

TOP 10 SOCIAL MARKETING TIPS

For marketers, making friends online is all about influencing them down the road and having them influence their friends. When social is done right and it pays off, it can be huge. It all starts with creating something that people want to associate themselves with — something they want to be a part of — something they're willing to vouch for, represent, and pass on.

You want to seek out the 'seducible' moments — times at which the people you market to are most open to your ideas and solutions. Social marketing starts by moving people to their first seducible moment with you — the one where they're willing to vouch for something related to your organization. How will you earn their endorsements? And how will you then turn that affinity into business?

1. Be Specific

“You won't make relevant friends without relevant content.”

People attend to things that are relevant to them. When you put specific content out there to address specific needs, it's likely to get traction. Irrelevance is a lonely, friendless, follower-free place where no company can afford to languish. Today's accessible avalanche of content makes it too easy to search, skim and scurry. You won't make relevant friends without relevant content to capture their attention, imagination and interest.

2. Be Valuable

“Look for things that make you uncomfortable — they're often the strongest ideas.”

Take a user-centered view of social marketing. Value is in the eye of the beholder, not the marketer. Constantly put yourself in the user's shoes and ask 'what it would take for that person to love us?'. Yes, love is the right word. Passion might be an even better one. Gimmicks will attract gimmick-loving followers. If that's psychologically who you believe has real business value to your organization, than by all means go gimmicky. For everyone else, establish real value in your exchange for affinity. Ask yourself what it is that you have that is highly valuable to your prospects. People want to pass value onto others. It makes them more valuable. Look for things that make you uncomfortable — they're often the strongest ideas.

3. Be Memorable

“Be bold, be funny, maybe a bit controversial — be human.”

Most of the time, it's not enough to be specific and valuable. You have to be interesting too. No matter what the monotone guy says, all we hear is blah, blah, blah. Be bold, be funny, maybe a bit controversial — be human. People like other people that cut through the monotony. Very few people want to introduce their friends to the intensely ordinary, boring guy. Now, what was his name again?

4. Be Selfless

“Have a lot more others and a lot less you.”

It's not about you. It's not about you. It's not about you. You're not making friends and influencing people because you're so great. Social will work for you, if you work for it. That means delivering real value even when it's not directly in your best interest to do so. You're looking for others to pass the good word about you and your brand to others, and those others to do the same. Multiply that out and you have a lot more others and a lot less you.

5. Be Convenient

“Make it obvious.”

Right place, right time, right idea... When you create your socially seducible moment, you darn well better put one-click tools at your users' fingertips. Make it easy to be your friend, to like your post, to follow your brand or to fan your page. Make it obvious how to comment, share, re-post, embed, invite or subscribe. Make it a pleasure to interact with you socially — anything less leads to loneliness.

6. Be True

“Misleading tactics will negatively impact your brand.”

Bad news travels fast(er than good news). There are spammy possibilities in every social vehicle. Stoop to that level and you're sure to invite online social push-back faster than you can say 'unfollow'. It's just not worth it. If you're in a real business, to attract real customers, then dishonest tactics or misleading practices will negatively impact your brand and ultimately your sales. Everyone knows everything. Remember that and be true.

7. Be Smart

“Drop trackable crumbs, and create incremental conversion events.”

So far, our first six tips have focused on becoming more social. But how do you know if all of that effort is actually worth it? That brings us to being smart about all this stuff. It's not enough to simply attract fans if you don't nurture those fans to escalate their relationship with your offering. If you consider social engagement to be a conversion — the first step towards seeing real business value — then you can track the sources of your social conversions against revenue (using social landing pages). Those social engagements that are the result of more organic socialization, are harder to track. But, as you nurture everyone in your social universe, you can drop trackable crumbs, and create incremental conversion events that make things much more measurable.

8. Be Consistent

“Better to be there all the time.”

Timing is everything. Banking on random strokes of luck — that your prospects are ready when you think they should be — is a strategy destined for failure. Better to be there all the time. That means having a consistent presence and mindshare with your fans, followers and friends. You need to be on their virtual radar all the time. And for all the right reasons. Mix in just enough commercial reminders (not spam) to keep your purpose top of mind for them. Just as your messaging won't make you friends if it's irrelevant, your conversations won't make you sales if they're unrelated to what you're selling. Stay consistently on mission and when they're ready, make it easy for them to raise their hand and escalate the relationship.

9. Be Persistent

“emphasis on frequency will give your message a life.”

Frequency in social marketing is a bit like brainwashing. What you put out there via Twitter, Facebook or LinkedIn needs to be guided and coordinated by strategy. When there's a plan that includes messages and adequate frequency for each of those messages — both within and across social vehicles — you can achieve awareness and recall that are so important for both branding and sales. When a social messaging plan is nonexistent, the haphazard nature of the resulting communication is inefficient and in some cases damaging. Put a relatively small number of core messages in your plan and be persistent in their dissemination. This emphasis on frequency will give your message a life of its own.

10. Be Patient

“Warming any house list takes time, energy and a plan.”

Social conversion is a form of lead generation. It's basically an effort to build a list or lists — housed by third parties like Twitter and Facebook — for a relatively new form of nurturing. Warming any house list takes time, energy and a plan. Social warming is no different. You need a warming program that moves your followers closer and closer to you, so that when they're ready for your solution, they think of you and not your competitor. All of this requires patience.

So how do you know if social conversion is right for your organization? And how do you get started? Building engaged communities of passionate fans is right for almost any organization. And getting started is simple. Put social triggers in convenient, close proximity to your most valuable, specific and memorable content. Create trackable social landing pages for your Twitter or Facebook links and be as specific as possible with who those pages speak to.

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