



Why Every Social Media Manager Should Be Under 25

by [Cathryn Sloane](#) | University of Iowa

Posted in: [News and Politics](#), [Voices](#)

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Facebook began in 2004. Twitter kicked off in 2006. I, along with everyone else in my generation, can remember exactly who told me about these endeavors, the perfect combination of confusion and excitement I felt when signing up for them, and the original layouts they exhibited. We were teenagers in high school at the time, a period when we were young enough to be the most impressionable yet old enough to grasp an understanding. Though we had absolutely no idea how insanely huge social media would grow, we were immediately along for the ride.



Cathryn Sloane

You might argue that everyone, regardless of age, was along for the ride, or at least everyone under the age of 30. I'm not saying they weren't, but we spent our adolescence growing up with social media. We were around long enough to see how life worked without it but had it thrown upon us at an age where the ways to make the best/correct use of it came most naturally to us. No one else will ever be able to have as clear an understanding of these services, no matter how much they may think they do.

The key is that we learned to use social media socially before professionally, rather than vice versa or simultaneously. After all, it is called *social* media; the seemingly obvious importance of incorporating comforting social aspects into professional usage seems to go over several companies' heads. To many people in the generations above us, Facebook and Twitter are just the latest ways of getting messages out there to the public, that also happen to be the best.

The specificity of the ways in which the method should be used is usually beyond them, however. The typically tired commercial statements or aggressively slang-imitating phrases companies tend to use on their sites do not match the witty, honest, energetic atmosphere these social media outlets offer.

The truth is, regardless of age, some people have a better handle on social media than others. But every generation has changes in history that define them, and social media happens to be one of those for mine. I do commend the way companies (and basically the entire population) have jumped on the social media bandwagon and recognized that *it is* the best way to connect with people nowadays. Yet, every time I see

a job posting for a Social Media Manager/Associate/etc. and find the employer is looking for five to ten years of direct experience, I wonder why they don't realize the candidates who are in fact best suited for the position actually aren't old enough to have that much experience.

As time has gone on, the age groups jumping onto these sites have gradually grown older – and frightfully younger as well. Sixth-graders who are now creating their Facebook profiles know nothing other than Timeline, and adults in their 40's who are tweeting with their iPhone apps have no idea that the old way to do it was by texting 40404. The mere fact that my generation has been up close and personal with all these developments over the years should make clear enough that we are the ones who can best predict, execute, and utilize the finest developments to come.

ALSO: [A response from NGJ's top Editors](#); AND [Dear NextGen: A Rebuttal From the Social Media Old Folks](#)



Cathryn Sloane

Cathryn Sloane is a '12 graduate from The University of Iowa with a B.A. in English and a concentration in Creative Nonfiction Writing. She hails from St. Louis, Missouri and has also written for USA TODAY College.

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Peggy Gartin · San Diego, California

By my calculations, Catherine, you have about 4 years to establish yourself in a social media career, if that's what you want, before winking out into insignificance (by your own admission). But, strangely enough, you just alienated every hiring manager you're likely to encounter by calling them old and out-of-touch. You also made sweeping statements that any debate team member can see are based on lazy thinking. And, to top it off, you've either ignored or never experienced a corporate HR seminar that deals with ageism in the workplace, so rather than looking qualified and hireable, you look like a big, fat, walking liability.

My goodness. How will you make it through the 40 years of career you'll need to plow through after 25?

You'd better hope us old geezers lapse into senility quickly so we don't remember that you wrote this article.

Reply · 826 · Like · Follow Post · July 20 at 7:28pm



Sondra Santos Drahos · [Subscribe](#) · Social Media Manager at Mandala / Earth Aware

Well, said Peggy!

Reply · 32 · Like · July 20 at 7:29pm



Dianne Star

What Sondra said, well said indeed!



Reply · 21 · Like · July 20 at 7:30pm



Kristin Beatham · San Francisco, California

I love you. Seriously...after reading this I would quite possibly make out with you. In a friendly way of course. Just sayin'.

Reply · 43 · Like · July 20 at 7:30pm

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Peter Meyers

So, by that argument, once social media is replaced by the next big thing, everyone your age should be unemployed and replaced by the generation that grew up with that technology. Given the pace of change in the tech. industry right now, that gives you a career of maybe 5 years, if I'm being generous.

I'm 42, and I've built my entire business (a respectable, 6-figure consulting firm) on social media, especially Twitter. What's more - I love what I do, and I do it on my own terms (working from home with my 2-year-old daughter). If that's doing it wrong, then I plan to keep doing it wrong.

Reply · 676 · Like · Follow Post · July 20 at 1:25pm



Melissa Fach · Top Commenter · Managing Editor at Search Engine Journal

I thought I was smart at 25. I am much smarter now.

Reply · 246 · Like · July 20 at 1:42pm



Meg Geddes · Subscribe · Works at Netmeg, Inc.

Linkbait. And a ridiculous premise.

Reply · 110 · Like · July 20 at 1:46pm



Daniel Swensen · Works at Notice LLC Search Engine Marketing

Let's make all CEOs 15, since youth apparently imparts magical powers.

Reply · 161 · Like · July 20 at 2:35pm

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Peter Shankman · Subscribe · Top Commenter · Vice President at Vocus · 95,167 subscribers

I no longer wish to live on this planet.

Reply · 290 · Like · Follow Post · July 20 at 8:50pm



Dan Schawbel · Subscribe · South Boston, Massachusetts · 20,553 subscribers

What about us 28 year olds ;)

Reply · 46 · Like · July 20 at 8:52pm



Joe Sickles · Chicago, Illinois

There's that sense of entitlement we've come to love from this generation.

Reply · 266 · Like · July 20 at 8:52pm



Ns Grody · Columbia

this explain a lot!!

Reply · 3 · Like · July 20 at 8:54pm

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Daniel Swensen · Works at Notice LLC Search Engine Marketing

Cool, I grew up playing a lot of video games, can I be CEO of Sony? Since my teenage years granted me mystical understanding somehow.

Reply · 243 · Like · Follow Post · July 20 at 2:38pm



Jeff Couturier



John S. ...

Liking this, not for the article itself, but for your on-target commentary.

Reply · 18 · Like · July 20 at 4:51pm



Daniel Davis

Fuck social media managers. Nothing but overpaid marketing morons. I like what Bill Hicks had to say about marketers:

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gDW_Hj2K0wo

Reply · 16 · Like · July 20 at 5:15pm



Edmund Kaye · Canton, Georgia

Bill was the man, i know what this video is before clicking the link!

Reply · 3 · Like · July 20 at 10:13pm

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Miranda Miller · [Subscribe](#) · 114 subscribers

At 35, you will look back at this post and laugh at how young and foolish you were. I'm 30+ and I didn't miss the social media boat simply because it didn't start while I was in high school. Newsflash: people out of high school still used social media as it was intended from the earliest days. These people were often already well established in their careers - those in marketing saw the potential for its use in advertising. It was not 15 yr olds who discovered this.

This post is silly, plain and simple. There are going to be exceptional social media managers at 20, 30, 40 and beyond. Age really has nothing to do with it, except some might actually argue that while younger SMMs are hip and fun, they lack the business experience to properly and accurately reflect a company in its best light. One might even say they haven't yet developed the critical thinking skills to answer tough business questions posed via social on the fly (which is underscored for me, personally, by the lack of critical thinking in this post by one of the so-called "experts").

Reply · 235 · Like · [Follow Post](#) · July 20 at 3:53pm



Melissa Fach · Top Commenter · Managing Editor at Search Engine Journal

So are you saying if this chick shows up at the next conference you won't be buying her a drink?

Reply · 10 · Like · July 20 at 6:43pm



Miranda Miller · [Subscribe](#) · 114 subscribers

Well I don't know, is she old enough yet? She may have to come up to Quebec ;)

Reply · 25 · Like · July 20 at 6:46pm



Melissa Fach · Top Commenter · Managing Editor at Search Engine Journal

Awesome...

Reply · 2 · Like · July 20 at 6:52pm

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