

## Social media as marketing tool for SMEs: opportunities and challenges

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### Abstract

Social media is a phenomenon that has transformed the interaction and communication of individuals throughout the world. Especially, social networking websites are very popular and have become daily practice in a lot of people's lives. These sites have made significant impact on the individual's life. However, social media is not only a communication tool for amusement, but it is also an important part of marketing strategies in business life. There is a constant rise in social networking and therefore impact of social networks is becoming stronger every day, into each kind of business. Social media are often used as a source of information and spread of knowledge changing people's views and opinions. They belong among very important business marketing tactics and help to create new business opportunities, develop a stronger market position or modify consumer's behavior. Therefore, in developed countries, social media are gaining popularity and are increasingly used in regular operations of many companies, including start-ups, small, medium-sized, and large organizations. But it seems that in emerging economies such as Kosovo, Albania and other neighbor countries, marketing over social media is not taken that seriously, especially by SMEs. There are some companies who have shown interest and have created their presence, yet there is no serious focus in this innovative marketing tool. The study deals with the issue of social media and its influence on SMEs. It classifies social media and explores the possibilities and challenges of social networks in business. The authors describe features and the evolution of social media, including major social networking sites that came into existence during the 21st century. The purpose of the paper is to review the academic literature on the opportunities and challenges of using social media from SMEs, as well as identifying factors that drive social media marketing adoption and usage in SMEs. This paper offers a useful means to analyze the kinds of research that needs to be pursued to make additional research progress in the related area of social media marketing. Within this research, the qualitative method is used in order to identify opportunities and challenges and determine factors that drive social media marketing adoption and usage in SMEs.

**Keywords:** *social media, social network, marketing, business, SMEs, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn.*

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