

# Internet News & Notes

## Social Media Provides Opportunities For Small Business

(NAPSA)—In days past, many people associated social media—including such Web sites as MySpace, Twitter and LinkedIn, as well as personal blogs—with texting teens and souped-up personal pages. But there's a host of new uses emerging; small businesses are beginning to leverage social media to connect with customers, cultivate new relationships and deliver personal marketing messages that resonate more deeply with their audiences.

“Our Comcast small- and medium-sized business customers are using their high-speed Internet connections to harness this technology to create custom messages and fulfill their customers' and potential customers' needs like never before,” says Kevin O'Toole, Vice President of Business Services at Comcast Business Services. “Social media also has the added benefit of helping a business manage its reputation and create additional value, which goes a long way toward establishing trust in a business.”

### E-mail Marketing

Perhaps one of the sharpest tools in a marketing toolkit is permission-based e-mail marketing. Not only is it cost effective, but it's highly targeted. A recent study reported that e-mail marketing enjoys an 11.5 percent response rate versus .55 percent for online Web site banner ads. E-mail marketing allows businesses to personalize their messages and use the medium to engage and educate an audience.

### Podcasting and Blogging

Some people enjoy hearing or watching their information. Some people better absorb material by reading. Either way, podcasting and blogging are highly personal ways to connect with an audience.



**By using all aspects of the Internet, small businesses can reach a greater consumer base.**

While they are fairly easy to set up and execute, they can be part of an overall marketing strategy that allows a business to advance its message.

### A Useful Company Web Site

While social media tools are getting a lot of attention, for most companies, their Web sites are still the main place to greet, educate and interact with customers. Today's buyers often make the Internet their first stop on shopping trips. As a result, site performance and usability are critical.

“Web sites are a balance between science and art,” adds Kevin O'Toole. “But what separates a good Web site from a great one is the addition of something special.”

Businesses can consider the addition of an RSS (Real Simple Syndication) feed to keep users up to date or use flash technology to help tell a story. No matter what, a well-thought-out site that is logically designed and artfully crafted will help build credibility and keep customers engaged.

For more information, visit [www.comcast.com/business](http://www.comcast.com/business) or call 1-800-316-1619.