

Handbook on building the Social Business

A complete step-by-step guide



Because people are our business!

Where do you start

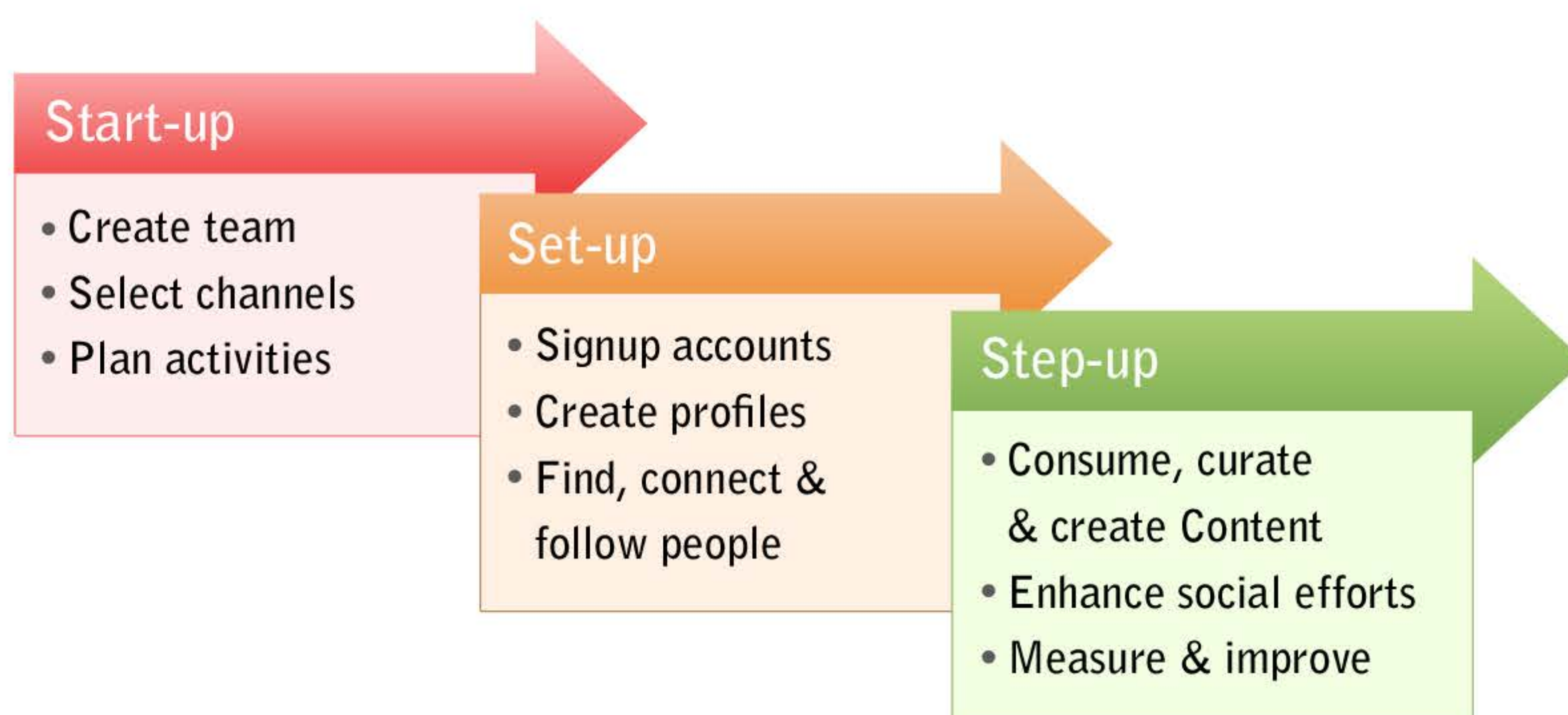
Businesses today are using social media to get people together on various platforms. However to build a successful social business, you need to engage the right people, influence them positively and encourage them to adopt the desired behaviours. You can achieve these goals when you implement the correct approach. Also, avoid pitfalls and take corrective and preventive actions to progress in the journey.

Engage the right people, influence them positively and encourage desired behaviours.

There are many ways to build a social business and these vary across the organisations. These differences in approach are based on industry, size, processes and resources of the organisations. For building a social business, there is no-one-size-fits-all approach that can be applied in the same way for all businesses.

Thinking and doing BIG might be good from a business and technology perspective. However, the key to building a successful social business lies in starting small and taking baby steps. The diagram below gives an approach from our Unified Experience Framework.

Texavi Framework–Building the social business



The need for small and medium businesses is to have a proven methodology. It should enable them to minimise their resources. Also it must help the businesses to control their costs and change the models as per their needs. Texavi created a process-driven yet flexible framework based on our experience, expertise and industry standards.

The methodology should enable small and medium businesses to minimise their resources, control costs and customise the model as per their needs

We evolved the Unified Experience Framework from the best practices and lessons learnt from the multiple projects with different clients. The practical insights derived from our framework are helpful for small and medium businesses. This White Paper guides you with step-by-step processes, activities involved, and resources required in various phases.

Building the Social Business – Texavi’s Framework



Start-up: Put the best foot forward



The Start-up phase is critical in the journey of social business. In this phase, the focus is on getting the first steps right. It starts with the decision on the responsible person or team for the social efforts. Based on your business needs, the suitable social media should be identified. Also, in this phase you should plan the activities to do on the social channels and define their frequency.

1.1 Create the right team

Large organisations nowadays have dedicated departments focusing on social media and managing the campaigns around these networks. Increasingly, these companies have people with titles such as 'Community Manager', and 'Social Scientist' and 'Social evangelist'. Also, the social media teams in these companies have no less than 15 to 50 people depending on the size of the organisation.

People drive the social businesses



To start with, there must be clear ownership and accountability with one team for the social initiative.

However, it could be overkill for small and medium businesses to put all their resources on social channels. They have neither the people nor the budgets, compared to the large enterprises. But it does not mean small companies cannot be social businesses. To be successful, they need to have a clear focus, consistent efforts and a responsible team, no matter how small the team is.

Increasingly, large organisations have people with titles such as 'Community Manager', 'Social Scientist' and 'Social evangelist'!

For every company large or small, old or new, people drive successful initiatives and it is true for social businesses too. Assign a person or team responsible for social efforts, depending on the size and nature of business. There must be clear ownership and accountability with one team initially, which can later be shared across the organisation. Though there is no clear visibility, the team must have a set of roles and responsibilities that can be refined in future.

Have clear focus, consistent efforts and a responsible team, no matter how small the team is.

1.2 Select the right networks

Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are the most popular social media but then the list does not end with them. There are other social networks such as GooglePlus, Flickr and Pinterest, for instance. Some of these are general- purpose platforms while some others are more specialised in one or few areas. Besides social networking, there are professional networks such as LinkedIn and BranchOut.

Be on the right social networks



Every organisation cannot spend their efforts and resources on all the social and professional networks. It does not make business sense to go after all the popular networks merely to have a presence. To become a successful social business, it is critical for the organisations to choose the right networks. We came up with a list of questions to help assess and identify the right channels.

Responses to the following questions will help you select the specific channels suitable to your business objectives. The outcome from these questions is a logical and structured response, relying on the nature, size, customer base, geography and resources of the organisation. You need to re- visit the list of the selected networks periodically.

Select the right channels – key questions

Your Business	Social/Professional networks
What is our core business – products, services & operations?	Which networks should we consider for our presence?
What is the size of our organisation?	What are the suitable social and/or professional media for our size?
Who are our target customers?	Where can we find our target audience, both in quality & quantity?
What is the nature of our business offering –B2B, B2C,C2C?	Should we choose social or professional networks? Which ones?
Where do we operate and which geographies do we need to focus on?	Which networks are available in our geographies, locally and globally?
What resources do we have for the social media activities?	Which networks fit within the resources that we have?

1.3 Plan the right activities

Social and professional networks offer a host of services from posting updates to uploading high-quality videos. Besides connecting with people, following and commenting on their updates, you can do various activities on these sites. Sharing photos, playing online multi-player games, audio and video conferencing with several people and blogging are possible with the social media nowadays. However, businesses should have well-defined goals that help them decide on their social activities.

Planning is key for businesses...helps decide on the social activities, resources and timelines.

Every organisation aiming to be social business should have the social goals in place, first. You have to specify clearly what you want to do, where you want to be, how to reach there and what timelines you are aiming for. There needs to be a plan in place for taking care of the goals set for social efforts.

These plans help to ensure that the team members and key stakeholders are aware of the following:

- Objectives of the organisation
- Goals for social activities
- Expectations from the team
- Activities, resources and deliverables
- Expected timelines

As part of the plan, you must not only capture the details initially, but also track and monitor the progress periodically. The following are the key aspects to be considered in this stage:

- Involve all the team members in planning
- Team owns the plan, updates it and delivers on it
- Let the team members estimate, commit and deliver the activities
- Specify the activities at a high level and tasks within each activity
- For each task, mention the persons and estimated time to complete
- Prioritise the activities based on business, finance and implementation
- Share the plans with the key stakeholders on a periodic basis
- Use the plan to closely monitor the progress and update, if required

Empower the team for building a successful social business. Let the team estimate, commit and deliver on the social activities.

Set-up: Moving in the right direction



Now that you did the groundwork required for the initiation phase, let us move on into the next phase. The Setup phase provides the right resources for the team to get started with social activities. Here, the team can start implementing their planned activities. They will start seeing the benefits of working as per a plan.

2.1 Signup and create accounts

Before you begin doing any activities like posting updates, or uploading photos or videos, you must be logged in into the networks. Even to add a comment on somebody else's post, most of the social media require users to be logged-in into their networks. But to be able to log in, you must first register yourself and create an account. After an account is created, you can do all the activities that a registered user can perform on the sites.

Signup is a key step on social networks



Begin with creating accounts on popular social and professional networks such as Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn. Also called as registration, this account creation is a one-time activity. For a number of web sites, and social networks, you don't have to register with each of them exclusively. Use your Twitter or Facebook details for accessing other sites. While managing the account, you can set up security and privacy related settings too.

2.2 Create meaningful profiles

User profiles are created when you initiate the account. Profile comprises the user's details like personal information, contact details etc. You don't have to provide all the information at once, as you must first provide the required details. You can complete the profile by adding more details later. Also, you can change, delete or add more information at any time.

Security and privacy on social media are critical, for most people. Manage these preferences in your profile settings.

A profile is vital for the users on social networks as it is the starting point to know about them. Though not completely updated or current, the profile does have the basic information about the users. Social networks and sites use this information to serve you better. For instance, this profile information would be used to offer value-added services like personalised recommendations. You can use the profiles of other users as the first source of information about them.

Create a profile that lets users know what you are and what you do.

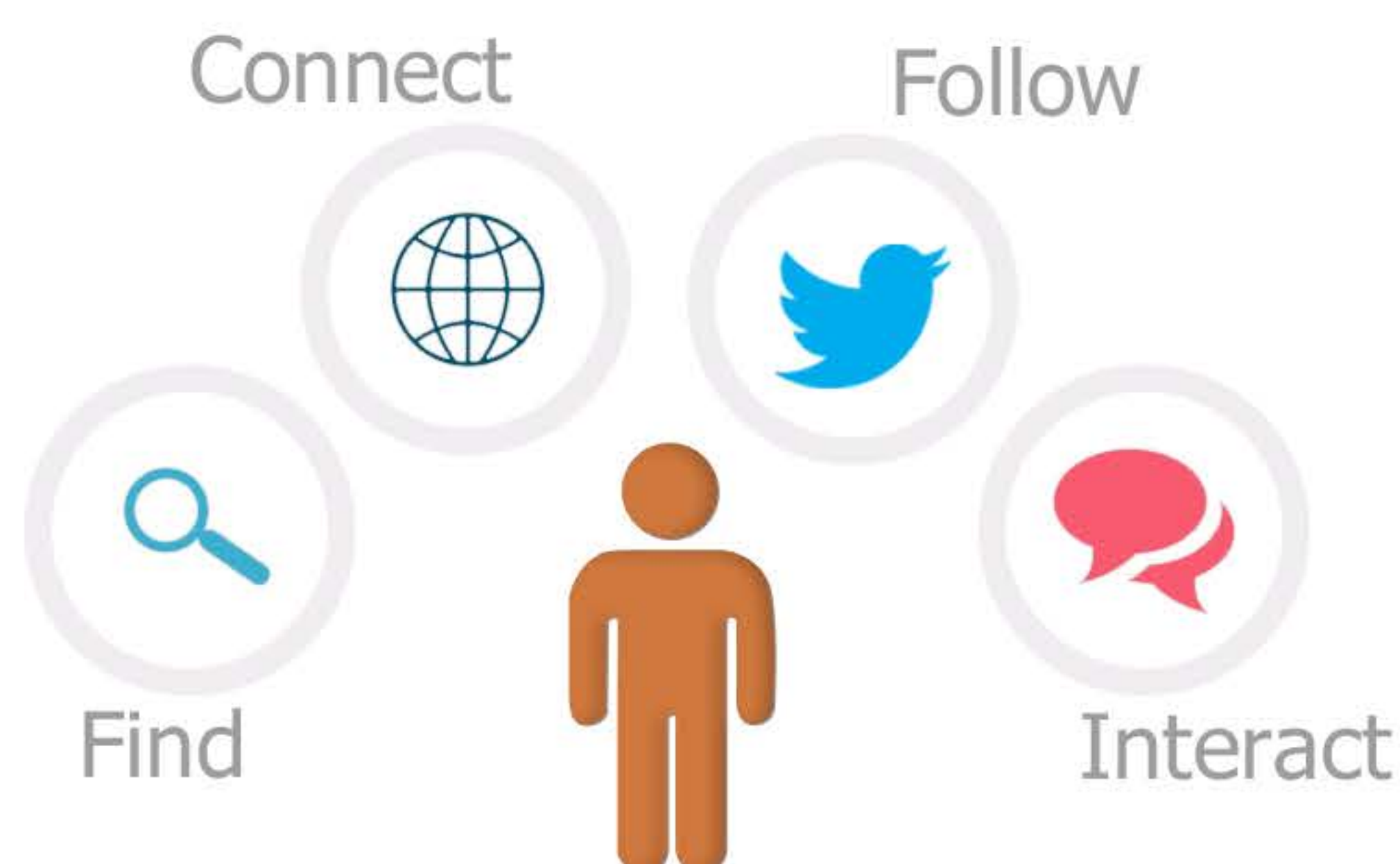
Create a profile that best reflects your business and let the users know what you are and what you do. Also make it clear on what your interests are and what areas you would be tweeting or posting updates about. Give appropriate information, depending on whether you create it for social or professional needs. Some people would like to maintain separate profiles for work and social sides.

2.3 Find, connect and follow the right people

One of the major factors that contributed to the success of social media is their ability to help connect with the people, quickly and easily. Once connected, you become their follower, friend or fan, depending on your interactions with them. You can follow their activities, interact with them and engage with their content on the networks.

Don't just follow people and their activities. For maximum value, interact with people and engage with their content.

Connect and interact with the right people



The key is to first understand whom you need to connect with. This depends on your business interests, social goals and planned activities. To reap the benefit from social networks, you must not only follow people's activities, but also interact and engage with them. Following people and being followed by them initially and increasing the number of followers indicate being active on social networks.

On social networks, don't follow someone back just because they are following you, unless they fit your target profile.

Some social networks such as Facebook allow setting your preferences on 'what' to follow. You can define how you wish to subscribe to the people's updates, and other activities etc. This ensures that you are not flooded with unwanted activities of the people you are following. You should control who you are following, what you have subscribed to and which content you are interested in.

Decide 'what' to follow by using the 'subscribe' options in the social networks.

Tips for finding and connecting with the right people

Given below are some useful tips on finding, connecting with and following people on social networks. They are not prescriptive, but help in guiding you for better results.

- Study the profile of the users who you wish to follow
- Check if your interests align with what they mentioned in their profiles
- Look at their activities in the recent past online and social networks
- Browse through their posts, photos shared, comments etc.
- Connect and follow people only if you find value from the above steps
- Interact with them by commenting and sharing relevant content
- Don't follow someone back, just because they follow you

Step-up: Taking it to the next level



By now, you have most of the infrastructure, resources and plans in place for building the social business. You decided which networks you will go after, what you are going to do and whom you are going to follow on the social networks. Gradually visibility grows and also social goals start aligning with the business goals of the organisation. The Step-up phase enables you to increase the pace of the social efforts and takes you closer to achieving your social goals.

Get active socially by interacting, engaging and influencing the people.

3.1 Consume, curate and create the right content

Popular content on the social networks comprises updates, comments, news articles, blog posts, photos, videos and games, to name a few. For each of these different types of content, there are various social media options available. For instance, Twitter is popular for short updates (known as tweets), Flickr for photos and YouTube for videos. But there are also the more generic platforms like Facebook, Google+ that let you manage all or most of the content types.

Choose the best from the lot



You are consuming content when you follow people and their activities and perhaps commenting on a few posts. However, these are not going to help much, as they are passive and do not engage the users much. To get active socially, you should start interacting with people and engage with their content. These happen in many ways depending on the social networks, and type of the content.

On social channels, you must think differently for the content to be shared deep and wide.

Another key factor that helped in the success and popularity of social media is their viral nature. Content such as photos, videos, blogs and updates can spread like wildfire, thanks to this sharing feature. Curation of content happens when you refine the content and share it with others. In Twitter, you can share the content by re-tweeting others' tweets and in Facebook, you share the content which appear on your page.

Curation of content is key on social networks



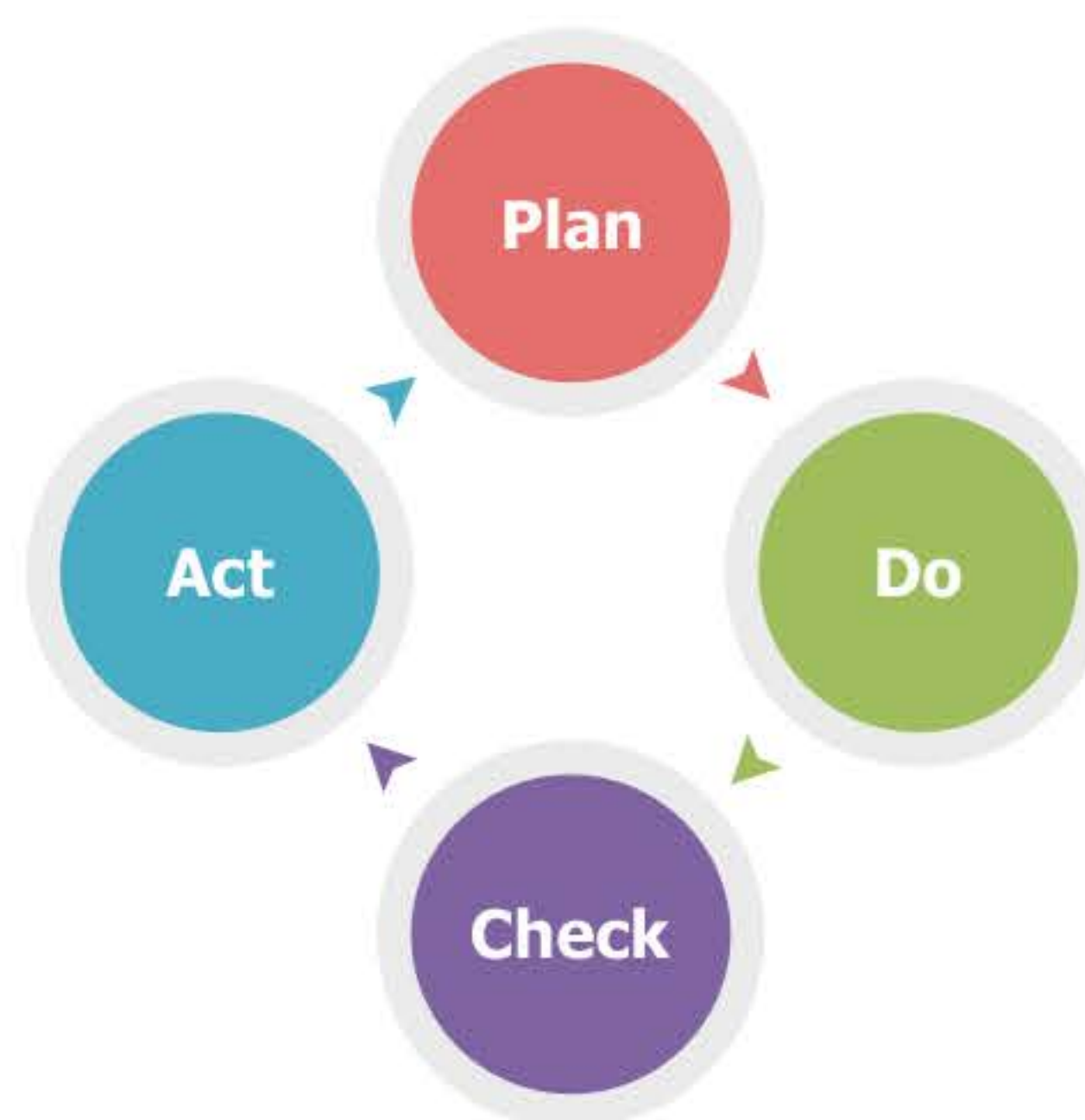
While content consumption and curation are comparatively easy to perform, the real benefit comes when businesses create their content. However, unlike the traditional media, you should think different for the content to be shared deep and wide. Businesses can succeed at creating the right content on social media, only when content is original, interesting and stands out from the noise.

3.2 Enhance and intensify the social efforts

Up until now, as part of the social business efforts, your team has been working hard on the plan. You might be tweeting occasionally, maintaining a Facebook page and have a company profile page on LinkedIn. However, these activities might not be sufficient to generate the right traffic and actively engage users. Time has now come to intensify your social efforts to reach the social goals, quickly and efficiently.

Activities that you were doing may not be sufficient to generate the right traffic and engage users.

Review and improvement are key for success



The efforts that need to be enhanced vary from organisation to organisation, based on their social activities, plans and goals. You may need to re-visit the plans and make a few changes to suit the changing landscape. From tweeting a few times per week, you might consider tweeting a few times per day. Also, make the Facebook page more interesting and engaging by regularly updating it with interesting content like event photos, fun videos and games. Consider upgrading to a premium account on LinkedIn.

Here are a few tips for identifying the areas for improvement.

- Look back and identify the pitfalls, success and failure cases
- Look out and observe how other businesses are performing
- Create the best practices and lessons learnt from your own experiences and others' work as well
- Re-visit the plan and update the details, if required
- Check the efforts on social activities –Number of people, time spent etc.

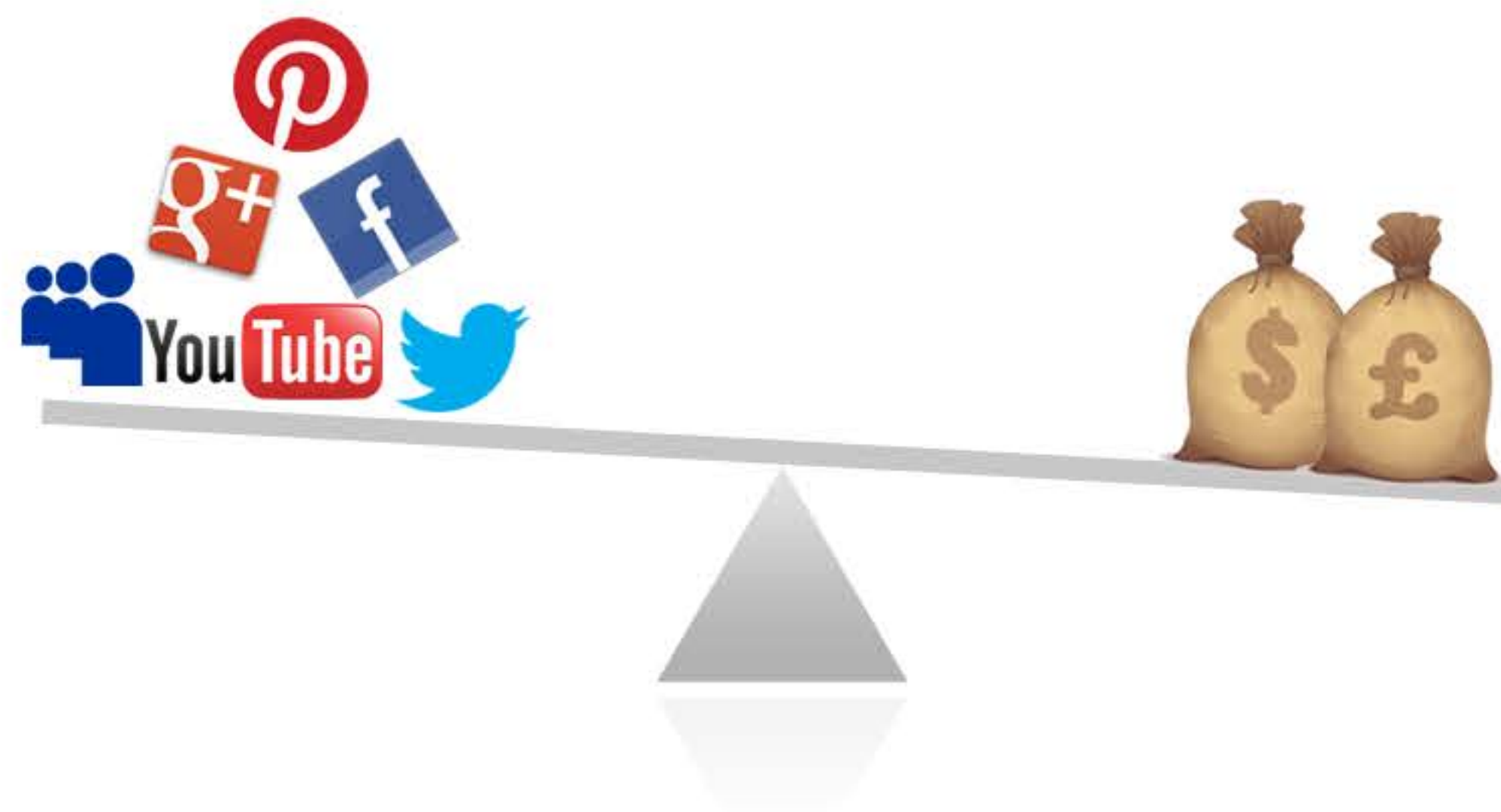
Planning and performing activities are nothing, unless you measure and improve on them.

3.3 Measure the progress and improve

In the journey of social business, setting goals, planning and performing a range of activities on the social networks are critical steps. But these alone are not sufficient for success. You need to measure what you are doing and the results from these activities. These measures and metrics, when compared with the goals and plans, will help you understand the efficiency of your activities and efforts towards building the social business.

Measuring the efforts will not help much, rather measure the results from those efforts to understand the progress.

Businesses today are measuring the activities and efforts towards these activities on social initiative. These include number of social networks, number of people in the team, time spent per day etc. However, measuring efforts will not help much to understand the progress. Measuring the results from these efforts is useful in understanding the progress and help in taking the next steps.



Measuring and tracking the quantitative measures is nice to do initially. You can get these metrics from major networks and sites easily. Some of the measures like page views and user statistics are available from tools like Google Analytics. Additionally, you can track metrics related to people and content, given by the sites upfront. These include the number of followers in your networks and the number of times your content got shared.

Given below are some of the quantitative measures that you can collect and track. Some of them are dependent on the specific social networks and sites.

Number of:

- Social networks and sites on which you are active
- People you are following (friends, fans or followers)
- People following you (friends, fans or followers)
- Times your profile came up in search (by others)
- Times your content has been liked or favourited
- Times your content has been shared

Though these simple numerical measures are helpful, they do not offer a complete picture on the effectiveness of your social initiative. Having 1000 followers does not always correspond to the right target audience on your network. However, complex quantitative metrics such as engagement and influence scores offer a better perspective on the quality of content and people within your social and professional networks.

The right mix of qualitative and quantitative data will help indicate the progress of your social activities.

Besides tracking the quantitative measures, social businesses need qualitative parameters that add value to their social campaigns. These include the quality of content, and personas and profiles of the followers, friends and fans on your networks. On Facebook, for instance you can draw usable insights about users when they clicked on the LIKE button. The right quantitative and qualitative data together indicate the progress and help you achieve your social goals.

In the journey towards making your business truly social, you have now reached a key milestone. You are equipped with the right people, necessary infrastructure, soft and hard resources, plans and goals in building the social business. With the right processes, measures and metrics in place, there is better visibility on the progress. Refer to our How-to guides for more practical insights on achieving success by adding value and differentiating your organisation.



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