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## Marketing isn't enough

Marketing without connecting is just expensive noise.

That's how marketers describe a period they call "post-marketing." And your customers are controlling it.

What does this mean for business?

It means telemarketing is dead. It means Yellow Pages ads are dead. It means, in some cases, direct mail may even be dead. Ask John Gibson, president of Denver's Swingle Lawn, Tree & Landscape Care. He's lived through it all. "Telemarketing and the Yellow Pages have come and gone," he says. "But what really surprised us this year was direct mail. We did a big piece we expected to do well, but it flopped in the market. So now I'm thinking direct mail has come and gone, too."

Social media is the next great marketing wave — a way to connect with potential and current buyers on a different level. And you can ride it or let it pass you by. But it may be taking your customers with it.

According to *Social Media Examiner's* 2010 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, an overwhelming 91% of businesses said they were using social media for marketing purposes, but 65% have only been doing so for a few months. Ten hours per week was the average time spent using these tools — the top four being Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and blogs. Owners aged 20 to 29 spent the most time using social media, followed by 40- to 49-year-olds and then 30- to 39-year-olds.

But what does this time spent behind a screen actually do for business? Eighty-five percent of marketers say the No. 1 advantage is generating exposure, followed by increasing traffic (63%) and building new business partnerships (56%). And 74% of businesses who have used social media for years say it's helped them close sales.

And the cost? Just time. A significant percentage of participants in the *Social Media Examiner* study say

their overall marketing costs dropped after implementing social media marketing. Maybe that's why in the prolonged recession, 67% of marketers plan to increase their use of blogs, Facebook, video/YouTube, Twitter and LinkedIn (in that order) in the coming year.

Another thing these tools provide is a means of push vs. pull marketing, meaning that

instead of trying to pull customers to your website, you push relevant content and information straight to their iPhones, Blackberries, Facebook and Twitter feeds — anywhere, anytime. You do this right, and customers will "like" it and pass the word on to their friends. *Wired* calls it "a radical future of media beyond the Web." "The Web is, after all, just one of the many applications that exist on the Internet," the magazine explains in its September issue, adding as the Internet moved from your desktop to your pocket, the nature of it changed ... and will continue to change. "Within five years, Morgan Stanley projects the number of users accessing the Net from mobile devices will surpass the number who access it from PCs."

"Blame human nature" on this movement, *Wired's* Chris Anderson says. "As much as we intellectually appreciate openness, at the end of the day, we favor the easiest path." LM



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