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FOUR STEPS TO INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA INTO SUCCESSFUL CAMPAIGNS

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Four Steps to Integrating Social Media into Successful Campaigns

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INTRODUCTION:

Looking at the New Campaign

Whether you're a marketer, manager or business owner, you probably sat in a meeting where the word "campaign" was shared. Although goals, strategies and tactics will vary for each and every campaign, there is a common hope that campaigns will help us achieve our business goals.

With 2012 drawing near, and the social web impacting consumers' media habits, this eBook will take a look at what the future holds for our campaign efforts. In our eBook, you'll learn:

- How the social media revolution has changed the campaign landscape
- How to leverage engagement and increase sales by understanding the mind of your customer
- How to create social media campaigns that meet bottom line objectives
- How brands and organizations are creating new campaigns, incorporating social media into every aspect of their communication
- How to stay ahead of your competitors

To start, let's take a drive through the hills of the social media landscape and see how this revolution is influencing campaigns.

STEP 1:

Understand the Changing Landscape

The Beginning

Previously marketing and PR campaigns were focused on one-way communication. The question was, “How can we get our message out?” Engagement or feedback about a campaign was limited to focus groups and measurement after the campaign took place. This one-way communication allowed you to completely control the content you were sending. While the content was the same, the interpretation of your message may have been different for different people. Once you put out your content, it was up to the masses to take and interpret it.

Messages for campaigns are communicated via a variety of media channels. Consider these:

- **Traditional.** Television, radio, print, outdoor and direct mail
- **Digital.** Email, display advertising, websites and paid search
- **Grassroots.** Localized outreach, such as street signage and door-to-door visits

In Recent Years

Social media has entered the communication landscape. Consumers are using social channels like Facebook, Twitter, blogs, forums and location-based sites to share and connect with others. The goal for all campaigns is to reach your audience in order for them to hear your message. Social media allows you to know how your audience is interpreting your message right away. If the message doesn’t resonate, you can quickly change course, save dollars, and save your reputation. Therefore, with the growth of social media for communicating and sharing, it might seem natural to go there to share your message.

But wait. There’s a catch.

Traditional media outlets, such as television, radio and print, are mostly one-way forms of communication. The advertiser shares the message and the audience receives the message. There’s no quick and easy way for the audience to respond to this medium. Social media has changed this. Campaigns are now a two-way street. If a business shares a message, the consumer can easily and instantly respond.

With the emergence of social media, we now have new and exciting opportunities to create successful campaigns. Marketing campaigns that previously consisted of mail-outs, billboards, newspaper ads and commercial spots now have the opportunity to take things to the next level using social media.

To illustrate this, we’ve included the top 5 changes to campaigns that have occurred as a result of social media.

1. Two Way Communication

Marketers can now engage with campaign participants and correct any misinformation right away. You can help grow buzz around the campaign by being a part of the conversation happening on social media.

2. Crowd Sourcing

Previously, it was difficult to measure how people were enjoying and participating in a campaign until it concluded. Now social media allows feedback to be gathered starting at the moment a campaign is launched. [Threadless Tees](#), for example, used [crowd sourcing](#) to help develop a new line of t-shirts. This was a way for them to involve the community and gain feedback from them right away.

3. Real-Time Measurement

Social media lets you begin measuring the effectiveness of the campaign right away because it is instantaneous and in real-time. How is the campaign being interpreted? Are people following the call to action? Is awareness of the campaign growing at the expected rate?

4. Community Sharing Power

No longer are marketers restricted to expensive mail out campaigns or TV commercials. Now the community can share your campaign. Do you have a strong community? Promoting a campaign can come down to sharing it with your community and leaving it in their hands to spread. A great example is [Ford Social](#) where community members share stories about their own Ford cars or ideas for their products. The content is largely created and spread by Ford's social media community requiring less push from the brand side.

5. Lowered Costs

Having your community share your story leads us to the final big shift in campaign management; lowered costs. Launching a campaign can be a fraction of the cost of what it once was. With [Ford Social](#) for example, the cost to produce this content is left with their community. They merely provide a nice environment to host it. They do not need to find customer stories themselves and spend the time and money to go film them. These stories are coming to them.

What is social doing for campaigns?

As you can see, social media has opened a lot of doors for campaign managers. Not only has it provided campaign managers with new resources, but it has also allowed them to reach a wider audience and approach them in a wider variety of ways.

Social media provides you with many more resources for your campaigns. Facebook, Twitter, and Foursquare open up opportunities to enhance your campaign. These, and other platforms, provide new places for your community to gather and share your message.

Reaching out through these social media platforms also means that you are able to communicate and collaborate with your audience more than you could using mediums such as direct mail or billboards. You can engage with people from all around the world without limitation.

STEP 2:

Get to Know the Social Consumer

Now that you understand the changing environment and how your campaigns can adapt, it's time to consider your audience. Who are these social consumers and how can you attract them?

One in four social network users knowingly follow brands, products or services on social networks. For those who use these sites and services several times per day, this figure increases to 43%. They are also engaging with peers. They're asking friends on Twitter about their next TV purchase, checking forums for tips on health and wellness products (as we learned from [GNC's case study](#)), and they're looking for deals by liking businesses on Facebook. In fact, a recent [Mashable infographic](#) shows that out of 1,500 consumers polled, 53% use Facebook to interact with a brand. Social media has become an information hub and the go-to spot for research.

Let's take a deeper look at the consumer:

They're all over the social web - Social consumers are using multiple outlets, not just Facebook and Twitter, to research, share and shout about their experiences with your brand. They have their own blogs, favorite forums and Twitter chats.

They're influencing others - Their voices, knowledge and passion influences their friends and connections. This applies to both your brand ambassadors (those that like your brand) and your brand detractors (those that aren't fans and are willing to share that).

They're joining in - Social media is a place for active participation and engagement. These consumers are joining conversations as they happen. They're sharing their stories and contributing their opinions to help others.

They're full of emotion - As [Michael Brito shares in his blog](#), they can be happy with your brand one moment and venting the next. Great service is a key way to keep them happy.

They're smart - These consumers are listening and learning. They research information online and engage on social media to gather information. Yet they're not scholars. They're looking for help to make the right purchasing decisions.

They're free spirits - While you'd like to get to know and potentially steer the mind of your social consumers, they have minds of their own and they'll make decisions about your brand based on the information they find.

They want to meet you - The social web is all about connecting and sharing and it's an open space for all. Social consumers are not afraid to meet new people. In fact, they are looking forward to it. Therefore, make your presence known and be open to communicating with your social consumers.

But wait, there's more! With the onset of businesses creating Facebook pages, Google+ pages and Twitter handles, consumers are using social media as an effective medium for outreach. They're asking questions, making comments, giving feedback and looking for advice from businesses by using the social web.

What if a business doesn't do anything about it? Not engaging is the equivalent of not returning a customer phone call, deleting their email or just ignoring someone who walks in your store. Consumers have come to expect a response and will react negatively if you leave them hanging. According to customer experience research company Maritz Research, [nearly half of consumers who tweeted a complaint directed toward a brand expected the company to respond](#). So what do you do?

How Social Media Will Help

By using social media in your campaign, you're immediately showing consumers that you are interested in dialog. If you weren't, you'd stick solely to one-way formats like television, right? Your brand can use the social space to share your stories and listen to others. In doing so, you'll build a network of supporters that will help grow your business.

Social media provides brands with the opportunity/ability to extend the reach of valuable content such as blog posts or white papers. As people share inbound links to your website or blog through social media, your search rankings can improve as a result of increased perceived credibility, and inbound traffic can increase as well. How does this appease social consumers? The resulting exposure will bring new customers to your site, driving your rankings even higher.

Social advertising opens many doors for consumer-generated content. Reach out to your consumers and offer to share their voices in your campaigns. The excitement of being involved will get your brand advocates spreading the word through social media.

Social media is the ideal location to try out new promotions and customer reward programs. Consider special offers, sales, and contests offered only to social consumers. If something doesn't work, that's okay. Consumers are looking for deals and will latch on to what they like. Be careful not to overdo this as people will become immune to it or even disinterested. A good rule of thumb is to promote others more than you promote yourself. ([Chris Brogan recommends a 12:1 ratio](#).)

STEP 3: Create a Social Campaign

There are several reasons to launch a campaign:

- To generate leads
- To acquire funding
- To increase awareness
- To increase sales
- To persuade

Consider the goal you are trying to achieve when selecting your resources. Therefore, when you're planning the launch of your campaign the important question to ask isn't, "How can we fit social into this plan?" but rather, "What are our goals and what are the best resources we can use to achieve them?" Asking the first question will force social artificially into your plan. Instead, ensure social media is incorporated into your campaign strategy upfront so you've built social into the foundation of your marketing efforts. Set reasonable goals and choose the most effective resources.

Ask yourself the following questions when considering how you can incorporate social media into your campaigns:

1. What parts of this campaign could benefit from social interaction?
2. What is the call to action and how can that be answered online?
3. How will this campaign generate an audience?

Each campaign has its own unique set of tactics and goals. So an exact how-to can be challenging. However, part of the answer goes back to solid social-listening. Determine where your target audience spends their time and focus your energy there.

Don't separate your social and traditional campaigns. They need to work together. Think of ways to link the two, so that engagement around your campaign can happen both online and off.

A very cool example of an online/offline campaign was the release of Jay-Z's book [Decoded](#). In preparation for the book launch, every page of the book was released and hidden both online and off all around the world. (You can learn a bit more about this campaign [here](#) and [here](#)). Even though the whole book was released to the public before its official launch, it debuted at number 3 on the New York Times Bestseller List. Conversations were happening both online and off and people were sharing the offline content of his book that appeared on billboards and such with their online community.

Jay-Z is not alone. In Chapter Four, we'll dive into some more successful campaigns that integrate social media.

STEP 4:

Make it Memorable

The following campaigns demonstrate how integrating social media can be beneficial and cost-effective. These campaigns break through the clutter and stand out as memorable, impactful moments.

Starbucks

During their “[Free Pint of Ice Cream for Facebook Users](#)” campaign, Starbucks gave away the frozen treat through their Facebook app in July of 2009. The gifting application, called Imaginatively, allowed users to send friends (or themselves) a coupon for a free pint of ice cream. This campaign allowed Starbucks’ Facebook fans to do a lot of the heavy lifting. They spread the word about the ice cream coupon with their friends improving the overall reach of the campaign. Sharing the coupons ensured that the ice cream would be tasted. Giving away only 800 pints per hour also helped encourage people to take advantage of the \$1 off coupon because not everyone would be able to get a free pint and this way they could at least get some at a discount. This Facebook promotion was run in conjunction with a [multi-million dollar marketing campaign](#) that was mostly traditional.

Blendtec

Have you heard of “[Will it Blend](#)” by Blendtec? YouTube viewers watched a white-coated expert [blend everything from iPads to golf clubs to glow sticks](#). The idea was simple and engaging. The campaign caused retail sales to explode by over 700%, far past Blendtec’s expectations. (A complete case study can be viewed [here](#) - PDF.)

So what does this mean for your campaigns? Your social campaign doesn’t need to cost very much money to be extremely effective. So instead of focusing on where to spend your money, focus instead on your audience and how to pique their interest.

Old Spice

Through [their campaign](#), Old Spice encouraged people to follow along with spokesperson, [Isaiah Mustafa](#), through [Twitter](#) and [YouTube](#). This was following the widely popular “[Man your Man Could Smell Like](#)” commercial. Mustafa stayed in character and answered people’s tweets through hilarious video responses. This social campaign was very effective because it encouraged two-way communication between the brand and their community. The YouTube videos were in response to real tweets which encouraged people to participate in hopes that they would get a response.

Social Media ROI

Measuring the ROI of social media remains one of the most talked about and contentious issues in the world of social media. Some people say it can’t be done, some say it shouldn’t be done, others say it’s essential. Odds are, if you do social media as part of your job, someone has asked, or soon will ask, you to justify the value of your activities. Here’s the good news: You can do it. But it takes some planning, some thought and some work.

How would you respond if someone asked you to measure the ROI of your marketing? It's too big a question; you'd have to break it down to answer it. And that's the secret of measuring social media ROI. Just follow these three steps:

1. Tie your social media activities to established business objectives
2. Plan what you want to achieve
3. Break your activities down into measurable chunks, or campaigns

1. Tie your social media activities to established business objectives

Social media can support your business in many ways, from generating sales leads to driving traffic to your website to improving customer service, and more. The best way to make sure your activities provide value (and to convince any remaining skeptics in your organization) is to tie your social media activities to established business objectives.

While it's possible to measure how social media can increase awareness and build community, you'll probably have an easier time getting started and showing your success if you set a goal with a clear outcome: increase online sales, drive more traffic to your website or get more people to attend your next event, for example.

2. Plan what you want to achieve

The benefit of tying your social media activities to an established goal is you already know how to measure success. If you decide you want to increase attendance at your next webinar or event, you've got the basic information you need to get started. If you know how many people attended your last event, it will be easy to see the increase in attendance.

It's good to set a specific goal in advance, but sometimes that may not be practical in the early stages. For your initial efforts, your goal can be to set a benchmark for future efforts.

3. Break your activities down into measurable chunks, or campaigns

As mentioned above, trying to measure the ROI of all your social media is too big a target, just like measuring the ROI of all of your marketing or advertising or public relations. That's not to say you shouldn't try; but you need to realize there will be many components in the larger equation. If you start measuring them one chunk at a time, you will eventually be able to build a bigger picture.

That's why many people recommend a campaign-based approach to measuring social media ROI. Let's use our previous example of building event attendance.

Last year you had 1,000 people come to your annual marketing event. You promoted it via your email lists, ads in your industry trade journals, press releases to those same journals and ads on relevant websites. This year you want to include social media as part of the mix, to see if it's worth the time and trouble. Here's how you can measure it:

1. Set up a landing page where people can register online for your event
2. Create a short URL (using bit.ly or other link shortening services) for that page and use it only for your social media promotions

3. Keep track of how much time you spend promoting the event and the short URL in social media channels. For instance, you might spend a total of, say, 10 hours promoting the event on Twitter over the course of a few weeks
4. Use your web analytics to track how many people come to that landing page from which channels, and if they registered

Your web analytics should be able to show you how many registrants came to the landing page from Twitter. Let's say it was 100, and you spent 10 hours creating and promoting your Twitter campaign. That's .1 hours per attendee.

If you know the hourly value of your time, (let's say it's \$35), then you know it cost \$3.50 per attendee. If you know the value to your organization of an attendee, then you can factor that into the cost and come up with a true ROI for the campaign.

Of course, one of the issues brought to light by the social media ROI discussion is the fact that many companies don't know the value of a customer, or of an event attendee, or of a press release. Building in an ROI discipline in social media may force you to figure out the value of some outcomes you had previously taken for granted.

CONCLUSION:

Wrapping it All Up

It's time to start creating meaningful, breakthrough campaigns. By incorporating social, you can make that happen. Here's a recap of the steps to get there.

STEP 1:

Understand the Changing Landscape. The social web has changed the way consumers communicate and make purchasing decisions. They're seeking information on social media channels and they're looking to engage with businesses.

STEP 2:

Get to Know the Social Consumer. When incorporating social media into your campaign, ensure it keeps in mind the needs and wants of social consumers. They're looking for help to make the best purchasing decisions, and they like two-way conversation. Involve them in your campaign, whether it's user-generated content or contests and offers.

STEP 3:

Create a Social Campaign. When you're ready to incorporate social media into your campaign efforts, think holistically. Social should be a part of your initial campaign discussions and be integrated into your strategy. Adding it as an afterthought won't work.

STEP 4:

Make it Memorable. We are all inundated with advertising on our televisions, phones, computers and commutes to work. Consider the approaches that Blendtec and Starbucks took to stand out (see Step 4). Brainstorm ideas with your team and know that you've got an amazing pool of talent to share and discuss opportunities. Social media has ample space for trial and error. If your campaign doesn't succeed, try something else!

The social media landscape is vast but inviting. It's open to everyone and your business can certainly thrive there. Who knows, maybe your brand campaign will be the next big success story we rave about in future eBooks.

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