



KOOLRYDING WITH INSTAGRAM

Using Instagram to build social media presence and extend market reach.

ABSTRACT

By using the right strategies, Instagram may be used to build community, fortify existing customer relationships and leverage them to reach new customers and grow KoolRyde's market share.

Risto Rushford

BA 205 Business Communication

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As society grows connected more and more by mobile phone and social networking, businesses that are seeking a desirable location and hoping for plentiful business from passersby on the street are still missing a critical element of a good business plan. People are now better connected and more mobile than ever before. Having a well-developed website and/or Facebook are steps in the right direction, however with the advent of the WEB 2.0 of user generated content, interactive social media is solidifying as a crucial aspect of any good business strategy.

The primary goal of advertising in this new environment is to spread a business's reputation by electronic word of mouth (eWOM), which Ismail Erkan, of Brunel Business School at Brunel University London explains, centers on the conversations that internet users have regarding products and services:

They provide an opportunity for people to share and exchange their opinions and experiences regarding brands with their friends on the internet through written texts, pictures or videos... In addition, consumers increasingly apply social media in an effort to acquire information relating to the brands they do not know very well because the information learnt by friends and acquaintances is perceived as credible and trustworthy (Erkan 1437).

Robust businesses are using a variety of strategies to advertise themselves in today's marketplace. Pinterest is great for craft and Do-It-Yourself styled businesses, and the Japanese LINE app is becoming increasingly popular with restaurants and many other businesses types. Individual celebrities and high profile business owners are using Twitter as a favorite way to engage their fans. But what social media are being used by businesses that encourage more active lifestyles?

Rising in popularity among web 2.0 applications in the connected marketplace is Instagram, particularly among people seeking to live adventurous and active lifestyles. Moreover, Instagram is a photo sharing service, allowing customers to visually display their experiences and satisfaction with products. Instagram enhances online presence and identity for businesses and consumers alike, and in connecting the physical and digital realms, it is also bringing richness to interactions between them (Ting et al. 18).

By adopting Instagram as a social media marketing tool, KoolRyde, Inc will be able to bring that richness and connectedness into its own customer relations! Businesses that are using Instagram to connect with their customers are building a loyal following among their customers and their friends. What's more, they are successfully encouraging their customers to share their experiences with the business and its products. In so doing, these customers are influencing their friends and acquaintances on their decisions to buy from these businesses as well. By holding photo contests and offering prizes or discounts for participation, KoolRyde can bring its word of mouth advertising to a whole new level by co-opting its customers into a win-win situation for both parties.

INTRODUCTION

With KoolRyde's specially designed, adjustable bike seats, combined with Portland's bike-friendly culture and scenic geography, a perfect opportunity presents itself: encouraging customers to photo blog about their bicycling experiences, and share them with hashtags attributing the experience to their use of KoolRyde's unique products!

By encouraging customers to follow KoolRyde on Instagram, and to post content about their use of KoolRyde's products, KoolRyde will be effectively expanding its reach and influence to new markets and demographics.

MARKETING BY PHOTO SHARING

KoolRyde, Inc has some unique products, the KoolRyde Ultra, Race and Mini, with which existing customers have been taking their bicycling experiences to a whole new level thanks to the economy, comfort and adjustable fit, and male or female versions of their designs:

- The **KoolRyde Ultra**, a local favorite thanks to its adjustable fit, is enabling cyclists to take longer rides through town and into the outlying area, embarking on new cycling adventures that they'd hesitate to take before due to uncomfortable seating.
- The **KoolRyde Race** has quickly become popular in the bicycle racing community with its sleek, aerodynamic and comfortable design.
- And finally, the **KoolRyde Mini**, the Ultra version for young cyclists, is in the process of quickly taking over the Portland market for seats fitted to riders in the age groups between 7-16 years of age.

In addition to the six seat designs, KoolRyde provides self-powered safety lights, which eliminate the hassle of needing carry around spare batteries when riding at night.

Each of these products holds the potential to grow a strong following through a service like Instagram. For a small but growing business like KoolRyde, Instagram provides an ideal way to engage in growing its brands by saving costs while building stronger relationships with its customers.

Beyond the utility as a marketing tool, Instagram is useful in building a sense of community between the KoolRyde and its customers. The business may use it to follow customers who are actively posting about their experiences while using their product. Additionally, KoolRyde can use it to support customers and other Instagram users whose activities align with KoolRyde's vision of getting people outside and riding their bikes:

... Social media also provide the marketers an easier way to understand their customers. In the case of Instagram, leaving comments and receiving comments on the photo posts can gain more feedback from the customers on the product. Followers are often interested to see the interaction between the organization and the users, so being attentive to the comments would help in improving the relationship with customers (Huey et al. 4).

Building community and rapport in the local cycling community are great benefits to using Instagram. With the right strategies, it can also be powerfully leveraged for advertising purposes.

When creating a social media identity, the first thing to do is to establish a brand identity and reputation. KoolRyde is already developing a following by producing superior products and maintaining a Facebook page. Because Instagram has been bought by Facebook, it is simple to link the two platforms. With each

Instagram post, KoolRyde has the option of making the post automatically to its Facebook page as well! This is a useful feature that many users are utilizing to reduce the complexity of maintaining multiple social media presences.

By encouraging existing customers to post about their experiences of using the KoolRyde seats on Instagram, the company will be off to a good start in building its Instagram community. Outlined below are five creative strategies which KoolRyde may consider using to grow it further:

1. Hold a photo-blogging contest, in which customers are encouraged to post photos or series of photos using a brand related hash tag. Then, the business owner may either choose her favorite photo with that hashtag, or effectively create a poll by announcing that the photo with the most likes will win a prize!
2. Offer promotional discounts to customers who make relevant posts with a promotional hashtag. While like the previous strategy, this one will encourage customers who might not have as many opportunities to go on grand cycling adventures but still enjoy using or are interested in trying out KoolRyde's products, to participate in growing the brand while benefiting from the interaction.
3. Follow and promote consumer generated content which is in alignment with the vision, goals and image of the KoolRyde. Consider offering sponsorships to local athlete cyclists.
4. Hold a campaign to promote rider safety by using the safety lights at night. Many cyclists have experienced the frustration of having their safety light's battery die while out riding in the dark. This would be an excellent way to promote the self-generated safety lights!
5. Post directly about products and services offered by KoolRyde. Some potential customers might simply not know what great products are being offered.

Strategies 1-4 are emotional or transformational in nature, by appealing to the customer's aspirations and desire to share about their experiences. The final strategy, while seemingly more mundane, is more functional in nature but may also be geared to such purposes as showing the unique benefits of the brand or its superiority to similar products (Ashley and Tuten 18-19).

RECOMMENDATION

By adopting Instagram as a marketing tool, KoolRyde will be able to grow its social media presence by effectively harnessing eWOM. By following the strategies outlined above, or devising similar strategies, it may expand its market reach to new levels by engaging and encouraging customers to share their own experiences which are being made possible by using KoolRyde brand products. By actively engaging with customers by using Instagram, KoolRyde will ensure loyalty and attract new customers who are eager to share their own experiences and benefit from establishing a relationship with the company.

WORKS CITED

- Ashley, C. and Tuten, T. "Creative Strategies in Social Media Marketing: An Exploratory Study of Branded Social Content and Consumer Engagement." *Psychology & Marketing*. vol. 32, no. 1, 2015, pp 15-27. Tracy Tuten, www.tracytuten.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/Ashley_et_al-2015-Psychology_Marketing.pdf. Accessed 05 Mar. 2015.
- Erkan, I. "Electronic Word of Mouth on Instagram: Customers' Engagements with Brands in Different Sectors." *International Journal of Management, Accounting and Economics*, vol. 2, no. 12, 2015, pp 1435-1444. Research Gate, www.researchgate.net/publication/292991785_Electronic_Word_of_Mouth_on_Instagram_Customers%27_Engagements_with_Brands_in_Different_Sectors. Accessed 05 Mar. 2015.
- Huey, L. S. and Yazdanifard, R. "How Instagram Can Be Used as a Tool in Social Network Marketing." *Center for Southern New Hampshire University (SNHU) Programs HELP College of Art and Technology*. 2014. Research Gate, www.researchgate.net/profile/Sook_Lim/publication/265377226_How_Instagram_can_be_used_as_a_tool_in_social_networking_marketing/links/54b512ec0cf2318f0f97195d.pdf. Accessed 05 Mar. 2015
- Ting, H., et al. "Beliefs about the Use of Instagram: An Exploratory Study." *International Journal of Business and Innovation*. vol. 2, no. 2, 2015, pp 15-31. Research Gate, www.researchgate.net/profile/Hiram_Ting/publication/272026006_Beliefs_about_the_Use_of_Instagram_An_Exploratory_Study/links/54d9749c0cf24647581e492e.pdf. Accessed 05 Mar. 2015.