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Brief #12



MINUTE MARKETER

How to Integrate Social Media with Email and SEO

9 tactics for leveraging your
brand's social network

30-Minute Marketer

How to Integrate Social Media with Email and SEO: 9 tactics for leveraging your brand's social network

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TACTICS YOU CAN LEARN OVER LUNCH

Welcome to *30-Minute Marketer* – a resource from MarketingSherpa featuring bite-sized tips for busy marketers.

In this report, we focus on how you can effectively integrate social media with email and SEO tactics for an effective and comprehensive marketing strategy.

Social media by definition is about sharing and building a community. So, it only makes sense that you would want to take an inclusive approach, blending social media tactics with the tactics you already use to engage and connect with your community of customers and prospects.

In this report, we'll show you:

- Why incorporating and encouraging social sharing is so important
- How to use and design sharing buttons wisely
- How a multifaceted strategy can help you generate more qualified leads
- Tips for using social media to realize link-related SEO benefits

We know you're in a hurry, so let's get started. We're eager to share these tips on social media sharing!

Bobbi Dempsey
Editor, *30-Minute Marketer*

About *30-Minute Marketer*

MarketingSherpa's *30-Minute Marketer* is designed with you, the busy marketer, in mind. We know you have a lot to do and not a lot of time in which to do it. You need quick, simple tips that you can put into action right away.

For each *30-Minute Marketer*, we scour the vast MECLABS library of marketing research, from MarketingSherpa case studies and benchmark reports, to MarketingExperiments optimization tests, and edit the research down into one actionable piece for helping you improve your marketing performance right now...or, at least, by the time you're done with lunch.

Most marketers use social media as part of their marketing strategy. But, rather than approach this as a separate, isolated strategy, it's important to incorporate it to work alongside other tactics, such as email and search, for best results and maximum efficiency. It may require some extra effort, but a carefully planned strategy that properly integrates social media with other tactics can pay off for marketers.

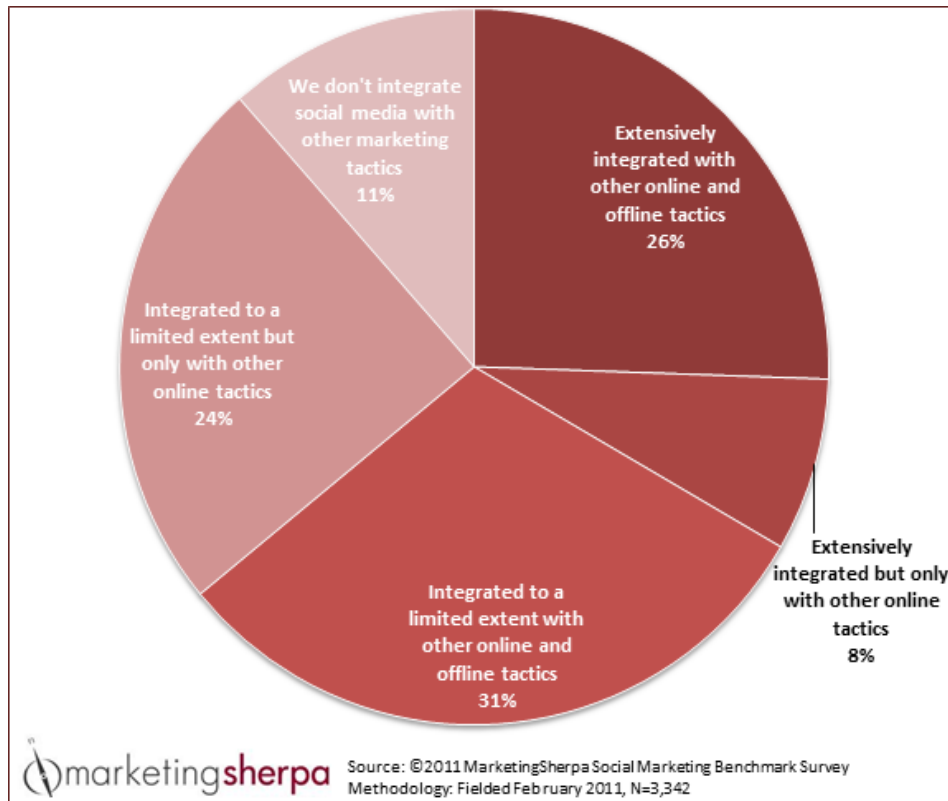
In the MarketingSherpa blog post, "[Making Social and Email Work Together](#)," Jeanne S. Jennings points out that social media share links included in email messages received clickthrough significantly higher than the clickthrough rates on the "forward this email to a friend" links marketers have been using for years.

"When someone shares your email message on a social network, it's the ultimate [form of] viral marketing," Jennings says. "With very little effort your message has the potential to reach all of the recipients' friends and contacts on that network." In her blog post, Jennings cites a report by email automation company Silverpop which estimated that posted messages have an average increase in reach of more than 24.3%, based on original email messages delivered.

Marketing Research Chart: To what extent are marketers integrating social media?

The chart below from the [2011 MarketingSherpa Social Media Benchmark Survey](#) looked at how marketers are integrating social media with other marketing tactics.

Q. To what extent does your organization integrate social media into the marketing mix?



Only 11% of respondents said they don't integrate social media with other tactics. The majority integrated social media—at least to some extent—with other online and offline tactics. The remaining 32% integrated social media only with other online tactics.

Bottom Line: Most marketers realize the importance of working social media into a bigger and more comprehensive marketing strategy.

Tactic #1: Use sharing buttons wisely.

As Adam T. Sutton writes in the MarketingSherpa blog post, "[Social Email Marketing: How to encourage sharing wisely, not randomly](#)," just dropping in some social sharing buttons in your emails indiscriminately usually doesn't work very well.

Instead of using buttons randomly, you need to think about how you can best use them effectively. In the KFC Double Down promotion cited by Sutton, for example, the KFC team designed an email that was solely focused on encouraging recipients to share the message.

EXAMPLE: KFC DOUBLE DOWN EMAIL



Tactic #2: Design sharing buttons carefully

As Sutton points out in the previous blog post, the message generated when someone clicks on a sharing button in your email is very important to the performance of your campaign. "So, program your buttons carefully," he writes. "Be sure their default messages are relevant and compelling to the audience on the social network, because you need people to notice the link, click it, and engage with your page."

Tactic #3: Use a multi-faceted approach to generate more qualified leads

As explained in the MarketingSherpa article, "[Using Social Sharing to Achieve Specific Email Goals: Five Insights](#)," the combination of email and social media offers B2B marketers (and marketers in general) a powerful way to stay in touch with prospects, distribute thought-leadership content, or extend offers that can turn social followers or email subscribers into qualified leads.

You must be prepared to invest some extra effort, though. Achieving the benefits of social sharing for lead generation can require more work than, for example, sharing a simple consumer product offer with social followers. Pam O'Neal, VP Marketing, BreakingPoint Systems and her team have created a multifaceted email/social integration strategy that includes:

- Creating a monthly email newsletter from the company's top blog posts
- Placing social sharing buttons on all content
- Maintaining LinkedIn groups with their own email communications
- Using email drip-marketing campaigns to drive prospects back to the website where they can request a meeting with a sales team

Tactic #4: Realize the importance of providing share-worthy content

In the MarketingSherpa article from Tactic #3, B2B newsletter publisher SmartBrief said that after adding social sharing buttons to articles featured in their emails, there was a notable increase in visits from the social networks where subscribers shared content:


- Visits from LinkedIn increased 2,070%
- Visits from Twitter increased 1,680%
- Visits from Facebook increased 1,351%


The huge jump in traffic from those networks almost certainly featured many visitors who were encountering the SmartBrief brand for the first time. "For the most part, it's about visibility and showing the value of your publications, because this is the way people are sharing information with each other," says Rob Birgfield, Director, Audience Development, SmartBrief.

In the MarketingSherpa blog post, "[Social Bookmarks in B2B Email](#)," Adam T. Sutton shares the strategy used by Kennametal in a campaign to target metal workers. The team realized current email subscribers may not be the target audience for the specific campaign, so they incorporated social bookmarking buttons in the email, to make it easier for recipients to share the content with the correct customers.

EXAMPLE: KENNAMETAL EMAIL WITH BOOKMARKING BUTTONS

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Tactic #5: Be selective in what you ask people to share

As noted in the [MarketingSherpa 2012 Email Marketing Handbook](#), not every email message is a fit for social sharing. Choose messages that your audience will find relevant to pass on to their friends or colleagues. Then make the content easy to share using a format with a single purpose, simple navigation and a strong prompt to share.

Similar to email, the content must be helpful, interesting and pertinent to motivate subscribers to share and for the brand to be respected as a thought leader. What is different is that many social sites (especially Twitter) will use your email subject line as the default text when published.

Carefully consider your subject line wording; what makes it stand out on a social media feed might (or might not) be the same for an email inbox. In addition, Twitter has a 140-character limit for its updates, so your subject line should be shorter to allow space for the post to be re-Tweeted.

Tactic #6: Use social media to help build inbound links for SEO benefits

In the MarketingSherpa article, "[Special Report: Social Media's Impact on SEO – Five Trends to Guide an Integrated Strategy](#)," several marketers said social media and search naturally complement each other, especially when it comes to link-related tactics.

"There's natural relationship," says Craig Macdonald, VP, Marketing and Product Management, Covario. "If you execute good linking strategies when you're doing content development for social media, then you find you can drive better rankings from an SEO standpoint."

In the same article, the team from Hearst Digital Media discussed the importance of providing good content so audiences will link to it.

"Our entire interest from a search perspective is almost exclusively on the power of social for link building, which is such a critical part of search performance," says Dan Roberts, Senior SEO Strategies and Analyst, Hearst Digital Media. Roberts' team found that repurposing content for social news websites such as Digg and reddit can generate a tremendous number of inbound links.

Some things to keep in mind:

- Most network links are "nofollow"

Many social networks links are meant to be passed over by search engines, as they employ the "nofollow" tag in the HTML code. This code means that many social media links, such as Facebook and Twitter updates, will not provide a direct SEO benefit to their destinations. However, linking to good content in an update calls an audience's attention to that webpage. The audience can then publish the link elsewhere or share it further in the network.

- Profiles have good links

Robert Holland, Founder, Social Media SEO, an industry blog, says marketers can get SEO benefits by adding relevant URLs to their profiles on Facebook and Twitter.

- Social channels get links out fast

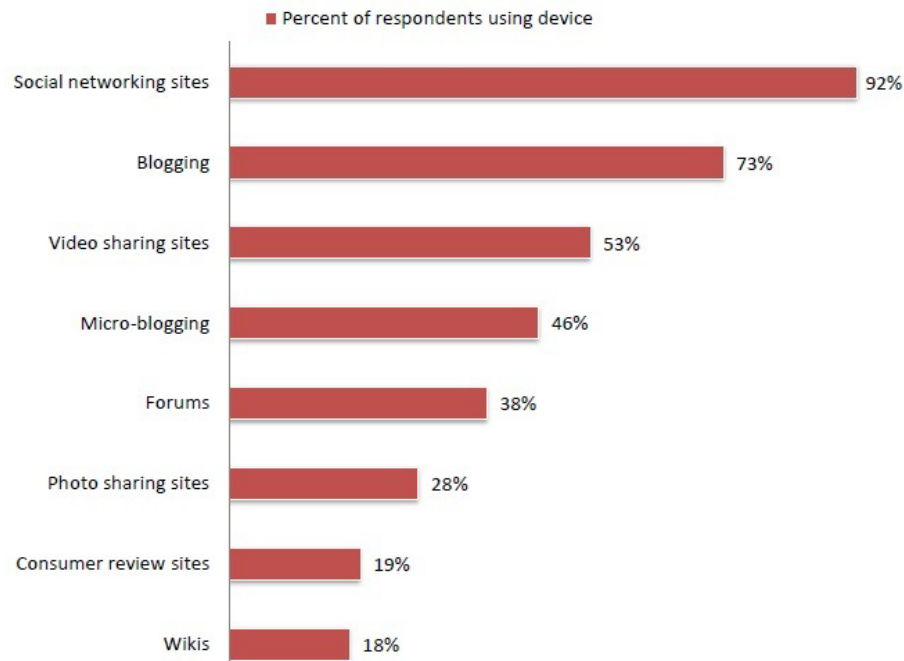
When dealing with emerging topics, Marshall Simmonds, Chief Search Strategist, New York Times Company, finds his team only has a matter of hours to build link authority. “In the early phase of a breaking news story, link equity is doled out, and sometimes that window of opportunity is very small.”

The team compensates by pushing hard to ensure content is accurate and that it immediately gets pushed to Google News, Twitter, Facebook and other channels so audiences see it immediately.

Tactic #7: Realize the importance of social networking sites for SEO purposes

One advantage of using social networking for SEO purposes is that most likely you already have the basic tools in place. As the chart below from the [2011 MarketingSherpa Social Media Benchmark Survey](#) shows, nearly all marketers are already using social networking for SEO. So the foundation is already there—it’s just a matter of utilizing these tools wisely and incorporating them efficiently into your overall SEO efforts.

CHART: SOCIAL MEDIA DEVICES UTILIZED FOR SEO PURPOSES
Q. What social media device(s) does your organization currently utilize to support your search engine optimization (SEO) plan? Please check all that apply.



Source / Methodology: MarketingSherpa Search Marketing Benchmark Survey / Fielded April, 2010 N=2,194

The chart shows that social networking sites were the social media devices most commonly used for search purposes, with nearly all respondents using them for that purpose. This is likely due to both the popularity of some social networking sites as well as the ease of set-up for profiles on these types of sites. In very little time, a company can be up and running with an active social networking profile.

Tactic #8: Consider how search and social data complement each other

As the MarketingSherpa article in Tactic #6 points out, many tools used to monitor social media conversations are keyword-driven. Search engine marketing is also keyword-driven – and the two channels can benefit from one another’s data. For example, SEO keyword research can identify keywords and phrases to use in social media channels to attract more visitor traffic to that content, and to help that content rank well.

Analyzing the language customers use to discuss your brand in social media circles can contribute to your SEO keyword research. Adding social data to keyword research keeps marketers from guessing, Macdonald says. “Have the consumers tell you how they want to find your brand.”

Also, Macdonald’s team found success using search and social media data to measure the impact of clients’ branding campaigns. After the team launches a major campaign, they can monitor the level of social media discussion and searches around the campaign and brand keywords. They then use the data to help gauge branding impact.

Tactic #9: Determine your audience’s habits and preferences.

In the MarketingSherpa article, “[Email and Social Media Integration: Five Strategies to Grow Audiences and Design Campaigns](#),” the team from cookware and cake-decorating accessory company Wilton decided to supplement email marketing tactics with a social media strategy. They wanted to see how much overlap there was between their opt-in database and social media channels.

To find out, they conducted several surveys—one asking their email recipients which social media sites they used, and another (posted on their social media feeds) asking people about their newsletter subscription and social media habits. They also observed discussions on social media sites to gather information about their followers’ habits and characteristics. This helped identify differences between their social media followers and their email subscribers.

Armed with this information, the Wilton team adjusted their messaging strategy to appeal to each group. They developed a cross-channel list building strategy:

- Email promotion to gain Facebook fans

The team used their email newsletter to boost awareness of the Facebook page. They added buttons to their email newsletter to encourage subscribers to follow the brand on Facebook, and saw a 325% increase in new Facebook fans on the day they sent the newsletter.

- Facebook promotion to gain newsletter subscribers

The team also tested the effect of promoting the email newsletter to Facebook fans. They created a Facebook wall post that encouraged fans to opt-in, and saw a 225% increase in newsletter subscriptions compared to the average daily sign-up rate.

EXAMPLE: WILTON EMAIL WITH SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING BUTTONS



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Useful Links and Resources:

[Location-based Email Marketing: 6 Tactics to Leverage Social Check-In to Grow Email Lists and Improve Engagement](#)

[MarketingSherpa B2B Marketing Summit '10: Integrating Social Media with B2B Email](#)

[Inbound Marketing: Unlock the Content from Your Emails and Social Marketing](#)

[Combining Email, Search, Social and PR for a Content Marketing Campaign](#)

[MarketingSherpa 2012 Search Marketing Benchmark Report – SEO Edition](#)

About MarketingSherpa LLC

MarketingSherpa is a primary research facility, wholly-owned by MECLABS, dedicated to determining **what works in marketing** via exclusive case studies, surveys, and results data analysis. Then we publish what we learn so our community of marketers and weekly readers can improve their results and train their teams.

Praised by *The Economist*, Harvard Business School's Working Knowledge Site and Entrepreneur.com, MarketingSherpa is distinguished by offering **practical, results-based marketing** information researched and written by a staff of in-house reporters.

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MECLABS deploys a rigorous methodology to conduct research. This research is compiled from:

- More than **10 years** of research partnership with our clients
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MECLABS has consulted with companies like Cisco, Johnson & Johnson, *The New York Times*, 1-800-Flowers, and NetSuite to optimize sales and marketing processes and achieve triple-digit ROI gains.

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The screenshot shows the Inbound Marketing website. At the top, it says "View with Images | View Mobile Version". The main header is "Inbound Marketing" with the subtitle "Social media, SEO, and content marketing". The MarketingSherpa logo is in the top right. A navigation bar includes "New Case Studies | Members' Library | Research | Events | Training".

The featured article is titled "Social Media Marketing: Brand-powered social site is 4th-largest traffic source for nonprofit". The text discusses the need for a steady stream of content and mentions a nonprofit organization with 23,000 users. A "Read more" link is provided, along with the note "(Open access until Aug. 28th)".

A sponsored section for HubSpot features the text: "Facebook is the most popular social network, and with more than 750 million users, it can serve as an important marketing tool for any business. Face it - your prospects are on Facebook whether you like it or not. Learn how to start using Facebook to achieve your business goals. Download HubSpot's free ebook".

Below the article are "More Recent MarketingSherpa Headlines" with links to "Event Marketing: Regional customer forums improve field events attendance rate by 150%" and "Lead Nurturing: Old names yield 37% of customers".

The sidebar on the right includes "Connect with us:" with social media icons for LinkedIn, Twitter, RSS, Facebook, and YouTube. Below that is a "Research:" section for the "B2B Summit 2011 Final Agenda", listing dates for Boston (Sept. 26-27) and San Francisco (Oct. 24-25), and listing keynote speakers: Flint McLaughlin, Kristin Zhivago, and Jay Baer. A "Reserve Your Seat" button is at the bottom of the sidebar.

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