

SOCIAL INDUSTRY

Leveraging the Power of Social Media in Manufacturing, Engineering and Heavy Industries

Social Media Marketing in Manufacturing, Engineering and Heavy Industries: An Overview

Social media marketing has become a powerful tool for businesses in recent years with 4.74 billion active social media users in the world, accounting for 59.3% of the world's population(1). According to We Are Social, 'by the end of 2021, 82.7% of Australians were active on social media, an annual growth of nearly 1 million users'(2).

Yellow, in their Social Media Report 2020(3), found that 90% of small and medium businesses (SMBs) use Facebook, followed by LinkedIn (33%) and Instagram (32%) and that around 80% of SMBs consider social media an effective advertising tool. Most customers, competitors, job seekers, and communities have a social media presence.

Whilst sectors such as fashion, retail, tourism and real estate embraced the benefits of social media marketing relatively quickly, it took longer for the benefits to emerge for manufacturing, engineering and other heavy industries.

Thomasnet, in their article on Industrial Marketing (4), point out that online audiences are a key driver for these sectors to join the social media space. 'Manufacturing customers today want to see detailed product information, a company's history, its business locations, and reviews/testimonials that endorse the company. They expect the content they're researching to be available on-demand, optimized for any device, interactive, and highly visual.'

To meet these demands, manufacturing and other industrial organisations are using social media for:

- generating leads,
- sales,
- showcasing their work and projects,
- events,
- social proof,
- brand awareness,
- customer service,
- staff communications,
- project management,
- community relations, and
- recruitment of new staff.



Case Studies on Social Media Marketing ROI

In his online article '15 B2B case studies prove Social Media ROI'(5), Rob Peterson, from Barn Raisers, provides some compelling case studies demonstrating Social Media ROI. Four of these relate to manufacturing and maritime industries and are included below.

Case Study 1

'Fisher Tank makes giant, above-ground welded steel tanks. With clients in the fuel industries, waste water, pulp & paper and other industrial and municipal areas, projects tend to be big (multi-million dollar) and take a long time to sell (12 months and longer).

'...quote requests increased by 500% and new qualified sales opportunities by \$3.4 million'

For more than 60 years, the company has made its sales primarily through cold calling and referrals from existing clients. So it took some moxy to launch a content marketing strategy online. The plan including sprucing up the website, integrating a blog and social sharing, and offering some valuable content by free download.

The campaign increased web traffic by 119%, traffic from social media by 4800%,



lead conversions by 3900%, quote requests by 500% and new qualified sales opportunities by \$3.4 million.'

Case Study 2

'Danish shipping company Maersk first began using social back in 2011 to raise brand awareness, gain insight into the market, increase employee satisfaction and get closer to its customers. It focuses on the stories that emerge from within the business, such as how it is helping fuel a boom in the sale of Kenyan avocados and where its staff come from.

Its presence on each network is tailored to that platform, so for example on LinkedIn it promotes job vacancies and publishes articles about the work culture within the business, while on Instagram it encourages followers to post photos of its ships using the hashtag #Maersk.' Maersk now has more than 3 million Facebook followers and 120,000 Twitter followers.

Case Study 3

'It's difficult to imagine the maritime industry getting to grips with social media, but Shipserv one of the leading industry marketplaces, proves that in can be done

very successfully. As part of a wider marketing strategy and customer engagement strategy, various social approaches were taken, resulting in greater site traffic, alongside increased brand awareness and lead opportunities. From an initial \$30,000 social media marketing investment, it's estimated the overall results achieved would have cost more than \$150,000 through traditional media.'

Case Study 4

'RS Components: The electronic product distribution company created a specific social hub, spanning four different languages, having the purpose of being a collaboration and engagement hub for Electronic Design Engineering. One of the centrepieces of the site is the free tool store, which includes a free design tool that's been downloaded more than 60,000 times and the site itself gathered more than 45,000 members within its first 12-month period.'

With these case studies, and the others in his article, Peterson provides compelling evidence of the direct link between social media marketing and ROI for businesses.

Image
CAT Products,
Sand Castle
Cat Trials - YouTube



Sand Castle | Cat® Trials

CAT Cat® Products
 268K subscribers [Subscribe](#) 👍 8.7K

Benefits of Social Media in Manufacturing

According to Hootsuite(6), a global provider of social media management software, social media can provide the following benefits to manufacturing, engineering and heavy industries:

- Increase brand awareness among your target audience,
- Drive traffic to your website and generate more leads,
- Increase sales and revenue by promoting your products and services,
- Showcase your work, achievements, products, projects, and talent to attract new customers and increase industry authority,
- Use social listening to source content and improve your products and services, as well as to grow an online community of advocates,
- Manage your reputation and handle crisis communication in a timely and effective manner,
- Engage with your customers and audience to build relationships and trust,
- Provide customer service and support through social media channels,
- Learn more about your customers and their needs through their social media activity and interactions with your brand,
- Gauge sentiment around your brand and industry to inform your marketing and business strategies,

- Keep an eye on your competitors and stay on top of industry news and trends,
- Utilise targeted advertising to reach specific audiences and improve ROI,
- Use reporting and analytics to measure the performance of your social media marketing efforts and adjust your strategies accordingly.

Challenges of Social Media in Manufacturing and How to Address Them

Social media is 'social' and requires a different approach than traditional one-way messaging and marketing.

Some organisations have found managing interactions on social media frustrating, which has led to a reluctance to adopt these platforms in certain sectors.

Yellow(3) found that negative comments or reviews cause the greatest concern for SMBs (22%) and 'other concerns and frustrations include dealing with technology-related issues (11%), the time and resources required to manage social

media (11%), and how to effectively target customers (9%)'(3). Education and support is key to addressing these challenges. These challenges can be addressed in large part with training, channel set-up that incorporates built in protections, and guidelines for managing online communities and handling negative reviews.

Looking for inspiration?

See how these organisations use social media to educate, entertain and inspire.

- Synergy Manufacturing on [Instagram](#)
- CAT on [YouTube](#)
- LockheedMartin on [LinkedIn](#)
- Kawasaki Heavy Industries on [Facebook](#)
- Thies Mining on [Facebook](#)

Platforms have a range of tools to manage negative comments including identifying offensive words and phrases and pre-blocking their use, blocking users from commenting, providing responses that address the issues raised, deleting comments, and closing comments functions.

'Platforms have a range of tools to manage negative comments'

As outlined in our article 'Responding to Negative Online Comments and Reviews' (7), it's important to remember that the vast majority of comments on social media are neutral (87%) (8).

Support from social media experts is available to help upskill organisations in social media marketing and provide managed social media services.

Sources

1. <https://wearesocial.com/us/blog/2022/10/the-global-state-of-digital-in-october-2022/>
2. <https://wearesocial.com/au/blog/2022/02/digital-2022-australia-online-like-never-before/>
3. <https://www.yellow.com.au/social-media-report/>
4. <https://blog.thomasnet.com/what-is-industrial-marketing-examples>
5. <https://barnraisersllc.com/2014/05/24/b2b-case-studies-prove-social-media-roi/>
6. <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-for-business/> Sand Castle | Cat® Trials - YouTube
7. <https://shirleygraysocial.com.au/articles/managingnegativementions>
8. <https://mention.com/en/blog/social-media-mentions-analysis/>

Should your organisation be on social media?

Yes. If you are in a competitive market for buying, selling, promoting or hiring, or if your organisation needs to engage with the community or stakeholders, then an online presence is essential.

However, that presence can vary a great deal depending on your strategy. Social media marketing strategies can range from having an online presence and being discoverable on search engines (such as Google), to more complex strategies involving multiple platforms, paid advertising campaigns and e-commerce strategies. Your organisation may not need to be on all social media platforms. Be strategic about what platforms you select and how you use social media to support your organisation's goals.

Leveraging the Power of Social Media in Manufacturing, Engineering and Heavy Industries

Social media marketing can bring numerous benefits to manufacturing, engineering and other heavy industries. From showcasing your work to managing your reputation, social media can help grow your business in many ways. However, some challenges and concerns may arise, including negative comments, time and resource management, and how to effectively target customers. As a social media expert with extensive experience in heavy industries.

Shirley Gray Social can help address these challenges and develop a custom social media strategy to support your organisation's goals. Contact us today to learn more about our services and how we can help your manufacturing or heavy industry organisation leverage the power of social media.

About Shirley Gray Social:

Shirley Gray Social specialises in helping businesses of all sizes achieve their marketing goals through effective social media strategies.

Our services include social media marketing strategy development, auditing,

consulting, and training. With our help, you can enhance your social media presence and confidently use social media marketing to achieve your objectives.

To learn more about how we can help

you with your social media marketing, visit our website or contact us today.

W shirleygraysocial.com.au

E shirley@shirleygraysocial.com.au