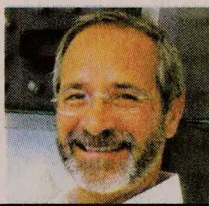


# Good social media strategy drives good results

**S**uppose you wanted to communicate with a good friend. Would you put a billboard in his front yard? Obviously not, but that simple metaphor illustrates why most businesses fail to see results from their social media effort – they shout, they don’t listen and they are ignored.

## EXPERT'S CORNER

Robert Rippee



Social media today is defined by an array of platforms including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Google+ and others. Although these platforms are simple, the strategy behind their use by a business can be elusive and problematic.

Unfortunately for you, there is no simple solution to optimizing a social media strategy and generating an immediate result. To use social media effectively, you must understand it and have a well-designed content strategy that you execute over time.

Social media is built on conversations. Those conversations take place one-to-one between your business and a single customer, repeated tens of thousands or millions of times.

Imagine a funnel as a theoretical model for how we journey along



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a path to buy goods or services. Social media works in the top of this funnel. There are many different iterations but essentially the theory describes the customer’s journey from awareness to interest to desire to action.

Social media works best in generating awareness and interest in your company’s products or services. Although some types of business can

drive sales (the bottom end of the funnel) with social media, for most businesses social media will be most effective at the top of the funnel, generating awareness or interest in your business.

How do you approach mastering social media? Here are some questions and answers to guide you:

**1. Who is that person on social media and what would “they” want to talk to you about?**

If your business is a law firm, it’s unlikely that “that person” is a 22-year-old who wants to talk about Las Vegas nightclubs. However, that 22-year-old’s mother, who owns a dry cleaning store, may be very interested in hearing about tax benefits for the installation of light-emitting diode lights in her business. And if your law firm specializes in tax practice, well, I think you get my point. The conversation must be relevant to the person you are targeting and about a topic that is relevant to your business.

**2. Remember who is in charge.**

The consumer. Your follower. They have absolute control over the effectiveness of your strategy and your data will prove it. Nobody shares your post? Nobody likes your video? They have just sent you a message: It’s irrelevant to them and they ignored it. With social media, you have the enormous benefit of a data-rich environment. You will know within seconds whether a post worked or not and then what to do next.

The most important social media measure is engagement. Engagement for Facebook for example is the combination of likes, comments and shares. Many companies make the mistake of focusing only on the number of likes. The current thinking is instead to focus on all three. Many leading companies accept fewer likes for higher levels of comments and

**RIPPEE**

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## Does social media really work? Ask customers

BY ANN FRIEDMAN  
LAS VEGAS BUSINESS PRESS

Weeding through the world of social media can be challenging.

It’s also one of the most rewarding marketing strategies a business has at its fingertips, say Las Vegas who are on the front lines.

“A lot of people try to do too much,” said Jesse Olive, Coldwell Banker’s director of marketing. “We wanted to do a few things the right way.”

At Coldwell Banker, Olive is in charge of the real estate company’s presence on various social media platforms such as YouTube, Google Plus, Facebook and Twitter.

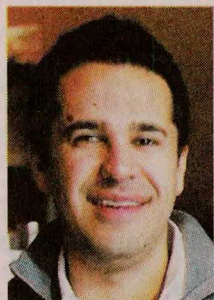
He said Coldwell Banker primarily uses third party content and asks its agents to share it on social media in an effort to reach more people.

“We want our agents to operate their own sphere of influence so they can post original content and link back to our content,” Olive said. “That way we can look at who is going on our website and what they do while they’re on the website. We want to be the source for relevant information regarding real estate.”

When drafting a social media cam-



Jesse Olive



Ben Sabouri



Iddo Gavish

paign, Olive said he pinpoints the overall goal and how to measure its success.

“If you’re not measuring the success than you lose your visibility as to how successful your efforts are,” he said.

According to Olive, social media campaigns should drive user action. In Coldwell Banker’s case, he wants users to sign-up for a home evaluation and to receive the real estate company’s monthly reports.

“We want to capture as much information as possible, which is what you should do on top of getting your message out there,” he said.

Facebook and LinkedIn, Olive said, have sophisticated reporting systems that measure everything from total clicks on a certain post to how many

people visited the website.

For \$100 a month, Coldwell Banker is able to boost its posts on social media so more people see them.

“We’re trying to build the number

of likes on our Facebook page, which is a long-term thing and doesn’t require you to be too aggressive,” he said. “You don’t need a huge social media budget to be effective.”

According to Jeff Breeden, CPA at Las Vegas-based Stewart Archibald & Barney, LLP, the million-dollar question is how businesses can measure their return on investment on social media marketing.

“I believe that social media marketing must be used in conjunction with other marketing and public relations efforts, but it has proven difficult to track direct ROI on social media efforts alone,” he said. “It’s just another tool in our marketing tool box that must be used today to be relevant in the competitive business environment.”

Breeden said that businesses connecting with customers should be where their customers are.

“Twitter, SnapChat, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest and others — some of which aren’t even invented yet — could all possibly be part of your strategy to connect with people that drive your business,” he said.

At MTO Café, owner Ben Sabouri said the restaurant has been on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter since it first opened downtown on South Main Street in October 2013.

“We started on social media from the time we opened and overtime we’ve developed a loyal and engaged fan base,” he said.

As a small business owner, Sabouri said social media is one of the most cost-effective marketing strategies available.

“It’s one of the main streams of media that we can update on a regular basis,” he said. “It’s a great way to connect with people and there aren’t too many mediums to advertise in so it’s really key.”

According to Sabouri, he posts spe-

**SOCIAL**

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## SOCIAL: Gavish Real Estate owner says Facebook is company's strongest platform

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cials, events, catering information and articles about staff members on MTO's social media pages.

To measure the success of social media campaigns, he said talking with his patrons is vital.

"We always ask our customers how they heard about us, what brought them in and where they saw us," he said. "Over the course of the year and a half that we've been open, it's been

a great gauge for us."

He added, "most people are happy to tell you how they heard about you... it all comes from interacting with guests."

At Gavish Real Estate, owner Iddo Gavish said Facebook is the company's strongest platform as it boasts nearly 20,000 likes.

"We inform the public of real estate market updates such as houses for sale and open houses," he said. "But if all we talk about is real estate, people

get tired of it so we also share information about local events so we're a resource base for them, not just for real estate."

Like Sabouri, Gavish said talking to his clients is one of the biggest ways to measure the success of his company's social media campaigns.

"Any client that we deal with, we ask what they look for and how," he said. "We're also on so many platforms — everything from television to social media — so one works

hand-in-hand with the other."

At Gavish Real Estate, six college interns oversee the company's social media presence, which has become a larger part of the company's budget each year.

"Social media has evolved over the years," Gavish said. "Initially it was an afterthought and it seemed like you had to do it, but today it's the primary focus, it's no longer an afterthought. If you don't do it, you'll be left behind."

## RIPPEE: Customer comments give insight

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

shares. That makes sense. Would you rather have a customer know about your business or talk about your business?

### 3. What are you going to say?

The keyword is relevance. Is your post relevant to your targeted consumers and is it something they would find relevant from your business? To my example of the tax law firm sharing content about tax advantages for LED lights, that is relevancy. Is it interesting? Well, to the business owner yes, but to everyone else, probably not. So while you need to share content that is relevant to your audience, it must also be interesting to them. The goal should be to post content that is interesting and relevant to the point that they will comment on it or share it.

Frequency matters. You cannot say something only once and expect engagement. Think of how often you peruse your social media. If you are like most people, you probably check a few times a day. As a business, this means that you need a content strategy that streams your content over time.

A content strategy is a plan of what type of content you will post over a period of time and on which social media platform. Good strategies have defined goals and your content strategy should be no different.

### 4. Listen

Customer reviews and comments are the most powerful insights any business can have and with the power of information, you can also peer into the insights that customers are sharing about your competition. Remember social media is two-way communication; your customers are speaking, so listen to them.

Social media can be a powerful tool in your marketing tool bag ... but only if you understand how it works and have a strategy to use it effectively.

Robert Rippee is CEO of Elysian, a Las Vegas-based business development and consulting firm that helps select brands to pivot their marketing strategy. He has more than 20 years of marketing experience and was senior vice president of marketing for The Venetian and the Palazzo. He is a frequent lecturer at UNLV and has also been on the faculty of the graduate school at the University of Georgia.

NEVADA STATE BANK PRESENTS

## A Positive Outlook

# PUBLIC SAFETY KEY TO ECONOMIC GROWTH



Jeremy Aguero, Consultant



**APPLIED  
ANALYSIS**

earlier. Most of that improvement came from a dramatic fall in property crimes, though violent crime was slightly lower than where it stood shortly after the turn of the century. Those trends held true in southern Nevada, home to 73 percent of the state's residents and 84 percent of its visitors. In Clark County, the violent crime rate in the past few years was essentially unchanged from a decade ago, while property crime had fallen by roughly one-third.

Are these positive trends happenstance? *I think not.*

More officers on the streets means less crime. A decade ago, Clark County Sheriff Bill Young championed the More Cops sales tax to fund hundreds of additional officers across southern Nevada. As those officers were hired and put on the streets, the crime rates stopped growing and started shrinking, despite one of the worst economic environments in American history. Today, the More Cops sales tax is responsible for more than 800 extra officers, 25 percent of all local police officers in Clark County. Those additional officers helped southern Nevada police agencies weather a significant loss of officers from budget cuts made necessary by the severe loss of government tax revenues during the downturn.

Now Nevada has transitioned from a period of recession to one of recovery. While we probably won't see the exponential growth reported in the early 2000s anytime soon, Nevada is again among the top states in the nation for both population growth and employment growth. With more people calling Nevada home, policymakers and police officials will need to keep a watchful eye on crime trends and work to ensure the gains made in public safety during the last decade are not lost. Less crime is critical to the success of our all-important tourism industry, our economic development efforts and the quality of life for Nevada residents old and new.

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