

Kick-start your social business All you need to get started for success!



Because people are our business!

Why social media for businesses

Organisations have been using the traditional ways of marketing with focus on promotions and advertising in conventional channels. Similarly, businesses optimising their content and applications for customary search engines may not be doing enough. For success in business today, using traditional marketing channels and search engine optimisation are necessary but not sufficient.

Increasingly companies nowadays are using the social networks for reaching out to the people, listening to their conversations and developing their business. Nowadays people use social and professional networks like Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn for personal and professional interests. Not just individuals, but businesses too have taken to these social networks for increasing their brand awareness and advertising their products and services.

For success in business today, using traditional marketing channels and search engine optimisation are necessary but not sufficient.

With millions of people already on these networks, social media offer a great platform for businesses to reach and market their products and services to those people. Businesses today have no choice but to embrace these social networks for their own benefit and also help their customers. Any business large or small, old or new, local or global can become a social business. As the title suggests, 'social' businesses tend to be active on the social media and leverage the power of reach offered by these networks.

Using social media is not an option for businesses anymore!

However, being a social business does not mean just tweeting a few times per week or collecting Likes on your Facebook page, though these are good starting points. This leads us to the question what a social business really is. Let us first understand the key aspects of social business and how it differs from the traditional business.

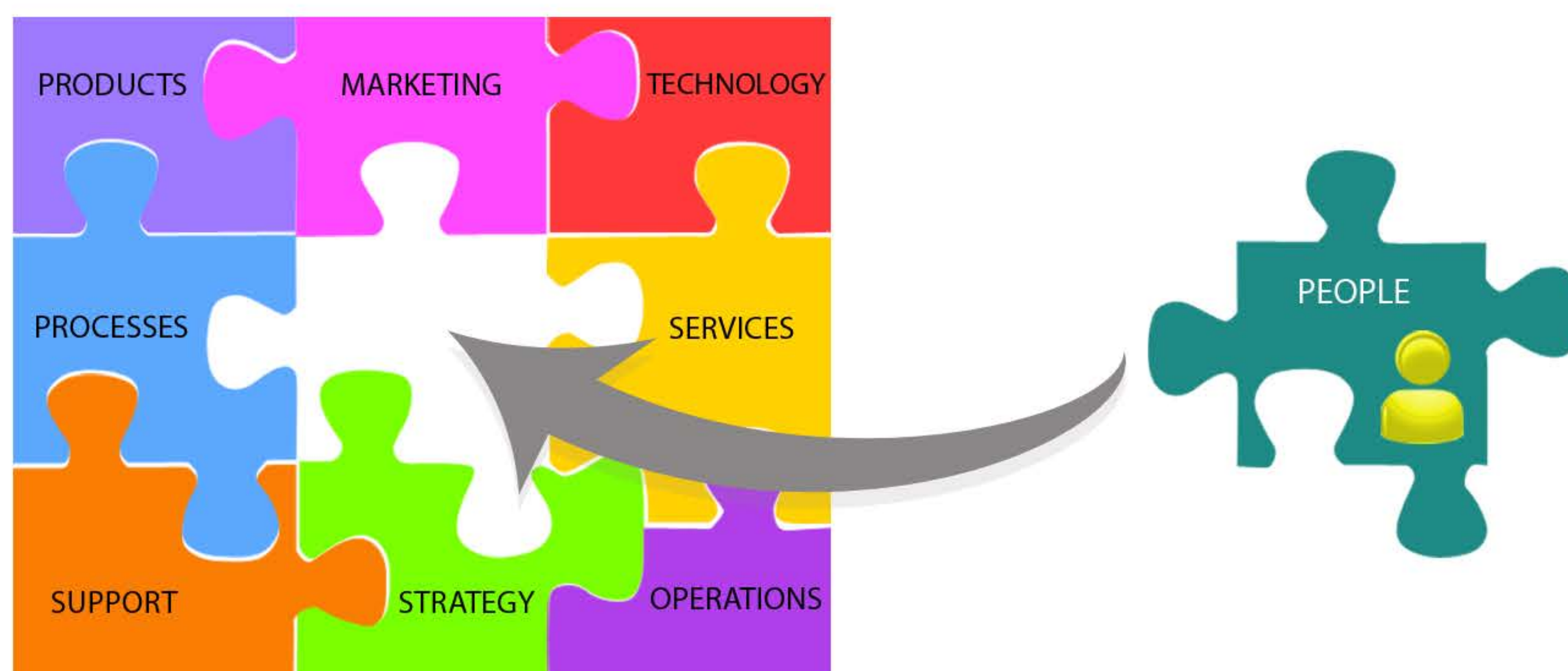
What is a social business

Social business can be defined as an organisation that tends to optimise its business strategies, operations and resources towards the 'people', both internal and external. External people here refer not just to customers and stakeholders, but also friends, fans and followers on the social and professional networks.

Tweeting occasionally or collecting Likes on your Facebook page cannot create successful social business.

Social businesses focus on putting the people's interests first. Their goals shift to engaging customers, users and visitors on social networks, influencing and empowering them to take informed purchasing decisions. And thanks to the viral reach of the social networks, the people that you can reach can include friends of friends (also known as FoF). Some would go to the extent of reaching out to the people who are in the six degrees of separation.

Put 'the people' back into your business



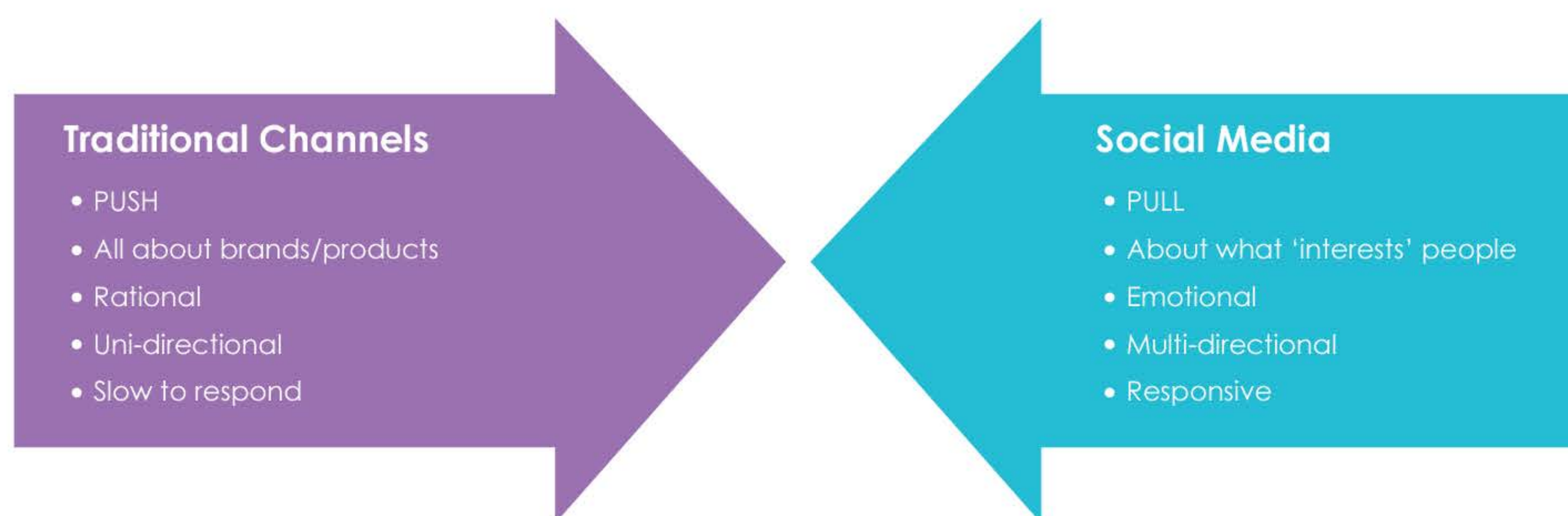
Traditionally, CTOs and CIOs take key decisions on technology and solution architecture. Thanks to the social business and the increasing focus on people dimension in businesses, CTOs have new friends. Increasingly marketing directors and CMOs too have a major role in the technology projects and products. Also in a social business, it is not just marketing department that is responsible for communications and branding. Potentially all employees can contribute to branding and marketing of the company, using suitable social networks.

Key decisions in technology projects and products are not taken by CTOs alone...increasingly Marketing persons too have a major role.

What makes a business, social business

The right social channels have to be effectively used by organisations to become social businesses. Traditional channels use push mechanism, meaning mostly they are one-way communication. Word of mouth, print advertising, Mail campaigns etc. are a few examples. Companies use the traditional channels for marketing their products and services through promotions and advertising.

Traditional vs. Social Channels

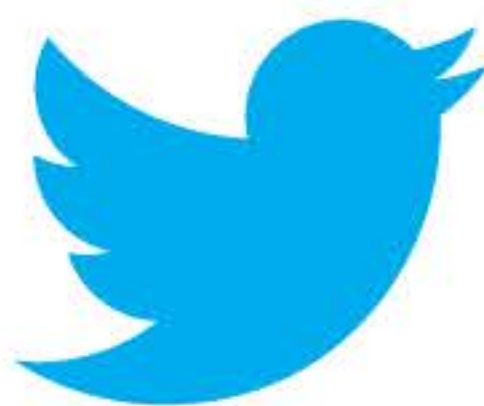


On the other hand, social channels are effective 'pull' channels, where people's interests weigh in. Public platforms like Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn etc. and customisable internal channels such as Ning are some of the popular platforms. Encouraging conversations among the people and engaging them become the primary factors here. Marketing in these channels is still possible, though done with an aim to increase brand awareness and targeted, personalised advertising.

What you can do on social media

*Find, connect and follow people
Consume, create and curate content*

The real power of social media lies in connecting with people and becoming their friend, fan or follower. Once connected, you can follow their activities on those networks and interact with them in many different ways. The trick is to find the right people to connect with, follow and be followed by them. You can find specific people based on their interests, topics, profiles and activities on the social networks.



Social media allow you to post content in the form of frequent and regular updates. These text updates can be posted typically in short and long formats. Twitter, for instance allows short message updates, up to 140 characters, called as tweets. Some others like Facebook, LinkedIn etc., allow longer text updates. Most of the social networks nowadays also allow uploading (and downloading) photos and videos.

'Follow and be followed' on the social networks!

One of the biggest factors that made social media popular is curation of content by commenting, sharing and voting. You can like or favourite others' content, share it with others. You can also add your comment on others' content. Sharing is done on Twitter, for instance, by re-tweeting the tweets posted by others.

So far you looked at the basics of a social business and understood what it takes for a business to get social. Now you have the required foundation to start building the social business. The next challenge lies in taking the first steps to get active on the right social media. You need to optimise your effort and resources to be successful with your social business initiative. Given below is a model from our Social Business Enablement framework, showing how the social media relate to building a social business.



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