

The 3 Stages Of Social Media

Dating, Engagement and Commitment (Marriage)
AND The Strategies for Each Stage



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STAGE 1 – DATING

This is the Attract stage, you are building a fan base and creating a social identity for your company. You are beginning the brand recognition phase. Think of it like dating. You are wooing potential customers to your social channels.



How long this takes depends on where you are now, what the company is ready to do in terms of resource allocation and staffing and how big your goals are. In this stage, you are not promoting or expecting sales (ROI). What you're doing is posting to make sure you have quality content when people come to your channels, interesting posts, and videos to attract fans and links to your website, so people can "check you out".

In this stage, you get the alignment of your team and set expectations for their participation. Otherwise, your social media will stay "siloeed", executed by one or two people without becoming a part of the company marketing.

In this stage, you tie in your SEO to all your social media channels by optimizing your About sections for your primary keyword or keyword phrase from your home page.

The progress and overall benefit to your entire marketing will not be known or even valued by the team. This can cause premature abandonment or slowing down of social media marketing efforts, a common mistake.

HINT: Trying to produce ROI in this stage is almost always unsuccessful or at the very least expensive. People coming to your page do not think your brand is meaningful if you have too few likes. Shoot for 1000 before moving to the next stage.

STRATEGY: In this stage, you use paid promotion to boost your fan numbers and expose your brand.

STAGE 2- ENGAGEMENT

This is the Nurture state. Your visibility is increasing; your fan base continues to grow. Your focus in this stage is *engagement*. You want your fans to accept your proposal if you will, and tell all their friends how much they think of you.

Content should be strategically produced and post subjects should be carefully monitored to see what works the best. All engagement from fans (customer, potential customers, and their communities) is acknowledged and encouraged. This is when you stop promoting your page and start promotions like offers to drive more traffic to your website and create engagement.



Your team should be working together with the social media manager to build your brand, engaging with your SM and sharing about your company on their own channels. They should also be supporting your efforts with ideas and helping to shape your posting calendar. If they aren't, you will experience loss of momentum and lengthen the time it takes to get to stage 3.

In this stage, you should have an editorial calendar and a social media aggregator (like HootSuite, Sprout, CoSchedule). This is when you plan your engagement posts and schedule posts out a week to a month in advance, allowing for spontaneous posts. This is also when you plan and create campaigns, that are executed over several months with specific business goals like increasing web traffic with engaging content or enticements to launch sales.

HINT: Use lots of video. Be sure you tag and optimize each one!

STRATEGY: In this stage, you use paid promotion to create engagement with your brand, content and some promotions but remember the focus is engagement, not sales.

STAGE 3- COMMITMENT (MARRIAGE)



This is the Sell stage - at last! This is the stage when you start producing measurable ROI. Your fans are committed to their relationship with you, a little like marriage. They show that commitment by spending money on your offerings.

You'll know you are here because you are meeting or exceeding your goals. New avenues of business growth are clear and your Social Media Marketing is supporting your overall marketing goals. Your posts and campaigns are relevant and welcome by your fans, your staff is engaged too. Social Media is working exactly as it's intended.

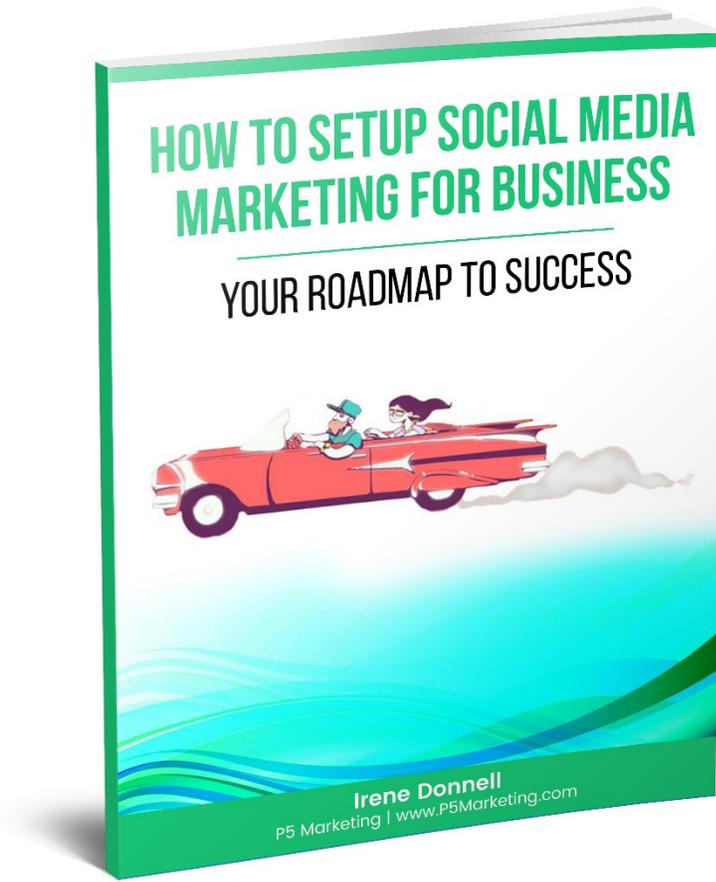
Be sure and use a CRM to collect leads and promote follow up to sales.

HINT: The length of time it takes to move to each of these stages depends on:

- **The assets** you commit to your SMM (time, money, staff)
- **The consistency** of execution
- **The commitment** of company leaders to plan and integrate SMM into the company's overall marketing plan

STRATEGY: In this stage, you use paid promotion to drive traffic to your website, promote engagement, drive leads and sales.

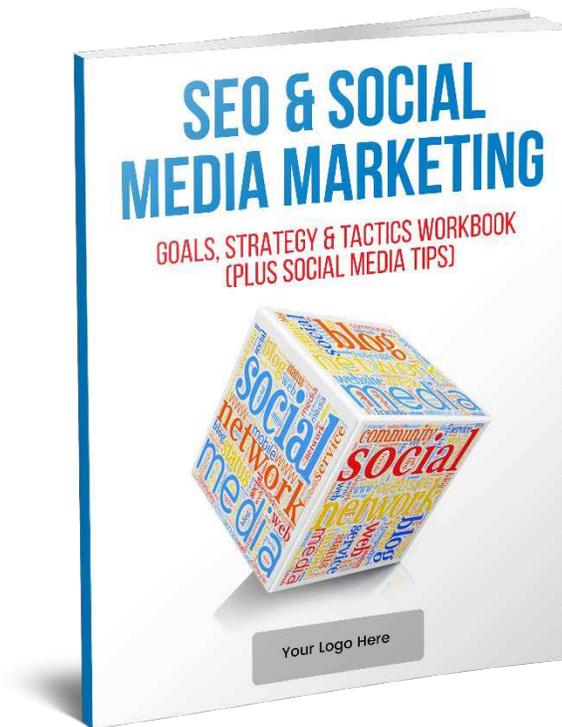
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