



Social Media Marketing For Dummies

From Social Media Marketing For Dummies by Shiv Singh

Marketing through social media platforms, such as Facebook and blogs, can be quick and powerful. Social media present unique marketing opportunities and methods of success. These articles help you to plan your online marketing, explore the online social media sites and find your target market, and measure the results of your marketing efforts on these platforms.

Social Media Marketing Rules

Marketing through social media platforms isn't quite the same as traditional marketing. Here are some rules that can help you conduct a successful social media marketing campaign:

- Make sure you give your customers something valuable because they'd much rather spend the time talking to each other about their passions than engaging with you.
- Recognize that different types of influencers play varying roles at different points in the marketing funnel. Do the research to know who is influencing your customers and where.
- Tie together all your strategies across the social media platforms. Think about how all your social programs can work together harmoniously.
- Make your customers brand advocates and partners in your business. Give them the opportunity to impact not just marketing but product development, customer service, and innovations, too.
- Develop your authentic social voice for the social media platforms. And make your brand a social brand.

Establish a Social Influence Marketing Game Plan

Marketing via social media means marketing directly to influencers — rather than consumers. And social influence marketing (SIM) requires a whole new game plan. Establish your SIM campaign with these tips in mind:

- Develop social influence marketing (SIM) guidelines for your organization. It provides critical guidance for your employees as they practice social influence marketing.
- Establish clear objectives for your social influence marketing efforts. Don't experiment for the sake of experimenting.
- Create a roadmap for your social influence marketing efforts to help you plan resources, conduct research, coordinate marketing programs, and deploy new tactics.
- Define your metrics for success up front before you execute your roadmap.
- Recognize that SIM programs don't have neat end dates. Plan your

resources and budget carefully to allow for continuous nurturing.

- Make sure you understand your customer base — who talks to each other and who influences who — before launching any program.

How to Bring Social Influence Marketing to Life

Social influence marketing (SIM) campaigns achieve success in the long term. Here are some tips that will help your SIM campaign flourish during its lifespan:

- Participate where your customers want to participate and be active in the customer communities you create. Remember that your customers are your equals.
- Design your SIM efforts so that customers are motivated and encouraged to form tribes, bringing others into the fold and engaging with one another.
- When planning outreach programs, recognize that the "A" list influencers may not be as helpful as the long tail of the other influencers. These other influencers are more likely to listen to your point of view and act on your behalf.
- Design your programs so that they are extremely easy for your customers and prospects to share with others on the social platforms of their choice.

How to Measure Social Influence Marketing

Find out if your social influence marketing (SIM) campaign is a success. Part of social influence marketing calls for establishing related metrics and measuring your results to determine the effectiveness of your campaign. Keep these tips in mind:

- Start with the *SIM score* (your brand's health compared to all of your direct competitors in the social Web) as a single, strategic, brand health measurement.
- Match your program to the platform and to the metrics available. Different social platforms allow you to measure metrics in different ways.
- Tie all your SIM metrics to a broader digital strategy and business metrics.
- Always prioritize metrics regarding sociographics and social action-related metrics over traffic demographics.
- Don't ignore SIM metrics from your corporate Web site. Your Web site is also a platform for social influence and should be measured and tracked in a similar fashion.
- Use the APIs (application programming interfaces) from the social media platforms to develop your own integrated metrics dashboard.

Which Social Media Marketing Platforms to Target

Strong social influence marketing (SIM) campaigns target multiple social networks. Because consumers rarely use just one social platform (for example, only Facebook or Twitter), your marketing campaign should reach each of these social media platforms:

- **Facebook:** The largest social network in the world, Facebook is ideal for marketing at the awareness and consideration stage of the marketing funnel. Fan pages, wall posts, virtual gifts, applications, social ads, and technologies like Facebook Connect make the platform a popular choice.

- **MySpace:** With its roots in music, MySpace is still considered the best platform for music and entertainment-related marketing activities. Traditional banner advertisements, sponsored music samples, and brand profiles present the greatest opportunities.
- **Twitter:** Evolving into a news, brand marketing, and customer service tool, Twitter is ideal for reaching out to influencers, handling customer service queries, and forging personal relationships with customers. Sponsored tweets are an emerging ad format on Twitter.
- **YouTube:** With custom channels and the ability to upload an unlimited number of clips, YouTube is a powerful marketing platform if you have engaging branded content. But don't treat it as a push channel through which to funnel TV advertisements. Focus on building social currency with subscribers and users.
- **Blogosphere:** Blogger outreach programs are a must, but make sure that you identify the bloggers carefully and reach out to them using blogger outreach best practices. Otherwise, you'll turn them off.
- **Niche social platforms:** Your users may be very active on the niche social platforms. Conduct research to learn where they're participating and explore the marketing opportunities on those platforms. Try LinkedIn, Ning, CafeMom, deviantART, and Gather.

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