

Reading 2

Skills:

- Details
- Author's purpose
- Vocabulary in context
- Understand referents
- Associate information

Getting started: Have you ever thought of creating a social network? What kind of social network would it be?

HOW TO CREATE A POWERFUL SOCIAL NETWORK PLATFORM



How did Mark Zuckerberg change the world? He built a global community that brings people closer together. Mark's vision of community opened a door to many variations of social media network platforms that today exist such as Twitter or Instagram. Today, Facebook has 2 billion monthly users,

Instagram 1 billion users, and Twitter 330 million users worldwide. Mark Zuckerberg's work is important because he had one brilliant idea that greatly impacted the humanity. Other social media spaces were also created because their CEOs were smart enough to recognize a good opportunity at the right time. Nowadays, building a social network website **from scratch** is a much easier process than before, and it can be done quickly by following certain suggestions.

Consequently, we have compiled a list of 8 steps that you need to follow in this process:

1. Identify your community

If you don't want to lose time and money, you need to identify your community. The process of identification needs to be done in the initial stage. A social network is created to meet certain needs of the population. Identifying preferences and dislikes of your community will help you understand the psychological factors that affect them as consumers and what you can do to get their attention. Sometimes the need for what you are offering won't exist on the market, that's why collecting demographics and psychographics data will give you the power to create that need.

2. Define the characteristics and functions

The definition of the **features** and functions of your network is tightly related to the identification of your community. What your community wants and needs is important to create the features of your social network website. What do you want your users to do? You need to think about categories such as user functions, administrative functions, or advertising. You should define the type of content that will circulate, what they can post, and how they will register. There are a lot of things to be considered at this phase.

3. Choose the right technology

Identifying the features and functions of your social media network will determine the platform where you can create your own network. Evaluating technology is something that must be done by professionals. Hiring a consultant to help you compare tools is the best solution. It will save you time and money. If you choose to do it by yourself, then you have to be careful and analyze all the options you have. You can apply different **CMS** such as Ning, Drupal, Ruby on Rails, or .Net. You can also check existent social networking platforms and what technologies they use. This learning process will help you understand various issues and opportunities for your social media network.

4. A must have structure

Experts say that certain general and important rules apply for building all web pages, and **these** must be considered when designing your platform because you are trying to engage users in social activity and keep them longer on your site. There are three significant aspects that you have to incorporate if you want your social media network to be successful and profitable:

- Customer service – Working along with a **hosting company** can change your life. They will deal with technical issues and any other issue related to your platform.
- Security – Use reliable security systems that will make your users feel safe without worrying about privacy intrusion and data **leaks**.
- Scalability – When you start building a social network you have to consider how much it is going to grow. Your social media platform has to be able to expand easily and quickly as many more users join it.

5. Design Activity Stream

Nowadays, **activity streams** are the center of every social media website. The fascination people have with their friend's activity is real. We want to know what they are doing, how they are feeling every moment of the day. Not developing quality activity stream can affect the attractiveness of your social network. This is the focal point behind the success of launching a social network. You can use Joomla's plug ins or Drupal's activity stream module that accomplishes this very well. In this way, you can always see the comments, likes and shares, which are shown in your news feed. You can make publications in the form of tweets or posts, and decide what to show in your activity feed, and who can see your updates.

6. Create Status Update Features

Status updates are crucial. Every social media user wants to express their feelings and thoughts anytime of the day. You need to design the perfect tools that will make the status updates an easy experience. Status updates are incredibly addicting. If this feature is not easy to use, users will abandon your social media platform immediately. In other words, interaction with other users is everything. There are a lot of **open-source** platforms you can use for developing quality status update features.

7. Quality Viewing Data options

You also need to create features that will increase the visibility of the content on your social media platform. Remember, users will see only what you allow them to see. Do you have enough data viewing options available? If the answer is no, think about what your users will have access to. Is it about popular upcoming stories, popular stories in the last 24 hours, popular stories in the last 7 days, etc.? Remember when Facebook launched their timeline features? Everyone was fascinated by the fact that they could access history data so easily, with just one click. The data viewing features must be easy to use and accessible. Additionally, everyone has different preferences, so allowing people to access and adapt their experience is a big plus and will keep them coming back again and again to your social network platform.

8. You need to attract the right users

The next step is attracting the right users. There are a lot of tools that will help you create awareness on the market. Before people start talking about your social media, they need to be aware of it. Digital marketing has tools to increase awareness and has available options that will help you reach your goals without spending so much money. For example, you can prepare an email database and use it for newsletters. You can create your own blog where you will discuss your new social media platform. Connect with other networks and interact with lots of people so that they hear your platform exists. Besides, you can activate paid ads to try to get more attention from people who don't know your social network.

With the numerous available resources today, creating a social media platform is easier than it was in the past. Doing a quality research is a necessary activity before you start, and if you have a good idea and follow the steps we have described, you may be able to create something unique. Just remember, the right information can save you time and resources.

**Adapted from <https://www.inc.com/john-rampton/how-to-create-powerful-social-network-platform-in-.html>*

Glossary:

- **CMS:** A Content Management System, or CMS, is a piece of software designed to help users create and edit a website.

- **Hosting company** (web host): Web hosts are companies that provide space on a server for use by clients, as well as providing Internet connectivity, typically in a data center.
- **Leak**: a deliberate act of stealing and/or giving secret information (e.g. WikiLeaks).
- **Activity stream**: An activity stream is a list of recent activities performed by an individual, typically on a single website. For example, Facebook's News Feed is an activity stream.
- **Open source**: A software for which the original source code is made freely available and may be redistributed and modified according to the requirement of the user

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the author in this text?
 - a. To describe the origin of social networks
 - b. To show how important Facebook is now
 - c. To give tips to build a good social network
 - d. To suggest tech platforms to develop apps

2. The phrase **from scratch** in paragraph 1 is closest in meaning to
 - a. based on someone else's experience
 - b. from the very beginning
 - c. without an effort
 - d. fast

3. To create a social network, what should be done in the first stage?
 - a. Pay a software developer to design the appearance of your platform.
 - b. Understand what people need, like or dislike.
 - c. Design the sections of your website.
 - d. Copy what Facebook has done.

4. The word **features** in section 2 is closest in meaning to
 - a. characteristics
 - b. futures
 - c. updates
 - d. necessities

5. What suggestion does the author make in section 3?
 - a. You should trust your abilities to develop your own platform.
 - b. You should talk to someone who knows about different technologies.
 - c. You should take some courses to learn to build platforms.
 - d. You should save a lot of money because this process is expensive.

6. The word **these** in section 4 refers to
 - a. experts

- b. web pages
 - c. users
 - d. rules
7. Match the following topics with the sections that develop them.
- a. A record of people's social network interaction _____ Section 6
 - b. The information users can see _____ Section 4
 - c. Safe web experience _____ Section 8
 - d. Getting people to join your network _____ Section 7
 - e. How people feel _____ Section 5

What do you think?

Choose a social network and identify the previous stages. Does this social network contain the characteristics that were listed in the text?