

**SUMMARY**  
**BY ALYSSA BURNETTE**

# Trendology

By Chris Kerns



# **Summary of Trendology by Chris Kerns**

**Written by Alyssa Burnette**

How social media can help you create successful  
marketing strategies.

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# Introduction

Have you ever scrolled through your Facebook feed and wondered, “Why on earth would someone post that?” or “Do they really think anybody cares?” We’ve all been there, right? Because people post about everything from their baby’s potty-training progress to what kind of sandwich they are (according to a personality quiz)! As a result, it often feels as though the internet is just a void for lots of idiots to scream into... publicly. And with all that social media clutter, it’s unsurprising that you might find yourself asking, “How do I make people listen to what I have to say?” or “How can I be sure my posts aren’t annoying?” Well, over the course of this summary, we’re going to answer both of those questions and more.



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# Why You Need a Social Media Presence

In an episode of the popular NBC comedy *Brooklyn Nine Nine*, police captain Raymond Holt is faced with a challenge when he attempts to run for election as commissioner of the NYPD. Being a straight-laced, no-nonsense man who believes in old-school values, Captain Holt is more than a little surprised when he learns that old-school methods for election campaigns have become obsolete in the modern age. But when his younger co-workers attempt to help him develop a social media presence, he resists, arguing, “If the mayor wants to make me the next NYPD commissioner, it’ll be because of my record and my qualifications, not my social media presence. This is a serious job.” But his co-workers astutely contradict his argument by responding that, “Social media-- and your race for commissioner-- is about being noticed. And right now, no one is noticing you.”

And the same is true for you if you’re attempting to establish and market your business without the aid of social media! Before we dive into any other information, we have to accept that as a baseline fact. Gone are the days of old-school print media and the campaigns that were based on the simple distribution of flyers. Today, you have to have a social media presence if you want to attract customers. But how do you craft a campaign that really works? And how do you get people to listen in the first place? The author observes that if you really want to win at social media, you need to tell a story. And whether you’re trying to market yourself or your brand, this strategy remains true. Because anybody can scream into the void or engage in contests to determine who can scream the loudest. And because customers realize that, they can just as easily mute you by unfollowing, deleting, or scrolling past your content. Put simply, it doesn’t matter how loud you scream or how many ad campaigns you launch; if people aren’t interested, they can still find ways to avoid you.

But if your brand tells a story, people want to engage. While that story will obviously look different for everyone, the author observes that many successful marketing campaigns are customer directed in that they invite individual customers to tell their own stories through the form of an ad

campaign. For example, if you're trying to sell FitBits, you could encourage customers to post on their own social media channels about their experience with FitBits. Ask them to talk about their relationship with exercise and how their FitBit is part of that story. Invite them to post pictures of themselves exercising with the promise of the best snaps getting featured on your account. This engaging narrative-- combined with the hope of having their picture displayed in front of millions-- will get people excited in a hurry!

But creating quality content is only the first step. You also have to think about how-- and where-- that content is going to be displayed. For example, ad campaigns that look too gimmick-y fall right into the "screaming into the void" category. People are tired of seeing those and they've learned to mute or follow them. As a result, your goal should be to create content that doesn't look like an ad. Instead of bright, flashy graphics and clickbait-y headlines, go for a high quality post that looks like it naturally belongs on an aesthetically pleasing feed. Whether that means partnering with leading models and influencers who can showcase your brand or designing something entirely new, your goal is to create an image so compelling that people are drawn to hit "like" and check it out. When they see your image, they should be so surprised that they exclaim, "That's an ad??"

But it's also important to consider where you post your ads. For example, if Twitter isn't the hot thing at the moment, you probably shouldn't waste time posting there. Similarly, if you post on a buzzing social network but fail to follow the etiquette of that platform, you're still shooting yourself in the foot. So, take some time, do your research, and craft a meaningful campaign that tells a story.



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# Twitter Is Your New Best Friend

So, now that we've examined the value and potential of social media, it's time to explore some of the platforms you can use. The author observes that Twitter is uniquely valuable because it offers some special and specific features that other social media platforms lack. Its user demographics and popularity are also rather unique. Unlike Facebook and Instagram (which everybody uses) and Pinterest (which people assume no one uses), Twitter is something of a middle ground. Some people hate it and some love it, but you can't deny its statistics; Twitter boasts an average of 1.3 billion users! However, this overwhelming population is both a blessing and a curse. On one hand, Twitter's user base presents an incredible amount of potential customers. But that also means that if you want to stand out, you have to make yourself heard over 1.3 billion voices. Unsurprisingly, when you think about it that way, the prospect of advertising on Twitter is both less exciting and more concerning than advertising on Facebook, Pinterest, or Instagram. So, how can you make yourself stand out on Twitter?

The author recommends a strategy called "trendjacking." Put simply, "trendjacking" involves capitalizing on the topics that are currently trending by finding a way to insert yourself and your content into the mix. For example, that might mean that you write a post or organize a charity event to help with a certain social issue. Or, for causes that aren't serious or significant, it might mean that you add a trending hashtag to your post to draw traffic to your site. Hashtags can be extremely useful because they provide a means of filtering the most popular topics and searches that people are talking about at the moment. You can use hashtags to draw attention to an issue, contribute to the conversation, or direct people to your posts. This, of course, makes them a very popular feature; many businesses even incorporate hashtags into their brand names or marketing campaigns in an attempt to appear hip and socially relevant. However, this often leads to a behavior that is commonly termed "hashtag



abuse,” and if you misuse hashtags, it can backfire quickly. Rather than demonstrating that you’re relevant and trendy, you might accidentally communicate that you’re clueless and wrong.



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# Embracing the Benefits of Real-Time Social Media Marketing

Now that we've explored the benefits of Twitter and of using social media to your advantage, it's time to take a look at another important tool: real-time marketing. Real-time social media marketing is a vital addition to your marketing toolbox and we're going to spend this chapter learning all about it. Let's start by unpacking what this term means. The popular social media agency Sprout Social understands that real-time social media marketing is necessary for any entrepreneur, so they've devoted a great deal of time to cultivating their own simple and accessible definition that anyone can understand. They explain that "real-time marketing or "RTM" is the process of engaging with customers instantly based on breaking news and information. It's about maintaining a consistent relationship with your audience with cutting-edge data.

Modern customers are more demanding than ever, and the days of waiting 24 hours for an update are over. Instant forms of communication like SMS, IM and social media prompt the rise of real-time marketing. Real-time marketing thrives on current information. It may mean adapting your marketing to suit changes in your own data or alterations in audience behavior. Alternatively, RTM could involve using social media to comment on news stories and respond to customer queries."

In short, real-time marketing is your way of making instant and powerful connections with your customers. So, what does that look like in practice? Well, let's imagine that you work for a sandwich company like Subway. And one night, you're watching the season premiere of a big national TV show such as Dancing With the Stars. Using your company Twitter account, you post a tweet that shares how much you're enjoying the show. In your tweet, you tag the official Dancing With the Stars Twitter account and use some relevant hashtags. When you live-tweeting this while the show is premiering, you're contributing to the on-going conversation about the show and adding your voice to the hype that fans are generating. This does two things: for

starters, it opens the door for a potential partnership. And for another, it enables you to reach a wider demographic of potential customers.

Because your tweet is added to the on-going conversation about the show, you're putting your message and your brand in front of thousands of potential customers. People who might not have noticed you before will see your tweet, check out your profile, and say, "Ooh, that looks tasty!" Then they follow you, keep up with your brand, and-- hopefully-- buy your sandwiches! But this also invites collaboration with some popular business partners. For example, let's say that someone from Dancing With the Stars sees your tweet. Before you know it, they've messaged you with a collaboration offer, and then they share your tweet, adding, "We're partnering with Subway for an exclusive deal! Buy one sandwich, get another one free when you use our exclusive code!"

This might sound like a long shot, but these opportunities are a real possibility when you take advantage of real time social media marketing. Just remember that the crucial detail is "real time." If you wait too late and post your tweet after the show's premiere has ended-- or worse, a week after it aired-- your tweet will have no impact. By the next week, no one will care about the premiere of Dancing With the Stars; the internet will have moved on to its latest craze because that's the nature of trends. So, if you want to stay current, it's crucial that you keep your finger on the pulse of the latest trends! You can do so by ensuring that your social media posts are current, consistent, and in keeping with the trends that matter to your target demographic. Being late to join in the latest trend can have a negative impact because it tells your customers that you are out of touch. The moment you appear to be out of touch is the moment you lose your influence, so make sure you take full advantage of your opportunities with real time marketing.



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# Measuring Success on Social Media

If you come from an old-school business model, you probably know how to measure the success of more traditional marketing campaigns. But social media is different. And if you want to succeed in the digital sphere, it's important to know the hallmarks of success so you can accurately measure your impact. Whether you're using Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram (or all of the above), your success on any social media platform is measured in terms of "followers" and "engagement." Your follower stats are the number of people who have subscribed to your content. Your follower count is important for a couple of reasons. For one thing, it enables you to share your message with a wide variety of people. You want followers because, without them, who's going to know or care about your product? But you also want followers because the amount of followers you have communicates something about your success on social media.

In this respect, your follower count is very similar to the scale of popularity you might find in any given high-school. If you only hang out with the geeks and the losers, other kids might (unfairly) assume that no one likes you and you're not worth their time. Similarly, if your account has less than 1,000 followers, people will draw the same conclusions. Both of these assessments are overly shallow and unfair, but sadly, they're indicative of our reality in the digital age. So, if you want to launch a successful business, it's important to connect with as many people as possible and create content that makes them want to follow you. But followers aren't the only metric for determining success. Engagement is crucial because your engagement indicates how many people actually care about your content.

Anybody can buy robot followers. You absolutely should not do this, but many people do, and it always backfires. Because when you buy followers, your engagement suffers. To put this into context, let's imagine that you bought 10,000 followers. These followers may or may not be real people; they're probably robots or spam accounts that will never actually engage with your content. So, if someone checks out your page and sees that you have 10,000 followers and only 50 likes on a post, they instantly know that

something is up. If you have 10,000 real followers, you should have a substantial amount of people engaging with your content by liking, commenting, and sharing it. That's because engagement is the real test of your social media presence. In order to genuinely connect with your audience, you need to create content that will engage your followers.

So, ask them questions. Post about things that are important to them. Create interactive polls that encourage them to vote and share their opinions. This is how you form a genuine connection that will make people want to engage with your page. And if you have a lot of people interacting with your content, you know you're winning at social media marketing!



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## Final Summary

Everyone wants to win at social media, especially when you're running a business. But the overwhelming vastness and popularity of social media also means that it's easy to get lost in the crowd or unknowingly commit a social media faux pas. So, if you want to cultivate a truly effective social media presence, it's important to keep your finger on the pulse of the latest trends. You should also research the various platforms available, along with their demographics and particular brand of etiquette, to identify the options that are most accessible for you. And last-- but definitely not least!-- don't forget about the value of real-time social media marketing. Engaging with trendy topics in real time can open doors for powerful collaborations and put your message in front of more people.



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