



The Advantages and Disadvantages of



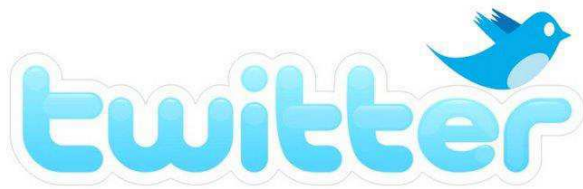
Advantages	Disadvantages
Massive audience	Unfocused audience
Accepted method of communications	Few controls on communicating
Easy to create content	Lack of branding of content
Can reach large numbers of clients	Mostly focused on consumer sector
Easy to relate to people	Can waste time chatting to unknowns
Low costs to set up and use	High time costs required to manage
Simple to set up marketing campaigns	Users don't like marketing campaigns
Can target specific demographics	Can be low numbers of required demographics

Conclusion

Facebook is massive and has value in helping boost and promote brands and organisations, in particular those which are consumer facing. However, in order to gain the most from Facebook, from a business perspective, a considerable degree of management is required to target the right people and engage with them. This is a hidden cost of Facebook and is a resource that many businesses do not take into account.



The Advantages and Disadvantages of



Advantages	Disadvantages
Easy to use	Difficult to manage without specialist software
Massive audience potential	Unfocused audience
Able to react quickly to events	Need to constantly monitor
Can send private messages to people	People have to follow you to get private messages
Can use the system as a promotion tool	People tend to ignore overly promotional items
Able to automate the sending of messages	Too much automation removes personalisation
Conversations are possible and easy	Need to be constantly online and monitoring
Can have several accounts for specific purposes	Extra time needed to manage multiple personas

Conclusion

Twitter is undoubtedly a popular communications tool for providing relatively instant updates, thoughts and information. It is also a useful way of holding conversations with relevant individuals, such as actual or potential clients. However, to get the most from Twitter you need additional software. Furthermore, Twitter activity is short-lived and hence you need to monitor the system regularly throughout the day, eating up time resource. Although Twitter is free and easy to use, it does have a hidden cost in terms of the management time it requires.



The Advantages and Disadvantages of



Advantages	Disadvantages
Excellent business networking focus	Most users only use it for profile, not networking
Potential for finding new business leads	Precise controls on search need paid upgrade
Ability to create focused groups for discussion	Few people actively engage, most just watch
Private groups can be used for customer contact	You need to spend time managing private groups
Wide range of connection features	Many features are hidden and not obvious
Has several useful services to gain new business	Requires specific training to get the most out of it
Can find and connect with useful people	Can be overwhelmed with too many connections
Excellent profile and recommendation system	Need to regularly update your entries

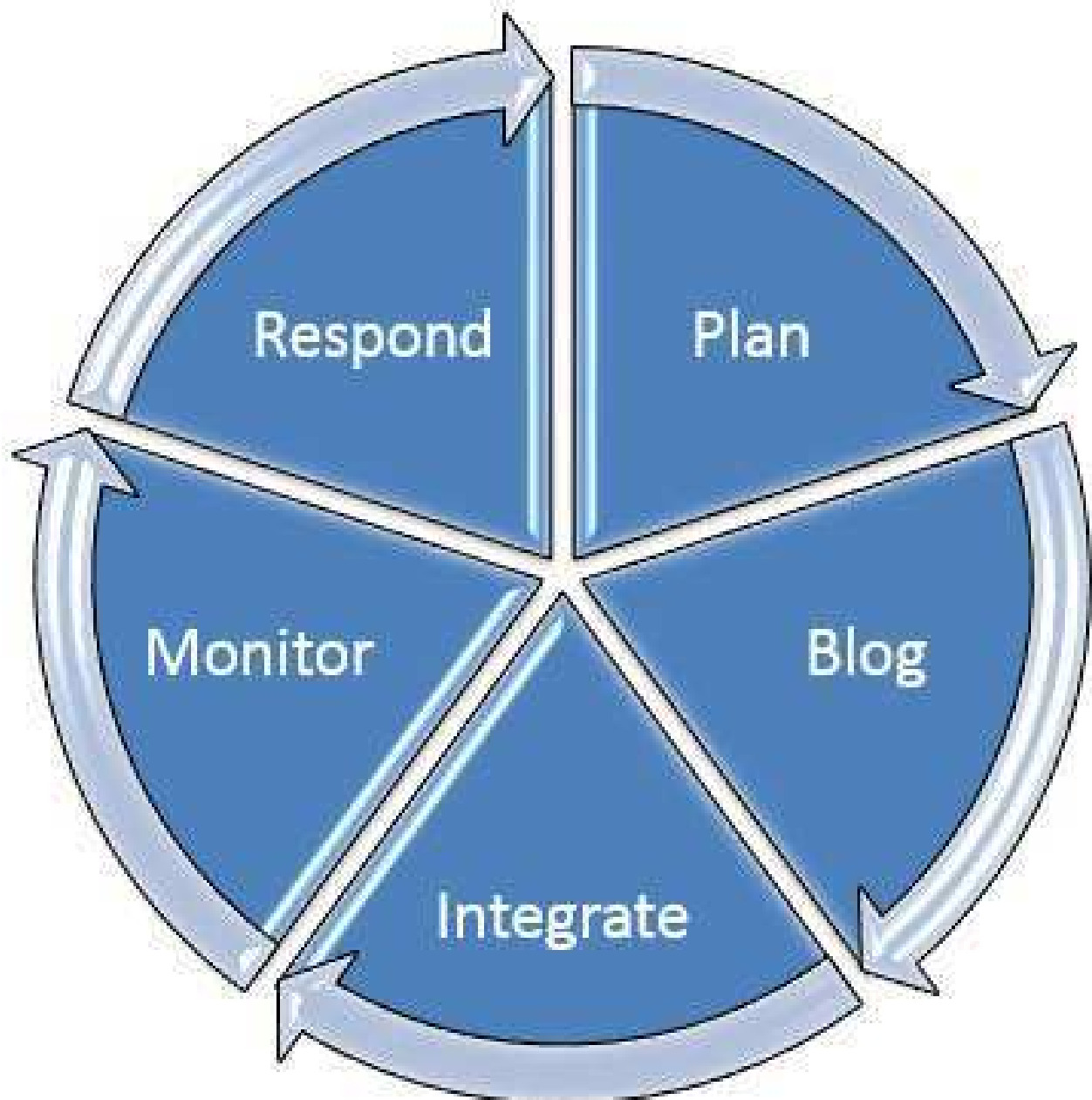
Conclusion

LinkedIn is excellent for business lead generation and business networking. It is also a highly valuable tool in finding suitable suppliers and partners. However, much of the value of LinkedIn is relatively hidden and the complex array of features means it is not completely intuitive, therefore requiring either investment in training or in time to learn the system and to be able to use it well. Furthermore, to ensure that you gain the maximum from LinkedIn you need to regularly update your entries and participate in the group discussions. LinkedIn therefore has a hidden cost in terms of time required to operate it successfully.



A Five-Step Social Media Plan

1. **Plan:** Have a strategy, decide exactly what you want to achieve, set targets and goals
2. **Blog:** Adding content should be your primary activity. The more the better
3. **Integrate:** Connect your blog to every social media outlet important to your market, but especially Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn
4. **Monitor:** Constantly be aware of your readership and what they are doing with your content
5. **Respond:** Reply to the engagement you receive and use that to help develop your future plans





Ten Steps to a Major Social Footprint

1

- Create a blog

2

- Create account at HootSuite

3

- Link RSS of blog to HootSuite

4

- Create Twitter account

5

- Create Facebook Page

6

- Create Google+ Page

7

- Create LinkedIn Profile

8

- Link HootSuite RSS to social sites

9

- Write blog post

10

- Your blog post appears throughout social web!



A Masterclass in Twitter

What is the practical use of Twitter in business? Even if you accept it does have a business case, how do you use it? And what if you use it - how do you capitalise on it? These are regular questions business people ask about Twitter. Essentially business owners and executives are wondering what the point of Twitter is for business and if they see the point they want to know how on earth you use it and make money from it.

One rather brilliant example of how to use Twitter came during a talk I gave recently at a breakfast meeting of the Thames Valley Chamber of Commerce. Indeed, one person in the room gave a complete masterclass in how to use Twitter to significant effect. Nigel Morgan, a public relations expert who runs Morgan PR, sent several "tweets" while I was talking. Indeed he started his Tweeting before I began to speak.

The day before my talk Nigel sent a message on Twitter (a "Tweet") which read:

Off to see @grahamjones in Henley tomorrow morning talking about Twitter at a Hotel du Vin, should be a good breakfast!

There are four key elements to this message.

1. It demonstrates what Nigel is doing, informing his clients who follow him on Twitter that he is keeping up-to-date on the latest information on a key topic. It shows he is continuing to learn and thereby shows his clients and prospects he is developing his business knowledge and expertise. That helps build trust.
2. The message also shows his location during the next morning. This helps his clients and prospects know that "tomorrow morning" probably will not be a good time to call, as he will be out. It also shows that if they wish to set up a meeting with him, he'll easily be able to see them in Henley.
3. This Tweet also uses the "@grahamjones" tag. This is my Twitter name and it connects Nigel's Tweet to my account. This means his followers can see me, my Tweets and can, if they wish, follow me as well.

4. Finally the message above sent by Nigel uses a business name "Hotel du Vin". If they are "on the ball" they will know he has used their name and they will be able to connect with Nigel for a bit of customer relationship building.

One sentence of a mere 119 characters (Nigel had space to say more if he wanted) which is packed with information. Who said the Twitter message length of a maximum of 140 characters was limiting?

But this message was a whole 24 hours before I started to speak. During my talk Nigel was a prolific Tweeter. A couple of people in the room sent a single message about my talk (thankfully both positive...!), but Nigel sent 17 Tweets during my 20 minute presentation. In fact, when you [follow his Tweets](#) you'll be able to get an excellent overview of my complete talk.

What did all this activity achieve for Nigel - and for me? Firstly, it brought my talk much greater attention. Several of Nigel's Tweets about my talk were "re-tweeted" by some of Nigel's followers. The result is that my talk - instead of being to 40 people at a business breakfast - was brought to the attention of a total of more than 8,000 people. In other words, Nigel's Tweeting activity brought me lots more attention and the result was that my normal daily increase in followers was doubled. Twice as many people decided to follow me in the hour after Nigel's Tweets as would happen on a single day. Clearly, getting other people to Tweet about what you are doing has value in bringing you more attention, publicity and followers (people who wish to remain connected with you).

The Tweeting activity which Nigel was doing also brought publicity for someone who was not even in the room. One person, who read one of Nigel's Tweets was personal branding expert, [Lesley Everett](#). She replied to one of Nigel's Tweets saying:

@Nigel_Morgan Make sure Graham mentions how important Twitter is for your personal brand and say Hi!

During the interactive part of my talk, Nigel mentioned this Tweet. I was then able to provide a comment and give

publicity to Lesley's expertise and business. Remember, the power of word of mouth. Furthermore, this connected Nigel and Lesley who is now writing a guest post on Nigel's website on the value of personal branding in public relations. That will bring extra traffic to [Nigel's site](#) and provide a useful link to [Lesley's website](#) too. One Tweet and several benefits:

- Publicity for Lesley Everett and her expertise on personal branding
- Further benefits for two websites
- A new business connection between Nigel and Lesley which could yield even more benefits
- Plus...my talk on Twitter was publicised to Lesley's followers on Twitter as well.

So, in a single 20-minute session with Twitter what actual benefits have been received?

1. My expertise was made known to 8,000 people, instead of the 40 I was talking with
2. My Twitter account received a significant boost in followers, enhancing my future business promotion
3. Nigel's business development and learning was made known to all of his customers, building trust and credibility amongst them
4. A new business relationship was created between Nigel and Lesley, enabling both to gain web benefits through new sharing of content

Oh...and one other thing....**someone contacted me after seeing all the Tweets and has asked me to provide consultancy work with them - for money...!**

If you were in any doubt as to the value of Twitter, perhaps this example shows the ways in which it can easily bring benefits to your company. Of course, when you want to know exactly how Twitter can help your business [call me](#) and we can discuss how my strategy consultancy will boost your company via Twitter.



Face Up To Facebook

Fix a time slot for social networking. Whether it's half an hour first thing in the morning, an hour before bed, or 15 minutes in your lunch break, giving yourself a fixed amount of time for engaging in social networks will avoid you being distracted and going off into areas which you will then feel guilty about afterwards.

Ask for help. Everyone in these social networks knows how you feel; they were all beginners once and all understand the concerns you have. As a result, there are significant levels of help and support available and if you ask a question someone will respond. These online communities are highly supportive.

Close your browser. Once you have finished with your social networking, close the browser, or click the tab closed. Otherwise the page will lay there on your desktop and you will feel constantly tempted to take part, or you will notice the lack of increase in friends since the last time you looked - and that will raise anxiety.

Exercise before using social networks. Anxiety happens when you have alterations in your body chemistry. Sitting down, still, at your computer for hours on end provides the right environment for the negative chemistry to build up. By exercising before using social networking sites - even a walk round the block - you will feel much more positive when logging on and much less anxious when using the site. The exercise will induce natural hormonal changes in your body.

Understand the system. Read the help file, look at the training videos if there are some and download the booklets about the system. Much anxiety is generated simply because people don't know how to use the networks. Look up all the advice you can, read it and use it. That way you will have a much more positive experience with social networking.

Profile yourself well. Make sure your profile page is complete, accurate, up-to-date and a proper reflection of you and your personality. Otherwise you will not attract people to become friends, or you could attract the wrong kind of people...! Either way, you won't feel comfortable.