**Social Media Recap of 2013 and Social Media Predictions for 2014**

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Lucky 13, right? It may be more than luck that caused social media adoption rates to continue to grow among brands, small businesses and individuals alike.

Here’s a quick recap we’ve prepared for the end of the year Internet Advisor Show on WJR. What social media trends do you remember from 2013? What predictions are you most looking forward to in the new year? We’d love to hear from you!

**For Brands**

* In 2013, 54% of all marketers have acquired a customer through Facebook. YouTube and Twitter come in second and third respectively as social networks that also allow brands to meet and do business with individuals they connect with. *(Source: DigitalSherpa.com)*
* Social media use during the SuperBowl was 3x higher than in 2012. 2013 was the year of the famous social media win by Oreo for reacting quickly enough during the power outage with a tweet that said, “Power Out? No problem. You can still dunk in the dark” *(Source: GibbonsDigital.com)*

**For Small Businesses**

* From a Q3 report, total reviews on Yelp’s sites, where consumers rate and leave comments about local businesses such as coffee shops, restaurants, dentists and plumbers, increased 41 percent in the second quarter to more than 42.5 million, while average monthly unique visitors grew 38 percent from a year earlier to about 108 million. Also, about 59 percent of Yelp searches originated on mobile. *(Source: Bloomberg.com)*
* We saw small businesses motivated to use social media more around peak retail times of the year such as #smallbizsat or #shopsmall (Marking Small Business Saturday on November 30, 2013)

**For Individuals**

* The demographics are quickly changing on social media. For instance, the fastest-growing group of Twitter users is the audience 55 to 64-years of age, while Facebook and Google+ see the most growth from the audience 45 to 54-years of age. *(Source: Aljazeera.com)*
* Photo-based social networks like Instagram and Snapchat, still have very young user bases. *(Source: Aljazeera.com)*

**Social Media Predictions for 2014**

Social media in its many forms – networking, listening, engaging and having conversations – is teed up to be stronger than ever in 2014. Here are some predictions for the New Year.

**For Brands**

* In 2014, it is critical for brands to remember that behind every social media post is a consumer and social media provides a channel for them to interact with their customers. This includes creating content for them, listening to them and providing customer service through sites like Twitter, YouTube and Facebook to name a few. It’s up to the brands to make it a seamless experience for their customers, which can result in a significant market share over their competitors.
* Personal opinion: I am much more likely to do business with large brands that I can access their customer service department via phone, web and via social.

**For Small Businesses**

* In 2013, we learned that 65% of time spent on social networks happens on mobile device (Source: Mashable.com); therefore, it’s critically important for small businesses to own their presence on location-based user review sites like Yelp.
* Additionally, despite limited resources, small businesses should not shy away from dedicating some of their marketing budget to paid ads on social media. It can be challenging for small businesses to keep up their organic social presences on sites like Google+, Pinterest and Instagram and YouTube; however, we will see more and more paid ad opportunities on networks like Facebook and Twitter to target customers based on their geographic location. Time to cancel those YellowPage ads and get more bang for your buck via social.

**For Individuals**

* According to FortuneTech.com, 2014 is the year your boss will learn to tweet. Gone is the day where professionals can simply hide behind the excuse, “I’m just not tech-savvy,” as the reason to not leverage social media for themselves. More and more jobs outside of the marketing and sales departments are looking for social media candidates and the best way to advance one’s own career is to proactively arm yourself with the right skills.