

Understanding Social Media: How to Create a Plan for Your Business That Works

Damian Ryan

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This excellent curated collection of observations is an all-in-one resource that should offer business marketers a wealth of guidance.

More and more businesses recognize the need to be agile at using social media, but significant challenges, not the least of which is measuring return on investment (ROI), still abound. *Understanding Social Media* adeptly addresses most every such challenge in a format that is engaging and informative. Damian Ryan, who established the first digital agency in the United Kingdom and Ireland, organizes the book into logical sections that cover topics such as starting a social media program, creating a social media budget, establishing “Key Performance Indicators” to measure success, understanding social media ROI, social media and the customer experience, and the PR–social media relationship.

The sections anchor the book's structure, but content for the sections is composed of short entries provided by sixty social media experts from companies large and small located around the globe. This assemblage of individuals adds a rare richness and depth of information that would normally be hard to duplicate between the covers of a single volume, which makes this book uniquely interesting. In addition, Ryan appends several case studies to each section, offering real-world examples of business-oriented social media campaigns. The author ties things together nicely with intelligent chapter introductions and conclusions.

The section on social media ROI is just one example of the comprehensive nature of the book. Here, one contributor addresses “what matters” and “what does not matter” in assessing ROI, while another discusses moving from social media metrics to social media engagement. Another contributor writes about setting social media goals. One case study covers the business use of Twitter while the other highlights the business use of Facebook.

The author includes biographies for all contributing writers, as well as capsule summaries of the clients and agencies mentioned in case studies. Web links are provided for every case study and, where appropriate, black-and-white screen grabs are included.

Because the book is really a collection of succinctly written observations and authoritative opinions, it makes for easy reading and can be consumed in one sitting or in smaller chunks over time. *Understanding Social Media* is an all-in-one resource that should offer business marketers a wealth of guidance, advice, and ideas about how to get the most out of social media.

BARRY SILVERSTEIN (May 13, 2015)

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