I have a dream that one day 100 percent of all business owners will embrace the power to engage customers, clients and investors in a way that will sustain bottom-line growth through the strategic use of social media.

This tool costs nothing and allows businesses to get in front of target audiences they may never have had the opportunity to get in front of before.

Social media is a powerful resource for businesses, one that will not eat into advertising budgets (or lack thereof). Still, some business owners don’t realize that social media is possibly one of the most powerful business growth tools they have access to today.

Social media started as a personal toy for many of us. A great way to show out-of-town friends and relatives pictures of our kids, or a way to follow our favorite bands and celebrities and feel like we have a personal connection with them. But it has evolved. Read these business-related statistics:

• 73 percent of online consumers now utilize at least one social media channel regularly to make purchasing decisions.

• According to the Business Insider, YouTube reaches more U.S. adults than any cable network ever has.

• 1.5 billion consumers use Facebook, 500 million use Twitter and 238 million are regularly engaged in LinkedIn. Do you think your local, traditional media outlets — magazines, television, radio for example — even come close to these numbers?

While these are proven, critical tools to any marketing mix, there is no comparison when it comes to targeted reach. Hopefully, you are starting to see the picture.

According to Steve Tappin, host of BBC’s “CEO Guru” and founder of worldofceos.com, the top 10 social-media-using CEOs for 2013 included Richard Branson (Virgin Galactic), Marissa Mayer (Yahoo), Jeff Weiner (LinkedIn), Arianna Huffington (The Huffington Post) and Elon Musk (SpaceX).

The top 10 list also includes CEOs from the likes of GE, Burberry and Salesforce.com. Is there any business owner out there who would not take marketing advice from these powerful individuals? They know the power of social media and are using their senior-level communications teams to lead the way.

Lange is owner of TNT Creative Group, a social media, public relations and marketing communications agency in Melbourne. tntcreativegroup.com. Columnist series sponsored by the Women’s Business Center at Florida Institute of Technology in Melbourne. For more information, visit http://wbc.fit.edu/.