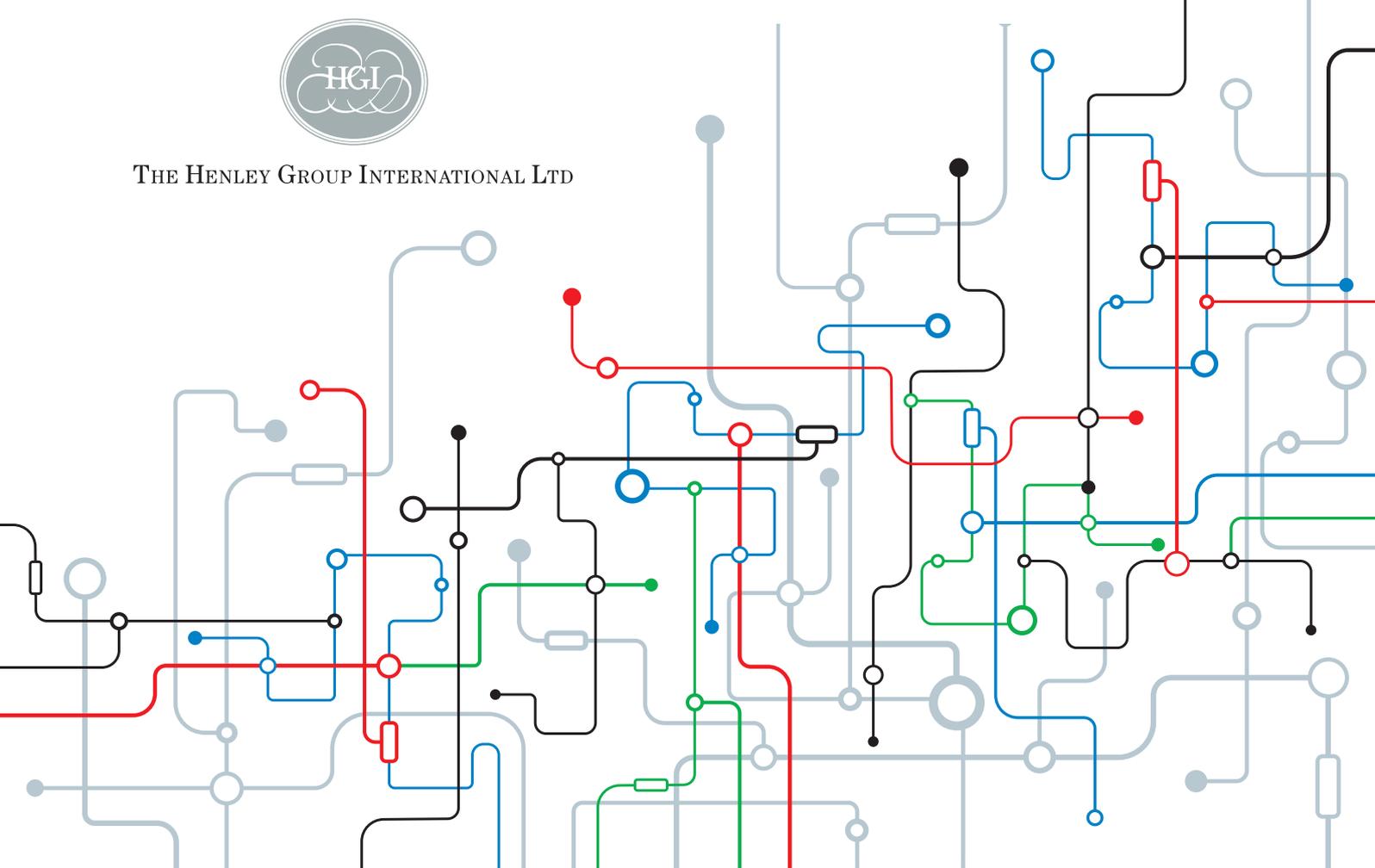


DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS: SOCIAL MEDIA FOR B2B BUSINESS

A WHITE PAPER BY THE HENLEY GROUP



THE HENLEY GROUP INTERNATIONAL LTD



WHAT DOES 'SOCIAL MEDIA' MEAN TO YOU?

Perhaps you associate social media with celebrities tweeting what they had for breakfast. Footballers complaining about refereeing decisions. Or teenagers organising parties on Facebook™.

Brand awareness, corporate reputation or the bottom line may not spring to mind.

But business is becoming increasingly active in social media. According to a recent study by KPMG*, two thirds of the businesses it spoke to were either initiating or expanding plans to use social media for sales and marketing. And 79% of businesses said their public profile had benefited from using social media.

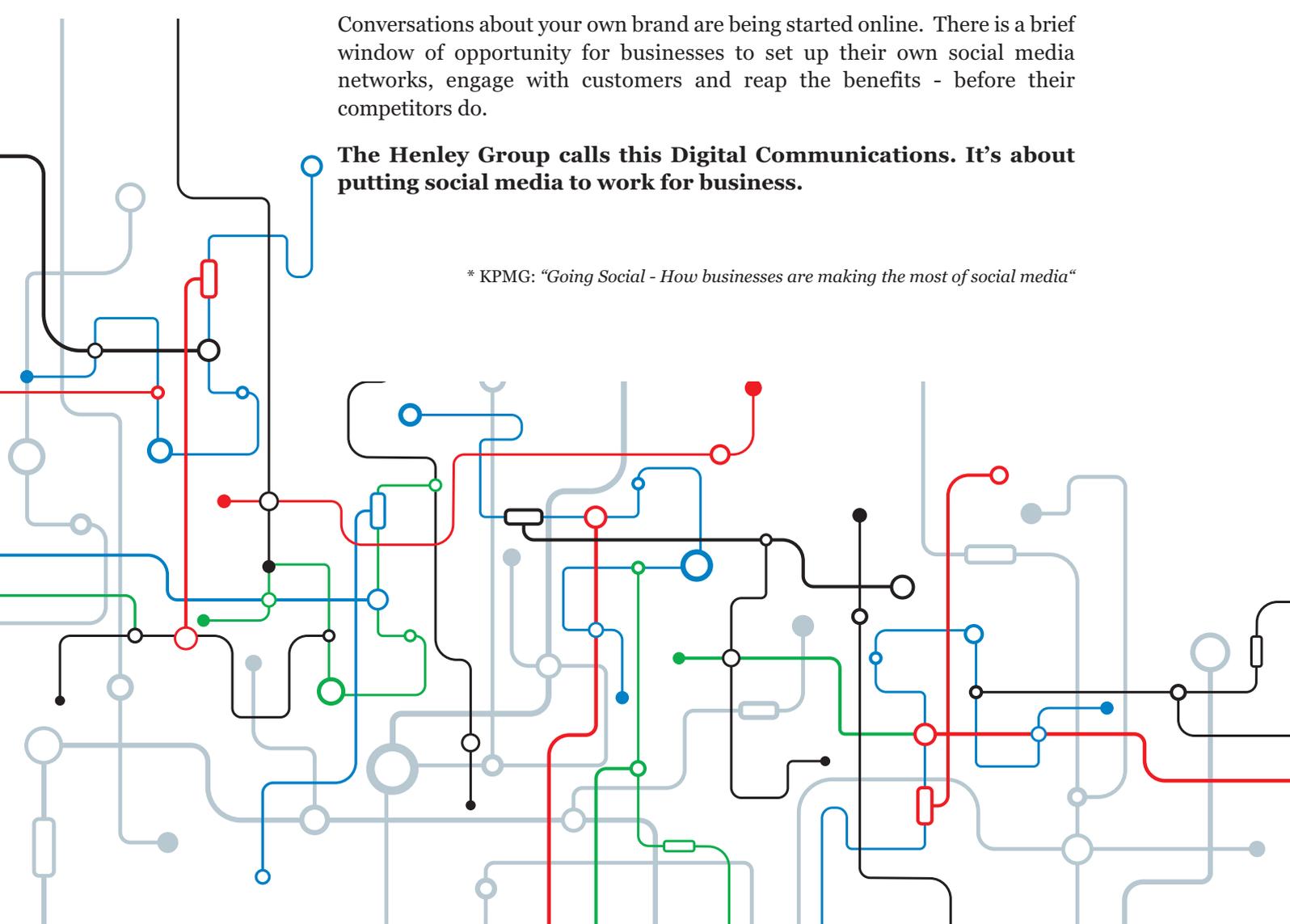
Many early adopters were well-known consumer brands. They found that their customers were already talking about their brands on Facebook, Twitter™ and other social media. Using the same tools allowed these organisations to engage consumers in conversation, learning more about them - and what they wanted.

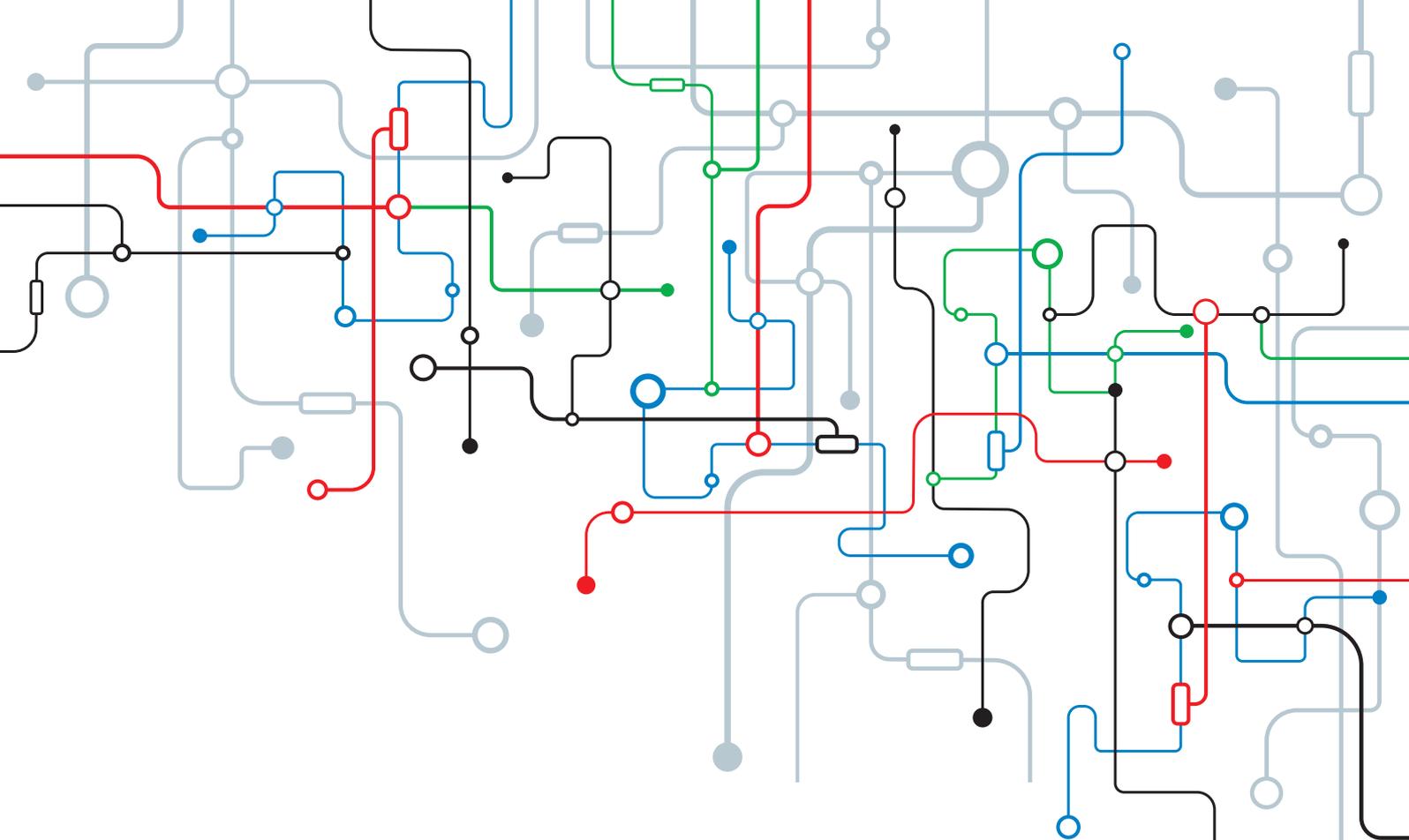
Most business to business organisations today are in a different position. They already know who their customers are. But these businesses are either not using social media - or they are not putting it to best effect.

Conversations about your own brand are being started online. There is a brief window of opportunity for businesses to set up their own social media networks, engage with customers and reap the benefits - before their competitors do.

The Henley Group calls this Digital Communications. It's about putting social media to work for business.

* KPMG: "Going Social - How businesses are making the most of social media"





Put simply, Digital Communications helps businesses communicate better with their target audiences.

It does this by adopting the social media tools embraced by individuals and the consumer brands that target them - and puts them to use in a business to business context. Taking what is often dismissed as 'frivolous' communication and turning it into a serious business tool.

Adding new social media channels into the marketing mix extends the reach of existing communications, but also helps businesses to engage deeply and profitably with entirely new audiences. This helps raise brand awareness, establish credibility and demonstrate leadership.

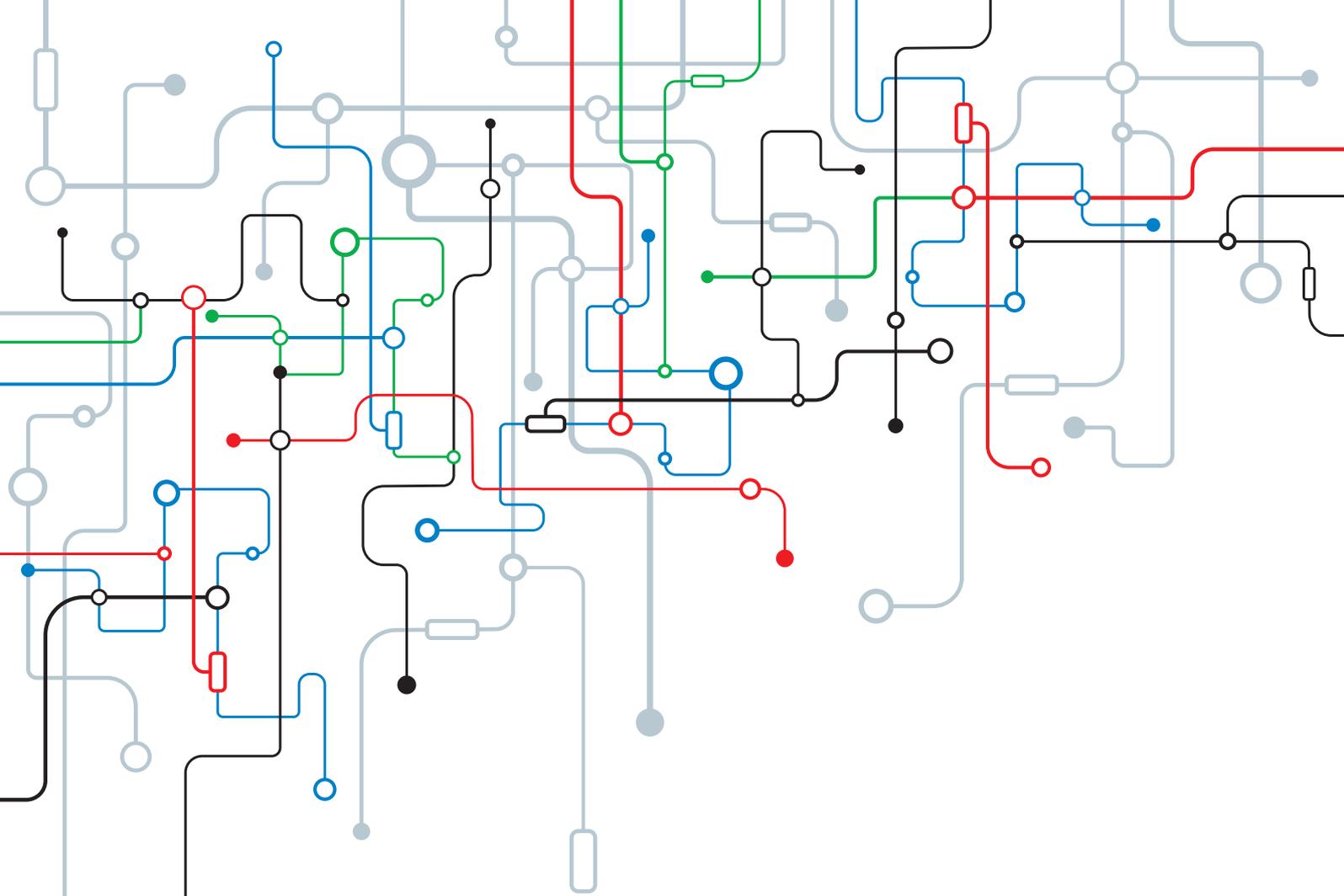
Used properly, Digital Communications can also help generate sales leads, retain customers and handle customer queries. And as more media embrace social media, businesses can better target journalists with news and announcements and identify opportunities for media coverage.

Despite the immediacy of the social channels now available, a digital communications campaign requires considerable time and effort to get right.

If it's to be done properly, tweeting can't be squeezed into an hour last thing on a Monday, nor passed down to juniors, assistants, or anyone known to use Facebook at home.

Just like all PR and marketing activity a Digital Communications campaign needs to be planned, managed and closely monitored if it is to work.

**WHAT CAN DIGITAL
COMMUNICATIONS
DO FOR YOUR BUSINESS?**



On a day to day basis digital communications means generating messages for dissemination across social media channels such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+™ and LinkedIn™. Naturally, this activity should be aligned with PR, advertising and other marketing campaigns.

Messages being disseminated must be 'content-rich'. So they might provide links to external sources, reference topical subjects, feature video, audio or interactive collateral.

They need to be written specifically for the medium in mind - for example, using keywords and tags that will get the message to the widest possible audience and drive traffic to the website.

So, while simply broadcasting business news is important, developing interactive and informative content is crucial.

Monitoring social media channels to identify opportunities to engage, comment and guide conversations with key audiences helps achieve this. Organising live Q&A sessions, promoting events and garnering customer feedback through social media also help businesses engage more fully with online audiences.

WHAT DOES DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS ACTUALLY INVOLVE?

HOW DO YOU GET STARTED?

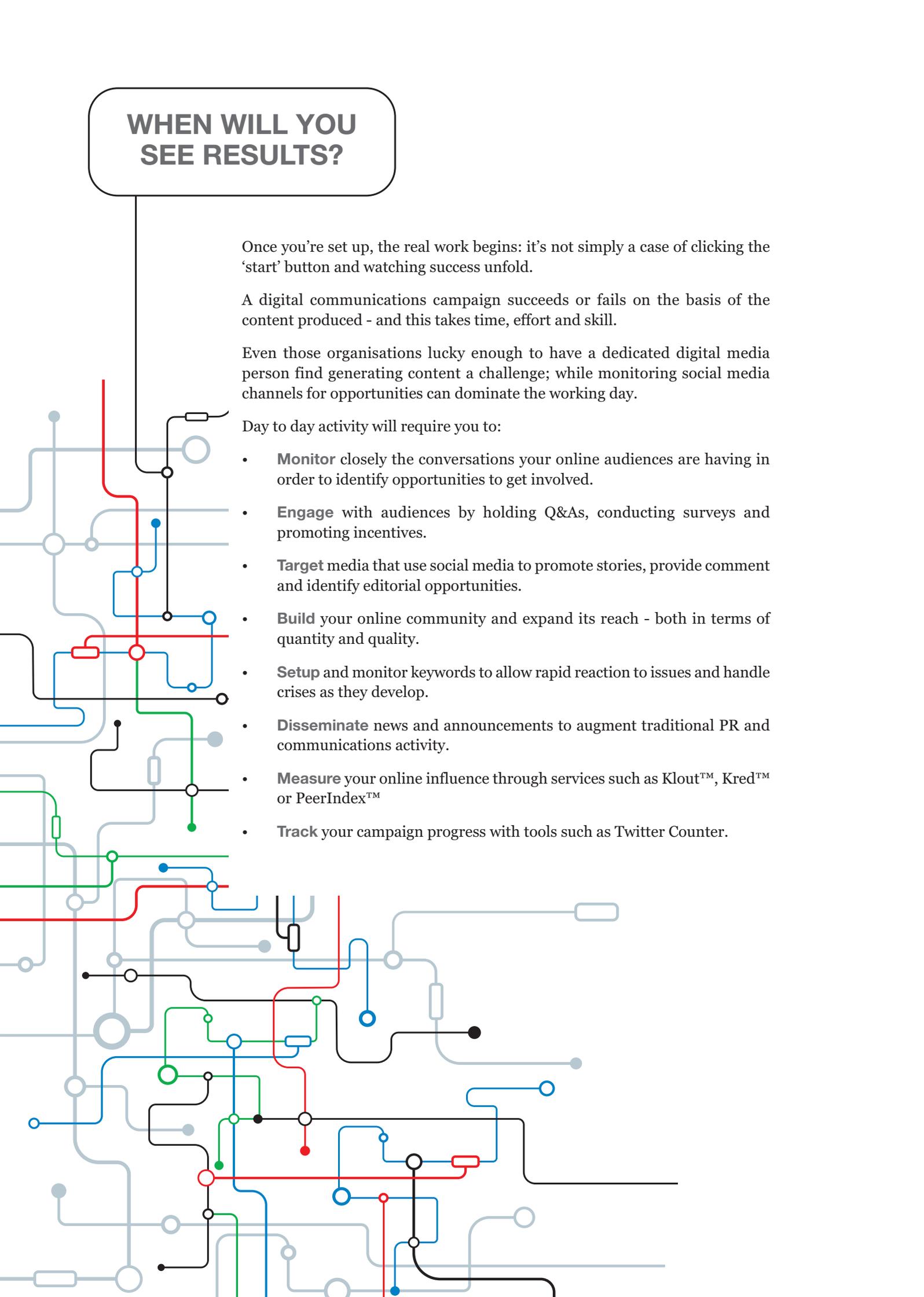
Getting up and running requires more than simply opening a Twitter account. The right framework for activity must be established, audiences must be developed and responsibilities have to be confirmed.

Above all, the strategic purpose of the campaign must be clearly defined. What must it achieve and how can results be measured?

Here's ten steps to get started:

- **Design** a Digital Communications strategy that meets your objectives and integrate it with PR and marketing activity.
- **Develop** a social media policy to govern internal use and provide guidance on how to use the channels.
- **Identify** advocates within the organisation to engage with and let them take a stake in digital communications.
- **Research** and identify customers, prospects and other stakeholders that will be invited to join the community.
- **Produce** a message platform to confirm key messages and strategic positions on issues and topics that might arise.
- **Establish** an editorial panel to guide the production of content and ensure the consistency of campaign messages.
- **Agree** on campaign metrics and develop dashboards that mesh with overall business goals.
- **Setup** the social media channels best suited to the needs of the specific business.
- **Help** to get audiences online, through white-labelled guides to social media, invites and incentives.
- **Promote** social media channels to internal and external audiences to build a following.

WHEN WILL YOU SEE RESULTS?



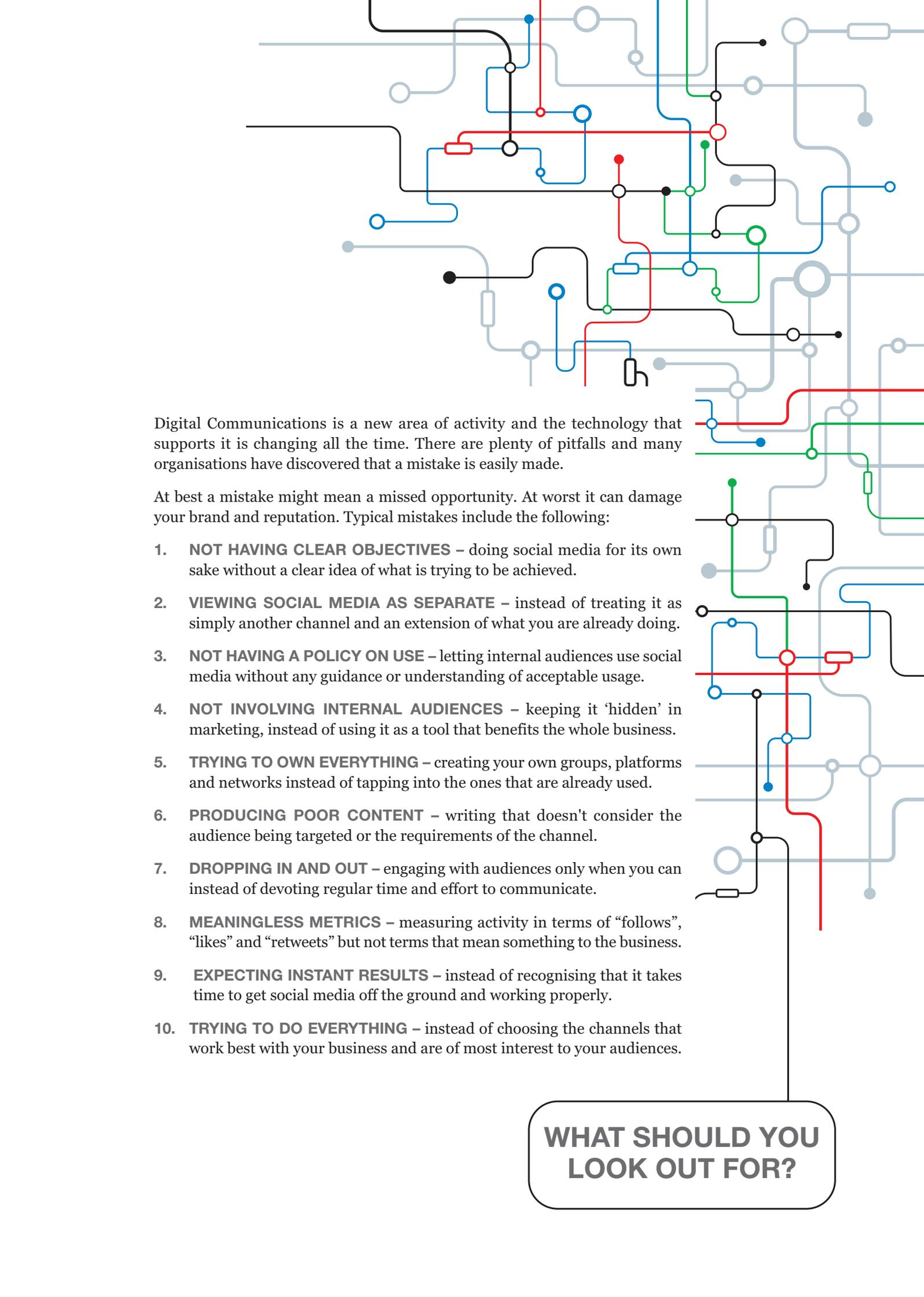
Once you're set up, the real work begins: it's not simply a case of clicking the 'start' button and watching success unfold.

A digital communications campaign succeeds or fails on the basis of the content produced - and this takes time, effort and skill.

Even those organisations lucky enough to have a dedicated digital media person find generating content a challenge; while monitoring social media channels for opportunities can dominate the working day.

Day to day activity will require you to:

- **Monitor** closely the conversations your online audiences are having in order to identify opportunities to get involved.
- **Engage** with audiences by holding Q&As, conducting surveys and promoting incentives.
- **Target** media that use social media to promote stories, provide comment and identify editorial opportunities.
- **Build** your online community and expand its reach - both in terms of quantity and quality.
- **Setup** and monitor keywords to allow rapid reaction to issues and handle crises as they develop.
- **Disseminate** news and announcements to augment traditional PR and communications activity.
- **Measure** your online influence through services such as Klout™, Kred™ or PeerIndex™
- **Track** your campaign progress with tools such as Twitter Counter.



Digital Communications is a new area of activity and the technology that supports it is changing all the time. There are plenty of pitfalls and many organisations have discovered that a mistake is easily made.

At best a mistake might mean a missed opportunity. At worst it can damage your brand and reputation. Typical mistakes include the following:

1. **NOT HAVING CLEAR OBJECTIVES** – doing social media for its own sake without a clear idea of what is trying to be achieved.
2. **VIEWING SOCIAL MEDIA AS SEPARATE** – instead of treating it as simply another channel and an extension of what you are already doing.
3. **NOT HAVING A POLICY ON USE** – letting internal audiences use social media without any guidance or understanding of acceptable usage.
4. **NOT INVOLVING INTERNAL AUDIENCES** – keeping it ‘hidden’ in marketing, instead of using it as a tool that benefits the whole business.
5. **TRYING TO OWN EVERYTHING** – creating your own groups, platforms and networks instead of tapping into the ones that are already used.
6. **PRODUCING POOR CONTENT** – writing that doesn't consider the audience being targeted or the requirements of the channel.
7. **DROPPING IN AND OUT** – engaging with audiences only when you can instead of devoting regular time and effort to communicate.
8. **MEANINGLESS METRICS** – measuring activity in terms of “follows”, “likes” and “retweets” but not terms that mean something to the business.
9. **EXPECTING INSTANT RESULTS** – instead of recognising that it takes time to get social media off the ground and working properly.
10. **TRYING TO DO EVERYTHING** – instead of choosing the channels that work best with your business and are of most interest to your audiences.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU
LOOK OUT FOR?**

A GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Social Media

Web-based technology that allows individuals, organisations and communities to generate, distribute and exchange messages and interactive content on shared networking platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn. Messages are accessed over the internet and, increasingly, on smartphones and tablets.

Blog / Microblog

A personal or themed journal published on the world wide web consisting of entries ("posts") displayed in chronological order, typically expressing the interests or expertise of the writer. A microblog is a variation of the blog in that posts are shorter and typically involve the sharing of brief sentences, images or links to interesting, newsworthy or entertaining content on the internet.

Web 2.0

A selection of web features encountered on the internet that allow users to develop, discuss, collaborate on and share content - in contrast to early stages of the world wide web where content was designed and presented for passive consumption only.

Keywords

Words, phrases, tags and terms that are easily recognised by search engines, allowing for the easy retrieval of messages and helping content reach a relevant and large audience.

LinkedIn

A business-specific networking website that allows individuals and organisations to develop business connections and engage with internal audiences, customers and sales channels.

Twitter

A 'microblogging' social media platform launched in 2006 that allows users to send 140-character messages, or "tweets". Each tweet is posted to a website where it can be read by anyone and sent directly to those Twitter users who have chosen to "follow" you and can "retweet" (forward) your message, or reply to it directly.

Facebook

A social networking service launched in 2004 which provides a web-based platform for users to identify friends, exchange messages, make comments, demonstrate their "likes", and join organisational or common-interest groups.

Google+

Described as Google's rival to Facebook, Google+ is a social networking platform launched in 2011 which allows users to share updates, messages and internet content amongst "circles" of individuals defined by their relationship to the user.

YouTube™

Launched in 2005 and now owned by Google, YouTube is a video-sharing website which allows users to upload, view, share and comment on videos.

Klout™ / Kred™ / PeerIndex™

Some of a wide range of measurement tools that track the online influence of a particular individual or brand. Other tools, such as Twitter Counter, provide statistics on the reach and extent of specific social media activity.

The Henley Group is not a social media agency. It's far more.

It has thirty years' experience of corporate communications and media relations for organisations such as Siemens, Toshiba, Hitachi, Pitney Bowes and NEC. This experience has made it particularly skilful in turning complex business messages into compelling stories that appeal to B2B audiences. It is adept at extracting the business benefits from the most technical of products and making these tangible and understood.

This means it is uniquely placed to undertake digital communications, often as a direct extension of PR and marketing activity carried out on behalf of clients. The Henley Group's background and experience guarantees a realistic, measured approach to social media. It is agnostic about the technology, only recommending the channels that experience has shown lend themselves for B2B use. It knows not to push 'fluffy' consumer stories onto business audiences. And its expert writers combine technical knowledge with an understanding that what works on paper won't automatically work in digital form.

Whether you need help setting up a Digital Communications campaign or would like someone to manage it on an ongoing basis, call James Tate on 01491 570 970 and see how the Henley Group can put social media to work for your business.