



THE **thinking**
BIGGER

Thinking Bigger
Business Media Inc.

A green background featuring a network of thin yellow lines that connect several circular photographs of people. The photos include: a man in a white shirt and tie; a man in a light blue shirt; a group of people in a large hall; a woman in a white lab coat examining a patient; a person in a white lab coat standing next to a wall; a man with his hands clasped in front of him; and a silhouette of a person's head and shoulders.



Opening Doors with Keywords

The value of using keywords in social media channels.

Keywords are normally thought to be a cornerstone of search engine marketing. But are there also reasons to use keywords in social media? Yep, and here are three.

Social Media Impacts Search Engine Results

While search engines primarily look at on-site SEO and link-building as key indicators, they also consider your social media presence and interaction with friends, fans and other followers. When they see that your blog post has Facebook likes and Google +1s, and has been tweeted many times, this clearly indicates that your content is good. This encourages the search engines to rank that content.

Let's say Dave the Plumber writes a blog post about installing a bathroom in a basement. The piece is educational and well-received by his audience. They give it some love on social media.

Later, when a prospect searches the keyword "basement bathroom installation in Cincinnati," Dave has a much greater chance of appearing in the search.

While Facebook and Twitter are known as the big players, Google+ is probably the most influential when it comes to impacting search results (on Google, at least). In Inc.com's article *6 Things You Don't Know About Google+*, we learn that "active Google+ users dominate search results."

By using your keywords in your social media posts, you're signaling to the search engines exactly what keywords you're hoping to rank for.

Social Media Search

Have you been introduced to social media search yet? If not, take a peek at twitter.com/

search. It's the search engine that will allow you to "see what's happening right now."

Unlike regular search engines, the Twitter search algorithm is based less on content quality and more on when the content is added. A search for the keyword "all-star game" shows the most recent tweets from ESPN, the St. Louis Cardinals, several pro ball players and even Charlie Sheen talking about the game in Kansas City. If this subject interests me, I can follow any of these users and stay up to date on their latest tweets.

Several months ago, I was vacationing in Florida with my wife while our kids stayed home with Grandma. My wife noticed something on Facebook about an earthquake in the Midwest. What the heck? The Midwest doesn't get earthquakes!

We were a little freaked out, but couldn't find anything on Google or any of the news channels. It was late at night, and we didn't want to call and wake Grandma. So we hopped on Twitter and searched for "earthquake." We got hundreds of results from all over Oklahoma, Kansas and Missouri. Luckily, it was clear from the comedy and lighthearted attitudes of the tweets that the earthquake was nothing to worry about.

How would a business use this? To be honest, I'm not sure how Dave the Plumber would benefit. I don't know that people are using Twitter to look for bathroom remodeling just yet, but maybe a coffeehouse or pizza place could use it for people searching Twitter for "specials" or "buy one, get one free" deals. I believe that, as more people are introduced to the idea of a "what's happening right now" search engine, we'll find more and more ways to use it.

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Social Media Relationships

The last reason to use keywords in social media is so that you can find and create better online relationships. When you use keywords in your posts on LinkedIn, Facebook or Twitter, other users will often get alerted that you would be a good connection. If they use social search to look for things that interest them—Bing also has a great social media search tool at bing.com/social—your posts

will have a better chance of reaching them when you use keywords.

For example, Emily's Rent-All publishes weekly blog posts about the equipment that her company rents, including the new power lawn edger that can help you install an underground dog fence.

A friend shares this on his Facebook wall, and you see it. You've been thinking of getting a dog, but didn't want the expense of a fence. You read the article and decide to follow Emily's Rent-All.

Maybe you go through with the dog fence, maybe you don't. But now you've got a constant drip of articles from Emily on your Facebook wall. When you finally install the fence, aerate your lawn or build a deck, Emily's Rent-All is the first company that you'll consider.

Whether you're tweeting, plussing or posting to Facebook, use those keywords for which you want to be found. Whether they help you rank on the search engines, get you found on social search, or help you create relationships that may someday turn into customers, using keywords in your social media can be a very powerful strategy. ■



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