

The Influence of Social Media in Today's Culture

Today, social media has a significant impact on the way we see the world. It is estimated that by 2017, the global social network audience will exceed 2.5 billion. Networking, entertainment, and hard-hitting journalism and opinion writing within the digital sphere have become a part of everyday life. Thought Leaders now turn to the web to create a splash, influence, and have their voices heard. As such a pivotal part of the way we understand society today, "Social Media & Cultural Studies" is even offered as a degree at universities across the globe.

Today social media opens the door for opportunities to create both positive and negative influences on the world. Each day we are bombarded by messages that can impact the way we think, what we think about, and how we view what we think about. Through the power of social media, organizations and individuals can reach audiences in staggering numbers not previously accessible through traditional media channels. In this presentation, participants will review examples of social media and its global impact in both negative and positive ways. In addition, we will consider the implications of not leveraging social media, answering the difficult question – is it right for my organization?

In this presentation, you will learn:

- What are the various social platforms and how are they being leveraged
- Why is Social Media so effective as a tool to influence the masses
- Examples of social media influence in today's culture (pop culture, religion, politics, philanthropy)
- What is a Digital Footprint and why a professional online presence is crucial
- What is Brand Awareness and how does it relate to building an international influence through social media
- Potential pitfalls with social media cultural influence and what behaviors to avoid

Steve Lowisz is a widely renowned and trusted entrepreneurial business expert. A highly-rated speaker, author and educator, Steve has served as a consultant across the globe for many Fortune 500 organizations. Having started and led multiple businesses in the field of Human Resources, in 1999 Steve founded Qualigence International, a recruitment research and professional search firm headquartered in Livonia, Michigan, of which continues to serve as CEO. In addition, Steve is also the principal consultant for Lowisz Consulting, which provides both group and individual leadership development consulting and individualized goal planning. Steve's business philosophy has always been to put the best interests of his clients first. His continual goal is to spread the word of successful business practices to fellow partners, associates and colleagues.

INTRODUCTION:

Today, social media has a huge influence on the way we see the world.

- It is estimated that by 2017, the global social network audience will total 2.5 billion.
- Networking, entertainment, and hard-hitting journalism within the digital sphere have become a part of everyday life.

- Thought Leaders now turn to the web to create a splash, make a difference, and have their voice heard.
- As such a pivotal part of the way we understand society today, “Social Media & Cultural Studies” is even offered as a degree at several universities across the globe.

Accomplishing cultural influence on social media comes with a need for brand awareness, practical planning, and creative expression. The realm of social media opens the door for opportunities to make a positive – or negative – influence on the world.

In this presentation, we will learn the importance of building a brand in order to have a positive cultural influence on social media.

- We will look at examples of social media and culture and its global impact.
- We will explore possibilities of becoming a cultural influence via social media and which avenue is best for sharing your message with the world.

In this presentation, you will learn:

- The Evolution of Social Media
- The Effect of Social Media on Today’s Culture
- Use and misuse of Social Media in the world of Christianity
- Best Practices in Utilizing Social Media for Positive Impact

I. The Evolution of Social Media

- Media
- Sender -> Receiver
- Mass Media
- Sender -> Information/Data -> Several Receivers
- Social Media -> Information/Data -> Participant -> Information/Data -> Participant

1. Keeping up with Change in a Digital World

A. Social Media has become impossible to ignore in today’s technological society

- Laying the foundation of social media techniques can enhance your overall engagement and connections, quickly increasing awareness and content dissemination
- Understanding the value of this resource is essential
- Important to understand who is using social media and how they use it to target the right people

- Interaction is everything in a tech-savvy world
 - There is a highly increased need to emphasize communication and engagement across different channels
 - Increased engagement to the public sector means increased loyalty, organizational trust
 - Increased engagement allows for customization and enhanced relationships with organization
- B. Online communication allows for the ability to engage in a conversation directly related to your mission in real time
- Communication is no longer a one-way street: now, interaction is key driver to successful thought leadership practices
 - Engaging online builds up loyalty like never before: Keeps audience coming back without the usage of promotions, deals, coupons

C. Research is no longer conducted in a book or over the phone: It's online

- People take to the Internet to find the info they need, and this shift continues to be on the upswing
- Different generations have different preferred ways of communication, and this continues to shift. Communication was predominantly one way (telegram, letter, print news), then electronically one way (faxes, pagers), and is now a two-way conversation (social media, Internet)

2. The Evolution of Social Media - History

1969 – First “dial-up” Internet service provider

1971 – The first email was delivered

1985 – America Online began

1989 – Development of the World Wide Web

1995 – Newsweek: *“The Internet? Bah! Hype alert: Why cyberspace isn't, and will never be, nirvana”*

1997 – The Web has 1m websites, blogging begins, AOL Instant Messenger allows chat

1998 – Start of Google

2000 – Burst of the “dot.com” bubble

- 2001** – Beginning of Wikipedia, editable online encyclopedia
- 2002** – Social networking site Friendster opens to public
- 2003** – Myspace launched
- 2004** – Facebook launched at Harvard, Podcasts began, Flickr image sharing began
- 2005** – Facebook opens to high school students, YouTube begins storing and retrieving videos, more than 8 billion web pages
- 2006** – Twitter is launched as social networking and “microblogging” site
- 2007** – Apple releases iPhone multimedia and Internet smartphone
- 2008** – Facebook passes Myspace in monthly users
- 2009** – Facebook is named as most-used social network worldwide. Twitter becomes reputable news source after story of plane crash in Hudson River breaks on Twitter, “unfriend” makes it into the New Oxford American Dictionary
- 2010** – Apple releases iPad tablet computer, 30% of global population is on the Internet, surpasses newspapers as primary news source
- 2011** – Social media accessible from virtually anywhere, becomes part of our daily lives: 65 million tweets sent a day, 2 billion videos viewed on YouTube a day
- 2012** – Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Google+ dominate Internet. More than half of adults use social media. Social Networks highly utilized by companies to enhance brand visibility
- BEYOND:** Estimated that Internet users will double by 2015 – That’s 60 percent of Earth’s population!

Started as Web 1.0

- One way communication
- E-newsletters
- E-brochures
- Career Website

Move on to Web 2.0

- Allows for two or multi-way engagement in a scalable way
- Enables 1-to-many conversation to become 1-to-1

What will Web 3.0 look like?

- Location Based Services
- Check-Ins
- Opening up vs. Privacy

3. Social Networking:

Who is using Technology?

A. Talent Levels

- According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, CEOs and Presidents are 3 times less likely than others to use LinkedIn.
- 60% of executives are on social media an hour a week or less

B. Demographics

- 70% Men vs. 74% Women
- Millennials are most frequently found on social media at 89%
- Those with a college level education are more likely to be found online than those with high school education or less

C. Around the Globe

- Facebook has 1.06 billion monthly active users globally
- Google+ has 343 million active users globally
- LinkedIn has 200 million active users globally
- Twitter has 170 million active users globally
- Pinterest has 25 million active users globally
- YouTube has over 800 million unique visitors a month globally

II. The Effect of Social Media on Today's Culture

- Connections online are everything now
- By 2017, the global social network audience will total 2.5 billion
- Entertainment, hard-hitting news, networking a part of everyday life
- Many colleges even offer Bachelor's Degrees in "Media & Cultural Studies" – such a prevalent topic today!

1. International Connection

Brand Awareness

- Brand awareness, connection becomes a global conversation

- Increased interaction, customer service the new normal
- Organizational culture must be open to criticism
- Must create a standardized process for how you use social networks and use them appropriately
- Ex: Coca Cola

2. Larger Avenue for Scandal

Importance of professional online presence more crucial than ever

- Former United States House of Representatives Member Anthony Weiner
- Sent inappropriate photos to a woman via Twitter
- Ruined his reputation, career

3. Artistic Freedom

Viral Videos

Allows for more creative and cultural expression worldwide

- New outlets for entrepreneurial vision, artistry, performance (YouTube)
- Bigger audience base than ever before
- Creativity unleashed: Pinterest, Etsy
- Ability for anyone to become a performer, gain an audience

III. Social Media & Christianity Use & Misuse

1. Ministers Checking in on Foursquare

- Alerts community members they're available for conversation at coffee shops, bookstores, even the bar
- Greater accessibility, comfort levels

2. Digital Prayer Groups

3. Bible Teachings on Twitter

- Digital Scriptures
- Many Christian leaders, such as Kay Arthur, international Bible teacher, author, and co-CEO of Precept Ministries International, exercise a system to more effectively study the Bible – digital outlets

4. Study: Christians on Twitter

- A study conducted at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign studied Twitter as a research tool and compared the messages of Christians and atheists
- When limited to 140 characters or less, Christians appear happier than their counterparts
- Two doctoral students in social psychology and an adviser analyzed the language of nearly 2 million tweets from more than 16,000 active users to come up with their findings
- *Christians are more likely to use words like “love,” “happy” and “great”; “family,” “friend” and “team.”*
- *Atheists Tweet more words like “bad,” “wrong,” and “awful” or “think,” “reason” and “question”*

5. Christian Influence on Twitter

- Christian Leaders more Influential on Twitter than International Pop Stars, according to study by The New York Times
- Christian leaders have bigger international following than Justin Bieber, Lady Gaga

6. Mobile Apps for Churches

- Video sharing for services, programs, and events
- Message Boards, Q&A Sessions
- Fundraising, contributions
- Calls for Volunteering

IV. Social Media Best Practices for the Greatest Positive Impact

1. Best Practices: Digital Journalism

Social Media is Replacing Traditional Journalism as Primary News Source

- More than 50% of people have learned about breaking news via social media rather than official news sources, according to Pew Research
- 45% of people get their news online at least 3x a week
- Online news revenue has surpassed print newspaper revenue

- People get their news from Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Google+

2. Social Media News Pros and Cons

- **Pros:** Immediacy, everyone can report, stories disseminated quickly, cell phones go where TV crews can't
- **Cons:** Fewer words to tell a story, inaccuracy and missing facts, journalist integrity can be compromised, amateurs becoming "reporters"

3. Social Media Pros

A. Improving Relationships

- 88% of users report that social media helps them stay in touch with friends they cannot see regularly, 69% report getting to know students at their school better, 57% make new friends online (commonsensemedia.org)
- Beneficial Business Platform
- 80% of sales cycle completed online
- Brand building, engagement, awareness, customer service more crucial than ever in digital world

B. Law Enforcement

- 67% of federal, state, and local law enforcement professionals surveyed think "social media helps solve crimes more quickly" (LexisNexis)
- 2011 Stanley Cup riots in Vancouver, 2,000 rioters caught due to social media photos

C. Study Sessions

- 59% of students with access to the Internet report that they use social networking sites to discuss educational topics and 50% use the sites to talk about school assignments (NSBA)

4. Social Media Cons

A. Less Face-to-Face Interaction

- 13% of Adults admitted to texting or playing on their phones to avoid human interaction (Pew Research Study)

B. Decreased Productivity

- 51% of employees 25-34 use social media at work
- 30 minutes a day on social media at a company with 50 people could cost 6,500 hours of productivity a year (GFI Software)

C. Usage Correlated with Anxiety, Depression

- The 2013 *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM)* is evaluating "Internet Addiction Disorder" for inclusion

D. Universal Privacy Concerns

- As many as 13 million users are unaware of or do not understand Facebook privacy settings (Consumer Report)

E. Wasting Time

- 42% of American Internet users play games like Farmville or Mafia Wars on social networking
- Students who spend excessive time online have lower GPAs (Kirschner & Karpinski, 2010)

5. Best Practices: Charity

Photographer raises \$228,600 for Hurricane Sandy relief on social media

- Following the storm, photographer took to streets of New York to photograph devastation
- Paired with Tumblr to launch viral fundraising campaign to help victims

6. Best Practices: Listening

Listen first, then never stop listening!

- The community will tell you what they need/want
- We spend most of our time and money on talking
- Most people don't listen, they are waiting to talk
- Social Media allows us to listen at scale

7. Best Practices: Respond

Join the conversation!

- Don't just 'tell', provide value

- Comment, comment, comment, and then provide a link
- Practicality is key – information someone can use today
- Do not treat social media as advertising platforms – you will turn people off
- Share only what is useful, helpful, interesting, funny, not available elsewhere
- Be real – It’s OK to share an occasional tip about your favorite restaurant – we all have multiple interests!
- Avoid bad spelling, hasty abbreviations and grammar
- Once you start – COMMIT

8. Why use Facebook?

- Many organizations have very successful Facebook pages that engage their audience
- Make announcements, interact with followers, engage in discussion about specific topics, provide your visitors with fresh content on a weekly basis
- Comment on other organization’s pages to engage in interaction; join groups of interest
- Consistency is key to keep people coming back and to share and “like” your page
- The more “Likes,” the more the word is spread about your organization
 - Starbucks – 33 million likes
 - Disney – 42 million likes, lots of interaction and chatter

9. Why use Twitter?

Initially a more personal outlet, Twitter has taken the world by storm. Users are able to share their content at a rapid pace, with the overall goal of building brand awareness by “Retweets” and “Shares.”

- Share your content and others’ in order to gain followers, be known as a Thought Leader
- Ask questions to your followers to engage in conversation
- Reference others’ content to establish yourself or your organization as a primary focus
- Excellent for outbound messaging
- Great for establishing engagement
- Highest viral potential – interaction is most important
- Use for “sentiment monitoring” – how do people feel about your message
- Get others to tweet about you and re-tweet your messages

Think About Your Twitter Voice: Twitter is a direct - often clever - way of getting your message across to your audience. Think about how you want your organization to be perceived as you Tweet.

- **Note:** It's OK to recycle content on Twitter. Re-reference your content on different days so long as you give a wide enough timeframe between each Tweet so as not to annoy your followers. Don't tweet in Bursts – five in five minutes then none for hours. Spread out your content to maintain engagement.

10. Why use LinkedIn?

Create an organizational page that can have its own banner photo as well as standard logo. Sub-pages feature the ability to include video, descriptions and connections to current staff, volunteers, etc.

- Allows for more overall engagement and accessibility. Organizations can also feature updates that allow their followers to be informed about events and announcements and increase visibility
- Within your organization's page you can promote specific topics, services, events, and members can recommend them

11. Why use Google+?

- Since the addition of communities, Google+ added 35 million active users in just 2.5 months
- A quiet but growing giant, it's a good idea to hop onto the Google+ wagon now

A PLUS: Other Google+ users will see your posts if they Google Search a term that you've posted about, increasing visibility for your organization or content.

12. Why use Pinterest?

- Organizations use Pinterest to share their content with others
- Organizations can follow each other and engage in content sharing
- Art links back to organization's website, engaging user and leading them to find out more about your organization and mission

13. Why use YouTube?

- Video is a powerful channel to inform your audience
- Response, engagement, and popularity are high for short videos
- Chatter drives engagement and click-throughs

14. What to Post

- No fluff – Stay relevant, interesting or even controversial
- Interact
- Ask questions, Post replies
- Request comments
- Mention others
- Give and ask for opinions
- Remain consistently inconsistent

15. Where to Start

- Social media can be overwhelming at first, which is why it's important to make a game plan.
- Most social media tools are free, so incorporating these tools into your organization's structure shouldn't cost much so long as you have the manpower devoted to maintaining them.

A. Make a Plan: Decide which social media tools your organization wants to use first.

- Don't immediately try to sign up for every single one in one day; this can lead to a sense of urgency and disorganization.

B. Create a Schedule: A calendar of social media updates can be extremely helpful when it comes to balancing the maintenance of social media with the rest of your responsibilities.

- Decide who on your team is going to tackle these tools and help to ensure they stick to the plan.
- Start slowly and work your way up as you become more comfortable with these tools.

C. Start with Facebook, Twitter and YouTube:

Because Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are currently the most popular personal networking sites, this can be a good entry point for your message.

- You need only an email address and basic information to create your own profile
- From there, you can create your own pages and let the networking begin
- YouTube is especially easy with today's smartphones. Taking video and putting it online is a fast and easy way to gain traffic and engagement with customers and your organization
- Invite viewers of your videos to add their own thoughts and insight in the comments. Be responsive to questions and open to suggestions