

Social Media

the new brand currency

Integration is presently the most successful approach in advertising. This means using one platform on its' own such as outdoor, TV, radio, Facebook or Twitter will not get the same results as creating a campaign that can utilise all these channels.

For an integrated campaign to achieve the greatest success the trick is not to repeat the same approach and content for every media platform. For true integration you need to develop an overall concept that is adaptable and can truly be channel relevant.

Forbes is a New York based American magazine that reports primarily on business, communications, technology, science and law. It is an authority on everything business related and offers this advice to brands about adopting an effective social media strategy.

Procrastination or ignorance is not an option. The longer you wait, the more you have to lose. Social media marketing, when done right, can lead to more customers, more traffic, and more conversions, and it's here to stay.

Because it appeared quickly, social media has developed a reputation by some for being a passing marketing interest, and therefore, an optional unprofitable one. The statistics, however, illustrate a different picture.

According to *Hubspot*, 92% of marketers claimed that social media marketing was important for their business, with 80% indicating their efforts increased traffic to their websites.

This demonstrates a huge potential for social media marketing to increase sales, but there is a lack of understanding on how to achieve those results. The following points are just some of the ways social media marketing can improve a brands performance.

Increased brand recognition.

Every opportunity you have to promote your brand and increase your visibility is an extremely valuable one. Your social media networks are just new channels for your brand's voice and content. This is important because it simultaneously makes your company or product easier and more accessible to new customers as well as to existing customers.

Improved brand loyalty.

According to a report published by Texas Tech University, brands who engage on social media channels enjoy higher loyalty from their customers. Convince&Convert found that 53% of Americans who follow brands on social media are more loyal to those brands. Today, in a busy marketplace, brand loyalty is everything.

More opportunities to convert.

Every post a brand makes on a social media platform is an opportunity for customers to convert (i.e. to consider or actually make a purchase or commitment). When a brand builds a following it simultaneously gains access to new customers, recent customers, and old customers, and social media allows the brand to interact with them all.

Every blog post, image, video, or comment you share is a chance for someone to react, and every reaction could lead to a site visit, and eventually a conversion or a sale. Not every interaction with your brand results in a conversion, but every positive interaction increases the likelihood of an eventual conversion.

It's where brands become human.

Perhaps the most significant advantage of social media is its humanisation element; brands become more like people with personalities when they interact in social media channels. It is a platform where brands can act like people do, and this is important because people like doing business with other people; not with companies.

Higher brand authority.

Interacting with your customers regularly is a show of good faith for other customers. When people go to compliment or brag about a product or service, they turn to social media. And when they post your brand name, new audience members may also want to follow you for updates. The more people that are talking about you on social media, the more valuable and authoritative your brand will seem to new users.

Increased inbound traffic.

Without social media, your inbound website traffic is limited to people already familiar with your brand and individuals searching for keywords you may currently rank for. Every social media profile you add is another path leading back to your site, and every piece of content you create on those profiles is another opportunity for a new visitor.

Decreased marketing costs.

According to *Hubspot*, 84% of marketers found as little as six hours of effort per week was enough to generate increased traffic to their websites. Six hours is not a significant time investment for a channel as large as social media. Just one hour a day to develop and share your content can reap rewards. Even paid for advertising through Facebook and Twitter is relatively cheap compared with traditional forms of advertising.

Better search engine rankings.

SEO is the best way to capture relevant traffic from search engines. However the requirements for success are always changing. It's no longer enough to regularly update your blog, optimise tags and distribute links pointing back to your site. Google and other search engines can calculate their rankings using social media presence as a significant factor. Therefore being active on social media can act as a signal to search engines that your brand is legitimate, credible, and trustworthy and therefore can help a brand appear higher up in search results.

Richer customer experiences.

Social media is a communication channel like email or phone calls however everyone else can also potentially see it. So every customer interaction you have on social media is an opportunity to publicly demonstrate your customer service level and enrich your relationship with your customers.

If a customer complains about your product on Twitter, you can immediately address the comment, apologise publicly, and take action to make it right. Or, if a customer compliments you, you can thank them and recommend additional products. At its very core it is a personal experience that lets customers know you care about them.

Improved customer insights.

Social media gives a brand a unique opportunity to gain valuable information about what their customers are interested in and how they behave via 'social listening'. For example, it is possible to monitor user comments to see what people think about any given brand. It is also possible to see which types of content generate the most interest. This gives brands the opportunity to produce similar content to keep the conversation going with their followers.

Your next brief.

Now you have a better understanding of how social media can work for a brand here is your next brief ...