

How Important is a Social Media Strategy to an Inbound Marketing Effort?

by Andrew L. Simon

There is plenty of literature that suggests that a social media or social marketing effort is important to the execution of an Inbound Marketing campaign.

With that said, I would like to briefly present a case study that very effectively demonstrates the power of social media for your website and business development efforts.

A Consulting Client

A consulting company whose business is exclusively B2B became a [HubSpot](#) client about 18 months ago. During the first year, [Simon Associates Management Consultants](#) tried to understand all the nuances of both the company's business development strategy and how to leverage HubSpot.

We produced significant content in terms of blogs, and also developed strong calls-to-act and gated landing pages. The company already had a great email list that we utilized with targeted, nourishing email marketing, while also capturing new contacts.

Despite all of this great content marketing, we did not spend time with social media activities. Strategically, these came next. When they did, much to our delight, they added tremendous value and power to the content marketing activities.

Social Media Marketing

At the end of last year (2015), we made the decision to start to capitalize on the use of social media. This meant that we had to make a concerted effort to publish multiple messages across Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter. Fortunately, the HubSpot platform allows us to publish blogs directly to a website and then easily disperse them over all the agreed-upon social media channels.

As a result of this decision to greatly expand the consulting company's social media presence, the number of social media posts increased from 6 in the 4th quarter of last year to 742 in the 1st quarter of 2016.

Please note that the number of actual messages is somewhat less than this because of the way HubSpot tallies posts. For example, if you belong to three LinkedIn Groups, that counts as three posts. Likewise, if you tweet a message to the same hashtag three times, it counts as three

posts. The real value here is that you can quickly share your message with a wide audience with enough frequency to reach them effectively.

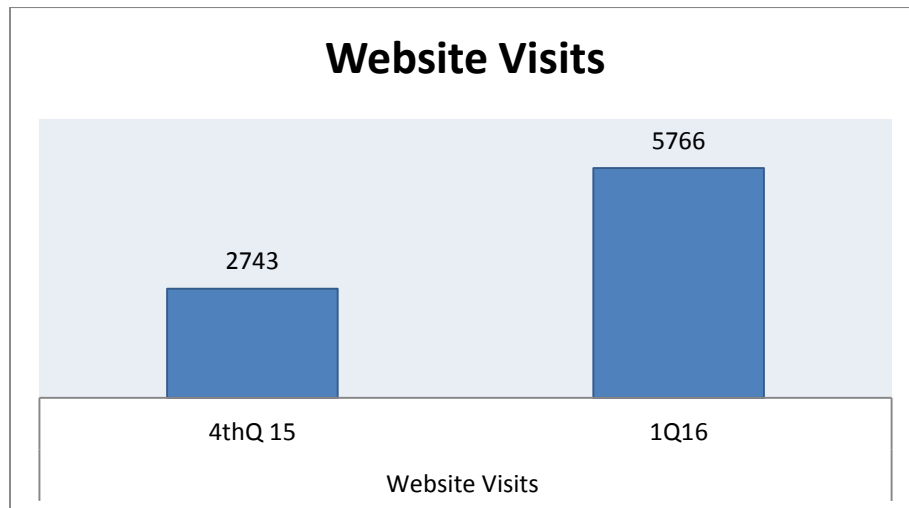
The Data Tells It All

HubSpot excels at providing meaningful data that either validates your marketing strategy or shows you where you need to make changes, which is invaluable.

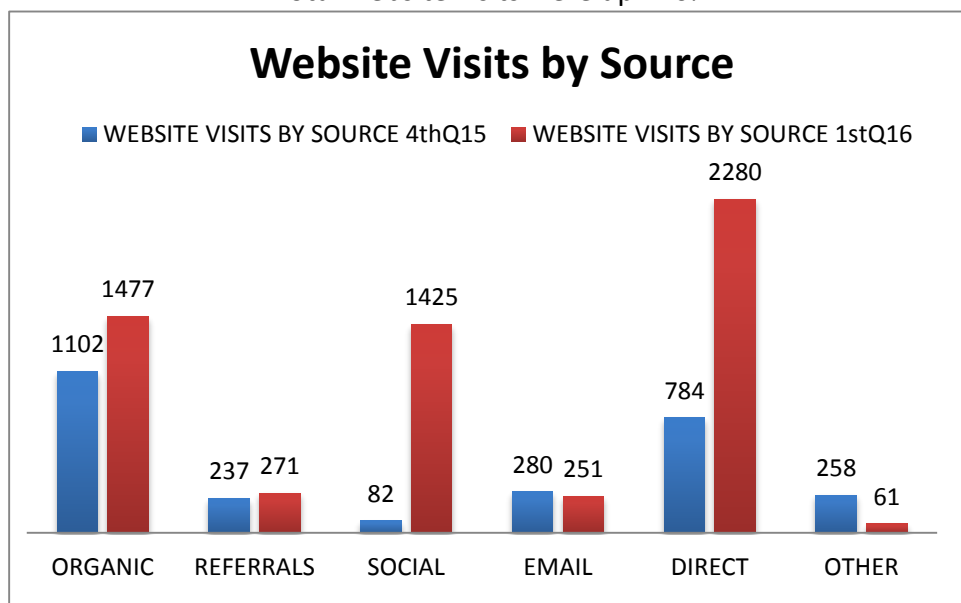
I share examples below:

1. Social Media significantly impacted site visits.

Our client's use of social media significantly enhanced website visits when comparing 1stQ 2016 to 4thQ 2015.



Total website visits were up 110%



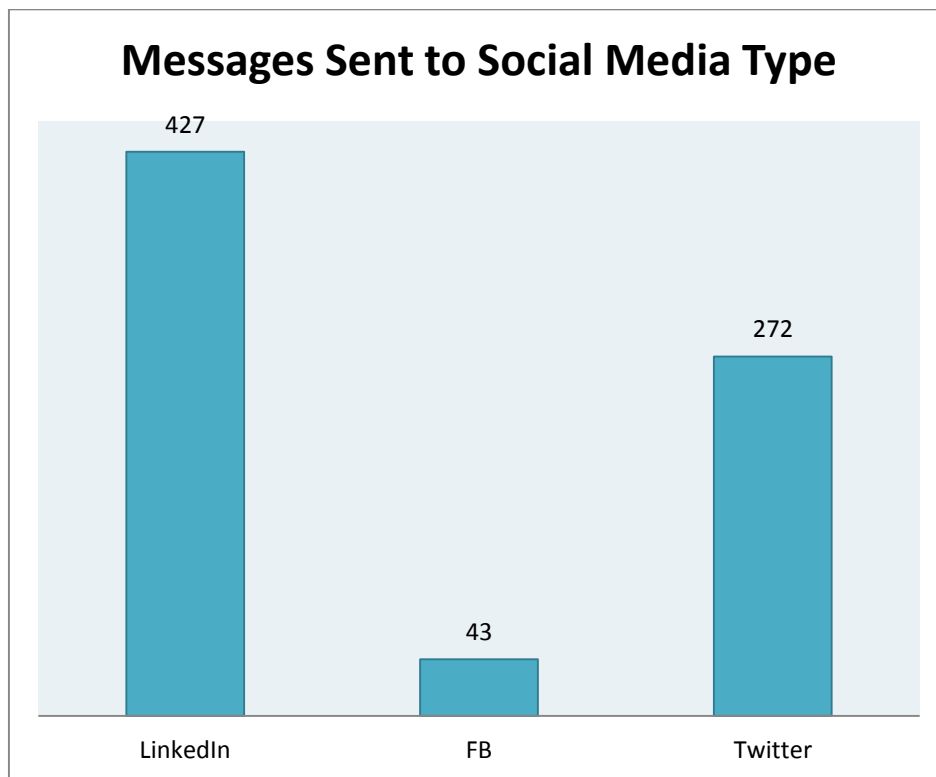
Total number of visits from social media increased dramatically from 82 to 1425, lifting organic and direct visits as well. This was over a 1600% increase.

From another perspective:

- **In the 1stQ 2016, social media accounted for 25% of the visits.** This was a dramatic increase over the 4thQ 2015 where social media only represented 3% of the website visits.
- **This represented 44% of the increase in site visits.**

2. Details of social media impact on website visits for 1stQ 2016

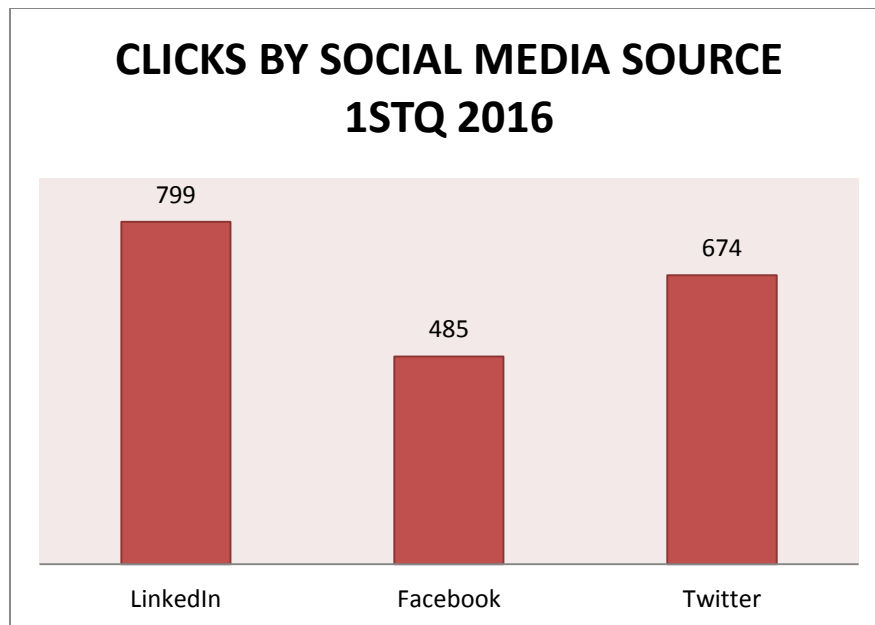
Percentage of messages by Social Media Type 1stQ 2016 (the number of messages placed on various social media sites during 1stQ 2016).



The messaging was right for the target personas, as witnessed by clicks. Furthermore, we believe that the messaging was appropriate for the client's target audience.

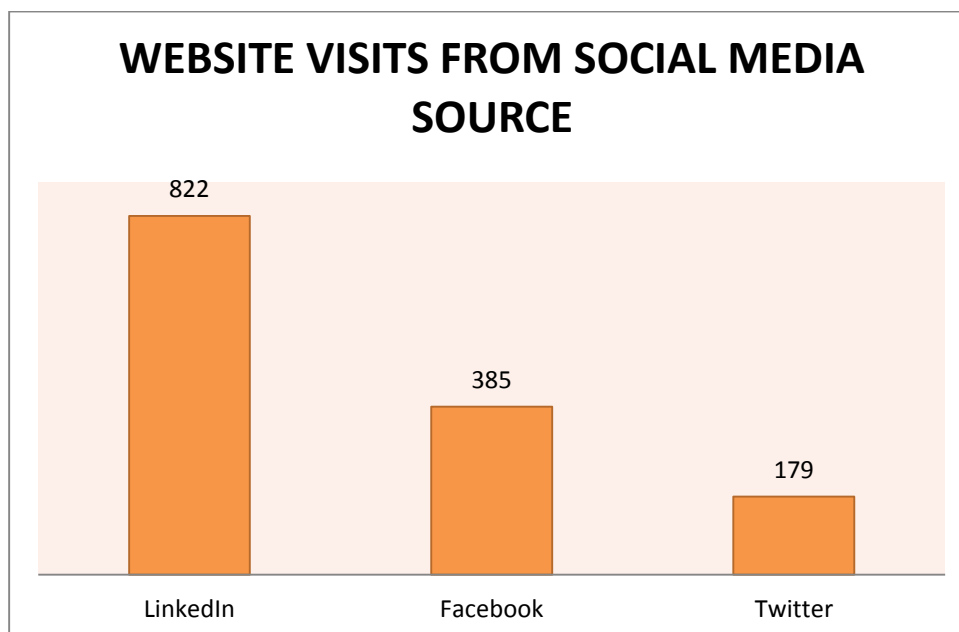
We generated over 1925 clicks, or slightly less than 3 clicks per message.

Number of clicks by social media channel:



LinkedIn appeared to be the most effective social media tools for the consulting business. However, the interplay of all the social media sources should not be underestimated.

While this appears to be intuitively correct because of the nature of the marketing business, there are several data points that suggest the importance of LinkedIn for our consulting client.



“Coefficient of efficiency”: Which social medium works best for a target persona?

As we analyzed the social media results, it at first appeared that LinkedIn was the best source of website visits. Indeed, it was a very powerful method for generating website traffic. However, to better understand the power of different social media channels, we constructed an index that we call the SAMC “Coefficient of the Efficiency of Social Media.” This index delineates how many visits are coming from how many messages. For example, we could see how Facebook with only 43 messages generated 385 visits. The index looks like this:

Facebook	8.95
LinkedIn	1.93
Twitter	0.66

What the above says is that the greatest return on effort — the efficiency of social media channels for this client — is Facebook.

So what does this all mean?

How do you design the right strategy to build your business using the tools of social media and digital or inbound marketing? You find the right buyer searching for your solution in the most effective and cost efficient way. In the old world of marketing, we might have thought that building brand visibility, such as building the impressions on LinkedIn, was highly valuable. This might, in fact, be very valuable. But from a cost-effective perspective, Facebook really met the mark.

Overall, however, based upon the data, it appears that all social media, combined, are very significant contributors to website visitors. Since the effort, via HubSpot, allows us to auto-publish directly to social media channels from blog postings, the effort is easy and the returns well worthwhile.

Simply performing social media activities without developing a meaningful social media strategy and campaign would not yield these types of results.

To execute effective Inbound Marketing, you keep these three points in mind:

1. **Personas do count.** If you do not understand who your target audience is, and if you are not writing to these personas, than you probably will not attract and drive the right people to your site.
2. **Keywords matter** as you disperse your content by way of social media. This is reflected in the types of messaging and social media outlets you employ.
3. **Hashtags are very important** to speak to the right personas with the right content.

In conclusion, social media is a very important part of your Inbound Marketing mix.

All the hard data is now before you. How could we of help? If you would like discuss with us how your company could capitalize on Inbound Marketing techniques, in particular social media, we would like to offer you a free consultation. Please [contact us!](#)

[Contact Us](#)