

Social Media for Entrepreneurs

*5 easy steps to using social media
to build your brand and company*

David Mullings

Free Sample: Social Media for Entrepreneurs

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**“WHEN YOU BRAND YOURSELF PROPERLY THE COMPETITION
BECOMES IRRELEVANT”**

- Dan Schawbel, Managing Partner, Millennial Branding LLC

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Introduction

In my MBA program I was constantly surrounded with case studies and I find them a great way to learn. Understanding the decisions and results of those decisions is one of the greatest ways to learn. I constantly say that it is wise to learn from the mistakes of others and make new ones than repeat old mistakes.

This book is meant to serve as a collection of case studies based on my personal experiences using social media and the wider web to benefit my business ventures and build brands. The steps do not require an MBA or even a college education to follow. Some may even seem like common sense, but we know that it is not actually that common.

Most importantly, this book only serves as a launching point to get you moving down the right path. Where you go from there is completely up to how you decide to apply what you learn and I wish you the best.

Chapter 1

What is social media?

By now most people have heard the term *social media* and usually associate it with websites like Facebook and Twitter. They know what the term describes but they tend not to think about what it actually means. Different people also define social media slightly differently. My preferred definition is any platform that allows conversation and interaction with groups of people. That is the essence of *social*.

That definition covers blogs, photo-sharing websites, forums, video sharing sites, social networks and information sharing sites (like Twitter). Too often people forget that social media is more than just social networks and messaging platforms.

Web 2.0, another term floating around with multiple definitions, mainly refers to the new way in which the world wide web facilitates a **push** strategy. In the past, you built a website, promoted it and got people to come to your site, a **pull** strategy. Today people and companies push content out to where people already are. It is akin to going from a corner shop to a shop inside a high-traffic mall. You have to work harder to stand out but you also have more eyeballs passing by to reach out to.

Once you accept what social media is, you have to look at the various ways that they are being used by people for business and then make a commitment to make an honest effort. There is no use in attempting something if you don't plan to be good at it. It is much easier to get better at something if you like it and make a commitment to improve so make sure that you are mentally prepared to work smart and put in the effort.

I was taught 5 P's in my marketing class; *Product, Place, Price, Promotion, People*. That was the marketing mix and as an entrepreneur I quickly realized that all those P's should lead to a sixth and critical P; *Profit*.

My recommended steps are built on these P's to help you create a marketing mix for your brands, including your personal brand.

Chapter 2

Step One: Product

Before you can discuss any other P's, you must decide what *product* you will be marketing. Most entrepreneurs are looking to market their company and themselves because they believe that will both increase awareness of what the company does and make it easier for them to raise money from investors or get publicity that helps the venture.

If you intend to market yourself, make sure that you are comfortable with the spotlight and can deal with the negative comments that always come from the naysayers. Entrepreneurs who step into the spotlight must have tough skin like politicians and be able to ignore negative comments.

“You’re never as good or as bad as they say you are but if you believe all the stuff or need the stuff, you are going to have an unhappy life”

- Christine Pelosi

You know who you are and the people who matter in your life know who you are. Ignore the haters if you want to be happy.

Once you have decided on the *product* that you will be using social media to market you can begin moving on to the other parts of the marketing mix as you prepare to go live. In my case I decided that RealVibez, the website my brother and I had built, would be the core product and I would also promote myself as a forward-thinking entrepreneur. Merely deciding on what part of my reputation I would focus on accentuating was not enough; it would have to be real and I would need something to drive me, something that brought out passion.

Find what drives you

For me it was wanting to be a positive role model for young people. When I was 15, I wrote down a 15-year plan broken into blocks of 5 years with the end goal of becoming a positive role model for young people. I wanted to inspire others to go after their dreams. That goal was going to be my driving force in my use of social media to build my reputation. You must find your own goal that will be your driving force.

Chapter 4

Step Three: Places

“You may not need to be everywhere if it doesn’t fit your business model”

- Michael Linton, SVP & CMO, eBay

Do not assume that you have to use every available social media channel. It is often dangerous to spread yourself and your resources too thin, especially when you have not perfected other channels. Take some time to identify the places where your targets spend the most time. Are they on Facebook? Twitter? Flickr? Do they read certain blogs regularly?

It is no different than traditional marketing and trying to understand where you will reach the audience that is most likely to be receptive to your message. The main difference is that you are going to be trying to start a conversation not just broadcast a one-way message and hope for action. The big difference is that the digital age suffers from the tyranny of more, more channels, more places, more launching all the time.

If you are looking to connect with reporters and influential reporters I highly recommend that you sign up for HARO, Help A Reporter Out. Three times per day emails are sent out with reporters and bloggers looking for stories covering a wide range of topics. Thanks to HARO I have been able to land guest blogging opportunities, get featured on blogs and even be quoted in articles. Best of all, it’s free!

Some of the places that you have to include are Facebook and LinkedIn, especially for building a personal brand. Your profiles on these social networks rank high in search engines when people search for your name and help you to control your reputation. Put our best foot forward on each one and do not fluff up your resume or info section. If you were part of a team that accomplished something, say you were part of the team. Being a team player is seen as a good thing.

I say Facebook and LinkedIn are important channels because of the interactions that can be facilitated through groups and questions/answers. How you use the *places* is just as important as the places you choose.

Standing Out

Thanks to Facebook, I was able to get an autographed copy of Guy Kawasaki’s *The Art of the Start*. I joined an entrepreneur group I found after searching for entrepreneur groups and my goal

was to become active. I started asking questions and responding to questions I felt I could answer. The group was all about sharing ideas and learning from the mistakes of each other.

I saw that Guy Kawasaki was an admin for the group and immediately figured that everyone who sees that tries to get him to add them as a friend so that they can pitch his Garage Ventures for investment or get him to be a mentor. How could I be different?

Instead of sending a friend request with a detailed explanation of why I was trying to add him even though we had never met, I decided to make him know that I was not there to harass him. I changed my profile picture to the cover of his book and in the additional info section I said it was the best entrepreneur book I ever bought (which was and is still true).

I then sent him a message saying that I loved his book and was promoting on Facebook in a unique way. That same day Guy replied and said that he really appreciated it and simply had to return the favor by sending an autographed copy. He asked for my address and I replied with it, not believing for a second that I would ever get the book. I also sent a friend request and he accepted.

Two weeks later a package arrived and to my astonishment it was a copy of *The Art of the Start* with a personal message to me.

As a budding entrepreneur you could imagine my excitement, not only did I get an author-signed copy of a book I loved, my social media experiment had worked and I could now share this valuable lesson with others. It could be used to help my personal brand.

The key lesson from this story is that you must choose your places wisely and then choose your approach so that you stand out from the pack. You must differentiate yourself from others just like how you seek to differentiate your venture from the competition.

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About The Author



David Mullings is an entrepreneur, speaker, author and columnist.

He is the Business Development Manager at The RMP Group, an investment and advisory firm, a co-founder of Random Media, an integrated media and entertainment firm focused on Caribbean entertainment and culture, as well as co-founder of Kaizen Interactive, an interactive marketing agency.

David, as CEO of Random Media, was instrumental in securing the deal for Random Media (through the Realvibeztv channel) to become YouTube's first Caribbean media partner and the company is now part of YouTube's new rental program and live streaming program.

Random Media also distributes eBook versions of Caribbean books in the Amazon Kindle and Apple iBooks stores.

He has been interviewed numerous times about using social networks for business, previously built up a Facebook fan page for Jamaica to over 55,000 fans in less than 2 years that is now being used by the Jamaica Tourist Board and has presented multiple times on digital marketing strategies for businesses and NGOs.

In 2008, David was asked to endorse a book on entrepreneurship [The Toilet Paper Entrepreneur](#) alongside Donny Deutsch, Host of CNBC's *The Big Idea with Donny Deutsch* and contributed a chapter to a McGraw-Hill Publishing book, [How To Make Money With YouTube](#). He is mentioned in the book [Upstarts](#) written by Inc. Magazine contributor Donna Fenn and was a judge for Business.com's *What Works For Business* contest in 2009 and has had a startup advice letter published in [Inc. Magazine](#).

David was born in Kingston, Jamaica, completed his B.Sc. at the age of 19 and is one of the youngest graduates from the University of Miami School of Business, receiving his MBA in Marketing and International Business at 22.

Other Activities/Affiliations

David Mullings has a weekly opinion column in the Jamaica Observer, a nationwide newspaper on Jamaica and was the first Future Leaders Representative for the USA on the Jamaican Diaspora Advisory Board, a board that advises the Government of Jamaica through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

He is the Vice Chairman of Upliftment Jamaica, a non-profit focused on Jamaica, as well as the Chair of the endowment fund he conceived of for Upliftment Jamaica. He is the founder of ChangeJamaica.org, a crowdsourcing website focused on soliciting ideas to improve Jamaica and change it for the better.