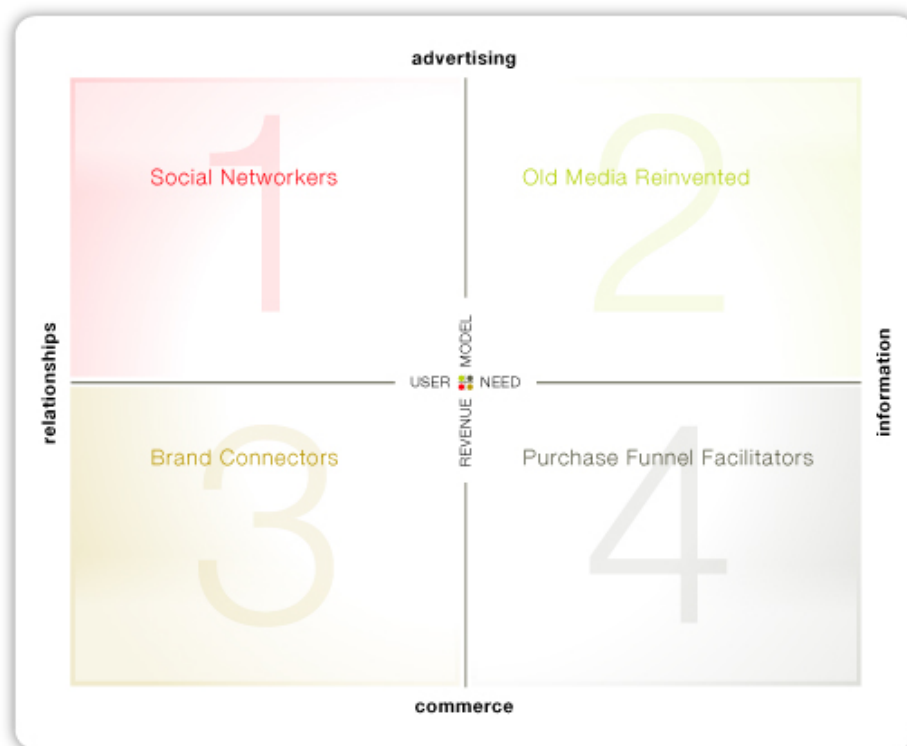
When thinking about integrating social media into your organization's digital marketing mix, consider the framework presented here as the first steps toward developing a strategy.

#### **Benefit:**

Social media enables you to reach and strengthen brand relationships, monitor your organization's success, or even engage your consumers in discussions of how to deliver better products.

Since social networks are all about the user, they do best when the hosting organization encourages and facilitates the network but otherwise stays out of the way. From a user standpoint, social networks are about connecting with a social circle and supporting its relationships.

Creating a social network is not a simple task. There is a full plate of items to consider, ranging from identity management and reputation building to seeding and moderation. There are also back-end considerations and costs for hosting such a network, such as having the right number of servers to support the environment.



## Quadrant 2 | Old media reinvented

The second quadrant is all about **content**, and often about a specific topic. The content consists of newspapers, TV, classifieds—in either their old form online, such as the New York Times, or in their new form, such as Craig’s List or YouTube.

Like the social networkers, media reinventors, or “morphers”, generate revenue through advertising, although they may also generate revenue through a subscription. But unlike the social networkers, the community develops around content rather than personalities. For example, users may exchange a dialog around a news article or video.

As a media morpher, it’s your job to enable this conversation. Tools to consider include forums, blogs and reviews. From an infrastructure standpoint, moderation will still be needed, but

profiles and reputation systems may be simpler than a social network. For example, instead of giving everyone a page with the ability to create an overview and upload photos, it might be sufficient to simply allow for user names. There are ways to implement reputation systems in this environment, which will allow community experts to develop; however, this is not mandatory.

Of course, the content must draw others, which means that you either need to be a content provider to begin with or need to attract a strong community of content generators.

### Quadrant 3 | Brand connectors

The third quadrant is all about your **brand**. It engages the user to interact with your brand in new and innovative ways. While this approach works especially well for strong brands that have loyal followers, it may also be used by those organizations trying to invigorate or reinvent a brand.

Social media is the way to enhance a brand relationship. In many ways, the media allows brand enthusiasts to spread the word and garner excitement.

Social media options are many in this quadrant. For example, blogs enable your organization to highlight new features or services while allowing consumers to take part in the discussion. Creative user-generated content or participation through polls or games can strengthen the user-brand relationship. Profile creation is also an option if your organization has the resources to support a larger scale project.

### Quadrant 4 | Purchase funnel facilitators

The fourth quadrant is all about facilitating the **purchase** on commerce sites—an innovative approach for an organization that wants to enable sales or drive conversion rates. The grand master of this quadrant is Amazon, which offers almost every type of social media feature, from reviews to tagging to wiki's, and is always experimenting with new approaches.

There are others who do well here. Carnival Connections employs group-planning tools to move the potential consumer to a cruise guest, and then enables post-travel sharing to encourage future visits.

While the social media options are numerous, it is easy to start small, for example, with product ratings. Another approach is tagging, where users can apply a word to a product that enhances its discovery on the site. RSS-enabled blogs are also a good choice for this kind of site since they keep potential consumers up-to-date with new features and services that may encourage a purchase.

## Summary

Social media features are more and more becoming part of the normal online experience. Not only do they enable reach and strengthen brand relationships, but they may also be used to help monitor your organization's success, or even engage your consumers in discussion of how to deliver better products. While the choices may seem daunting at first, it's helpful to start by looking at how your organization generates revenue and what your consumers may need or expect from your organization. Once this is understood, the path will be narrower, and you can begin to develop a social media strategy.

## About the Author

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Laura is a User Experience Director and a subject matter expert in community and social networking in the Seattle office of Razorfish. She has been developing digital brand, content and community strategies for clients throughout the U.S. and Italy since 1994, including Ford, Microsoft, Sony Music, and Williams-Sonoma. Prior to joining Razorfish, Laura was the Director of Brand and Content Strategy for Velodea, an Italian digital consulting firm based in Milan. Before Velodea, Laura was a Director at marchFIRST where she founded the Content Strategy & Creation department for the Los Angeles office in 1998. Laura began her Internet career as an Online Community Reporter at The Seattle Times, where she later created and managed a Web services offering for the company. Laura has also worked as a newspaper and magazine reporter covering community, technology and business stories for publications in the U.S. and the Czech Republic. Laura holds a Master of Arts in Media Studies with a focus on social media from New School University in New York City and a Bachelor of Science in Journalism from the University of Colorado at Boulder.

## About Razorfish™

Razorfish is one of the largest interactive marketing and technology companies in the world, and also one of the largest buyers of digital advertising space. With a demonstrated commitment to innovation, Razorfish counsels its clients on how to leverage digital channels such as the Web, mobile devices, in-store technologies and other emerging media to engage people, build brand loyalty and provide excellent customer service. The company is increasingly advising marketers on Social Influence Marketing™, its approach for employing social media and social influencers to achieve the marketing and business needs of an organization. Its award-winning client teams provide solutions through their strategic counsel, digital advertising and content creation, media buying, analytics, technology and user experience. Razorfish has offices in markets across the United States, and in Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. Clients--many of them served in multiple markets--include Carnival Cruise Lines, Coors Brewing Company, Levi's, McDonald's and Starwood Hotels. Visit <http://www.razorfish.com> for more information.

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