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The biggest advance since the Industrial Revolution is upon us, and it's giving the consumer a global voice. Social media has given the people a platform on which to be heard, and they now have the opportunity to speak, and be heard around the world.

Experts of Social Media has defined social media as 'online platforms for interaction, networking and relationship building. It enables people to create and communicate like never before.'

Utilizing social media sites such as Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, and LinkedIn, people can brand themselves according to who they are, their personality, their hobbies, their likes, dislikes, and what they do for a living. People were once defined by the position they held in a company, rather than as a unique individual, and individuals became faces and names without depth or personality. Social media brands a person for who they are, for their own merit, and allows them to be real and genuine, as a person, not just a position in a company.



Having recently become more mainstream, social media has enabled instant, worldwide connections, and that has placed the power back into the hands of the people enabling a stronger presence than ever before. Collectively, the people now have a louder voice than all the news stations combined, louder than celebrities, louder than politicians.

The power in our voices has forced a shift in the way companies do business as feedback and customer experiences, both negative and positive, are instantly and globally accessible. Companies need to be more conscious of their consumers; they need to display integrity, be accessible and personable.

Essentially, social media is word-of mouth marketing, or relationship marketing online. Word spreads much faster in an online environment than in offline (face-to-face) environments. There is a large difference in selling and marketing and social media is a marketing channel; the most powerful marketing channel available to businesses today.

A growing populous are using social media, and are now telling companies that they should use social media as well. Consumers want to be able to interact with companies on a more genuine and personable level than ever before. Now is the time to share your voice and join the conversation.

So why should companies use social media, as well as the people in their organization? Here are some astonishing statistics that demonstrate our reasoning:



The 2008 Cone Business in Social Media Study states:

- Almost 60% of Americans interact with companies on a social media web site
- 93% of Americans surveyed believe that a company should have a presence in social media
- 85% of Americans surveyed believe that a company should not only be present, but also interact with its consumers via social media
- 56% of American consumers feel both a stronger connection with, and better served by companies when they can interact with them in a social media environment

Because it is relatively new, social media on average is used incorrectly, so here are some tips:

1) The purpose of social media is to connect with other people and build relationships. With the internet, you now have the ability to connect with people on a broader, worldwide level.

2) Building relationships is essential to building business, because it's based on trust. When consumers trust a company, the company can drive business to the next level.

3) Again, social media is a marketing channel, not a sales channel. You cannot sell in a marketing channel. If you try to sell on social media sites, people will tune you out.