TRAINING TO WIN

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STRATEGICALLY APPROACHING SOCIAL MARKETING

The Web offers endless ways for people to create, consume and share information online today. Social media has been a driving force behind the shift in media creation and consumption habits, giving more power to the consumer to customize their information however, wherever and whenever they want it. As media consumption habits continue to rapidly evolve, knowledge and real-time intelligence of the social landscape – and how your audience is interacting with it – is critical.

A successful foundation for a social marketing program can be established by gathering an intimate understanding of your audience, how they engage across the social landscape, what they are saying about your brand and how your competition is utilizing social marketing. This can be achieved by actively listening, watching, gathering and learning from the online landscape before diving in.

While online listening can help inform marketing messaging, creative messaging and even product development, this section will specifically address how to listen online and gather insights that will help you plan and execute a successful social marketing program.

Summary:
Developing a foundation for a successful social marketing program starts with observing:
- Your customers' social media behaviors
- Online dialogue related to your brand
- Your competitors' social media footprint

Takeaway:
Actively listen and learn before diving into the social landscape to understand the opportunities available for your brand.

YOUR CUSTOMERS

Your customers are increasingly spending more time online, especially in social spaces. What are they doing there? Perhaps they visit Facebook once a day for a couple of minutes to check status updates, but then spend most of their time watching videos on YouTube or providing recommendations on social shopping sites.

People have different levels of personal investment in social media so your customers' Social Computing behaviors play a key role in establishing strategic direction. Forrester Research describes six levels of participation or Social Technographics®:

1. Creators
2. Critics
3. Collectors
4. Joiners
5. Spectators
6. Inactives

At the top of Forrester's Technographic Ladder are those individuals considered to be influencers. These are generally the Creators (e.g. those who publish blogs, upload user-generated videos, etc.) and the Critics (e.g. those who post ratings and reviews, comment on blogs, etc.).

If a large percentage of your customers are Creators, then you can develop a social strategy that empowers users to create programs about your brand or its benefits. But if your customers are more likely to consume media than to create it, perhaps a low-engagement social tactic like a quiz or poll will inspire more activity. Understanding

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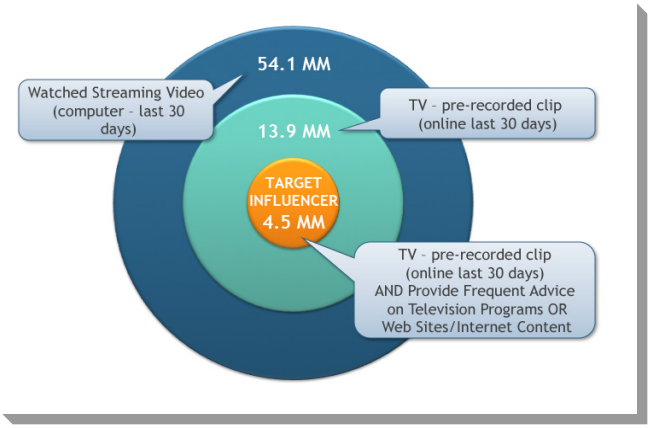
both the places your customers visit on the Web and how they interact can help inform the strategy to establish a relationship with them in those environments.

About Influencers:
It is important to identify influencers who can help spread your message through the ripple effect because they hold the keys to the perception castle. Influencing the influential can deliver a multiplier effect, as their endorsement of a product will be read by all of their friends and followers. As such, identifying and understanding the motivations of the key online influencers within your customer base can be extremely effective in driving social marketing programs that spread far beyond their initial reach.



Above is an example of an influencer target and the wider audience that influencers impact through the ripple effect.

YOUR BRAND

While there are dozens of tools to aggregate volume of discussions, it's also important to understand the topics discussed, brand sentiment and the locations where these discussions are occurring (More on blogs than chat rooms? More on Café Mom than Facebook?).

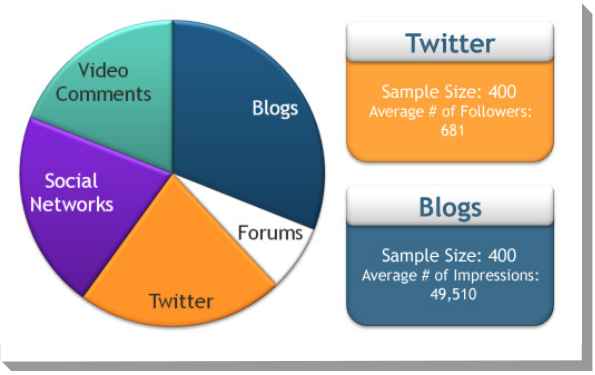
Online listening can provide a real-time snapshot of customer sentiment about a brand, which can be especially salient during periods of change, whether you release a new iteration of a product, announce news or are impacted by seasonality. Oftentimes, spikes in conversations and buzz can also be tied back to offline media efforts such as TV commercials or promotions.

Analyzing online buzz can help brands understand why consumers make the choices they do. This analysis is not just limited to blogs and social networks. Reading product reviews on sites like eBags or Yelp can provide tremendous insights into why someone prefers one product over another.

YOUR COMPETITION

Your competitors' prominence within social media is equally important to your brand buzz and online brand health metrics. Evaluating the same components you use to understand where your brand stands in the social landscape can help you understand more about your competitors, including how people talk about them, what they are saying and where they are saying it.

Measuring your competitors' brand-generated social marketing footprint is an additional component for competitive analysis. What is their current social marketing footprint and strategy? How much of that footprint is driven by the brand and how much is consumer-generated? Measuring the efficacy of your competitors' social marketing strategy can also reveal new opportunities for your brand.



This graph looks at conversation distribution and audience size across social platforms.

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HOW YOU CAN LISTEN

There are both public and private ways to listen and learn from your customers online.

- **Public:**

Online chatter can be used as a real-time organic focus group. Listening to what people are saying on blogs, reviews, comments, chat rooms, Twitter and more can provide metrics for understanding brand awareness, sentiment and preference.

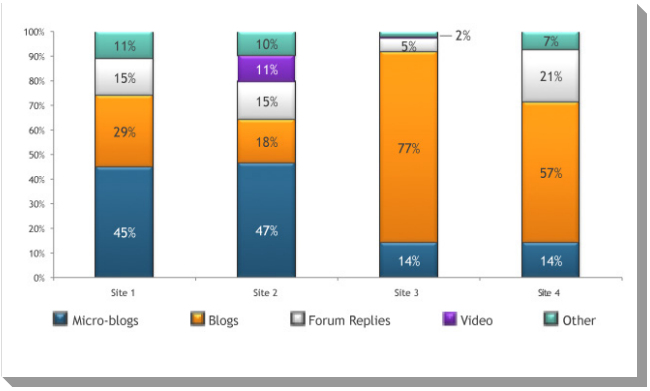
- **Private:**

Oftentimes, brands want to gauge sentiment on a product or the product's marketing message before it is released. Private online communities can serve as an ongoing focus group to engage customers and better understand how they perceive the brand or product. This allows brands to obtain real-time insights to help shape and refine their products, provide a vehicle to listen and learn from their customers and potentially uncover new ideas or learnings that are counter-intuitive to their current thinking. Listening to consumers provides them ownership in the process and builds long-term loyalty and trust.

While private listening provides an opportunity to test things that your public audience has yet to experience, public listening provides an organic snapshot of actual chatter. Both can help inform your marketing strategy, creative messaging, product development and certainly a social marketing strategy.

CONCLUSION

Having gained a deep understanding about how your customers engage in social media, what they are saying and how the competitive environment stacks up, you will be in an excellent position to plan and launch a strategic social marketing program that not only engages your customers on their turf, but helps your brand build and join conversations in a way that truly adds value to your company and your customers.



Analysis of digital chatter for competitive video sites across a wide array of social media.

Key Conversation Indicators℠ (KCI)

Similar to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), KCIs establish social marketing metrics for brands and/or social campaigns to measure online buzz, as well as gauge a social program's success. The service measures social engagement, sentiment and opinion, as well as specific consumer actions. Although the metrics measured are different for every brand, some of the items measured as part of the KCI℠ service include:

- Conversation Volume
- Sentiment / Favorability
- Topics of Conversation
- Ratings
- Favoriting
- Friends and Followers
- Passalongs

Establishing the criteria you want to measure and track will help frame the direction of your research and social strategy.

2

DEVELOPING A GAME-WINNING STRATEGY

DEVELOPING A GAME-WINNING STRATEGY

BEST PRACTICES FOR ENSURING SUCCESS IN SOCIAL MARKETING

Assessing and vetting opportunities in social marketing may seem like a daunting task - among the thousands of social networks and platforms for interaction, marketers are challenged to find and build strategies that provide the best opportunities for establishing a relationship with their customers. However, this process becomes much less daunting when armed with key insights and clear objectives to use as a prism for assessing which platforms have the necessary scale and engagement opportunities for your brand.

There are thousands of social platforms; not all of them may be right for your brand.

Summary:

To devise the best strategy for your brand, begin by:

- Establishing clear objectives and success metrics
- Viewing all opportunities through your strategic lens
- Crafting a unifying concept and brand voice

Takeaway:

There are plenty of ways to engage with your customers through social marketing - identifying the best channels and approach for your brand is more than half the battle.

ESTABLISHING A STRATEGIC LENS

Define Objectives

Strategic development starts with setting clear objectives. Goal setting for your social marketing program should be no different than with any other brand communications plan. The goals that work best are traditional brand-health objectives (e.g. to increase overall awareness, favorability or purchase intent) or goals that are campaign-specific (e.g. to increase the number of brand advocates or fuel passalong). However, the full potential of social marketing is realized through continuity programs rather than flighted campaigns.

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Evaluate Opportunities

There's a seemingly endless stream of interesting and groundbreaking ways marketers can reach and engage core audiences online. Innovation, creativity and out-of-the-box thinking often lend themselves to successful interactions in social marketing. But, beware of "bright shiny object syndrome," where marketing objectives are ignored and innovative ideas are religiously pursued in the name of developing something sexy. Awards don't pay the bills; results do.

The best opportunities do not arise from ambitiously surging into a broad range of social platforms with the assumption that, by casting a large net, the brand will be bound to meet its audience. Likewise, just because a social platform grows rapidly and/or gains a lot of media attention, this does not mean marketers must develop a strategy for their brand on that platform.

Answering four questions can help assess and vet opportunities in the social sphere.

The "Four Questions" to ask when assessing opportunities in social marketing.

1. Objectives: Does the opportunity meet your brand's objectives?

Bold or inventive strategies can be huge enhancements to social marketing programs *if they meet the marketer's objectives.*

- Does this opportunity provide value that will help me achieve my stated goals?

- If yes, how will I measure the opportunity's contribution to achieving these goals?

2. Arsenal: Does the opportunity leverage your brand's existing arsenal of assets?

An effective opportunity will showcase your brand's strengths, so if you've got it, flaunt it. Assets are advantages – and online content, video, celebrity endorsements, creative messaging, brand partnerships (e.g. tie-ins with tent-pole events like the Olympics or the Oscars), and other differentiating assets can be used to bolster your program. Digital content that's portable and shareable, such as widgets that work across a number of platforms and sites, can provide added flexibility. Most marketers have some assets that are underutilized, while others will need to build much of the arsenal from scratch to work across digital platforms and beyond.

Your arsenal may also include some existing "social citizens" that are already advocating for you organically. By harnessing your assets and brand advocates, marketers can capitalize on opportunities in social marketing that may have otherwise been less effective, if not overlooked entirely.

NBC's "Late Night with Jimmy Fallon" Facebook Page leverages the show's interactive nature and its core group of Brand Advocates.

GAME-WINNING STRATEGY

3. Rules: Does the opportunity abide by the social media rules of the road?

Embarking on a program that is not in line with the customs of the social platform it employs would be like wearing a pair of ski boots out for a morning jog: clumsy and ineffective. With a good understanding of each social platform and how a target audience utilizes it, you can strike a balance between your brand's own style and the specific rules of the social space you wish to occupy – without sacrificing creativity and innovation. Fresh campaigns that conserve brand identity, while still abiding by the commonly understood best practices of the medium, will be the most successful.

Studying the medium before entering it, learning the local language and becoming familiar with "laws of the land," such as sharability and open dialogue, can help ensure that you will abide by the medium's best practices. More on specific social platforms and their best practices can be found in the Arenas section.

Kraft's Recipe Manager widget and iPhone app provide utility, sharability and access from both computers and mobile devices with daily dinner recipes and associated shopping lists.

4. Value: Does it provide significant value exchange?

What are you providing for your customers? Whether it's an actual product, entertainment, access, dialogue or even intangible forms of social currency such as inside information or a virtual asset, consumers expect more from brands today, and they expect it for free. The brand benefits of a social marketing program are obvious – but you will be most successful if you also consider the value expectations of their audience. Providing value will ensure your customers continue engaging with your brand in the social landscape, and might even inspire them to share the value you provide with others.

The social landscape, though at times chaotic and complex, holds a world of opportunities for brands to better connect with their customers. Marketers can lay the groundwork for successful social marketing initiatives by viewing opportunities through their brand's unique strategic lens.

360i invited select bloggers to an exclusive screening of NBC's "Kings," which included a set tour and Q&A with the cast and Executive Producer, resulting in advocacy well above traditional Digital Word Of Mouth benchmarks.

CREATING A SOCIAL MARKETING ARCHITECTURE

Every brand has a unique "online social footprint" – that is, an aggregation of all the conversations taking place online about that brand, including:

- Conversations between brands and their consumers
- Chatter among consumers facilitated and/or hosted by the brand
- Organic dialogue among consumers

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While vibrant and exciting, these conversations are often disorganized and scattered across a wide array of online platforms. Conversations travel naturally from one social medium to another; understanding and controlling the nuances of that flow will allow your brand to engage more deeply with those creating the buzz.

Creating a social marketing architecture to map out this conversation matrix allows brands to gain a more holistic view of their online buzz, harness it and steer it in a certain direction. Most importantly, a well-planned social marketing architecture creates an environment that encourages deeper consumer engagement and loyalty.

Crafting an Architecture

The first step to creating a social marketing architecture is to take stock of your brand's current and planned social marketing footprint. To do this, first identify conversation hubs across all the social platforms where:

- Your consumers are having conversations about your brand (with or without your participation)
- Your brand is actively engaging consumers right now
- Your brand plans to engage consumers in the future

Conversation hubs can exist anywhere online. Platforms for communication include but are not limited to:

- Profile-based social networks (e.g. Facebook, MySpace, MyYearbook, Bebo)
- Social shopping sites (e.g. Kaboodle, StyleFeeder, Wists, Polyvore)
- Photo and video sharing sites (e.g. YouTube, Flickr)
- Microblogging services (e.g. Twitter, Seesmic)
- Social bookmarking and social search sites (e.g. digg, StumbleUpon, del.icio.us)
- Product review sites (e.g. Yelp, epinions)

Once you've identified your brand's "online conversation hubs," mapping them will help to reveal how these seemingly disparate pieces of the social graph are already organically interconnected. The current conversation flow about your brand will then provide insight into how you can open the door for increasingly meaningful consumer engagement.

A successful architecture delivers a seamless user flow from brand experiences on one platform to another. To a consumer, this will seem natural and effortless. But behind the scenes, this is the blueprint that maps out the brand's footprint and connects all the dots.

There is no single right way to structure the architecture. To arrive at one that will work best for your brand, consider the insights garnered via online listening and answering the questions in the strategic lens.

Below are three very different sample social marketing architectures.

Like snowflakes, each social marketing architecture is unique. Examples architectures (left to right): H&R Block, Vitamin Water and Skittles.

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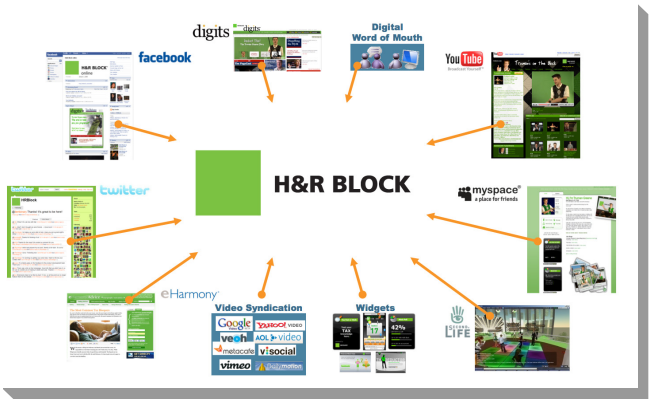
In these examples, the goal is not to determine whether these architectures are good or bad. Without knowledge of these brands' objectives and unique strategic lens, one cannot weigh in on the success or failure of their approaches. Nonetheless, the vast differences between their approaches showcase how an architecture can vary widely depending on the brand, its social footprint and its objectives.

H&R Block

H&R Block found that in order to truly engage taxpaying consumers in a meaningful way, they'd have to set up shop in a variety of social environments, making taxes funny, interesting and/or personal depending on the audience and unique attributes of each platform. On MySpace and YouTube, H&R Block created the spoof character Truman Greene, who sang parody songs about his love of taxes, while on Facebook, the brand provided useful tools for people to expand their knowledge. And on Twitter, H&R Block made experts available 24/7 to answer real questions people had during crunch time.



H&R Block has multiple voices on multiple platforms, with an interconnected architecture powering their efforts in the background.

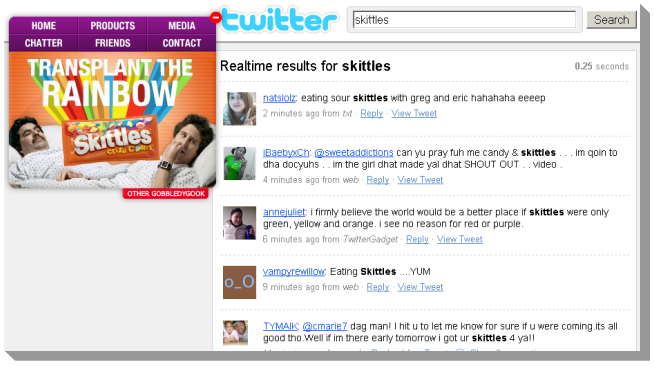
Vitamin Water

The latest Vitamin Water campaign starring LeBron James and Kobe Bryant puts an existing social platform, Facebook, at the center of its hub and spoke architecture. The campaign pits two NBA superstars against each other in an online-wide debate about which player reigns supreme. TV commercials, as well as banner ads that appear on relevant sites like ESPN.com, direct viewers to the Vitamin Water Facebook Page – not the company's Web site. The large audience on Facebook, in addition to the useful tools and applications already present within the platform, gives Vitamin Water the opportunity to reach consumers in interesting and effective ways.

Banner ads for Vitamin Water's "Great Debate" campaign point users to the brand's Facebook Page (Image courtesy of Mashable.com).

Skittles

Skittles took quite a different route, constructing something like an inverted social marketing architecture. In a bold move, the candy brand re-launched its Web site in February 2009 and put the focus almost entirely on consumer-driven conversation. For the new site, primary navigation was designed to overlay three main conversation hubs: Twitter, Facebook and YouTube, along with "official" content such as product information.



Skittles opened their brand up to put its fans front and center.

GAME-WINNING STRATEGY

By gaining a holistic view of the online conversations about your brand, you can:

- Tap into them for consumer feedback
- Efficiently disseminate content and information
- Cultivate conversations to amplify positive buzz
- Monitor your social presence for potential red flags
- Establish a framework to plug into for one-off campaigns and promotions
- Leverage all of the platforms where your brand has a presence to create a more seamless experience for the consumer, positively affecting brand preference and loyalty

DEVELOPING A UNIFYING THEME

Successful social marketing programs are driven by a conceptual framework that has been developed to resonate with consumers and inspire them to do something. While it would be great if we could all have a big, award-winning idea like Burger King's "Subservient Chicken" or Dove's "Campaign for Real Beauty," having a single big idea is far from a requirement for achieving success in social marketing. Whether you're a car manufacturer trying to engage a community of new mothers, or a not-for-profit aiming to educate children on the importance of recycling, your campaign's overarching theme is what's going to draw the consumer in and form an emotional connection.

A great idea without a strategic plan may get an "A" for coolness but an "F" for achieving marketing objectives. Conversely, a bad idea can ruin a well thought out strategic plan that follows all the rules of the road.

One of the biggest barriers to developing a smart social marketing program is predicated on adapting the way you think about marketing. While over half of all social marketing programs fail to thrive (Gartner, Oct. 2008), the successful ones have the same elemental truth in common: they understand their target audiences' passion points and have developed an interactive experience that enables consumers to express themselves. A great social marketing program will be the launching pad for a direct relationship with your customers, providing multiple opportunities for interaction.

So how can you maximize your chances for developing a good idea that your target audience will embrace, but that will also meet your marketing objectives? There is no silver bullet, but there are certainly ways to increase the odds of success.

The Brainstorm

Get the creative juices flowing.

Select the right participants: Think about who will contribute the most. No need to relegate the ideation exclusively to the most creative people at your company or your creative agencies. Rather, focus on a diversified group comprised of people that bring either:

- Passion about the topic or product, whether that's Joe in Accounting or Jill in HR, they will bring a perspective from someone representing the target audience.
- Disciplinary expertise, whether that's internal or via your agencies. Considering that social marketing sits at the intersection of so many disciplines, representation from PR, media, customer care and creative will enhance the ideation and output since each group will consider the effect on different constituents.

Prepare your participants: Make sure you've sent information in advance to all participants, including the brief, personae analysis, marketing objectives, product differentiation and any online research you may have done to better understand quality and quantity of conversations about the brand online.

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Come prepared: Make sure the participants are up to speed on the product you're brainstorming about. Bring props and tools to help inspire more creative thinking. Go on a field trip in advance if you can't bring the product into the office.

Set the mood: Not everyone is going to have the best idea. Creating an open forum for collaboration and encouraging ideas will break the ice and allow more people to contribute. All ideas are welcome in a brainstorm – narrowing them down into something concrete will come later.

Refinement

A brainstorm is a means to an end. You may not get the big idea, but you might get a string of smaller ideas that then weave together a common theme that may emerge as a unifying theme. After the brainstorm, it's time to modify those ideas by looking at them from different angles to craft them into something cohesive and strategic. As you get closer to honing in on certain themes, it can be helpful to bring in publishers and content developers for continued ideation. Publishers, especially those who specialize in social spaces, can be your best friends when developing custom programs as they have the best insight into customer engagement in their environments.

But does it measure up against the strategic lens?
Once the ideas start going from "Wouldn't it be crazy if…." to "This will definitely help us reach our stated goals," then it's time to go back to the strategic lens to make sure it measures up.

1. Does it meet your objectives?
2. Does it leverage your social media arsenal?
3. Does it abide by the rules of the road?
4. Does it provide value to the consumer?

The devil is in the details
Successful execution is critical. Weaving together every tactic, providing a seamless experience and communicating in a consistent voice across multiple and seemingly disparate platforms is a major challenge. Additional challenges come into play as execution starts crossing agency and departmental borders.

Daunting? Absolutely. Achievable? Unquestionably. Careful execution with a detailed roadmap and open communication between departments and agencies can result in one of the most – if not the most – successful marketing programs done by an organization. It is one of the very few opportunities to take into account the full customer experience and create a platform for conversation across the organizational spectrum.

FINDING YOUR VOICE IN SOCIAL SPACES

Developing an authentic voice is one of the most important ways marketers can build connections with consumers through social marketing. Just as two people meeting for the first time will instinctively judge each other based on how they sound, consumers will make judgments about brands' voices upon first encounters through social media. This is one of the critical intangible factors that will determine just how successful the marketing execution will be.

When any brand puts itself front and center in social arenas, it must personify itself by exhibiting and embodying its core brand attributes, while also adapting to each environment in which it interacts. This can be a challenging balance to strike, which is why marketers will be best served if they identify their voice and research the spaces they are entering into before launching a campaign. This is easier said than done. There are many questions about how a brand should present itself, and the many variables in social marketing underscore the importance of a cohesive, well thought-out strategy.

Finding your voice is a process that involves research into the customs of the social channel, as well as a sharp strategy that will enable your brand to effectively

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convey its core message within the lay of that land. While it's important to maintain consistent messaging and always relate back to your core brand attributes, brands may have many incarnations in social spaces. Some executions will call for the participation of a personality within corporate or customer relations (such as Zappos CEO on Twitter), while the foreman of a bottling plant could create YouTube videos of his daily adventures.

Transparency and authenticity are two of the most important factors in a social marketing program. Several companies who have made missteps in this regard saw backlash toward the brand and the agencies that advised them. Marketers can avoid crises like these by clearly identifying themselves when communicating in a social channel as a company representative.

CONCLUSION

There are countless opportunities across the social landscape that may or may not help a brand achieve its objectives. Marketers can carve a successful path for their brand by assessing strategic opportunities, establishing an appropriate architecture, developing a unifying concept and determining which voice(s) will enable them to best engage with their audience.

3 THE ARENAS

THE ARENAS

KEY PLATFORMS FOR PUTTING YOUR BRAND IN PLAY

The arenas here aren't meant to be comprehensive of every social property online and not every platform is right for every brand. There are thousands of platforms, and potentially millions if you count some of the micro-communities that form and disband every day. Rather, this section takes a close look at five areas marketers can explore. The first three are among the most important social arenas today, and two others will become increasingly important in the near future.

Summary:

The social media landscape has hundreds if not thousands of platforms where consumers interact every day. In this section we focus on some of the most buzzed about opportunities for marketers:

- Three of the largest social platforms – Facebook, Twitter and YouTube
- Two up-and-coming arenas – mobile platforms and social aggregators

Takeaway:

Staying abreast of the latest arenas helps identify potential opportunities for reaching your customers, but not every platform – even the newest cool kid on the block – will be right for every brand.

FACEBOOK: HOW TO WIN FANS AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

Overview

Facebook offers a much different experience for consumers and marketers than it did just a year ago. Previously, Facebook Pages were more static, where marketers could build them and easily leave them alone until it was time to change the look for a new season or campaign. Today, Facebook Pages are designed around active conversations that marketers can have with consumers. This change in format should lead to a change in mindset and strategy for marketers who may have built their pages some time ago. It also provides a reason for marketers who haven't built a presence on Facebook yet to take another look at the social network.

Facebook Facts & Figures

- Unique U.S. visitors: 67.5 million (comScore, April 2009)
- 59% ages 18-44
- More than 4 million users become fans of Pages daily
- Facebook users share more than 1 billion forms of content every week

Driving Engagement with Facebook Pages

There are many ways marketers can increase engagement and visibility for their Pages:

1. Send updates to fans. Page creators can blast messages to all fans. A notification appears on fans' home screens when there are Page updates. These updates should be used sparingly so that fans read them rather than ignore them or potentially even un-fan the Page.

2. Update the Page status. These updates appear in fans' News Feeds and can include more day-to-day updates, such as notifications of new content on the marketer's site.

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3. Create polls. These can appear in a separate tab on the Page, and when fans participate, it will appear in their feeds so their friends can see it.

4. Post events. Whether it's a product launch, a TV show premiere or some other time-sensitive promotion, creating an event can also trigger updates that fans can share with their friends.

5. Develop interactive applications. Create applications on a Page that trigger actions which appear in fans' feeds. For instance, a Page might offer a virtual gifting application that makes it easy to share branded content with friends.

6. Encourage fan participation. When fans share content such as photos or videos on a Page, those updates appear in fans' feeds. Fans may also write on Page walls, comment and "Like" posts, which keeps fans engaged, although it won't be visible in friends' News Feeds.

7. Advertise the Page. Facebook offers various ways to advertise Pages, whether on Facebook's homepage or through self-service ads that run on the rest of the site.

8. Convert visitors to fans. When visitors become fans, their friends are exposed to that action - this alone can be a key tool.

Are You Fan-Worthy?

There are a number of factors that contribute to the number of fans a Facebook Page attracts, many of which may not fit with your brand, its products or its overall message and tone. Keep these factors in mind when managing your own expectations in terms of how many fans your Page can hope to attract.

• **Recognition:** How well known is the brand? You'd expect third tenor José Carreras to have fewer fans than Luciano Pavarotti, and Pavarotti has more than 300 times as many fans as his peer.

• **Silliness:** There are 320,000 fans of Not Being on Fire, and it went from under 2,000 to over 300,000 in ten days. The Homer Simpson catchphrase "D'Oh!" has more than one million fans.

• **Food:** Popular food Pages on Facebook with at least one million fans include Coca-Cola, Pizza, Pringles, Ice Cream and McFlurry. A large number involve chocolate, including Nutella, Kinder Surprise, Ferrero Rocher, Chocolate Milk, Oreo Cookies and Toblerone.

A word cloud of self-described teen interests and hobbies generated from Facebook and LiveJournal profiles.

While not all brands fall into these categories, there are other ways to build up a fan-worthy Facebook Page, such as including useful applications and tools or providing other forms of engagement. Insurance company USAA has attracted 15,000 fans by sharing useful articles and hosting events – mostly webinars but also an in-person TweetUp. Sprinkles Cupcakes,

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a bakery with five locations, uses its Page to get consumers into its stores by posting time-sensitive passwords that earn visitors free cupcakes. The Building Your Fan Base section (page 36) will go into more detail on how you can spread the word about your Facebook presence and build up your fan base, whether or not your brand has some of the more "fan-worthy" factors. Brands with a smaller fan base may want to consider investing in both paid and earned promotional media to jumpstart the Page growth.

Regardless, the number of fans you attract to your Page is not necessarily the ultimate measure of success on Facebook. Engaging with a targeted audience in a medium they care about and giving them ways to share their love of your brand with their friends can lead to successes that go beyond just racking up a fan count. Put simply, you can have a successful Facebook strategy without having a lot of fans "friending" your brand's Page.

Facebook CheckList

- ☑ Conduct a detailed analysis of your Page (if you have one already) and competitors' Pages to determine the degree of engagement and type of content shared.
- ☑ Find out how many people on Facebook currently list your brand or association on their personal profiles – this is the low-hanging fruit to sizing the immediate opportunities for fans.
- ☑ Develop an editorial calendar that shows how often the Page will be updated so it stays fresh for fans.
- ☑ Mix it up using various ways to drive engagement for fans new and old.
- ☑ Measure continued Page interactions with Facebook Insights, available to the owners of any Page.

YouTube: More Insights, More Interaction

Overview

YouTube Insight, an analytics dashboard set up by YouTube to view detailed statistics about the videos that are uploaded, has emerged as the so-called "killer app" for video producers and content owners. It's so valuable that even if content owners prefer to host videos elsewhere, the intelligence alone from attracting YouTube views can make the site an important cornerstone of a marketing plan. And it's one more reason that publishers upload 20 hours of content to YouTube every single minute – or 28,800 hours of video every day.

This is a period of rapid change for YouTube. Its homepage has shifted from featuring the most popular user-generated uploads to prominently promoting professionally produced TV shows, films and music videos. Meanwhile, its new Realtime Sharing toolbar is adding another layer of community to the video viewing experience. Expect to see YouTube Insights draw from all of this as its evolution continues, according to Tracy Chan, YouTube Insight Product Manager, who contributed his insight into how marketers are working with YouTube.

YouTube Facts & Figures

- Unique U.S. visitors: 89.7 million (comScore, April 2009)
- Average daily visitors: 16.6 million
- Videos viewed monthly: Approximately 6 billion

How to Use YouTube Insight

Any content owner who uploads videos to YouTube can access Insight. While it's still important to create and upload great content, Insight can inform programming and marketing strategies to better reach audiences on YouTube and in other marketing channels.

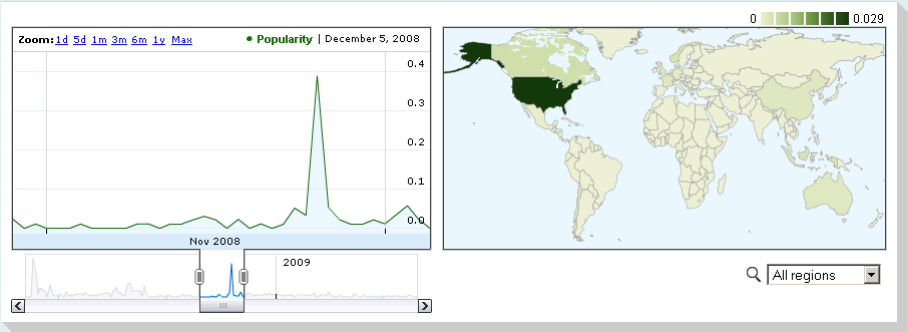
THE ARENAS

YouTube

Views and Popularity

What they tell you: The number of video views over time and how popular the videos are in various countries and states.

How to use them: Find out if marketing programs translated into consumers viewing the videos by analyzing when consumers are watching them and where they are coming from.



Marketers can tell when YouTube video views spike and where the views come from.

Discovery

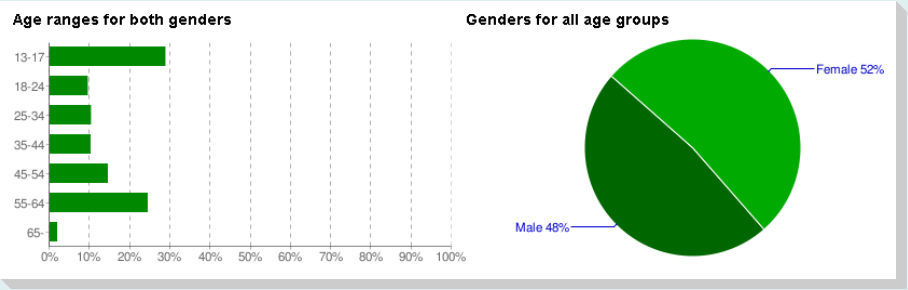
What it tells you: How viewers find the video. Categories include YouTube Search, Viral / Other (e.g., instant messaging and email), External Links, Embedded Player, Google Search, Related Videos, YouTube Other (e.g. browsing through a user's videos).

How to use it: By diving into Discovery, content owners can determine ways to significantly change and improve upon how videos are found on and off YouTube. Also, when running ad campaigns, YouTube can suggest keywords for targeting the campaign.

Demographics

What it tells you:
Age ranges and genders of video viewers.

How to use it:
Determine how well the Insights data matches audience targets.



YouTube Insights can tell marketers whether online video views align with distribution targets.

THE ARENAS

YouTube

Community

What it tells you:
This newest Insight feature reveals community engagement metrics by measuring ratings, comments and favorites.

How to use it:
By pairing these metrics with Views and Popularity, content owners can see not just where people are coming from but how engaged they are depending on their location.

Hot Spots

What it tells you:
Second-by-second viewing information to see where viewers tuned in and out. An Audience Attention meter then compares Hot Spots across different videos.

How to use it:
See exactly what grabs viewers and apply those lessons when creating video programming in the future.

YouTube Checklist

- ☑ Upload content to YouTube, even on a trial basis, to review Insight data first-hand.
- ☑ Learn the lifecycle of your videos to see how long their popularity lasts, and upload new videos to build on the popularity of your existing content.
- ☑ Explore who's watching your videos and where to see how that matches up with your target audience.
- ☑ Review where videos are embedded to determine whether online promotional programs and advertising campaigns are impacting views or might help your videos gain even more visibility.
- ☑ Consider a test of Promoted Videos.

TWITTER: CONVERSING IN 140 CHARACTERS OR LESS

Overview

Twitter allows users to post brief, public updates (called "tweets") and respond to others, creating conversations that anyone can read. Twitter users can submit and read updates from the Web, mobile devices, desktop applications and other channels. It's possible to create private accounts, but those are in the minority; most people who use it want to share with anyone – the more followers the merrier.

Twitter Facts & Figures

- Unique U.S. users: 17 million (comScore, April 2009)
- 62% of users are ages 25-54
- More than 90% of Twitter.com visitors are moderate or heavy Internet users

THE ARENAS

How Twitter Can Benefit Marketers

Here are some of the benefits of using Twitter:

- Engage in real-time conversations with key influencers and amplify the enthusiasm of brand evangelists
- Gain immediate feedback; use Twitter as a real-time focus group
- Establish the brand as an industry resource for bloggers and the media
- Create a human presence and voice for the brand
- Proactively respond to consumer questions and problems, using it as a CRM tool

Even without participating or "tweeting," most marketers can benefit from monitoring Twitter to gauge what people are saying about them, their competitors and their industry.

How Marketers are Using Twitter

Marketers use Twitter in countless ways. Here are a handful of examples among the thousands of marketers already participating (numbers as of May 2009).

Customer Service

Comcast (@comcastcares): responds to any discussions of Comcast and will call users to help with customer support (19,000 followers, 30,300 updates)

CRM

H&R Block (@hrblock): during tax season, posted updates related to taxes and its digital media programs and provided customer support; since then, continues to converse with followers (2,900 followers, 1,200 updates)

Humanizing a Brand

Zappos (@zappos): CEO regularly tweets about his business, Silicon Valley, his travels and anything else (635,000 followers, 1,650 updates); twitter.zappos.com links to over 400 employees using Twitter

Interactivity

National Geographic Channel (@natgeochannel): Program information, fun facts and regular contests (15,300 followers, 800 updates)

Personal Connection

The Ellen DeGeneres Show (@theellenshow): Personal updates from Ellen, with occasional shared images and links to videos (1.6 million followers, 230 updates)

Tools to Manage Twitter

Twitter allows others to build on its platform, driving increased functionality and continued innovation by others. Here's a guide to several of the most useful tools:

Monitoring

Twitter Search: Marketers should spend at least as much time here as with Twitter itself; search.twitter.com offers more advanced features than what's built into Twitter.com

Twitturly and *Tweetmeme:* View the most popular links bubbling up in tweets

Twist and *Twitscoop:* Chart Twitter buzz

Tweeting

TweetLater and *HootSuite:* Schedule Tweets to appear at a pre-set time or set up an auto tweet for your blog's RSS feed

THE ARENAS

TweetDeck: The most popular desktop software to submit posts, monitor responses and categorize friends

Bit.ly and *Cli.gs:* Shorten URLs and track them

Twitpic and *Picktor:* Share photos on Twitter

Topify: Learn more about the people following you and send direct messages via email

MrTweet: Discover new people to follow

@360i: Follow us here, and tweet us anytime

Twitter Checklist

- Be authentic: Write with a human voice
- Listen: Pay attention to what people are saying
- Converse: Talk to others even when they're not specifically talking to you
- Be responsive: Monitor Twitter at least daily, it can be even more powerful when monitoring it more frequently
- Quality over quantity: It matters far more to post something meaningful or interesting than constantly posting; similarly, attracting the right followers is more important than racking up a body count
- Avoid link spam: While some links back to your digital properties are fine, they shouldn't be in every tweet
- Stick around: With relationships and conversations so central to Twitter, it's best to use Twitter as part of an ongoing program rather than a one-off campaign

IDENTITY AGGREGATORS: PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Overview

Social sites keep proliferating, and it can be hard to keep track of which friends are where and what they're doing. To manage one's digital identity and those of one's friends, aggregators bring everything together in a single location. They're not meant to replace the individual properties, though some social networks and portals are also trying to be aggregators.

Key Aggregators

A complete review of aggregators could fill up several playbooks, so here are just a few of the most well-known aggregators:

FriendFeed

Launched in 2007, TechCrunch founder Michael Arrington blogged in October 2008 that "FriendFeed's simple approach may be the way to win," and prognosticated, "I have a feeling it will be a very popular service." It's on the right track, although it still hasn't become mainstream, reaching 927,000 unique users in March 2009 (Compete), up from 221,000 only one year earlier.

FriendFeed is in many ways a classic prototype for identity aggregation. Upon registering, users can select from more than 57 online services to add to their own profiles, mostly from social sites (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, digg and dozens of others) and select others that have feeds such as Amazon and Netflix. Users can also subscribe to others' feeds. FriendFeed has been a pioneer of categorization, allowing users to subscribe to hundreds of business associates and categorize them as such while keeping a few favorites in the "home" feed.

THE ARENAS

One added benefit of FriendFeed is its search engine. Users can search their friends' feeds, but even visitors who aren't registered can search all of the content and links shared from the search box on friendfeed.com. A marketer, for instance, can search for all references to his or her brands or competitors across all of FriendFeed users' aggregated feeds. Searching FriendFeed may bring up links and references on niche or smaller sites that a marketer could otherwise overlook.

Facebook

Facebook has evolved to serve as a hub for all social activities. The network's size – 200 million users and counting – makes it an instant leader among identity aggregation contenders. Facebook users can choose from roughly a dozen social sites to include in their profile feeds, including Google Reader, YouTube, Picasa, Flickr and Delicious. Separately, users can also share other accounts such as Twitter and FriendFeed on Facebook.

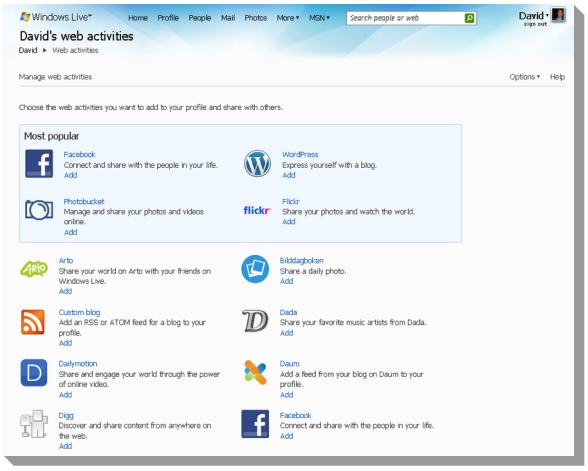
This turns the FriendFeed model on its head. Instead of a separate site designed to aggregate digital identities, the social network also serves as the aggregator. Given that Facebook is already one of the most popular Web destinations, it may eventually obviate the need for startups such as FriendFeed.

Quub

Unlike the other aggregation services, Quub focuses on syndication. The service, which launched in April 2009, offers a simple way to create status updates and syndicate them simultaneously to services such as LinkedIn, Twitter, Plaxo, Facebook, MySpace and Tumblr. Users can then see their friends' status updates. The goal here is simplicity. It's still questionable, however, to what degree status changes will apply equally well across many networks, as each network is designed for different purposes, and users will have a different network of friends on each.

Windows Live

As Microsoft evolves Windows Live, identity aggregation is starting to factor into it thanks to features launched in 2009. Now Live's millions of users can import as many as 30 "Web activities;" the most popular are Facebook, WordPress, Photobucket and Flickr. While Microsoft may not attract as much press attention as some of the newbies on the block, its identity aggregation feature likely has more users than FriendFeed, Pulse, Quub and other startups combined.



Windows Live's millions of users can import up to 30 Web activities.

Benefits for Marketers

Some identity aggregation services such as Windows Live are designed specifically for consumers, but others such as FriendFeed can be used by brands. Here's why marketers should consider using them:

- Marketers can join some of these identity aggregators to get in front of consumers, especially early adopters.
- Some of these services are searchable, so marketers can monitor what consumers are sharing there.
- Marketers only need to invest a minimal amount of time to set up aggregator accounts, with relatively little maintenance required to keep them current.

THE ARENAS

MOBILE: SOCIAL MARKETING TELLS STORIES ON THE ROAD

Overview

Mobile will play a big role in the future of media consumption. The signs are everywhere, from how the iPhone has increased mobile Web adoption to how the Kindle is changing consumers' relationship with print media. Mobile content production is in turn dramatically changing. The increasing volume of content from mobile social marketing creates two opportunities for marketers: it offers new tools for marketers who were already embracing such digital channels, and it also creates new ways to connect with target audiences.

Mobile Social Marketing Facts & Figures

- More than one billion iPhone applications have been downloaded (Apple, May 2009); 45% of iPhone owners have downloaded 16 or more applications (Compete, April 2009)

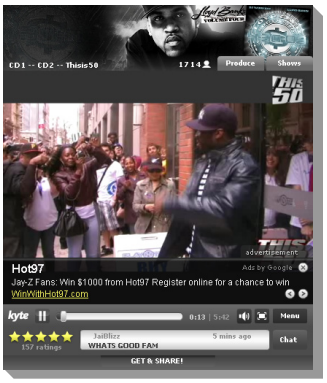
- eMarketer projects mobile social network users worldwide will climb from 243 million in 2009 to 803 million in 2012

Mobile Storytelling Applications

The options for producing mobile content keep multiplying. Sharing photos and videos from mobile devices continues to get easier, Twitter has created an entirely new channel for sharing mobile media and devices equipped with GPS that "know" the device owner's location at any given time are opening up new frontiers in mobile marketing.

Mobile Video

Mobile video sharing allows content producers to create immediate and potentially powerful connections with their audiences. One startup, Qik, focuses on live streaming from mobile devices, while Kyte works either live or by uploading video segments recorded on cell phones. The marketing opportunities offered by these providers are most ripe for entertainment brands to offer raw or behind-the-scenes footage. Rapper 50 Cent, for example, features Kyte's video player prominently on his site at Thisis50.com, and viewers can chat with each other as they watch (some of his streams have attracted hundreds of thousands of viewers).



Rapper 50 Cent shares mobile video clips via the Kyte player on his site.

Twitter Multimedia

Twitter is widely used with mobile devices, predominantly for sharing text and links, but new services make it increasingly easy to share multimedia. This generally applies to photos from camera phones, but expect more applications for video, as well.

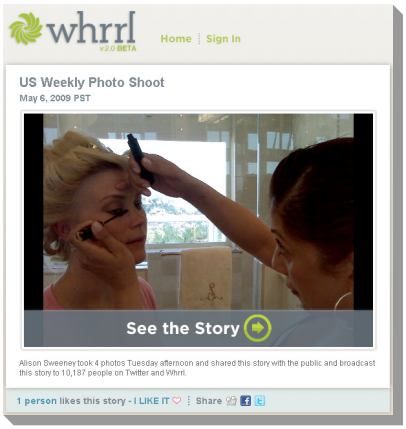
There's a great example of this experience in Waco, Texas, a good hundred miles south of Dallas and north of Austin where a local Best Buy is the closest spot to a technology hub in the area. Yet when visiting the Dr Pepper Museum and Free Enterprise Institute, signs next to exhibits point to "TwitPic Photo Ops." These unabashed plugs to stimulate Digital Word of Mouth perfectly bridge the real world and online experiences.

TwitPic signs at the Dr Pepper Museum encourage visitors to spread the word about exhibits through Twitter.

THE ARENAS

Location-Based Storytelling

The whole point of mobile content is that it can be produced and distributed from anywhere, so naturally the location where it's produced is often an integral element of its value. In light of that, a number of mobile social applications and sites are designed to help consumers share what's happening where they are, and also help connect them with others in that same area. Brightkite enables people to find their friends nearby when they check in with their location; foursquare turns visiting hot spots in a city into a game; and Whrrl allows consumers to share pictures and video in a more literal version of storytelling.



Whrrl lets users tell their stories through text and images.

Augmented Reality

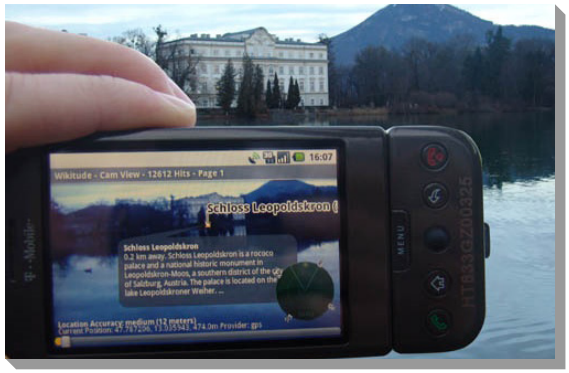
The hot futuristic buzzword of the year is "augmented reality," which describes any way that digital information is overlaid on the physical world. In one such example, the 2009 Topps Series 1 baseball cards include one special card in every pack that one can hold up to a webcam to play a 3D game with that pitcher or hitter online.

While much of the desktop Web's take on augmented reality currently falls under the category of "cool things you can do with a webcam," applying it to mobile devices brings more practical applications. For instance, the Austrian company Mobilizy developed the Google Android application Wikitude that brings up Wikipedia entries when scanning a camera phone over a physical point of interest. Viewing the Empire State Building through a camera phone, for example, would bring up the Wikipedia description of the landmark.

Baseball cards become 3D games with augmented reality. ***(Image source: IGN.com)***

This not only makes content consumption more powerful on mobile devices, but it can lead to far richer experiences when creating and sharing the content, as well.

The applications of such technologies are limitless, and they don't need to be confined to cell phones. Augmented reality technology could be built into binoculars so that when a bird is in view, information about the species appears. It could be incorporated into cameras so attendees at a baseball game can view stats of the players in view. Most of the practical examples should tie into phones, though, since those are the devices that people have on them most often.



Mobile devices may soon provide consumers with relevant information about landmarks and locations. ***(Via Mobilizy.com)***

Conclusion

Regardless of the platform or technology, it's important for marketers to fully understand the arena before entering it. From there, marketers can evaluate if and how their target customers are using it and whether it's a proper fit for meeting their brand's objectives.

4 BUILDING YOUR FAN BASE

BUILDING YOUR FAN BASE

PROMOTING YOUR SOCIAL MARKETING PROGRAMS

When building your fan base online, peer-to-peer recommendations are the gold standard for fueling awareness and visibility. If consumers are actually going to take the time to participate and become part of a branded, interactive experience, they are going to be looking to the people they trust most for a "stamp of approval." Have their friends already participated or become a member? Did the environment receive positive reviews?

Word of mouth recommendations can spread organically even without marketing support, however, there are several ways to jumpstart and spark engagement around your brand and community quickly: integration with traditional marketing channels, Digital Word of Mouth, branded integration and media buys. These promotional vehicles are especially useful for supporting campaigns, events or releases that have a short window of opportunity for participation.

INTEGRATING WITH TRADITIONAL MARKETING

Oftentimes marketers fall into the trap of using online advertising to support online experiences, while using traditional advertising to support offline campaigns. While there are certainly organizational challenges when asking your traditional ad agency to incorporate social marketing components into a 30-second spot, the efficiency gained by leveraging your investments, as well as the promotional benefits of providing a call to action that encourages consumers to engage more deeply, can offset the internal complexities. This opportunity is greatly enhanced when considering the increased number of people "co-viewing," watching TV while multitasking on their laptops.

Co-opting marketing efforts are both efficient for the marketer and useful to consumers because they don't have to search for your online presence or wait to stumble upon it – you've already let them know where they can interact with you online.

Summary:

There are a variety of ways for marketers to promote their social presence including, but not limited to:

- Integrating with traditional marketing
- Digital Word of Mouth
- Branded integration

Takeaway:

Developing a smart promotional strategy to spread the word about your social programs can mean the difference between hitting a home run to a packed house or striking out in an empty stadium.

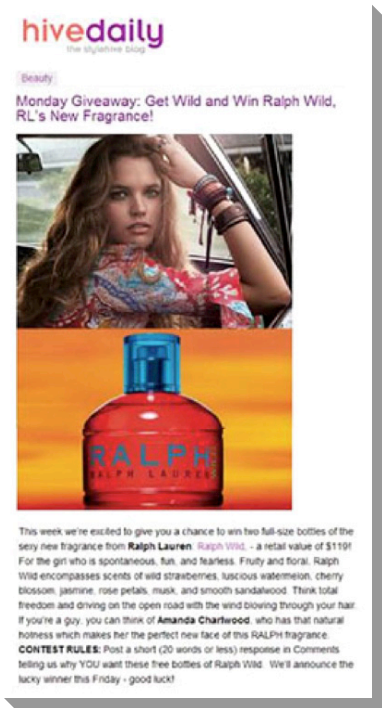
Product packaging and point-of-sale promotion also offer ripe opportunities for spreading the word about your social marketing efforts. Marketers can invite consumers to start a relationship right when they are in the midst of considering a purchase, or have already purchased the product. Consumers also benefit by knowing there is a place for them to engage and share experiences with other individuals who have purchased the same product.

A recent TV ad campaign by Vitamin Water asks consumers to weigh in on who is better - Kobe Bryant or Lebron James – by visiting the brand's Facebook Page.

BUILDING YOUR FAN BASE

DIGITAL WORD OF MOUTH

One of the most powerful ways to gain awareness of your brand is to receive positive endorsement from online influentials. Bloggers, editors, forum moderators and microbloggers abound, offering a point of view on any topic under the sun. It's beneficial for your brand to build relationships with those individuals covering subjects contextually relevant to your product offering. If your brand or community can grab the attention of an influential blogger and receive a glowing endorsement, this recognition can lead to a ripple effect of favorability throughout the blogosphere.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Beauty

Monday Giveaway: Get Wild and Win Ralph Wild, RL's New Fragrance!

This week we're excited to give you a chance to win two full-size bottles of the sexy new fragrance from **Ralph Lauren**: Ralph Wild, - a retail value of $110! For the girl who is spontaneous, fun, and fearless. Fruity and floral, Ralph Wild encompasses scents of wild strawberries, luscious watermelon, cherry blossom, jasmine, rose petals, musk, and smooth sandalwood. Think total freedom and driving on the open road with the wind blowing through your hair. If you're a guy, you can think of **Amanda Charlwood**, who has that natural hotness which makes her the perfect new face of this RALPH fragrance. **CONTEST RULES:** Post a short (20 words or less) response in Comments telling us why YOU want these free bottles of Ralph Wild. We'll announce the lucky winner this Friday - good luck!

This Ralph Lauren Wild editorial placement on popular blog Stylehive was a direct result of a Digital Word of Mouth program.

Relationships aren't built overnight, though. They are cultivated and earned. Brand representatives can earn this trust by taking the time to truly understand the bloggers' points of view, actively reading their material and finding ways to start an exchange of information on topics that will be valuable to the bloggers' readers. The most successful Digital Word of Mouth programs start with transparent, authentic and personalized communication between brand representatives and bloggers. Exclusive content, access to talent or new product lines, sampling opportunities and interviews are just some of the ways to make a lasting impact with online influencers.

For example, last year Ralph Lauren approached 360i to create buzz around the launch of Ralph Wild, a fruity fragrance aimed at young females ages 15-25. 360i crafted a six-week program, which began by compiling an extensive list of sites and blogs to engage in a dialogue about the fragrance launch. In addition to extensive blogger outreach, product samples were sent to select sites, resulting in reviews by influential fragrance, beauty and fashion bloggers. Coordinated contests and product giveaways on high profile sites such as Stylehive, Styledash, Bunnyshop, She Knows and Seventeen Magazine served to further extend the awareness and excitement about the new fragrance, engaging consumers on a more personal level with the brand.

BRANDED INTEGRATION

Providing value to consumers is a critical component to achieving social marketing success. But building a valuable experience can be time consuming and expensive - plus, after you've built it, you still need to invest in promotion to develop an audience. However, there are many content providers that have invested in product development and audience aggregation. Integrating your brand with a program that reaches your target audience, helps achieve your objectives and ties into your brand promise can be a very effective way to engage an instant audience, while providing utility and value to the customer.

The most successful brand integrations reach a similar target audience as the promoted product and offer an opportunity to truly integrate beyond the banner. 360i has executed similar

ARMOUR

HAUNTED HOUSE

AVAILABLE FOR A LIMITED TIME ONLY!

Purchase and inhabit a haunted house to foil your enemies when they attack you! You know the rules - without an invitation, Vampires can't enter another house. But you can enter your own house into the 'Home Is Where the Haunt Is' Contest for the chance to win $25K! For details, sink your teeth into FearNet.com.

Price: **100 Vampire bucks®**
Uses: **75**

Works on: **All players**
Must be used within 30 days of purchase.

Buy Haunted House!

A FEARnet branded-weapon was integrated into the popular Facebook application Zombies, Vampires, Weapons and Slayer.

BUILDING YOUR FAN BASE

strategies for a number of marketers, including FEARnet, who wanted to promote their online programming during Halloween. The company partnered with the popular Zombies, Vampires, Weapons and Slayer application on Facebook to create a FEARnet-branded weapon for users to protect themselves during game play.

Branded integration can also be effective when brands want to generate awareness of a promotion rather quickly, but don't have the time or resources to build an interactive experience like a widget or application from scratch and then wait to promote and build a following.

IGNITING DISTRIBUTION

One of a social marketer's biggest fears is launching a program only to find that no one ends up using it because no one has heard of it. You could have the most engaging program or application on the Internet, but due to market saturation, the launch could be a tree falling in a forest. Instead of crossing your fingers and hoping that a program goes "viral," there are some performance marketing opportunities out there that will guarantee a set number of users.

Some vendors offer consumers virtual currency (e.g. points that can be used to advance within a game) in exchange for downloading or interacting with a marketer's program. This approach can lead consumers to abruptly stop interacting with the marketer's program or application after they have received their incentive. That may be okay if your objective is to quickly gain awareness for a campaign-based promotion such as a movie release. However, if longevity is part of your objective, you may want consider working with vendors who promote social programs within contextually relevant environments and aim for organic installs.

MEDIA BUYS

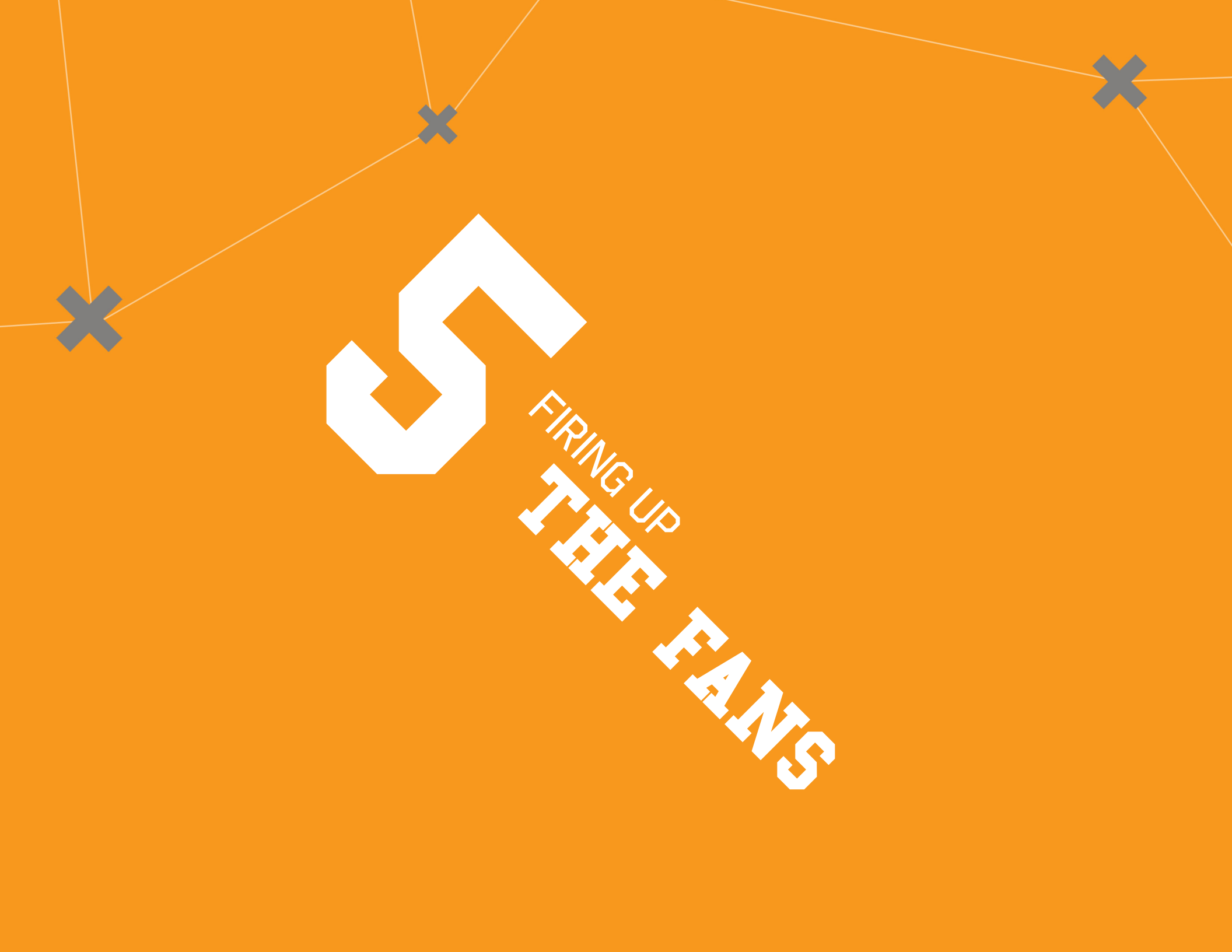
When building a presence within a social networking community, it's important to let the community know that you're there. During the planning process, brands can set aside a portion of their budget for promotional media to jumpstart awareness. The majority of the leading social networking communities, including Facebook and MySpace, have targeting capabilities that allow brands to run ads based on user interests. For example, in promoting Paramount Home Entertainment's Godfather IQ quiz on Facebook, 360i ran ads targeting the hundreds of thousands of people who mentioned that they were Godfather fans on their Facebook profiles.

An ad promoting the Godfather IQ quiz on Facebook, was developed in support of "The Godfather" trilogy DVD release.

In general though, the advertising model on social networks is fairly immature. While premium CPM-based ad opportunities are available, many advertising opportunities on social networks are sold using a performance model, giving brands the flexibility to pay only for those consumers who are interested in engaging with their social marketing program. Before brands begin fleshing out their social networking concepts, it's helpful to get a deeper understanding of what promotional vehicles are available on the selected platforms and how much budget is available for them.

CONCLUSION

There are a variety of ways to promote your social marketing presence and increase consumer engagement with your programs. However, promotion of your brand's presence, while great for increasing participation and awareness, should not be confused with nurturing a community to foster loyalty to your brand and your social programs.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FIRING UP
THE FANS

FIRING UP THE FANS

NURTURING A SOCIAL COMMUNITY TO BUILD DEEPER RELATIONSHIPS

Whether a marketer builds a community using some of the techniques discussed in the previous section, or works with organic communities that have arisen around a product, nurturing, fueling and engaging with communities can produce a host of benefits. This is often described as "community management," but that term can conjure images of top-down moderation and rigid control over a community. A more appropriate term might be "community nurturing," since a free and open relationship with communities produces greater benefits, including:

- Increased engagement leading to greater likelihood of endorsement
- Increased brand loyalty by uniting the user community in advocacy and defense of the brand
- Increased size and activity of the fan community
- Real-time insight into how customers perceive and talk about your brand
- Focus groups where you can ask your customers to weigh in on new promotions, messaging, ideation and more to help inform product development. This also provides customers with sense of ownership in the development process, which builds long-term loyalty and trust. This can be accomplished either via public communities or even inviting some of your core customers into a private community for deeper access and insights.
- Customer care, either by directly addressing consumer complaints or giving advocates a platform to actively help others in the community

Summary:

Actively nurturing the community or fan base you've built can lead to:

- Deeper brand loyalty
- More frequent, helpful customer feedback

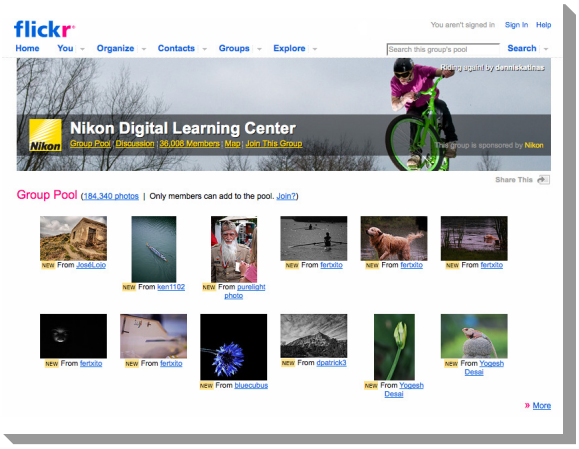
Takeaway:

Retaining customers after you've driven them to your social experience is critical. It's not enough to just drive people to your social programs – you have to continually provide value to them once they've arrived to keep the conversations flowing and nurture deeper relationships that provide benefit to both you and your customers.

COMMUNITY NURTURING IN ACTION

Nikon on Flickr

Sometimes the best customer service infrastructure can be a community built up around a brand that helps consumers help each other. Nikon's Flickr community, called the Nikon Digital Learning Center, invites photographers to share their tips and learn from Nikon professionals and industry experts. Community members can also submit photos and start discussions around



The Nikon Digital Learning Center helps customers help each other.

FIRING UP THE FANS

various photographic techniques. The community allows the company to evangelize its product in an appropriate forum, and because they're providing enormous value to amateur photographers, the evangelism isn't seen as overly self-promotional. The company also shares information about its new camera lines and lenses, but doesn't limit the conversation solely to Nikon products.

Soliciting feedback isn't always just a means to improve customer experience with existing products – it can also aid the development of entirely new products by identifying heretofore unknown consumer demands.

Starbucks' My Starbucks Idea

My Starbucks Idea lets consumers submit their ideas for improving the brand's food, drinks and retail outlets, and enables other consumers to comment and vote on their suggestions. Starbucks then puts the best ideas into action and showcases them on the site. Several consumer ideas have been put into practice, including a wider selection of breakfast food options.

My Starbucks Idea gives consumers a forum for suggestions and discussions.

Blizzard's "World of Warcraft" Community

Some branded communities can serve to capture all the benefits listed above at once – for example, Blizzard's branded community around its enormously successful online game "World of Warcraft." The site serves as a space for players to help one another hone their skills, provide feedback on game updates, request new content or features, discuss the game they love and become more engaged with the brand - leading them to evangelize it to their friends.

In addition to active discussion forums, Blizzard uses WorldofWarcraft.com to highlight community members and the content they produce – front page features include a "screenshot of the day," top fan art, and spotlights on independent fan sites.

But building such an active and dedicated community requires constant oversight – especially when the community has such a passionate and vocal audience. Blizzard has numerous full-time Community Managers (affectionately referred to as "Blues" because of the blue font color they post in) who interact with community members on a daily basis - disseminating news and content, correcting misinformation, allaying concerns and when absolutely necessary, ejecting disruptive community members and closing unproductive discussions.

GATHERING AND REACTING TO FEEDBACK

The benefits of a well-nurtured community are numerous, but brands should be cognizant of potential negative ramifications.

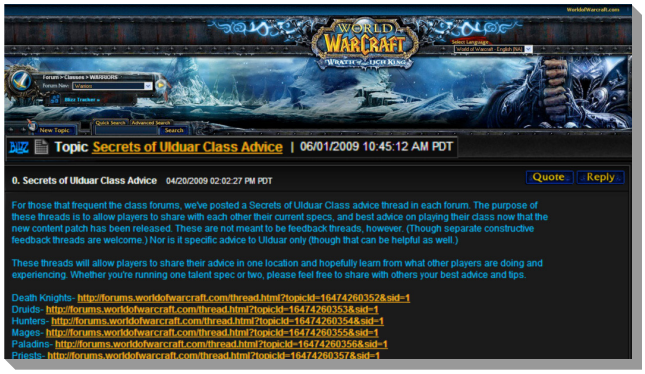
Customer feedback is one of the natural byproducts of an active community - consumers openly talk about what they like and don't like about brands, and are only too happy to provide feedback - negative and positive - free of charge. When people have an open forum to share their opinions, negative feedback often arises, and it's recommended that brands have a plan in place about how – and when – to respond to that feedback. More on responding to negative feedback is discussed in the next section on page 46.

FIRING UP THE FANS

CONCLUSION

There is a tremendous amount of potential creative energy that exists inside any community, whether it's built by a brand or organically occurring. Harnessing that energy can be enormously beneficial, providing marketers with feedback, fan-created content and improved customer service and engagement.

By giving customers a voice and a platform to connect around their brands, marketers can simultaneously connect customers to brands and learn valuable insights about their customer base. Keep in mind that when customers are given a platform to speak directly to the brand, it's possible that the volume of replies will be suprisingly large. Smart marketers will ensure that processes are in place to address all feedback.



Blizzard's "World of Warcraft" community attracts more than one million visitors per month.

6 PREVENTING & MANAGING SOCIAL MARKETING FUMBLES

PREVENTING AND MANAGING SOCIAL MARKETING FUMBLES

HOW TO AVOID MISSTEPS AND ENSURE THEY DON'T COST YOU THE GAME

Conversations in social media often reflect discussions already happening every day at playgrounds, cafes, water coolers and barstools around the world. But social media is so much more powerful than the water cooler conversations. Why? The ripple effect is much easier to achieve. With one click, a video can be posted to your Facebook Page, where all of your closest friends can view it. And since the content is easy to share, this can spark an amplification effect across thousands of your friends' friends. Scale like that just can't be achieved at a water cooler, even with the juiciest of rumor.

While social marketing can be great for positive virality, it can also spread negativity about your brand far faster than traditional media or offline word of mouth. This makes a proactive and prepared crisis communication strategy critical for any brand playing in social marketing arenas.

Summary:

Develop a proactive plan before a fumble happens to avoid missteps and control fallout should one occur.

- Regularly monitor conversations to spot issues before they become widespread
- Include customers in online discussions about potential brand or product changes
- If an issue arises, be proactive and engage in the environment where it's being discussed

Takeaway:

Crisis management is a critical part of any well-executed social program. A poorly handled fumble can lead to disaster, but a thoughtful response to issues that arise can actually lead to greater customer appreciation and loyalty.

GATHERING AND REACTING TO FEEDBACK

Listen:

While important during times of crisis, listening to your customers is just as important – if not more so – in times of calm. Addressing the concerns of your audience early on can help ensure a small spark doesn't ignite a full-blown fire.

Inquire:

Using the Internet as a focus group can help inform opinions before launching a new product. Marketers can learn from the mistakes of Tropicana. The brand did plenty of focus group testing before releasing their new packaging earlier this year, and yet a widespread consumer revolt ensued after the launch, resulting in a 20% drop in sales post-rebranding. Said Neil Campbell, President of Tropicana North America: "What we didn't get was the passion this very loyal small group of consumers have. That wasn't something that came out in the research." It would have been fairly inexpensive to conduct online testing with enthusiasts pre-launch. Bringing them into the process ahead of time also increases the likelihood of them becoming evangelists for the brand, campaign or product rollout.

Lay Foundation:

Set up your organizational structure now for what may come later. Social marketing doesn't fit squarely within organizational paradigms as it spans so many different

SOCIAL MARKETING FUMBLES

disciplines – media, creative, PR, Web development, customer care and event marketing, just to name a few. Building a social marketing council comprised of members of disparate teams can ensure cross-departmental learnings, best practices and case studies. Also, it can facilitate discussions between council members that can lead to innovations and breakthrough cross-departmental programs. This council can also develop a plan for rapid-response crisis communications situations, ensuring risky issues are addressed in the most appropriate manner.

Many marketing pundits pummeled brands like Motrin for failing to react quickly to critiques when they were spreading like wildfire across the blogosphere. The chaos of the online environment coupled with short deadlines greatly exacerbates the risk of making bad decisions. Putting the right tools in place before a crisis strikes can not only mitigate the risks of viral, negative spread, but can also set a structure in place that can lead to longer-term brand preference and advocacy.

Moms took to Twitter to express their outrage over Motrin's ad campaign.

IF DISASTER STRIKES…

Does this mean control of the brand is lost forever? While some control has been ceded to consumers, that doesn't mean you should throw up your hands and hope for the best. In fact, active management of communities and your brand's presence in social spaces is prudent to prevent disaster before it strikes and to mitigate the effects if one should hit. Here are some tips on what to do if disaster strikes:

Listen:
Through the discovery phase, we emphasized the value of listening to your customers. Active listening will help identify issues early on, but sizing up the audience and each commenter's sphere of influence is even more important to qualify the potential ramifications and either amplify or quash discussions from there.

Address:
When an issue arises, it often takes some time to figure out the best communications plan - and you can add to that the time required to secure buy-in from all necessary parties. The bigger the organization, the more complicated the communications plan. Lack of responsiveness only makes a brand seem more out of touch. But even if you don't have an answer, address consumers to let them know you're on it, and tell them when you'll get back to them next. Converse with them in their environment. If your consumers are crying bloody murder on YouTube, then make a video to respond and post it there, plus seed it across other user-generated sites. If they're lambasting you on Twitter, then address them on Twitter.

Motrin failed by not responding quickly to the barrage of negative feedback across many social properties, especially Twitter, when they ran a commercial where Motrin likened a baby sling to a fashion accessory and said that while toting the baby can be tough, it "totally makes me look like an official mom."

SOCIAL MARKETING FUMBLES

Moms were in an uproar all over Twitter, but Motrin chose to respond by updating only their Web site, missing out on a key opportunity to connect and reconcile with their audience where the complaint originated. In addition, Motrin exposed the issue to a broader audience than would have seen their response solely on Twitter.

Speak the Language:
When addressing your audience in a user-controlled environment, speak the language of your audience while retaining the voice of your brand. If you're known as a playful brand, then get more comfortable. But if you're a financial services or insurance company, then retain your voice while keeping to the protocol and best practices of the specific social environment.

CONCLUSION

When one person has a good experience with a brand, the viral effect can be amazing. At the same time, a shared bad experience can damage a brand's hard earned equity. Putting the right process in place before a problem occurs can mitigate damage and even promote increased advocacy when you show consumers you are ready, willing and prepared to handle any situation.

7 KEEPING SCORE

KEEPING SCORE

HOW TO KNOW HOW YOU MEASURE UP

Measuring the impact of social marketing can appear to be exceptionally daunting, but it doesn't have to be. Even though there is an abundance of data that can be measured, that doesn't mean that it should all be measured, let alone weighted equally.

Addressing measurement for your program requires answering six questions:

1. WHO?

Learn more about your audience – who saw the program and engaged with it? By conducting an audience analysis, you can understand the demographic, geographic and psychographic makeup of those who engaged with your brand or campaign. Is this who you wanted to reach when you outlined your initial goals? If so, what learnings can be applied to the next program? If not, what caused the campaign to resonate with a different type of audience? What can be learned from that?

Sizing the audience is just as important. How many people were exposed to the program, How many chose to interact and to what degree? How do you compare impressions and engagement across channels? Creating a standard currency with which you can evaluate programs in context can help gain a better perspective on performance.

2. WHAT?

Measuring how your audience engaged with your program can be a bit more intricate. Sure, you can measure number of engagements, but should a video play and a video rating be measured equally?

Summary:

Social marketing can be measured, but the metrics used must be tailored to your program and objectives.

- Identify metrics that will help evaluate or improve your program
- Weight metrics to measure engagement
- Tie it back to traditional brand metrics

Takeaway:

Develop a social marketing scorecard that is unique to your brand's program objectives and determine how these metrics can be translated and compared against other online and offline media.

Sample Scorecard	
Action	**Weighting***
Impression	1x
View video	3x
Click through	4x
Rate video	4x
Share video	10x
Embed video	20x
Create video	100x

Creating a custom weighted scorecard for social marketing can help measure engagement.

*Sample weighting only. This is customized for each marketer and is tied to program objectives.

KEEPING SCORE

How does that compare to someone who creates a custom video as a result of being exposed to a program? Further, how does this compare to someone exposed to a pre-roll video spot, a banner ad or a 30-second TV spot? Creating a custom weighted scorecard for social marketing can help measure engagement.

Components for engagement can include:

- Video plays
- Forwards
- Polls
- Time spent
- Clicks
- Installs
- Share/passalong
- Comments
- Ratings
- Contest entries
- Content creation

Each of these measurable components contributes to your campaign objectives in different ways.

3. WHERE?

Perhaps you ran a program across Facebook, MyYearbook, Gaia and a Digital Word of Mouth campaign across top blogs and found that the total number of people engaging was phenomenal, but it was all concentrated on Gaia. Understanding where your audience is congregating and engaging is critical for optimizing your social marketing program in real-time, as well as culling learnings for future programs.

Another component to consider is measurement of your brand-influenced chatter (e.g. those conversations generated by a word of mouth campaign or found on a brand-moderated Facebook Page) as compared with organic chatter. Measuring linguistic analysis and sentiment can help inform whether or not the marketer-influenced chatter caused people to use specific "on brand" words or associations, increase advocacy, etc. In fact, we have seen comparable lift in positive sentiment and "on brand" advocacy from brand-influenced conversations as compared with organic chatter.

4. WHEN?

Factors beyond your social marketing program can heavily influence the outcome. Online conversations often revolve around offline brand activities, such as chatter about Super Bowl ads. Other times, it's tied to news or seasonal events (swine flu was the most popular discussion topic on Twitter in May 2009).

But what about instances when a campaign "goes viral" after the promotion is over? Time is still of the essence. When the timing is right, and the passalong value starts to occur with enough time to take action, this can make a tremendous impact on marketer objectives.

5. WHY?

Quantity of conversation is certainly important, but quality can provide the kind of actionable analysis that helps you understand what drove consumers to participate with your brand. Just as in the discovery phase, performing a KCI℠ (Key Conversation Indicators) analysis can help you better understand what people are saying about your brand, your social marketing footprint and your competitors' brands. Measuring volume, sentiment and sphere of influence can also help determine campaign success.

6. HOW?

How can social media metrics tie back into overall branding initiatives? How can marketers gauge effectiveness as compared to a TV commercial or a billboard? To understand these things, it's important to measure the following:

Before, during and after: Measuring qualitative and quantitative data, sentiment and competitive mindshare throughout the campaign can help gauge effectiveness of the campaign as it integrates throughout the marketing spectrum.

KEEPING SCORE

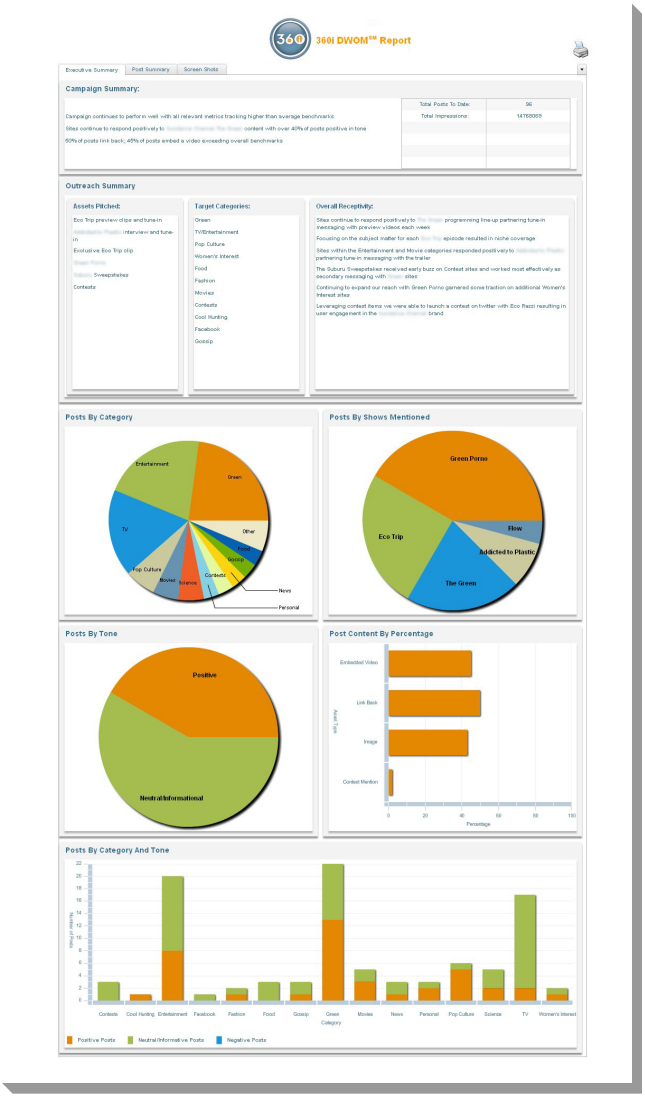
Adapt traditional metrics: How many TV commercials during Rachel Maddow's show are equal to a blog post on the Huffington Post? If CMOs have a formula that measures quantity of TV exposures against brand health measures or favorability, then how can marketers adapt that to an Internet equivalent, whereby a bilateral discussion can ensue from an engagement?

Integrating into existing customer research: Many marketers already conduct focus groups and surveys to find out how their customers were made aware of a product, or what may have influenced their decision. Incorporating answers like "from a blog" or "from a friend online" or "from a social network" can help measure the impact on awareness, purchase intent or even sales.

Building indices: Each campaign or marketing program is comprised of many measurable components that, to varying degrees, contribute to achieving your marketing objectives. For example, impressions, video plays and widget placements can all be counted, but they represent very different levels of customer engagement. Building an index that accurately represents the contribution of each component to an overall objective provides the basis of effective benchmarking and intelligent decision making.

CONCLUSION

Ultimately, measurement boils down to gauging success against marketing objectives and developing easy-to-understand proxies for those metrics to evaluate the contribution of individual marketing components to the overall success of the program. It's not about any one lever – it's about making the levers work in tandem to produce metrics that gauge effectiveness against pre-determined objectives.



A robust Digital Word of Mouth measurement analysis, as seen here in 360i's Social Marketing Reporting Dashboard, can help marketers assess program goals.