

10 Golden Rules in Social Media Marketing Social media marketing best practice

Digital Insight Report
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Blogs, online communities, social media and then social networks: they have permanently changed online marketing. In this new landscape brands are in a constant dialogue with customers who increasingly play critical roles in advocacy and recommendation. The brand is only one guest among millions and the challenge for marketers is that while the rewards may be great, the risks are greater. The Ten Golden Rules were extracted from analysing the successes and failures of hundreds of social media marketing campaigns, looking for DNA that was shared between the successful and absent in those that failed. The clarity of patterns that emerged removes much of the mystery of social media and helps marketing teams quickly identify the specific risks and potential of the opportunities unfolding around them.

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Making sense of a digital world

DigitalStrategyConsulting.com



Analyst's profile

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“Social media has rebuilt the models of how consumers relate to brands. Brand advocates and brand vandals can share their beliefs effortlessly on a massive scale, changing perceptions and influencing culture. In social networks the brand is only one guest among millions, and while the rewards can be great, the risks can be greater. Social media marketing requires a shift in thinking for marketing teams and the firms who understand this landscape can transform the way they communicate. When marketing budgets are tight, social media can provide the perfect solution.”

At a glance

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Speedread

- There is vast potential for any brand to use social media marketing
- Getting social media marketing right requires understanding the new rules of engagement, and the different approaches to marketing through classic media
- In spite of the newness of social media, clear best practice has now emerged
- There are many types of social networks and social media, each with different techniques, benefits and roles - but these common rules still apply
- Best practice principles need to be applied both within a brand's own network and where they market themselves through other websites
- The role of social media in the digital marketing mix will continue to grow massively
- Brands take huge risks by entering social spaces without preparing properly, and they are often unaware of the scale of those risks

1. Introduction and context

The Ten Golden Rules were extracted from analysing the successes and failures of hundreds of social media marketing campaigns, looking for DNA that was shared between the successful and absent in those that failed. The clarity of patterns that emerged removes much of the mystery of social media and helps marketing teams quickly identify the specific risks and potential of the opportunities unfolding around them.

Background and context

Blogs, online communities, social media and then social networks: they have permanently changed online marketing. In this new landscape brands are in a constant dialogue with customers who increasingly play critical roles in advocacy and recommendation. The brand is only one guest among millions and the challenge for marketers is that while the rewards may be great, the risks are greater.

A different way of thinking to harness social media

There's a new type of transparency in customer relationships. The interruptive model of advertising continues weakening in favour of engagement. The challenge to persuade consumers to listen has replaced the ease of buying time to interrupt. Consumers are more conscious than ever of where and how they give their attention, and are ruthless in tuning out when the message doesn't resonate. Between Twitter, Facebook, MySpace, Google and the portals, there's a ceaseless stream of new technologies and techniques for marketers to try, and the roadmaps for many brands remain unclear.

Added to this is organisational complexity because effective social media ties together PR, advertising, customer service and corporate messaging. It demands cross functional teams with broader insights and skills than classic advertising required. Yet in the right hands it creates news, sparks discussion, delivers entertainment customers want, and achieves an engagement lost by the advertising industry. With the right team and ideas, brands can nurture consumer generated content, boosting discussion and the reach of their messages. Feeding the social media ecosystem places new challenges on website publishers, as they rework their content into malleable and exportable formats ready to invite participation.

Management coaching

These notes support an Executive Level Digital Training Academy that is part of a programme of advanced training for client-side marketing and brand managers. The Academy is designed to lift knowledge levels across marketing teams, boost alignment behind best practice, increase the effectiveness of agency management, boost judgements of campaign creative and raise confidence levels. The goal is to derisk social media marketing and simultaneously boost campaign effectiveness while reducing budgets.

2. Types of social media content

Although today's social media landscape is dominated by FaceBook and the international social software platforms, there are many ways people take part in social media. These are techniques of consumer generated content any website can incorporate and they often satisfy many marketing goals at once: boosting engagement with consumers, stretching the reach of the message, generating content that fuels greater interest, and amplifying effectiveness.

Types of consumer generated content

- Ratings and voting
Pioneered by Amazon and the early online retailers
- Consumer generated content: text
Pioneered through newsgroups and forums, but now mainstream through blogs
- Consumer generated content: images
Pioneered through Flickr and the media sharing websites
- Consumer generated content: video
Mainstreamed through YouTube and media sharing websites
- Consumer generated content: audio
Pioneered through podcasting
- Consumer generated content: knowledge
Pioneered through the Wiki Foundation and Wikipedia
- Collaborative filtering: People who like this, also like this...
Pioneered through online retailers such as Amazon and online publishers
- 'Most popular content': top for traffic, blogging, posting
Mainstreamed by online publishers
- Advanced user generated content
Pioneered through the advanced reviews of Web 2.0 sites such as CNET
- Mash-ups that combine content together
Mainstreamed with the combining tools such as Google Maps with other data

Types of social content

- Consumer generated content: contributions of content to websites
- Collective intelligence: contributions to wikis and ratings, improving knowledge
- Online social networking: connecting between people
- Social media: building profiles and sharing connections
- Social software: using applications that connect groups together
- Social mash-ups of data: combining social data such as Google maps and photos



Digital links

Campaign references on Digital's websites

Case studies and examples of best practice in consumer social media: DigitalTrainingAcademy.com/socialmedia

Digital Insight Reports on social media and digital marketing; introductory guides and background briefings into digital strategy: DigitalStrategyConsulting.com/insight

3. Preparing the social media marketing journey

Social media marketing is more than a simple additional set of tools to add to a campaign strategy. Getting it right requires a fundamental shift in thinking because the rules of engagement between brands and consumers are radically different from the approaches and models of advertising – either offline or online.

In setting out on the social media marketing journey, successful brand teams start to think and behave differently. Their DNA of smart brands typically reveals four key strands:

- Experience social media first hand to learn the language
- Listen to the conversation before taking part
- Open up the organisation, removing the barriers and inviting engagement
- Join the social networks and become part of the conversation

3.1 Experience

Experiencing social media first hand is key for the brand and agency teams to learn the language and rules of the space they're entering. Through Facebook or MySpace anyone can set up a web presence in seconds and apply complex applications with no more skills than 'drag and drop'. This is effortless web page design and represents a quantum leap from the personal home pages of the 90s or the personal blogs of the early 2000s. The fact the tools are free and the audience is guaranteed is illustrative of the tectonic shift in publishing strategies.

3.2. Listen

The conversation about your brand is already taking place. It's ironic that some marketing teams fail to use anything more than simple Google Alerts to listen to what customers are saying. The data trails of the web can provide some of the richest qualitative and quantitative feedback any brand could look for. This is a media channel where almost everything is recorded and archived, providing brands with granular insights about how they are perceived, used, recommended or rejected by different segments of their marketers. Listening to the conversation before taking part is key for approaching social media marketing the right way.

Example: HSBC on Facebook

An interesting early example of this on Facebook was in August 07 when a protest against the HSBC bank began by UK students unhappy with changes to the bank's interest rates for graduates. The National Union of Students (NUS) acted as the catalyst for this debate, fuelling a protest group on Facebook that generated online and offline publicity. Joining a Facebook

group may be a low energy act – a one-click acceptance of an invitation forwarded from a friend – but its simplicity means large numbers of people can show support of causes very quickly. HSBC clearly realised this and within days stepped back from the change to banking terms, moving into negotiations with the NUS centrally. It's one of the earliest examples in the UK of brands listening to social media conversations and behaviours (the sociograph), anticipating when a trend was about to go mainstream (in this case the protest) and heading it off. The ease of connections creates an almost frictionless surface over which ideas can spread. The resulting speed of diffusion is much faster than brands have been familiar with and an order of magnitude quicker than the first generation of email viral marketing a decade ago. This incredibly fast spread of ideas will continue to raise the power of small groups and pressure groups who harness these tools the way the NUS did until a new social understanding emerges of where 'groups' fit in charting the scale of people's beliefs. Over the next few years Facebook's social networks will provide an instant attitudinal survey of beliefs and behaviour types.

3.3 Open up the organisation

Preparing for social media requires a greater shift in corporate mindset than many brands are prepared for. Opening up the organisation means changing the mindset of senior management and removing the barriers to invite meaningful engagement. Social media marketing requires this, and successful social media marketers start changing the culture of their firms much earlier.

It's a shift needed at the top of the firm and that's why corporate blogging can prove a powerful tool in changing the cultural framework leadership teams set for their organisations. However, corporate blogs have a deservedly poor image: many of the blogs that unfolded from 2004 onwards (as blogging went mainstream) were little more than copy-and-paste machines for the press office production line. The typical challenges hinge around leadership teams either not having a powerful voice or not being able to use it. One of the best examples in getting corporate blogging right comes from the technology trailblazers at Sun Microsystems. Their senior management team all have blogs and that zone of their website remains one of the most popular with an explosion of comments and feedback around thousands of posts. Sun succeeded in delivering industry thought leadership through their blogs while most firms were wrestling with their staid Web 1.0 online brochure-ware. In the UK grocery market Waitrose CEO Mark Price is another industry leader who created a 'door is always open' culture when he set up his 'Grocer's Blog'. Price explained that on the one hand it's about "telling people what I'm eating and where I'm going" but at the same time it formed "a great way to communicate with internal and external groups; a great opportunity because MDs are normally out of reach". The reason these types of shifts in organisational mindsets are key in preparing for social media marketing is that open marketing requires open doors.

3.4 Joining the social network

Joining the social network is still part of the preparation for the social media journey for three reasons. Creating the footprint commits the organisation to action. Failure to take a presence early creates similar opportunities for cyber-squatting that caused the domain name battles of the late 90s, and only by joining can the brand team fully listen to existing customer conversations.

Example: The first national election won with social media



The Obama campaign succeeded in part because of an exceptionally powerful digital marketing model that took successive waves of complex messaging and drew people into participating in the election campaign in a way politicians had never achieved before. It was the first national election anywhere to be won through social media and hinged upon a series of key messages that were delivered through all the main social media platforms as well as directly to voters through email and RSS feeds. As the administration took office the model continued, motivating Americans to be involved in the social and economic policies of the new administration in a way never before seen in politics. The Obama campaign joined the social networks and joined the conversation.

“Social media is changing the way people interact, accelerating networks of friends and amplifying the reach of messages”

4. Ten Golden Rules For effective social media marketing

For navigating the social media marketing journey there is a surprising amount in common among brands that succeed. From Cadbury's to Diet Coke, BMW to Skittles, the similarity in approach reveals the DNA for developing powerful social media marketing. These 10 Golden Rules emerged as not only being present among the campaigns that worked, but also being absent among those that failed to take off. They offer a strong foundation for best practice and remain neutral to the individual executional technologies and toolkits brands can choose from.

i. Stay

Once a brand is in a social media space they are in it for the long haul. There's an importance attached to not simply taking part, but continuing to take part.

The media brands represent the best examples of this, where tools like YouTube or Twitter have become additional broadcast channels for feeds of content from the likes of the BBC or CNET, with some media groups already clocking up tens of thousands of updates on Twitter in a relatively short space of time. Once content is malleable it adapts easily into different platforms and this approach can extend the reach of social media campaigns by embracing new platforms without any impacts on budget. It also positions the brands perfectly as new tools and techniques arrive, whether it's extensions to the wall on Facebook or the arrival of new platforms such as Kindle in the publishing industry.

ii. Ease

Make participation simple, make participation a single click. The easier the participation, the higher the chance of involvement. For every one person who readily wants to write their opinions and comments, fifty or more may be ready to click on a voting tool to give an existing comment a star rating. Creating a group on Facebook may take commitment, but simply accepting an invitation from a trusted friend is effortless. Smart social media marketers make participation easy and give brand advocates additional tools to become more deeply involved in the message.

iii. Initiate and then let go

Brands need to start the discussion but not set out to own it. It's an important distinction, repositioning the brand as initiator. In social media the brand is only one voice and smart

marketers create content that sparks discussions which continue without their involvement. The loss of control on the web means brands cannot take responsibility for what happens once the message is released. It's also important from a regulatory perspective that they distance themselves from the conversations their customers subsequently have.



Example: Diet Coke and Mentos

The videos of Diet Coke fountains on YouTube are legendary. The chemical reaction of Diet Coke with Mentos mints quickly became an iconic piece of internet marketing. Critical to the success has been the way the marketing team at Coke stepped back, maintaining the authenticity and edginess of the idea.

iv. Think webspace, not website

Consumers rarely want to visit brands websites and for brands that see their online marketing model as simply about driving traffic to their site it's time to rethink the approach. While for retailers the direct response traffic generating model makes sense, for many firms this puts

Sure Girl® <whatmakesyousweat>
"We know what makes you sweat"

Sure Girl is holding an exclusive 'Style Exchange' party in London on 28th June hosted by Alesha Dixon. There will be fashion, hair and make up experts running interactive workshops for everyone that attends so you can arm yourself with top style tips and skills to make sure you avoid those embarrassing fashion moments that make you sweat!

Only 50 girls will get to attend the event – to be in with a chance to win a ticket for you and a friend, all you have to do is describe your dream 'Style Exchange' party in the comments section below. Don't forget to check the terms and conditions in the blog before you enter. (Travel and overnight accommodation is included in the prize)

Profile Views: 175094
Share the Luv
❤️ 573

Sure Girl says: Have you been spotted by our Sure Girl style spotters? Check out our style spotted photos-more coming soon....

- ★ See photos of her (1)
- ★ Send a Message | Saved Messages
- ★ Add as Friend
- ★ Use this Skin | Favorites
- ★ Send-It
- ★ Block | Report Abuse

additional hurdles in the path of a consumer. When the goal is about shifting consumer perceptions and involving consumers in the discussion, the large social networks are where the consumer is spending their time and therefore a far better vehicle for reaching out to them.

Example Sure Girl on Bebo.com/whatmakesyouweat

One brand that understood this early on was the deodorant, Sure. Their SureGirl campaign on Bebo is a good example of reaching out to the target consumer where she is and taking the message to her rather than asking her to come to the message.

v. Release

Brands need to spread their content widely on the web. This is key to extending the message, a goal behind many online marketing campaigns. Taking the brand into social networks by setting up a presence is one solution, but there are many others alongside this that are not mutually exclusive. If the goal is to boost the reach of the brand message then first prize is to create content that can be distributed by its consumers.

This means being comfortable with the release of images, videos, games and content that can be used by consumers and passed through their networks of friends. In the nineties this typically meant emails of content to seed groups with the hope of triggering a viral effect. In today's landscape email and messenger applications still play key roles but delivery channels are as likely to include Facebook, MySpace and Twitter, and the devices your content is seen on could as easily be an iPhone or wireless laptop rather than a cabled PC. That's why for extending the reach of consumer messaging, releasing assets to consumers online can achieve a breakthrough.

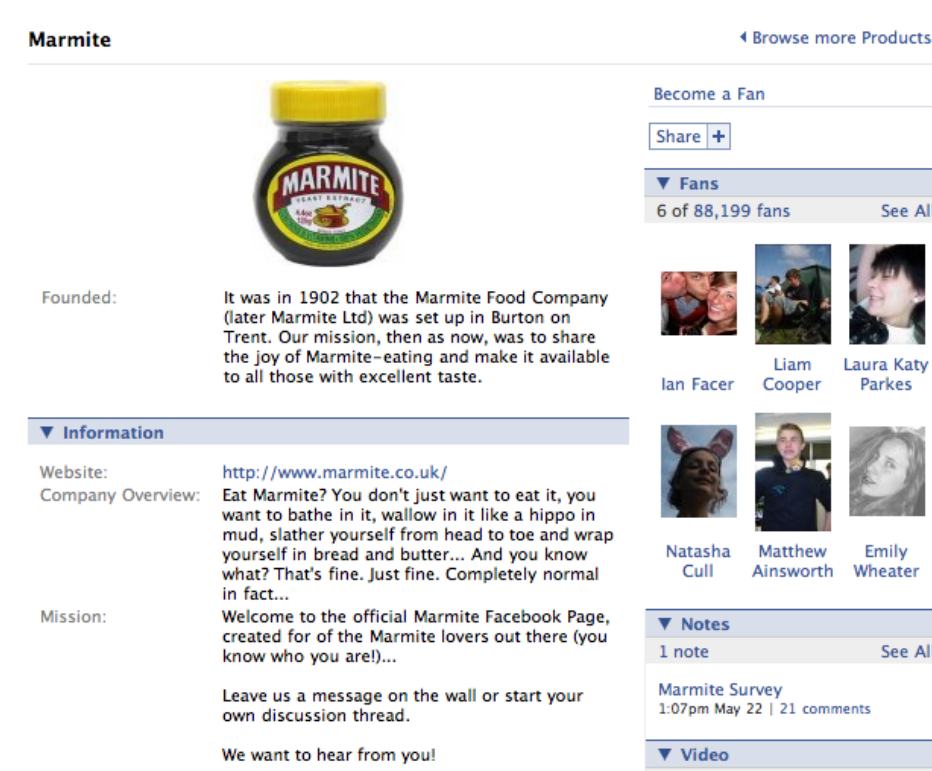
1. Learn from customer insight which type of content is likely to work and why
2. Start building assets for syndication
3. Remember that iconic brand assets may have long term appeal in social media, while current campaigns may lose their energy after a while
4. Ensure necessary copyrights are obtained to allow distribution
5. Create final assets
6. Release them on the platforms where the brand's customers spend most time
7. Make content tearable so it can be easily taken from your pages, copied, pasted and used by the consumer in their own social media environments
8. Reach out to customers directly, telling them the news with the right tone of voice for the brand

For these processes to work, the mindset of releasing content rather than controlling it needs to be clearly in place. Once the genie is out of the bottle there's no predicting how it will

behave and as every brand has its vandals as well as its advocates, the business has to be prepared for any type of reaction. It's this authenticity that gives social media its value to the brands that get it right, but the lack of control is a stark reminder for brands that have anything to hide.

Example: Marmite on Facebook

Marmite's 'love it / hate it' campaign on Facebook is a great example of a brand pushing itself out into the social spaces and offering its fans content they can – and want – to use. Something as simple as images from a PR campaign (like the Marmite sculpture of a kiss) to the iconic pack shots every brand stores on file – both can be powerful ways to create content that consumers can take further. The key is having a strategy that encourages its release.



Marmite [Browse more Products](#)

Become a Fan
Share +

Fans
6 of 88,199 fans [See All](#)

Information

Website: <http://www.marmite.co.uk/>

Company Overview: Eat Marmite? You don't just want to eat it, you want to bathe in it, wallow in it like a hippo in mud, slather yourself from head to toe and wrap yourself in bread and butter... And you know what? That's fine. Just fine. Completely normal in fact...

Mission: Welcome to the official Marmite Facebook Page, created for of the Marmite lovers out there (you know who you are!)...
Leave us a message on the wall or start your own discussion thread.
We want to hear from you!

Fans: Ian Facer, Liam Cooper, Laura Katy Parkes, Natasha Cull, Matthew Ainsworth, Emily Wheater

Notes: 1 note [See All](#)
Marmite Survey
1:07pm May 22 | 21 comments

Video

vi. Share: Encourage brand advocates to advocate

To accelerate the spread of the message brands need to actively encourage customers to share the content. This can be as simple as the 'forward to a friend' mechanics built into the structure of many web pages or the more energetic feeds of content inside Facebook. Different audiences respond in different ways but most online social networks have strong mechanisms for letting people share content within opt-in groups.

Example: Sharing content on Facebook

Beyond simple advertising techniques, Facebook offers many routes for encouraging use of and access to content. It illustrates typical mechanisms that other social networks are mirroring.

- Brand profile pages: Publishing the assets with implicit or explicit invitations to copy
- Fans: Inviting customers to become a fan of the brand
- Gifts: Sponsoring branded icons that people can send to their friends as gifts

vii. Build tools and content for customers, not 'marketing' slogans

Marketers need to shift their mindset away from the simplicity of advertising if they're to succeed in social media. Although advertising models still flourish in social media (such as the skyscrapers graphical ad formats or background wallpapers on sites like MySpace and Yahoo), social media marketing is really about harnessing the consumer's personal social network to propagate the message. Persuading people to join in demands creative thinking, clear benefits to the consumer and strong reasons for them to pay attention. This is why the creation of compelling content or powerful tools that satisfy clear needs in people's lives is key to the challenge. The lack of depth in the messaging of traditional advertising means it lacks the richness needed for social media, and that's why marketers with an advertising mindset need to rethink their approach.

Example: STA Travel – a blog for every customer

Before Facebook became famous, smart marketers at STA Travel had already realised the power of social networking. By creating a blogging platform for their customers they were able to provide a framework through which customers could communicate with their friends and family, enthusing about their holidays and spreading the STA brand along the way. The idea is simple but the execution challenging. Brand managers teamed up with the technology specialists at Off Exploring to create a platform that made blogging and photo uploads easy. They added a mashup data set of Google Earth so people could plot their position and routes over time and added an email distribution tool to let them quickly circulate news to their friends and family. The model proved an instant hit, with customers turning into lifelong brand adorners for several interwoven reasons:

- Use and reuse of the brand website regularly throughout the trip
- Investment of time in writing their travel journals and uploading images that in turn act as a gallery
- Building their friends and family email lists that in turn becomes a contact database they are incentivized not to move
- Continued exposure and good will to the pages and the site long after the purchase and the holiday are finished

Add to this the viral effect of pushing the STA brand's reach to so many new prospective customers and it's clear that the scale of these benefits runs throughout the brand's marketing, boosting the reach of their message and the positioning in consumers minds

Example: Nike' Run London platform

The screenshot shows the Nike+ website interface. At the top, there are navigation links for NIKE.COM, NIKESTORE.COM, PRODUCT DOWNLOADS, REGISTER, MY ACCOUNT, and NEWSLETTER. A central banner features a male and female runner with the text 'MAKE EVERY RUN COUNT' and 'GET IN ON THE ACTION'. To the right, there's a 'NIKE+' logo and a 'WHAT IS NIKE+' section. Below the banner, there are navigation buttons for 'My Runs', 'Challenges', 'Community', 'Gear & Music', and 'Support'. The bottom of the page includes a footer with 'COUNTRY SELECTOR', 'STORE LOCATOR', 'CUSTOMER SERVICE', 'PRIVACY/TERMS OF USE', and '©2009 NIKE ALL RIGHTS RESERVED'.

Nike is one of a small select group of brands that successfully harnessed the role of social media platforms in building consumer engagement and loyalty. Building tools that earn a role in people's lives is a far more powerful way of building loyalty. In Nike's case the goal of the site is to create a platform so useful in people's weekly routine that they become loyal to the platform, using it constantly to manage one aspect of their lives – in this case their fitness regime relating to key events. By giving a community the tools they need to achieve their goals, or quality content they'll regularly enjoy, the brand is well on its way to building consumer engagement.

viii. Encourage

Authenticity in marketing ideas is increasingly coming from the brand's community rather than the brand's agency. Social media has released the creative valves in millions of would-be film producers, artists and creatives that took YouTube and Facebook by storm. While the vast majority of content on YouTube remains far from where most brands would like to be seen, the ideas of this mass of talent can now readily be reviewed and cherry-picked.

Nurturing individual's creative talent can boost the authenticity of brand communication. From formal talent contests to recruiting brand adorers through Facebook, there are numerous models for nurturing their ideas and energy, encouraging them to create and enthuse.

Example: ThisisMatt on YouTube

When Matt Harding and his girlfriend began making videos of him dancing in front of the picture postcard landmarks on a backpacking trip, they stumbled upon a neat formula for building engaging content. The compelling videos and hypnotic music proved a hit on YouTube, gaining cult status and clocking up millions of views. Enterprisingly they turned the idea into a sponsorship opportunity which was picked up by the Stride chewing gum brand. Now Matt strides around the world funded by his sponsor, with the same authentic voice of the original creative work, but now with stronger approach for creating entertaining programming, and more structure to their content and processes. It's a great example of nurturing the individual's creative talent and encouraging consumers to take part in the creation of the message. In a similar way, many brands are now actively encouraging their consumers to generate content and discussion to promote brands.

ix. Amplification: Using social media to amplify the effectiveness of offline marketing

The power and impact of social media doesn't demand a web centric marketing strategy. For brands heavily committed to classic media channels there are many options for integrating their online and offline strategies into a seamless whole, letting one fuel the other. Each channel and tool has its own strengths, but harnessed together they can amplify the effectiveness of each other.

This could be as simple as extending the reach or frequency of a television commercial by releasing it on YouTube, or releasing archived product shots of a brand's development over time. Similarly, using YouTube as another touch point for video demonstrations of the brand or interviews with the team behind it can increase the discoverability of content and build stronger customer connections.

“In social media,
the rewards are
great, but for an
under-skilled team,
the risks are
greater”




Digital Social Media Academy
Connecting intimately with consumers
Harnessing social media, consumer-generated content, social networking and 'Web 2.0' trends

Blogs and online communities are just some of the ways to harness social media and user-generated content. The sudden rise of social media has created new publishing and marketing techniques. These are more powerful publishing tools to generate reach than TVC, which are more powerful tools to generate reach than TVC. With your online audience in this Web 2.0 world, we start training about the practical side of how to harness social networking and collective intelligence give your website increased traffic and an editorial edge. We explore different types of UGC, and provide practical hints and tips on how brands and website publishers can make their content more easily discoverable to help drive audiences.

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Social media strategies for building reach

Digital social media commercial strategies

Although social media can transform engagement, few publishers apply it effectively and even if discussion begins, few succeed in really harnessing the potential. These strategies create a shift in discussion and dialogue within the audience and boost engagement and reach by finding the right tools for the brand. The risks of harnessing social media are reduced and the benefits amplified.




Digital Marketing Academy
It's all about marketing
Marketing concepts and planning

The world of marketing is changing and to understand the potential of digital marketing techniques fully you need to appreciate the wider digital marketing environment. In this Web 2.0 world, we start training about the practical side of how to harness social networking and collective intelligence give your website increased traffic and an editorial edge. We explore different types of UGC, and provide practical hints and tips on how brands and website publishers can make their content more easily discoverable to help drive audiences.

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Building social media into your websites

Digital marketing strategy development

Which tactics will really boost audiences? And which will boost them cost-effectively? We show you how you can instantly drive more traffic and how those customers can be locked into relationship marketing programmes to bring them back. Our framework creates a marketing strategy and plan for content and promotions that work for budgets of all sizes.




Digital Relationship Marketing Academy
Turning strangers into acquaintances,
acquaintances into friends and friends into high value consumers.

Digital relationship marketing is the chance to build meaningful relationships with marketing savvy consumers. They create a sustainable relationship in digital media and unlock both greater cost efficiency and greater interest for consumer acquisition and activation. Relationship marketing is at the heart of all high value consumer strategies and in the Academy we explore some of the theory, practice and challenges on using digital channels to build an effective programme that changes the way businesses work.

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Designing effective viral marketing Digital social media and email strategies

An intensive programme to transform the spread of ideas through email and viral marketing across social media networks. Our consultants coach on the theory of marketing strategy, social networks and social software. We work with your teams to build strong models that create greater campaign reach and deeper engagement.




Digital Search Academy
Getting to grips with search engine marketing

Getting your products found online can be like asking your consumers to find the proverbial needle in the haystack. Search engines are key to your business and our strategy orientation gives you all the basics you need to get started in effective search engine advertising and marketing. Concentration on the essential knowledge you need gives you a framework for the future, and delivers practical tips your company can use straight away.

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Boosting search engine marketing with social media

Digital search marketing strategies using social media

These practical strategies show how to boost free traffic to your sites by using social media to drive link building programmes and increase Page Rank. They show editorial, publishing and marketing teams the techniques needed, before applying them together to specific current business challenges.

x. Honesty: Be yourself, be transparent, be true

The web is an incredibly transparent place. Society has yet to feel the real impacts of the scale of this transparency, but marketers should be cautious about their approach when everything is literally a single click away. With Google's ability to decode the content of billions of web pages, and consumer publishing platforms that allow anyone to share what they've discovered, there is a clock ticking for brands that are not honest with consumers or fail to fulfil on their promises. From motor companies to detergents, banks to soft drinks, dozens of global brands have already felt the rough side of social media.

Example: Trip Advisor.com

Travel recommendation site TripAdvisor has become the blessing and curse for every hotelier. It crossed its tipping point in early 2007 and suddenly every business traveller seemed to be using it to check hotels. Its open platform and simple tools let anybody upload photos and share experiences, and although open to abuse, the platform provides a reasonable collective view on millions of travellers' experiences.

5. Applying the 10 Golden Rules

The 10 Golden Rules are not intended to be an inflexible process, but instead a checklist of ideas marketers can test their approaches and campaigns against. All the excitement and potential of digital technologies is in no way a substitute for a good idea and marketers need strong ideas to fuel their social media campaigns. What the 10 Golden Rules succeed in doing is helping strong ideas stretch that much further.

Reflections

Social media has changed the landscape of marketing. Whether marketers are actively engaged in it, or still in the process of evaluation, understanding the models and approaches social media offers are key to making smarter decisions with marketing budgets across the board.

The irony is that for all the hype and excitement of the social media sector today, the phenomenon is still in its infancy. Thinking of where Google was in c1999 proves a good way of gaining perspective on where social media and online social networking will head. That's why this is neither something marketers can ignore nor delay. As the culture of marketing changes, it gravitates towards the thinking emerging from social media which is why understanding these rules of engagement is key for marketers in any sector and any discipline.

Evaluating social media strategies?

Evaluating different options in social media is challenging. Here are some key questions marketing teams can use to compare the potential of one social media tool or channel to another.

- How many people can I reach?
- How many are really target consumers?
- What will their experience of your brand really be?
- How will consumers use your brand assets and relationship?
- How many people could become stronger fans and what will the consumer connections achieve?
- What do the risks look like?
- What is the risk profile for this activity; how to minimise the risks?
- How could this be marketed?
- What does success look like?
- How do I maintain the presence?

How we support agency and brand marketing teams with strategy and coaching

Our consultants have been developing the thinking in online marketing since the mid 90s. For over a decade we have been coaching management teams and accelerating their businesses by harnessing the best digital thinking and applying it to the challenges they face. The team boosts the knowledge and insights of your brand or agency, accelerate the thinking of your approach and then help the team apply the right models for today's challenges. We can then hand over to your agencies or internal teams for implementation, and help guide them along the journey. As a team of specialists we have worked in thirty countries, helping accelerate digital brands and digital teams. We have supported consumer and business brands, agencies and media groups, governments and global corporations – and many world class portals and online media services.

Continuing the conversation?



To find out how we could help your team accelerate the firm and navigate the storm, simply ask us.

Email the author of this report directly:
Danny@DigitalStrategyConsulting.com

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Intensive in-company digital marketing and publishing coaching that boosts the effectiveness and productivity of marketing and digital teams in brands and agencies.



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Making sense of a digital world

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