
Using Social Media for Marketing

Facebook

Facebook profiles have more details than Twitter. They allow videos, photos, and longer descriptions for a product. Videos shows how a product can be used and when to use it. These includes testimonials so that other followers can comment on the product pages for others. Facebook sends event reminders through linking back to the product's Twitter page. Facebook promotes a product in real-time and attracts customers. Social media marketing, continues advertising to increase sequential ad spend in social by 25% as marketers see more value in social media marketing. Stories acquiring new fans and strategies to extend the reach with Sponsored with Facebook ads remain an uptick in spending across the site. The study attributes 84% of ""engagement"" or clicks to Likes that link back to Facebook advertising. Today, brands fan counts get increased on an average of 9% monthly and increasing their fan base by two times annually.

Blogs

Blogs allow a product or company to provide longer descriptions of products or services. The longer description can include reasoning and uses. It can include testimonials and can link to and from Facebook, Twitter and many social network and blog pages. Blogs can be updated frequently and are promotional techniques for keeping customers. Other promotional uses are acquiring followers and subscribers and direct them to your social network pages.

Social Media Marketing Tools

Besides research tools, there are many companies providing specialized platforms/tools for social media marketing, such as tools for:

- Social Media Monitoring
- Social Aggregation
- Social Book Marking and Tagging
- Social Analytics and Reporting
- Automation
- Social Media
- Blog Marketing
- Validation

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Implication on Traditional Advertising

Minimizing Use

Traditional advertising techniques include print and television advertising. The Internet had already overtaken television as the largest advertising market. Websites often include banner or pop-up ads. Social networking sites don't always have ads. In exchange, products have entire pages and are able to interact with users. Television commercials often end with a spokesperson asking viewers to check out the product website for more information. Print ads are also starting to include barcodes on them. These barcodes can be scanned by cell phones and computers, sending viewers to the product website. Advertising is beginning to move viewers from the traditional outlets to the electronic ones.

Leaks

Internet and social networking leaks are one of the issues facing traditional advertising. Video and print ads are often leaked to the world via the Internet earlier than they are scheduled to premiere. Social networking sites allow those leaks to go viral, and be seen by many users more quickly. Time difference is also a problem facing traditional advertisers. When social events occur and are broadcast on television, there is often a time delay between airings on the east coast and west coast of the United States. Social networking sites have become a hub of comment and interaction concerning the event. This allows individuals watching the event on the west coast (time-delayed) to know the outcome before it airs. The 2011 Grammy Awards highlighted this problem. Viewers on the west coast learned who won different awards based on comments made on social networking sites by individuals watching live on the east coast. Since viewers knew who won already, many tuned out and ratings were lower. All the advertisement and promotion put into the event was lost because viewers didn't have a reason to watch.

Advanced Social Media Marketing Strategies for Small Businesses

The definition of an advanced social strategy is a technique that goes beyond the normal social media presence. It introduces or reinforces a marketing message while pushing a user to another profile or business site. Before moving forward with an advanced strategy, it's important that your business understands social marketing, has experience engaging consumers, and that you possess a basic understanding of online marketing.

Multimedia Usage

The term "A picture is worth a thousand words" has never been truer. Consumers are now

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using the web to look for product pictures and videos; they want more information and want to see what they're considering buying. The good news is that it's easy for a company to create and publish videos and pictures. In addition to taking photos of products, you can also take pictures at office events as a way to highlight company culture. This not only helps convince others to work with you or to buy from you (consumers see that you are down to earth and one of them instead of a stuffy company), it also helps your HR department recruit new employees. Who doesn't want to work for a company that celebrates birthdays and has a good time?

Videos are useful for explaining complex how-tos or concepts. Showing step by step directions can have a greater impact than even the most well written article. Businesses don't have to invest huge sums of money to create good videos, either. I highly recommend the relatively cheap Flip camcorder, which takes great videos and is easy for even a non-technical marketer to use. Multimedia can break down the faceless business-to-consumer sales flow and make your company appear friendlier. Use videos and images to show that your business is fun, you care about your employees, and most importantly, that you care about your customers.

Integrate Offline and Online Advertising

Many small businesses do some sort of offline advertising, whether it be radio, print, or cable. Social marketing allows a business to extend their offline sales pitch. Including your Facebook Page or blog URL in offline ads act as social proof, inviting potential consumers to see your community and increase trust in your business. Not only can integrating online and offline advertising help the conversion process, but it can also help build your community. Introducing potential consumers to your social profiles means they may join your community now and buy later.

Message Adaptation

As businesses start to become more sophisticated with social media they are starting to leverage more online platforms. However, most deliver the same message over multiple platforms instead of tailoring communications for each individual site. Social platforms each have an ecosystem of their own. What might be acceptable on Tumblr might be considered spam on Facebook. A specific style of writing might spread on Twitter but fail on FriendFeed. Understanding that each site is different and then customizing your message ensures they do well on each respective site. Not only does customizing messages across sites help the message spread but it keeps users from receiving multiple identical communications. Be sure to maximize your potential by sending a user that follows the business on Twitter and Facebook two different messages, instead of the same thing

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Local Social Networks, Beyond Yelp

For a small business, local search can be a big win. Being visible to consumers looking for a business in their area is extremely important. Make sure your site is included in local business directories in order to help ensure that consumers find you when they need you. Sometimes finding that many sites can be difficult, however. First, make sure you check your competitors. Where are they listed? Check their inbound links to check for business directories you can add yourself to. Also, make sure your business has been added to Google Maps, using the Local Business Center. Take the time to include all the information you can and update any old news. For many consumers, this will be their first interaction with the business.

Conclusion

Social platforms each have an ecosystem of their own. Creating a basic social media presence is easy enough, getting your community to actually do something is more difficult. Make sure your site is included in local business directories in order to help ensure that consumers find you when they need you. Customizing messages across sites help the message spread but it keeps users from receiving multiple identical communications. By giving exclusive coupons to your social community, you're rewarding and reminding them that you are not only a brand to engage with, but also to buy from. Taking advantage of these strategies can help you build your community, make your marketing more effective, and incentivize buying.

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