Social Media for the Facilities Management Sector

White Paper Published by Service Works Group

Contents

Introduction 2

1. Why Use Social Media 3
2. Social Media Channels 5
    - LinkedIn 6
    - Twitter 8
    - Facebook 9
    - Other Platforms 10
    - New Kids on the Block 14
3. Creating a Social Media Routine 15
4. What to Write About 18
5. Staff Use of Social Media 19
6. Who Should be in Charge? 20
7. Best Practice Examples 22
8. Conclusion 23

Appendix 24

Contact Service Works Group 28

Introduction

As a leading facilities management software provider, Service Works embraces new technologies, both through its product offering and its social media presence. Online media channels, such as LinkedIn and Twitter, which foster interaction, have rapidly become essential elements of many business's marketing strategy and are changing the way in which organisations operate.

Many of the social media platforms are valuable marketing tools that complement traditional media and directly connect businesses with clients. According to the 2012 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, 94 per cent of marketers use social media to market their businesses, with 83 per cent agreeing that social media is important to their businesses. This white paper considers how organisations involved in the facilities management sector can use social media to connect with clients, potential clients and other stakeholders, as Service Works has done since raising its social media profile. The paper includes the following sections:

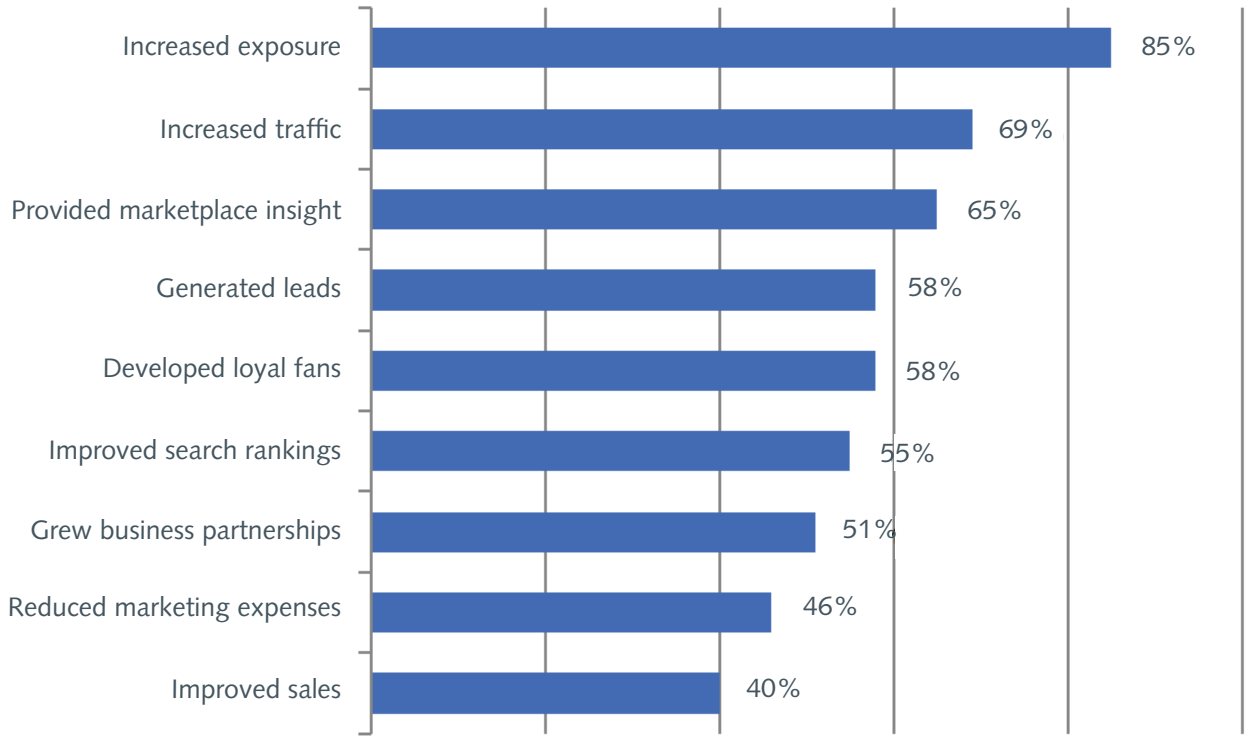
- Why use social media?
- Social media channels
- Creating a social media routine
- What to write about
- Staff use of social media
- Best practice examples
- Appendix 1 – setting up on social media

Why Use Social Media?

According to the 2012 Social Media Marketing Industry Report by Social Media Examiner, social media marketing has numerous benefits; the main benefit being an increase in exposure, as indicated by 85 per cent of the marketers surveyed. It also increases traffic and subscribers to websites as reported by 69 per cent of marketers. Investing a minimum of 11 hours per week on social media efforts saw a benefit of reduced marketing expenses. Improvements to search engine rankings were most prevalent among those who have been using social media for a year or longer, with nearly 59% or more reporting a rise in rankings.

Not only can the platforms be used to sell to or at least engage with many people, they can also be used to establish the account holder as an industry expert or prominent online industry figure; to build relationships; and even to recruit new staff. Your customers use social media, your competitors use it, and without a doubt, so should you. And best of all? While traditional marketing can cost hundreds and thousands of pounds, most forms of social media marketing are free, although there is an investment in staff time and expertise to ensure that it's right. The survey reports that the main cost is in fact the time required to secure decent results. And with regards to the existing marketing budget, 57 per cent of the self employed were likely to benefit from a reduction in marketing costs given that social media marketing is an adequate replacement.

Benefits of Social Media Marketing



Source: *2012 Social Media Marketing Industry Report* Social Media Examiner
www.socialmediaexaminer.com

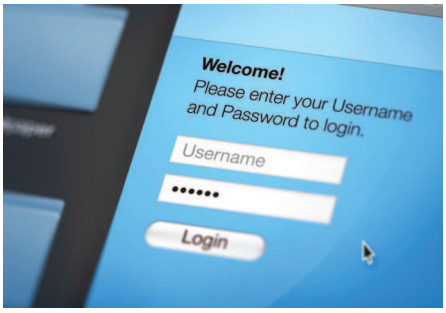
The smart phone revolution has fuelled the use of social media. The first iPhone was launched in 2007 with Android phones appearing a year later, and by the start of 2011 almost half of UK mobile sales were smartphones, versus just 4 per cent in 2007. Ofcom's 2011 Communications Market Report showed that over a quarter of the adults and almost half of the teenagers in the UK owned a smartphone, and according to the International Data Corporation (IDC) in 2011 there were around 450 million smartphones sold across the world, which is expected to double to a billion a year by 2015. The global information and measurement company, Nielsen, has found that 44 per cent of US consumers have smartphones. Social media apps on smart phones allow people to immediately access networks wherever they are. And since 2011 when Twitter was embedded at the menu layer in the Apple iOS5 mobile operating system, which powers the iPhone, iPad and iPod Touch, Twitter has seen sign-ups increase by 300 per cent. Social media use is also fostered by ever- increasing 3G "mobile broadband" coverage and by the increasing availability of Wi-Fi in public places, bars and cafes.

But how does social media, so embedded in our lives now, impact the bottom line? Marketers increasingly want advice about how to monitor, measure and track return on investment (ROI). According to the Social Media ROI 2011/2012 Survey by the marketing agency King Fish Media, social media ROI tracking will become much more relevant because half of the surveyed companies still do not analyse ROI.

In its initial incarnation social media favoured targeting the consumer market – and is still evolving in a business setting. LinkedIn was invented as a social media business tool and Facebook has subsequently targeted the professional market with a business offering. Twitter is also being widely used in a business setting now, but social media in a business setting is still evolving. Organisations are still learning to analyse and measure its overall effectiveness. In a B2B environment, organisations feel the need to have a presence, but in terms of calculating the ROI – it's still early days.

According to the marketing survey, one third of the businesses that did calculate the ROI of their campaigns stated that their measures had the expected impact. For 13 per cent the results even exceeded all expectations.

Tip: To track the ROI of a specific social media campaign, use a software system such as the social media dashboard Hootsuite to determine how many times a person has clicked on the link you posted on your social media site. A website analytics tool such as Google Analytics then determines whether the lead was converted into a sale. The total sales generated by one post can then be tracked (and compared with traditional advertising). Digital web agencies can provide advice around this somewhat technical topic or do it for you for a fee. The important question is whether your social media presence is driving your organisation's revenue and increasing profits?



Social Media Channels

Most business marketers focus on the 'big three' social media channels - Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn - since these have the largest memberships and so the greatest potential to spread a message. Facebook's membership currently stands at nearly three times that of Twitter, with around 845 million monthly active users at the end of December 2011 (that's at least one in every nine people on earth) logging over 700 billion minutes monthly.

As of April 2012, Twitter had 140 million global active users, with 340 million average tweets made per day. LinkedIn, as of April 2012, had over 150 million members worldwide, with more than two new members signing up to join per second.

From a business perspective, combined, that's a significant number of potential customers to reach out to. The survey discovered that the self-employed (79 per cent) and owners of small businesses (79 per cent) are more likely to use LinkedIn. Larger businesses are more likely to use video-sharing website, YouTube or other video and less likely to use blogs (55 per cent). This could be a reflection of larger businesses being social media trend setters, or it could simply reflect them having larger budgets and dedicated staff to work on these corporate videos.

LinkedIn

Of all the social networks, LinkedIn has the most focus on professional interests and its user base is the most likely to be using it for career-related reasons. Almost anybody who's anybody in FM has a LinkedIn account, even if they aren't really making the most of it (yet). Users have complete control over what others see on their profile, and should use this to showcase their skills and talents so the right people and opportunities can find them. It's as simple as signing up for an account, setting up a profile for free and beginning to link to your existing contacts. This gives you access to information about your connections and access to your connections' connections and so on. Basically the more connections you have the larger the business network you will have access to.

'Groups' is one of the most popular and useful features, allowing users to join relevant professional groups such as the Global FM, UK & Europe Estates & Facilities Management Professionals, BIFM, Facilities Management Association, The FM Network and Occupiers Journal.

Users can then discover discussions within these professional groups, and even be part of determining the top discussions by liking and commenting on them. Users can find discussions of interest by seeing which discussions their contacts have liked and how many people commented on them. They can even make contact with the most influential people in the groups by checking the Top Influencers board within that group. FMs regularly comment on the discussion forums in the numerous FM groups, a good way to demonstrate individual expertise and get your name out there.

LinkedIn also aids offline networking. After a networking event you can add your new contacts on LinkedIn, reinforcing the relationship and many professionals now have their LinkedIn details on their business cards. Another plus point is that LinkedIn provides a highly-targeted advertising forum, given that individuals are already in a work mindset. It is therefore considered more acceptable to advertise B2B products and services, and adverts can be targeted by age, gender, seniority, job title and even by company. LinkedIn also allows companies to showcase themselves via a Company page, a centralised online location for the company where employees and others can stay updated about company news, products and services, business opportunities and job openings.

It's an idea to request that senior managers and client facing members of the organisation have a LinkedIn presence, ideally containing standardised information about the company to ensure that the picture painted is accurate. These people can also be encouraged to take part in LinkedIn discussions and forums to further spread the word about the company. They can even find potential clients this way.

But of course, a business introduction via LinkedIn cannot have the same depth as a face-to-face introduction. Some individuals may even prefer not to be put in touch through LinkedIn without first meeting, although it is becoming more acceptable especially among the IT-savvy younger generation.

Users may also want to invest in LinkedIn Premium, a paid-for service with many extra tools such as InMail, which allows users to contact anyone on LinkedIn without an introduction. The Expanded Profile Views function allows users to see expanded profiles of everyone on LinkedIn, even people outside of their network. And the Who's Viewed My Profile feature enables users to see the full list, to learn how they found you, and more. Users also have the opportunity to see up to 700 profiles per search, and more.

Tip: Be sure to add LinkedIn (and/or Twitter and Facebook) follow buttons to your website so that people can easily follow your company without making the effort to leave the site.

Tip: Worried about competitors seeing your whole address book? Users can also adjust their LinkedIn privacy settings to have control over the information that other users can see. To access these controls, hover your mouse over your name, in the top right hand corner of the screen and select 'Settings' from the drop down that appears. This takes you through to your Account Settings page, from which Privacy Controls can be changed.

Twitter

Twitter is by far the most popular microblogging platform, and has gained much media attention for its ability to break and spread news to its millions of users faster than any other platform. In January 2009, when US Airways flight 1549 crash landed into Manhattan's River Hudson after hitting a flock of geese on take-off, onlooker Jim Hanrahan broke the news on Twitter 15 minutes before mainstream news channels. "I just watched a plane crash in the Hudson," he said, and other tweeters followed with images and commentary.

To have access to a world of information sources, you just have to sign up for an account and begin following other users, such as individuals, businesses and associations in the FM sector and general business news sources. You can see their tweets (140 character messages) and compose your own. It is also possible to publicly and privately message Twitter users, create lists of accounts you wish to group into a category, and use hashtags (a word or phrase with no spaces and a # before it) to categorise content and take part in discussions. Searching hashtags such as #facilitiesmanagement or #BIFM is a great way to keep up with FM industry news. Use of the hashtag is becoming increasingly common in the media even with many TV shows including a hashtag in the opening credits.

The open culture of Twitter is an obvious draw. Unlike LinkedIn and Facebook, people on Twitter can remain anonymous if they choose to, given that their user 'handle' (name) does not need to reveal who they are. A real benefit this brings is that people are far more willing to chat to and engage with strangers, and are happier for brands to try and communicate with them. It is also very easy to share information on Twitter using the retweet button.

On the downside, the 140-character limit is a frustration for some and not every important point can be whittled down to 140 characters. Users can also easily become overwhelmed with information, especially those who follow many accounts. This means it is unlikely that more than a fraction of your followers will see any given tweet. This can be countered in some cases by posting 'build up tweets' such as "we'll be making an exciting announcement at 3pm, stay tuned!" But still it's unlikely that anything like 100 per cent of your followers will see the message.

Of course the flip side to an open culture is that it is open to abuse. People will tweet with the sole purpose of disrupting a conversation or provoking an emotional response, a phenomenon known as "trolling" and a feature of other internet forums.

People in the public eye are frequent victims. For example, British Olympics swimmer Rebecca Adlington has had to deal with nasty remarks about her personal appearance and has said: "It is awful and I get angry. Even if there are 10 nice comments, you get one idiot. I've now given up. I won't be checking Twitter or going on it a lot during the Games. I think I will just tweet when it's over."

Tip: Be consistent. It's unlikely that your first tweet will go viral or that you will generate even one lead with it. Results come from being consistent with your message and delivering good content regularly.

Facebook

Although Facebook is the most used social networking service by worldwide monthly active users, and although many businesses have a Facebook page for followers to like and follow posted content, most B2B businesses still see Facebook as a personal sharing website and not ideal for promoting business. Established as a tool for connecting with friends and people with similar interests, it mostly remains as such, rather than a place to buy products or services. To push the business agenda through Facebook is like a salesman arriving on the scene of a house party. That said, Facebook is undeniably an incredibly powerful tool for interacting with people, and the Facebook business page wall is an important facade for any business where fans, customers and even critics can interact with you and each other, particularly in a B2C environment. Facebook has also recently added considerable functionality to pages including applications such as the discussion board and YouTube video box to add more engaging content.

Facebook post types are roughly: status 73%, photo 10%, link 9% and video 8%. But in-depth research from Headstream reveals that links, followed by photos, videos and lastly status generates the most likes; photos, videos, followed by links and status generates the most comments; and video, photos, links and lastly status generated the most shares. Therefore if we want more people to share our material and comment on it, we need to post fewer status updates and more video and photos and links.

Advanced users can add custom design to their page using iFrames (Inline Frame), which is basically an HTML document embedded inside another HTML document on a website. An iFrame pulls the content of another website into an area on a Facebook page. You can either build an iFrame application from scratch or use a third-party application. To add an app, select the "Add to My Page" link in the left-side bar. From the drop-down menu that appears select the Facebook page where you would like to add the app. Now go to the page and the app should be in the left side-bar. Popular iFrame apps to choose from include iFrame by Wildfire, iFrame by Involver and TabPress by HyperArts.

Tip: Fans may not notice a solitary daily post. Many social media strategists advise posting on Facebook two to five times per day. Stagger the posts, vary the content to keep followers engaged, and include a call to action such as click, comment, share or like to encourage interaction. Keep posts at around 80 characters. A study by Buddy Media showed that posts with 80 characters or less received 27 per cent higher engagement rates.

Other Platforms

There are hundreds of social media platforms out there that can be used to drive traffic to business websites. These are some of the more important ones.

Google+

This is quickly gaining ground on Facebook and Twitter, opening to everyone in September 2011, after being invite-only for nearly three months during the trial stages. By January 2012, it had surpassed a user base of 90 million, and may total 400 million members very soon. Industry experts say Google+ is the company's attempt to create a social network that rivals Facebook and to draw all of the divergent Google services together from YouTube, to Google Earth's interactive map of the world and even the Google Art Project with thousands of artworks photographed in extremely high resolution from famous galleries around the world.

Technology writer Mike Elgan shared a post with a great light-hearted summary of the tool: "Instead of saying, "I'm going to write a blog post now," or "I'm going to send an e-mail" or "I think I'll tweet something" you simply say what you have to say, then decide who you're going to say it to. If you address it to "Public," it's a blog post. If you address it to "Your Circles" it's a tweet. If you address it to your "My Customers" Circle it's a business newsletter. If you address it to a single person, it can be a letter to your mother. I'd say this is pretty revolutionary."

Essentially it's a collection of different social products or features including Stream (a newsfeed), Sparks (a recommendation engine), Hangouts (a video chat service), Games and Photos, and Circles (a friend management service). Unlike Facebook, the focus of Circles is not on sharing with a mass group of friends, but on targeted sharing with various social groups that you share interests with.

YouTube

The free, video sharing platform on which users can upload, share, and view videos is another valuable and popular social media tool, with similarly impressive user statistics. In 2011, YouTube had more than 1 trillion views or almost 140 views for every person on earth. There are over 800 million unique users each month, over 4 billion videos viewed each day, and 60 hours of video uploaded every minute.

It has also become synonymous as a source for discovering new talent. Since the homemade videos of teen pop star Justin Bieber were discovered by a record executive on YouTube, Bieber has gone on to record numerous number one hits.

YouTube is also great for businesses. For example, a marketing team can further enhance a brand by sharing videos and webinars on aspects of products or services as well as interviews with senior executives on the company website and in corporate literature.

Some examples of FM-related video marketing include:

ISS 2020 Vision seminar at ISS HQ - May 23 2012
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y_69bh3uJr8

Emcor corporate video
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X5ovy1inDgA

Norland Managed Services Induction
www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&list=HL1318514609&v=NVDPjPLcvwI#!

Feeling Good - The Science and Economics of Wellbeing in Interiors by Building Centre, Grigoriou Interiors, Gardiner & Theobald
http://vimeo.com/36012387

The *2012 Social Media Marketing Industry Report* found that B2B users are more focused on video, LinkedIn and blogs versus B2C users who are more focused on Facebook. What's more, marketers indicated at the time of the survey that YouTube/video was the key area they planned to increase their social media efforts in. Some 76 per cent would increase their YouTube/video marketing, and for the second consecutive year, YouTube/video is the top area where marketers plan on increasing their social media efforts.

YouTube also offers a wide range of promotional options, including a masthead advertisement on the home page; 'in video' and display ads next to videos; 'in-stream' ads i.e. similar to television advertising. You can even make sure yours is the first ad that most viewers see on YouTube partner videos all day. Advertising on YouTube has also now been incorporated into Google's AdWords system.

When uploading a video, users are shown a screen with the message: "Do not upload any TV shows, music videos, music concerts or advertisements

without permission, unless they consist entirely of content that you created yourself". Anything otherwise is in breach of the Digital Millennium Copyright Act and copyright holders can and often will issue a takedown notice. Three successful complaints for copyright infringement against a user account will result in the account and all of its uploaded videos being deleted.

Tip: Always have your brand visible in any YouTube clip because if it is embedded in another website, your brand will still be visible.

Flickr

1

The online photo management and sharing application is another social media favourite. It is home to over five billion photos and has around 60 million users, with around 3,000 images being uploaded every minute. Even NASA and the White House have official accounts. Although it's not a platform that many FM organisations would want to use every day, it's certainly useful for sharing pictures of senior executives, key business speakers at conferences and events, key clients' case studies, and more.

Blogging

Writing blogs and commenting on blogs is another essential component of any social media marketing campaign. A blog containing searchable keywords and phrases is not only a great way to direct traffic to your website and tell everyone on other social media channels when you post a new blog, but it helps you further establish yourself as an industry expert and source of information about FM. By reading other blogs in FM you can keep up to date with the latest industry news, get ideas for your own blogs, and continue to build relationships by commenting on their blogs. Most quality blogs are interactive, allowing readers to comment and even share the blog on other social media channels using interactive buttons. The interactivity is what distinguishes a blog from a static website. WordPress is currently the most popular content management system (CMS) on the internet, is used by over 14.7 per cent of Alexa Internet's "top 1 million" websites and as of August 2011 manages 22 per cent of all new websites

Instagram

2

Instagram is a free photo sharing programme launched in 2010 that allows users to take a photo, apply a digital filter to it, and then share it on a variety of social networking services, including Instagram's own.

Instagram confines photos to a square format, similar to old Kodak Instamatic and Polaroid images and the filters emulate a 'low-fi', scratched up look.

Pinterest

Launched in 2010 Pinterest is a relatively new social media site. It is essentially for sharing photographs and creating theme-based image collections around events, interests and hobbies. Pinterest is likely to be used by smaller B2C businesses rather than larger ones but organisations that have good, original images might find it a useful promotional channel.

Foursquare

This social networking website enables users to "check in" using a free app on a smartphone at venues, and awards the user with points and sometimes "badges" for doing so. As of January 2012 the company reported it had 15 million registered users worldwide and over 1.5 billion check-ins, with millions more every day. Users can see where their friends are, get recommendations from friends about where to go and what to get, get discounts and special offers from participating businesses, get insider tips from local experts, brands and celebrities, and follow lists of the best places to go. Users can also opt to have their check-ins posted on their Twitter and Facebook accounts. There are also Foursquare business pages that enable any business to create a free branded Foursquare business page, allowing fans to "follow" the brand and unlock its tips. This is obviously therefore an excellent tool for businesses selling to consumers.

Yammer

Yammer is a free private social network for people within companies and organisations and is said to be the Facebook for business. Access to a Yammer network is determined by a user's email address. Only those with matching domain email addresses are able to join that network. Launched in 2008, it has exceeded over three million users in three years and can boast that more than 80 per cent of the Fortune 500 are using it, such as Deloitte, Ford, Nationwide, 7-Eleven, Orbitz Worldwide, Rakuten, and Telefonica O2. Co-workers can share status updates including posting updates on what they are working on. They can also share news, links, ask questions, and get answers from others in the organisation, making it a good way to measure the most influential people in the company.

Features include Events, which enables co-workers to invite each other to events and to track responses; Links, which enables them to share URLs; Topics, which enables them to tag content with topics, enabling collection and maintenance of conversations and data; Presence, which allows them to see who is online now; and Enhanced Analytics, which provides managers with charts about usage.

New Kids on the Block

Facebook and the other heavies are likely to continue to drive the most activity and arguably innovation in social media, but there are smaller companies coming out with interesting products. No one can predict the future but here are a few of these that social media experts are talking about:

If This, Then That (ifttt) is a free virtual assistant social media tool, which a user instructs: "when something happens (this) then do something else (that)." In essence, it's a simple but useful notification service. For example, if an app predicts rain in your area you could set up an 'if this then that' recipe to send a text message to your phone to bring an umbrella. It works across numerous media including Facebook, Twitter, Dropbox, Gmail, Flickr, Foursquare, and many more. Another example: If you're tagged in a photo on Facebook, the photo can be directed to be sent to Dropbox. Or if a person follows you on Twitter, then a message can be sent greeting them. Or if you upload a photo to Facebook then it can also be uploaded to Picasa, and so on.

Smaller companies such as Path and Milk (with its Oink app) are coming out with new products to enhance mobile networking. These services put people or businesses in touch with each other in new ways. Path for example is a social network built to make sharing with people who are important to you easier. Described as "the smart journal that helps you share life with the ones you love."

There are also sites that allow economic value to be directly exchanged between individuals rather than them having to go through traditional business routes. Kickstarter, for example, gives anyone with a project the chance to get it funded by those who choose to (and patrons receive something in return). Quirky, a platform for inventors, lets the best product ideas rise to the top and then helps them get produced and sold while the "inventor" takes a cut. Air BnB turns homes into hotels and travellers into guests, providing both parties with an opportunity to make and save money.

Creating a Social Media Routine

As in 'real' life, with social media you have to put in the effort to reap the rewards. You can't just set up LinkedIn and Twitter accounts, add a few obligatory posts, and expect many people to 'like' you, and trust you enough to buy from you. Nurture your existing contacts, reach out to strangers and offer useful advice, every day.

Creating a social media routine, where at a set point or several in the day you check in and update your platforms is a good place to start. For those who balk at routine, watch out for the temptation to get around to it. Start by dedicating 10 minutes to your social media efforts each day, which will build naturally as you begin to get more business exposure, drive traffic to your website and create new business relationships.

According to the same 2012 Social Media Marketing Industry Report referenced earlier, 61 per cent of marketers who spent at least six hours a week using social media received lead generation results. So how many actually spend at least six hours a week using social media? The findings are that 59 per cent of marketers use social media for 6 hours or more each week and 33 per cent for 11 hours or more.

The award-winning social media researcher Dan Zarella mined a lot of data around social media, including billions of emails to see what works and what doesn't. A lot of it boils down to timing. He found that if you want to build Twitter followers tweet a lot, around 20 times a day. But if you want to drive traffic don't tweet so much, but tweet the same link several times as different groups of people will see it throughout the day. He tweeted the same link nine times and the click through rate was consistent each time. He discovered that retweeting activity is the greatest later in the day, between 2pm and 5pm (the best time being 4pm) so if you want links retweeted, this is a good time. Later in the week is better than earlier in the week too. Twitter click-throughs peak on the weekend. Facebook activity is much lower than Twitter during the working week as many organisations ban Facebook. And emails are best sent between 4am and 7am so that they get to users before they start their working day.

Twitter activity could be significantly higher if you attend a tweet chat, a virtual Twitter meeting or gathering where tweet chat participants use the hashtag name of the chat to identify the tweets.

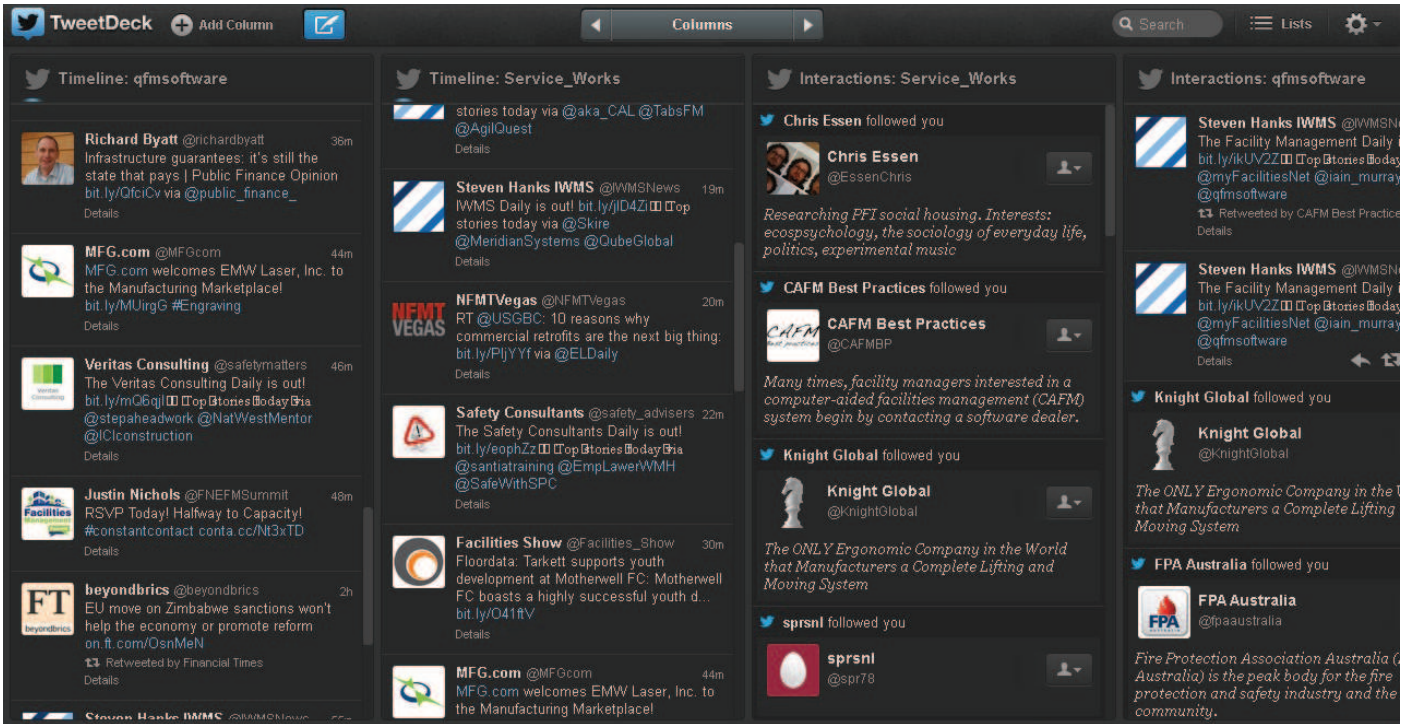
When Save the Children launched its first ever multi-lingual global tweet chat, spanning 14 hours and 12 time zones, on child malnutrition, over 5 million users took part.

Participants at FM sector events such as Workplace Futures 2012 (#wf12), ThinkFM (#thinkfm), or a BIFM meeting (#bifm) use the relevant hashtags to post comments on speakers, exhibitors or their experience on the day.

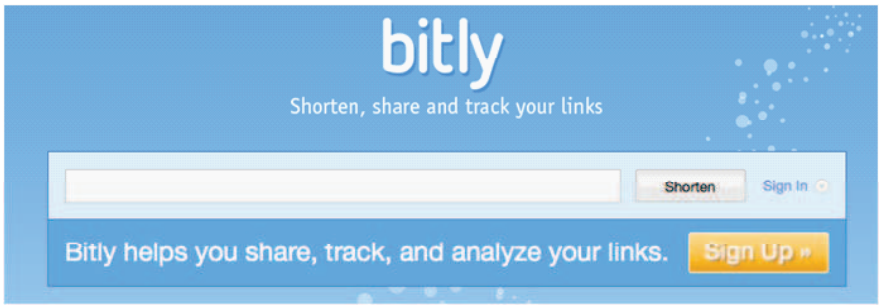
Many larger businesses, and individuals with a large following, pay to use social media dashboards such as Hootsuite to enable them to manage and measure all of their platforms at once. Hootsuite, with over 3 million users and over 700 million messages sent, enables scheduling of messages and tweets, tracking brand mentions, and analyses of social media traffic.

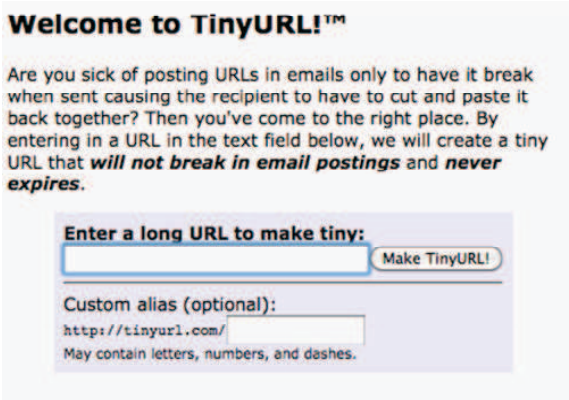
The Hootsuite user interface is a dashboard, which supports social network integrations for Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Foursquare, Mixi, MySpace, Ping.fm, and WordPress. There is also a HootSuite App Directory, which has support for Tumblr, Trendspottr, Constant Contact, Digg, Flickr, Get Satisfaction, InboxQ, and YouTube. Organisations known to use the service include Facebook, the Obama administration, Pepsico, TIME Magazine and The Gap. Hootsuite offers a basic free package which enables users to manage five social profiles, and a pro package which can manage unlimited social profiles.

A similar social media dashboard application is TweetDeck, which enables users to manage multiple Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, LinkedIn and more accounts. Users can arrange their social media feeds into columns which can show different categories such as tweets from users labelled as friends. It also enables users to schedule their own tweets. It is free to use.



Some social media posts and tweets will contain links/URLs, which can be quite long. But especially on Twitter where only 140 characters are allowed, there isn't always enough room to include the whole URL. This is where link shortening websites such as Bitly and TinyURL are extremely useful. Not only can you then copy your long link and paste it in the box on the site to have it shortened, but with Bitly when you sign up for a free account you can also gather statistics about how many clicks the shortened link gets and where the people are who have clicked on it. The only downside is that you have to check the shortened link every now and again to ensure it's still working and hasn't been for example affected by malware on the site. Applications such as TweetDeck will automatically shorten links/URLs when added to a post.





What to Write About

As the FM sector has not yet saturated the social media sphere, individuals and companies with an extensive online presence are in the advantageous situation of positioning themselves as industry experts. But while social media is an excellent marketing platform, it should not be abused. Users are too savvy to put up with constant advertising and don't appreciate companies blasting them with promotional information about products and services. Some say one tweet in nine should be marketing-focused; some say one in 15. The message is clear, you can't self promote all the time. In 'real life' no one likes a shameless bragger and the same is true in the social media sphere.

Many organisations make the mistake of posting interesting content which isn't relevant to their brand. They then attract followers / fans, but those fans therefore aren't relevant. Content must back up the brand.

So what information should you provide to become a respected, important source of information within the FM sector? A good common sense rule of thumb is: if you come across information that interests you in a professional capacity, it will likely be of interest to others. Even share those articles that mention your competitors – to show that you are an independent source of information about your topic and not partisan. Set up Google searches, which arrive in the form of e-mail alerts, for key topics and disseminate the relevant stories and statistics that come through. It's also OK to share your own news blogs, articles, products and so on, but do so sparingly.

Most companies have archives of information and literature that can be transformed into new and informative content for the social media user. Everything from trends in FM, technology advances, new appointments, different ways of working, conferences and events, and general news stories affecting the industry, in the UK and abroad, can be formulated into social media friendly snippets of information.

Most important is to listen as well as to talk – Twitter and LinkedIn are discussion forums not publishing forums, so respond to what your followers and the people you are following have to say. On Twitter, regularly do a hashtag search for the topics you're interested in (e.g. #facilitiesmanagement) to see what people are saying – then respond.

It is also important for businesses to keep on top of what others write about them so that they can respond appropriately and quickly – it's also free feedback about your business and your competitors' products and services. According to marketing association WOMMA (Word of Mouth and Social Media Marketing) the average consumer mentions specific brands over 90 times per week during conversations with friends, family and co-workers, which can include both positive and negative mentions.

In January 2012, McDonalds ran a campaign intended to shift consumer opinions using the hashtag #McDStories, by tweeting facts about their organic potato farmers. But the campaign backfired as consumers began using the hashtag to condemn McDonald's, making accusations from drug use to food poisoning, leading to the whole affair becoming known as #McFail. While the likelihood of this happening is much diminished in the primarily B2B FM industry, businesses can still plan to respond to a worst case scenario in a way that demonstrates professionalism, addresses the concern, and is authentic to the brand.

Tip: It's best not to mix business with pleasure on social media. Social media has developed so quickly that there doesn't seem to have been an opportunity to develop etiquette. But for business users it's important to maintain professionalism. Consider this: will your business clients really be interested in hearing about your Saturday night out or how bad you're feeling the next day? Well, they might be intrigued. But will they then see you as a reliable, professional, trustworthy individual?

Staff Use of Social Media

Most companies have a policy around staff using social media. This generally covers how staff can use the platforms for work and during working hours with some companies being more restrictive than others. A 2011 study by IT development company HCL Technologies showed that 48 per cent of UK firms have banned staff from using social networking sites from their work devices in the past year. Staff interviewed believed the main motive was concern around reputational loss due to negative postings rather than decreased staff productivity.

Saying that, in 2009 Portsmouth City Council famously banned Facebook on its computers after it was revealed that staff spent on average 400 hours on the site every month, so productivity may well also be dampened. Others allow restricted access by time or job role while others leave it open access. Of course there are always situations where internet access cannot be allowed for security reasons, but progressive managers, who lead with a carrot and not a stick, trust employees to be sensible, managing them by output and not input. And in case of employees going too far, the social media policy should outline a discipline procedure.

There is still a great deal of uncertainty around what restrictions companies can place on employees and in some cases, mainly in the US, the courts have been called upon to step in. Last year a decision against a Wal-Mart employee who complained on Facebook about management "tyranny" and swore about a female assistant manager was upheld. He was suspended for a day and disqualified from seeking promotion for a year. In another case, a Chicago car salesman was fired after complaining on Facebook that his BMW dealership served cheap food at the launch of a car. The courts said his comments were legally protected because he was expressing concerns about the terms and conditions of his job, which he had shared in person with other employees.

Companies may also consider advising employees against writing offensive remarks that could leave the individual in jail. In March 2012 a precedent was set when Swansea University student Liam Stacey lost his appeal after being sent to jail for 56 days for posting racially offensive comments on Twitter over the collapse of football player Fabrice Muamba. Even though the individual may not be in an employed capacity when writing the comments, the press may come to mention where the individual is employed, implicating the company by association.

Questions also arise around ownership of social media accounts. In 2011 the BBC's chief political correspondent Laura Kuenssberg moved from the BBC to ITV and took her Twitter account and its 58,000 followers with her. The BBC did not seek legal ownership of her account. But in 2008, the courts ordered the recruitment consultant, Mark Ions, to hand back his LinkedIn account to his former employer, Hays.

Given the changing nature of social media and the legalities around it, the key is to update the policy when necessary, ensuring that changes are communicated to staff. Ideally companies should maintain good working relationships with staff to prevent difficult situations arising, although of course this is easier said than done. At the very least staff tasked with updating social media channels as part of their day job should be told in writing exactly what they can and can't write about. Whatever the policy, staff representing the company on social media should know about it.

Who Should be in Charge?

It's not the best idea to hand over your social media channels to a junior member of staff, thinking that it is new and therefore a young person's game. This is your business communicating with the outside world. Would you let a junior employee speak to the press without checking what they were saying or that they had the right message? Saying that, having internal members of staff as opposed to an external agency make updates is probably best. Internal staff really understand the business, know what's going on and have their ear to the grapevine, in a way that a PR company who might meet only monthly with the client could never do.

So who's the best internal resource to take on social media? Is it a marketing function, a public relations' responsibility. Or since it's focused on the customer, should it be the responsibility of sales, or HR, or even the executive team? Actually, it's all of the above. Social media Silicon Valley web analyst Jeremiah Owyang says there are many ways in which a company can structure internal social media involvement, and there's no one-size-fits formula. MITIE Group Plc has social media engagement written in to all their executive contracts, for example. Owyang's research points to five main ways that companies organise their activities: organic, centralised, coordinated, dandelion, and honeycomb, which are further explained in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Pros and cons of the five main social media models

	Description	Advantages	Drawbacks	What No One Tells You
Organic	Social efforts bubble up from the edges of the company. All employees are encouraged to take part.	Looks authentic and therefore trusted as multiple conversations appear closer to products and customers.	Inconsistent message. A nightmare for IT data management and marketing.	Typical in large companies where control is difficult to enforce (e.g. software based companies). Most companies using this model transition out of it.
Centralised	One department controls all social media, e.g. Ford has deployed their efforts to engage in the tough discussions while staying on brand.	Great for the consistent customer experience, coordinated resources, and rapid response.	May appear very inauthentic as press releases are rehashed on blog posts or videos by staff executives.	Great for regulated industries or brands over scrutiny, yet make sure you bring out the employee voices - not just faceless logos.
Coordinated	A cross-functional team sits in centralised position and helps various nodes such as business units, product teams, or geographies be successful through training, education, support.	The central group is aware of what each node is doing and provides a holistic experience to customers with centralised resources.	Costly. Executive support required, program management, and cross-departmental buy in.	Most companies are headed this route, in order to provide safe autonomy to business units. Tip: the hub should be an enabler - not social police.
Dandelion	Often seen in large multinational companies where 'companies within companies' act nearly autonomously from each other under a common brand.	Business units are given individual freedom to deploy as they see fit, yet a common experience is shared amongst all units.	Requires constant communication from all teams to be coordinated which can result in excessive internal noise. Requires considerable cultural and executive buy in, as well as dedicated staff.	Suited to multinational corporations with multiple product lines. Look closely, the lines connecting the multiple hubs may be severed.
Honeycomb	Everyone is in customer service and support and any employee who wants to be social is enabled. Dell and Zappos fit the bill.	Tapping into your entire workforce.	Requires executives that are ready to let go to gain more, a mature cultural ethos, and executives that walk the talk.	Few companies ever achieve this as it stems from internal culture. Don't ever force this. Provide training classes on culture, social readiness, and a hotline for help for an employee.

Source: Framework and Matrix: The Five Ways Companies Organize for Social Business, Jeremiah Owyang April 2010 www.web-strategist.com

But it should be noted that an approach can only be effective if there's a clear company culture, which employees can embrace and then portray to the outside world. The company brand should guide social media participation, no matter which staff end up participating.

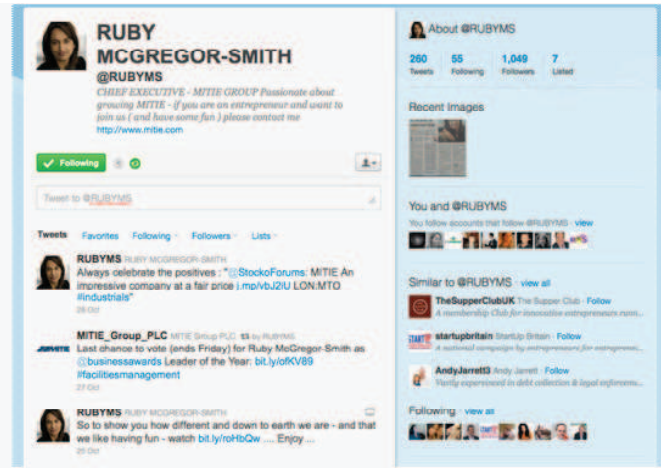
But as budgets tighten, workloads increase and headcounts decrease, many just won't have the time to fully utilise social media. For all but the biggest organisations, employing a dedicated social media expert probably isn't an option. So although doing social media in-house is probably preferable, rather than adding social media to the to-do list of an already overstretched staff member and for them to pay lip service to it, it's probably an idea to use an external resource such as a digital media agency or a PR agency.

Based on the 2012 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, the overwhelming majority of marketers surveyed were not outsourcing their social media marketing efforts. But the number of those who are has doubled since 2010 from 14 per cent to 28 per cent. Most likely to be outsourced are design and development, content creation and analytics. Those with three or more years experience of using social media are most likely to outsource design and development tasks (23 per cent).

Best Practice Examples

Some companies and individuals in FM have an incredibly effective presence on social media. Rentokil, for example, manages to make the somewhat skin crawling topic of pest control interesting by tweeting interesting facts about all sorts of creepie crawlies using the hashtag #pestfact (e.g. "The false widow spider likes to hide in fences and buildings and gives a nasty bite which can feel like a burning sensation #pestfact"). The company also uses tweets to raise awareness such as about Global Handwashing Day; to respond to customer and other tweeters questions (e.g. "@firequacker difficult to tell from the picture but the spider looks like it might be from the Family Sparassidae"); and to respond to complaints from the public.

MITIE Group also has a very effective presence on Twitter, Facebook and even YouTube. The main Twitter handle is the corporate site, MITIE Group Plc, where they tweet company news, respond to customer queries and retweet all (good) comments about MITIE. But the chief executive Ruby McGregor Smith also has her own Twitter feed, which she uses to distribute formal MITIE news. She also talks about what she's up to on a day to day basis, and uses it to motivate staff and congratulate teams and individuals. Many CEOs in FM could learn from her example.



MITIE Group Plc also has its own YouTube channel showing interviews with key staff and bosses, and the latest corporate video, which are generally innovative and effectively attention grabbing. There's even a section showcasing top employees called MITIE's Got Talent.

Conclusion

As with many innovations, social media use has gone through phases. Users can be identified using the classic categories, from innovators and early adopters to laggards but it is clear that take-up does not necessarily follow along clear age, class or occupation lines.

The many different channels and options available are allowing people to find the way of using social media that suits them, from non-stop tweeting to regularly updated and carefully crafted blogs on their personal passions.

Social media has accelerated the trend towards peer to peer communication and in particular the importance of personal recommendation. Just as eBay will locate the one person prepared to pay for your unwanted possessions, social media can connect people with views and expertise on the most esoteric subjects.

After some, mostly clumsy, initial experiments with social media, business has begun to grasp the importance of these features. Some of the most innovative uses of social media are in the business to consumer sector, where the ability to connect directly with individuals or communities of interest is especially valuable.

However, business to business organisations can learn from and adapt these ideas to raise their profile, shift perceptions, broaden their reach and start a dialogue. The FM sector has always demonstrated a strong affinity for networking so is a receptive and active market for social media.

From broad marketing-led campaigns, it is likely that FM providers and others will use social media to engage with clients, customers, staff and in some cases the wider public. Social media is being integrated into FM software and we may see some applications, such as Twitter, replace more conventional tools in areas such as help desk communications and staff alerts.

Social media exemplifies three trends in modern technology and communications – it's user-centric, it's cross-platform and it's easy to experiment with. Of course there are risks but hopefully this guide has alerted you to these and given you ideas on how to mitigate them.

When people can very rapidly seek views on your products and services; when they can equally rapidly share their views and see them spread; when one person's poor opinion can be amplified or an individual's great service be instantly recognised – then your business must respond.

Appendix

Appendix 1 – Setting up social media accounts

Setting up on social media sites is really easy, and can be done in a matter of minutes.

1. Twitter

- Visit twitter.com.
- Sign up for a new account by entering your details as in the box below.

Pick a suitable username then select 'Create my account'. Ensure that the text you add to the 'about me' or biography section is professional, representative of the brand, and contains no errors. Choose a photograph that befits the company or individual's public image. As first impressions count, it's important to use an image that presents you in the best light.

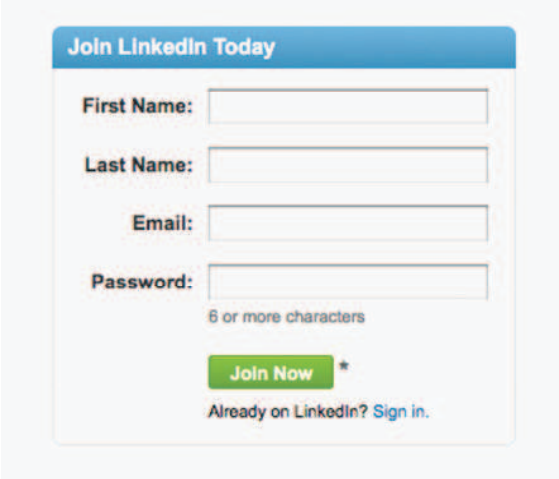
To begin tweeting, move your cursor to the top right hand side of your screen, and select the blue button with the feather 'Compose new tweet'.

- All tweets are restricted to just 140 characters (about 20 words) so pick your words carefully.
- To follow other people with Twitter accounts, move your cursor to the top left hand side of your screen, and select the grey button '@ Connect'. Type the name of the person you want to connect with in the search box that appears in the top right hand side and select enter. When their Twitter account appears select 'follow'. This person will now be notified by email by Twitter that you have followed them and may choose to follow you back.
- If you want to mention someone in a new tweet, search for the name of their official account e.g. @qfmsoftware then copy and paste that into your tweet.
- If you're tweeting about a popular topic, add a hash tag (#) just before the word or phrase (without spaces between words) e.g. #facilitiesmanagement. This enables other people to search for all tweets about that topic.
- Similarly to search for topics that other people are tweeting about, move your cursor to the top left hand side of your screen, and select the #Discover button. Type the name of the topic you want to search in the search box that appears in the top right hand side and select enter.
- Reply to a tweet that someone has sent you by hovering over the tweet and selecting reply. Type your tweet then select 'Tweet'.

- If someone you follow writes a tweet that really interests you, you can retweet this (hover your mouse in the top right of their tweet for the retweet button to appear then select it) so that then all of your followers can see it.

2. LinkedIn

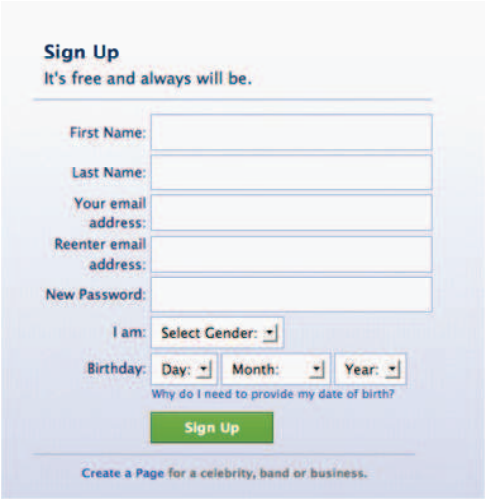
- Visit www.linkedin.com/home.
- Sign up for a new account by entering your details as in the box below and selecting 'Join Now'.



- You'll now be guided through filling in a series of boxes including where you live, your job title and company.
- In the next box you can choose to search for other contacts on LinkedIn or you can 'skip this step' until another time.
- When your account is set up and confirmed you can begin to add meat to the bones of your profile. Move your cursor to the top left hand side of your screen, and select the Profile – Edit Profile buttons. Add the relevant details.
- Find your contacts in the real world in the virtual world by moving your cursor to the top left hand side of your screen, and selecting Contacts – Add Connections.
- Users can also give and receive recommendations from other LinkedIn members. Not only can you read the recommendations of people you're considering doing business with or employing, but you can also use LinkedIn recommendations to build your own reputation. You can request recommendations from your first degree connections and can reciprocate when you accept a recommendation from a contact. When the recommendation is written, the recipient can either accept it, reject it, or request a revision.
- Build your company profile on LinkedIn by setting up a company page. Go to the "Companies" menu and select "Add Company"; enter the information required such as company description, number of employees, and industry; then follow the steps to create your company profile like adding a logo, locations, a feed for your company blog etc.

3. Facebook

- Visit en-gb.facebook.com.
- You will need to have a Facebook account before you can create a page for your business. To do this, enter your details as in the box below.



- You can then create a page for your business by selecting the 'Create a page' link.
- To make changes to your Facebook page, use the navigation bars in the left hand column. Write anything on your wall for all of your fans to see by selecting 'Wall' then writing your text in the 'Write something...' box. Add photos by selecting the photos link then selecting the 'Upload photos' box located in the top right of the screen.

4. Linking Twitter and LinkedIn, and Twitter and Facebook

- For your tweets to appear on your LinkedIn page, sign in to LinkedIn and move your cursor to the top right hand side of your LinkedIn screen, hover the cursor over your name, then select 'Settings'. Now in the middle of the screen under the word 'Settings' select on 'Manage your Twitter settings'. Add your Twitter account and select 'Display your Twitter account on your LinkedIn profile'. Do not select Share only tweets that contain #in (#li also works) in your LinkedIn status.
- To link your Twitter account to your Facebook page so that all your tweets show up on your Facebook page, sign in to your Facebook account and on the left hand side under 'Pages' select your business's page. Select 'edit profile' on the top right hand side. Then select 'Resources' in the left hand column. Then under Connect with people select 'Link your Page to Twitter' and 'save'.

Appendix 2 – Adaptation of infographic created by Mashable comparing the various offerings and dynamics of the four main social media platforms

	Google+	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn
Friending	No	Yes	No	Yes
Following	Yes	No	Yes	No
Status updates	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Control who sees status updates	Yes	Yes	No	No
Private Messages	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
News Feed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Customise/filter news feed	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Sharing button for third party sites	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Like button	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Groups	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Repost button	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Integrated photo albums	Yes	Yes	No	No
Events	No	Yes	No	Yes
Chat	Yes	Yes	No	No
Video chat	Yes	Yes	No	No
Multiple participant video chat	Yes	No	No	No
Location sharing	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

Reference

[1] Reproduced with permission of Yahoo! Inc. ©2012 Yahoo! Inc. FLICKR and the Flickr logo are registered trademarks of Yahoo! Inc.

[2] This [application/website] uses the Instagram(tm) API and is not endorsed or certified by Instagram or Instagram, Inc. All Instagram(tm) logos and trademarks displayed on this [application/website] are property of Instagram, Inc.

Contact Us

Europe, Africa & Middle East:

Service Works Group
SWG House
4 Keswick Road
Putney
London
SW15 2JN

T: +44 (0)208 877 4080
F: +44 (0)208 877 4090

Asia Pacific:

Service Works Global Pty Ltd
Suite 2.02, 365 Little Collins Street
Melbourne
VIC 3000

T: +61 (0)3 8676 0380
F: +61 (0)3 9600 2455

North America & Canada:

Service Works Global
36 Toronto Street
Suite 850
Toronto
Ontario
M5C 2CS

T: +1 416 603 9096
F: +1 416 360 3838

www.swg.com
info@swg.com

Service Works Group is an expert software solutions provider with many years of experience in the facilities, property and public–private partnership (PPP) market sectors. The company's flagship software, QFM, has been identified as the product of choice for many leading service provider, blue chip and public sector organisations because it optimises the operational efficiency for asset, building and service activities and delivers measurable cost savings across FM operations.

Service Works reputation is built upon a long-term commitment to offering comprehensive and leading edge software and services, combined with a partnership approach to ensure that clients secure competitive advantage and rapid return on their software investment.

© 2012 Service Works Group Ltd. All rights reserved. "Service Works Global" refers to Service Works Global Pty Ltd, a company registered in Australia with Australian Company Number 108 665 818 and whose registered address is Suite 2.02, 365 Little Collins Street, Melbourne VIC 3000 or Service Works Global Ltd, a company registered in Nova Scotia with registry ID 3222235 and whose registered mailing address is 36 Toronto Street, Toronto, Ontario, Canada M5C 2C5 as the context requires. Service Works Global Pty Ltd and Service Works Global Limited are wholly owned subsidiaries of Service Works Group Ltd, a company registered in England with company number 4915250 and whose registered address is SWG House, 4 Keswick Road, Putney, London, SW15 2JN. The information in this document is not intended to be used as a substitute for consultation with professional advisors.