



orange

Issue Five

SOCIAL MEDIA

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The impact of social media for marketers is undeniable. Those who understand its importance, utilize the appropriate channels and commit to constantly feeding those channels with valuable content are experiencing great success. Marketers who dismiss social as “a fad” or who launch unsupported social efforts are in danger of becoming tomorrow’s marketing road kill.

In this issue of **orange**, we explore many aspects of creating a successful social media program. It takes expertise, creativity, commitment and, most of all, content. We’ve devoted a significant amount of this issue to the fashion and retail industries, as they’ve always led the way to what’s coming next. Companies like K-Swiss, Kate Spade New York and General Electric Co. have fully embraced social media and are using it to create excitement and engagement for their brands with their target audiences.

The bottom line for marketers is that social is not going away. It’s here for good and it’s going to become an incredible marketing vehicle for those who embrace it, or, for those that don’t, a way to accelerate their irrelevance in the minds of customers.

Jim

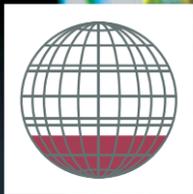
Jim Meyers
President & CEO
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Don't Be Road Kill

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Brands, companies & personalities in this issue

REI, Nordstrom, Urban Outfitters, Apple, Whole Foods Market, Kate Spade New York, Craft & Culture, Jason Parker, Hana Ryan Wilson, Macala Wright, Lands' End, Valentino, Scott Schuman, Cupcakes and Cashmere, Emily Schuman (no relation to Scott), Coach, Mariana Leung, Fendi, DKNY (Donna Karan New York), Oscar de la Renta, Macy's, Maurices, ModCloth, Grunt Style, Daniel Alarik, Ann Handley, MarketingProfs, Intel, Firehouse.com, McDonald's, Rackspace, Aon Corp., General Electric Co., Cisco, Wendy Tanaka, Omni Hotels & Resorts, Xerox, Ducati, EMC Corp., Thread, Disney, Lancôme, Nike, Ralph Lauren, Henry Cittone, Eloqua, CNN, BBC, Joe Chernov, Marilyn Hagerty, Olive Garden, Kobie Fuller, Revolve Clothing, Geoff Cottrill, Converse, Marlboro, Sears, Alka-Seltzer, JELL-O, TWA, Starbucks, General Mills' Nature Valley, Zappos, Bisquick, Harley-Davidson, Joyann King, Harper's Bazaar, Monica Frisbie, Mondrina, Noah Kravitz, PhoneDog.com, Tom Klein, Laura Kuenssberg, ITV, Rick Sanchez.



05

Trend Watching

Smartphones and social media are the next frontier for point-of-purchase. The opportunity, in numbers.



06

Thought Bubble

The Pinterest evolution: Pontificating its future.



08

A La Mode

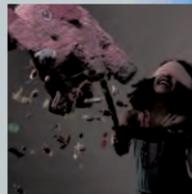
Fashion likes to push the envelope. In social media, it works.



14

Whose Followers?

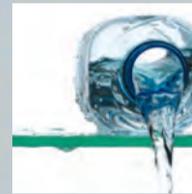
Phonedog.com sues a former employee for 17,000 Twitter followers. Guess what happens next.



19

The Buzz

What makes content go viral?



20

Holding Back

Social media was meant for the B2B market, but the bandwagon is still bare.



26

Hit or Miss

The apps, and the apps-not. Plus, was your brand manager asleep at the wheel?



30

Measuring Social's Success

Social media marketing is fun, but companies survive on sales.



36

Buy This Idea

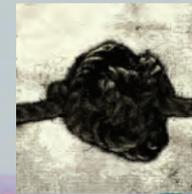
Need another path to social engagement? We've got two.



40

What is a Modern Brand?

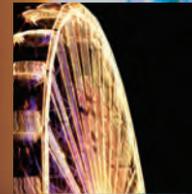
Evolve or die: A brand's survival guide in the modern era.



46

Tying the Knot

To grow or engage—that is the question. Or is it?



50

The Never-Ending Media Ride

Today's social trends go as fast as the thrills on a roller coaster.

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Cover Image: iStockphoto

orange, issue 5

what's inside



Paige Anderson / @paigewanderson
Buy This Idea, pg. 36
 Paige is a social media strategist driving all things digital for CPG and retail brands. While creating social strategies for Buy This Idea, she embarked on a weekend of online shopping—in the name of research, of course.



Louis LaPlante / @louislaplante
Thought Bubble, pg. 6
 Louis is a former lifestyle writer who once ate a fried brain for a story. He now covers business trends and billion-dollar projects. His stomach thanks him.



Mary Cusick / @marykatecusick
Hit or Miss, pg. 26
 Mary is a Chicago native with a background in social media and marketing. She is charmingly awkward, speaks fluent sarcasm and points out marketing strengths and weaknesses in the Hit or Miss column.



Allison Ellis / @allisonellis
A La Mode, pg. 8
 Allison is a freelance writer and brand strategy consultant based in Seattle. A former fashion editor, there was a time when she once paraded around the office in 4-inch stilettos. Now she conducts business from the safety of her own bathrobe.



Ana Fernatt
Hit or Miss, pg. 26
 Ana is a social media manager and freelance writer who covers lifestyle topics for several publications and her own blog. Her love of Angry Birds led her to trying a “real life” version at a carnival. Twenty bucks later, Ana is sticking with the mobile app.



Christina Galoozis / @galoozis
Measuring Social's Success, pg. 30
 Christina is an editor for **orange** and a journalist covering all things small business, parenting, marketing and politics. Her aim was to make it through this issue of **orange**.



Rebecca Rolfes
Holding Back, pg. 20
The Never-Ending Media Ride, pg. 50
 Rebecca is the co-founder of Imagination and has worked as a business journalist all over the world. She now reports on the world from a sunny office in Savannah, Ga.



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Tying the Knot, pg. 46
 Karen Bannan @naturalasposmom
 Karen is a veteran business writer and editor with an M.A. in magazine journalism from New York University. Her work has appeared in *Forbes*, *The New York Times*, *The Wall Street Journal*, *AdWeek*, *AdAge*, *Time*, and *Crain's BtoB*. She has also moderated more than 100 webinars.



Cole Moir / @coleremoir
Trend Watching, pg. 5
 Cole is a Web analytics strategist, analyzing Web presence, social channels, community engagement and mobile technologies. He is a former Olympic contender in diving but today jumps off nothing higher than a treadmill.



James Meyers / @jmeyers
What is a Modern Brand?, pg. 40
 Jim is the founder and president of a fast-growing content marketing agency in Chicago's West Loop. This issue of *orange* inspired a new tagline for his company: Content That Fuels Modern Brands.



Nick O'Mara / @nomaradesigns
Trend Watching, pg. 5
 Nick is an infographics designer, taking facts and figures and turning them into unique visual representations. With his knowledge of infographics, he can assemble IKEA furniture faster than most.



Adam Wren / @adamwren
Whose Followers? pg. 14
 Adam is a journalist covering small business, policy and politics. After reporting on the case of Noah Kravitz, Adam decided to increase his own Twitter following by offering a copy of one of his books to his 500th follower. Not a book he wrote. Just a random book from his bookshelf. He remains at 489 followers.

Social Buying Power

How many people have smartphones in their pockets and purses?



50% of U.S. adults have smartphones.¹
 That's nearly **117 million people**.
 If those users were a country, they'd be the **11th largest** in the world.⁹

And more will be joining them.

Smartphone sales globally are expected to increase by **25%** to **\$630 million** this year.¹



People are currently using their smartphones to:



browse the Internet.⁴



access a search engine.⁴



access social networking sites.⁴



watch videos.⁴

They also use them to make decisions about shopping.



79% of mobile users use smartphones for shopping.⁴
74% of smartphone shoppers made a purchase as a result of using their smartphone.⁴
70% use their phones while shopping in-store.⁴

But they don't use smartphones to purchase products with social media.



of company Facebook pages feature products customers can buy on the social media page.⁶



enable customers to make complete purchases on Facebook.⁶

Despite a huge opportunity.

425 million people log onto Facebook through their mobile phone **each month**.⁷



U.S. population: 308,745,538.⁸

That's **1.4 times** the population of the **United States**.

More money could be made.

By **2015**, brands will generate **50%** of their Web sales through **social media** and **mobile platforms**.³



Will you seize the opportunity?

Sources: 1) State of the Media: The Social Media Report Q3 2011; Nielsen 2) 2012 Mobile Future in Focus; comScore 3) Gartner, Inc. 2011 4) The Mobile Movement Study e/ipsosOTX MediaCT 5) Digitas' Data Digest, Digitas and Harris Interactive 6) Argyle Social, February 2012 7) Facebook Blog 8) U.S. Census Bureau's 2010 Census 9) CIA's The World Factbook.

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Now What?

Pinterest shows promise, but is the best yet to come?
Or should companies pause before pinning?

On the Internet hype meter, Pinterest is practically off the charts. But is it the next Facebook—or the next MySpace? Last winter, the social media site was the fastest-growing website of all time. But as summer approached, growth started to simmer. While no website can maintain frenzied growth forever, the plateau points to the next wave for the young website with digital pin boards. Should companies race to join the über-popular—yet still developing—website and pin their hopes on the next social unknown? We asked two creative heads for their perspectives.

POINT:

Pinterest is a powerful extension of our culture. Adapt now or miss an engaging way to interact with your consumers.

Joyann King, website director for **Harper's Bazaar**:

"The growth we've seen with Pinterest is impressive. It's revolutionized something [people] have been doing for years: saving magazine tears and photos that they love or inspire them. Pinterest took this personal practice out of dé-coupage boxes and removed the organizing dread of it all. Plus, there's the added value of seeing what your friends and favorite influencers are loving at the moment. It expands and hopefully elevates everyone's mood boards.

"Pinterest is total eye-candy. It's all about the compelling visual. This makes it a great platform for a brand like *Bazaar* that has its roots in original, directional photography and its voice in personal style.

[Pinterest's] closest competitor in the social arena is Tumblr, but the curation aspect of Pinterest makes it easier to keep your thoughts organized, and the social aspect is more engaging since users can pin to one another's boards."

COUNTERPOINT:

Pinning innovative products creates the risk of competitors stealing ideas.

Monica Frisbie, head designer for **Mondrina** handbags: "We [at Mondrina] spend countless hours looking for inspiration in all different places, but photos online is not one of them. It often takes us a month to make an inspiration board for a new collection and to create a 'theme.' We are afraid to let too much out of the bag and are very worried about others using our ideas.

"We also are always a little wary of saving other people's photos, and it seems like some potential legal

problems could occur.

"I do like the overall function of Pinterest, and the 'pin it' button is very tempting to press. I do think the site is very pretty and is visually a designer's paradise. I will be using it for personal projects, especially home-related ones."





LA Mode

Want to stay on top of social media trends?

Follow fashion.

By Allison Ellis

Always changing, always trending, the fashion industry is one of the few with the moxie to try new things and discard them mere months later. It's a tactic that has worked particularly well in social media, where fashion brands, consumers and tastemakers co-mingle behind the scenes.

All, we might add, with fabulous results.

Watch a model strut down the runway in a feathered parrot dress with a matching headpiece, and you might think the fashion world is a little crazy. Or maybe you say to yourself: "There's my new look!" Regardless, the parrot dress—and most runway fashion—brings you into a world where anything is possible and taking chances is encouraged.

This mirrors the fashion industry's approach to social media: experimental, trend setting, out there. And it works.

How does it do it? Layering the right mix of lifestyle branding, expressive customer engagement and insider exclusivity. Just take a peek.

Lifestyle

When it comes to expressing a compelling narrative, fashion marketers wrote the book. It's called lifestyle.

Think about it: The clothing brands you wear say a lot about you. **REI:** Outdoorsy and active. **Nordstrom:** Sophisticated. **Urban Outfitters:** Hip, young and cool. Which isn't to say consumers embody one particular head-to-toe "look" all the time, but when it comes to building a brand on lifestyle, for the most part, fashion gets it right.

A lot of fashion's marketing success has to do with aspiration. A full-page, glossy advertisement of a smoky-eyed Angelina Jolie floating on a rustic boat with a Louis Vuitton bag at her side, for instance, reminds us of exotic travel and the journeys we aspire to take. Not that we've all toted a \$2,000 handbag with us on a wooden raft, but hey, don't you wish you had?

That's the point. Both online and off, many successful brands exude a certain lifestyle, enticing customers with the appeal of places (or things) more exotic, more colorful, more adventurous or more diverse than theirs. While some mainstream consumer brands have mastered the lifestyle play—think **Apple** and **Whole Foods**—no one is better at this than fashion.

Take **Kate Spade New York**, which this spring ranked second in a think tank's list of top fashion brands in the social space. Through its multiple social channels, including YouTube, Instagram, Tumblr, Twitter and Facebook, the brand takes followers to an exotic world of food, travel, music and nostalgia-inspired, simple objects, like tulips, roller skates or shoelaces.

While everything is "on brand" in terms of bright colors, playful images and retro-chic style,

the environment Kate Spade has created is engaging and rich: full of pool parties, day trips and discussion-worthy, whimsical art. The company's clever hashtag, #ridecolorfully, continues the sentiment and also helps customers connect in this highly social, virtual world that, importantly, is not built around a suite of products. The images are beguiling, the voice is strong and everything about the experience is bold and vivid. Who wouldn't want to join in?

Similarly, indie designer-focused **Craft & Culture** uses social media to curate images that align with its edgy, artsy style. The brand works with designers who, as owners Jason Parker and Hana Ryan Wilson tell us, "already have their own scene." Which is to say: Our cool world is largely defined by those we invite to the party. Customers, meanwhile, are drawn in, pinning, commenting, sharing; in essence, making this enticing world part of their own identities.

"In a way, it's no different than scrapbooking or putting magazine tears up on the wall," says Macala Wright, independent fashion consultant and publisher of FashionablyMarketing.Me. "Before social media hit the scene, curation was limited to the top 1 percent of influencers, stylists and tastemakers. Now, anyone can put up a photo collage on Tumblr, create an inspiration board on Pinterest or start a fashion blog. It's more about social product discovery," she explains.

Notice, too, that these brands don't constantly post about their own products. The social media adage, "promote others more often than you promote yourself," holds true in fashion, where the most successful designers tweet about upcoming shows and their favorite designers and artists. To fully embrace the lifestyle concept, think "scene," not "seen."

Following the Followers

While we're on the subject of elevating your community, remember those virtual dress-up bots where you could drag and drop clothes and compile "outfits"? **Lands' End** had a pretty good one, but like most of the original online tools employed by retailers, it was clunky and didn't really do justice to the apparel, or the consumer. But they had the right idea: Allow consumers to assemble their own style. Sharing was the

missing component.

With social media, all of that has changed. Wright estimates there are hundreds of thousands of blogs devoted to fashion, style and trends, many of them focused on "personal fashion," where the blogger uses photography, video and inspirational images to help define his or her own identity and personal style—and share it.

The clue here is to not use social media as a megaphone, but to capitalize on a theme and run with it. For example, Scott Schuman, a former **Valentino** marketer, started his blog, *The Sartorialist*, as a way to showcase street fashion images of everyday people. The blog, which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every day, helped launch a six-figure book deal for Schuman, as well as a booming fashion-photography business for several luxury brands.

Similarly, Emily Schuman (no relation to Scott) of **Cupcakes and Cashmere**, started blogging about her interests (fashion, food, interior décor) in 2008. The blog, which has been described as "Martha Stewart meets Carrie Bradshaw," the perennially popular "Sex and the City" protagonist, launched a collaboration with **Coach** where Schuman helped the company design a fresh, new handbag for a younger demographic.

"A big part of social media's allure is that it's very status driven," explains Wright. "Everyone wants to be known for something, and consumers are getting more selective about which brands they choose to 'like.'" The trick is to identify and tap into those key influencers early and forge relationships—in the way of cross-promotion, affiliate sales or even new product development. "It's the new way to engage your brand ambassadors," she says. They're already sharing fashionable tips and trends, so why not yours?

To fully embrace the lifestyle concept, think "scene," not "seen."

Intimacy

There was a time, not long ago, when fashion brands were fearful of pulling back the curtain and letting consumers see what happens behind the scenes. What if they see how unglamorous it can be? They might ask, “How hard is it really to put together a runway event, a new clothing line or a photo spread?”

Thanks to reality shows like “Project Runway” and even “America’s Next Top Model,” consumers don’t just want a peek backstage, they’re demanding VIP access. They want to see the pain and the drama, and top brands are giving them the inside look. It’s become a big part of the fashion narrative and has helped propel the social media success for many industry brands.

“Consumers will appreciate you more if they

know what goes into the making of your product,” says Mariana Leung, an independent fashion designer and blogger at MsFabulous.com, a site devoted to the behind-the-scenes elements of fashion design. Leung, a graduate of Parsons School of Design in New York, has worked on nearly all sides of the fashion business, including sales, technical design, public relations and marketing. She highlights an interview she did last year with artisans from Rome who flew to New York City to work on a custom fur for **Fendi**. “It took 10 designers over 40 days to complete,” she says. “When buyers know more about the inspiration and art form behind products, and the skill level involved, the connection between customer and the brand is deepened that much more.” Consider bloggers your new product-knowledge team.

Social Fashion: Best in Class



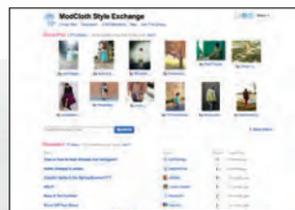
The Insider:
Donna Karan New York
@DKNY

Quick: How do you get 380,000 Twitter followers? Aliza Licht, senior vice president of global communications for Donna Karan, is the quirky and hilarious voice behind @DKNY. She offers a fun mix of fashion and celebrity musings, life in the fashion lane, inspirational quotes, and, of course, insider news on happenings at work. Her bio: “I’m your well-placed fashion source bringing you behind-the-scenes scoop from inside Donna Karan New York & DKNY and my life as a PR girl living in NY.” We want to follow her because we want to be her.



The Friendly:
Maurices
Facebook.com/maurices

“Liking” Maurices is like having a cool friend who helps you pick out a cute outfit. Maurices is an American women’s clothing chain mostly found in shopping malls and small towns. “We make women feel good about themselves no matter what their size,” says Maurices’ Marketing Director Monica Hendrickson, speaking of the brand’s real-world-inspired vibe. Its Facebook page, with more than 300,000 fans, offers a range of user-friendly styling tips and insider info. Our favorite: “This or That Thursday,” where users vote on two clothing items. What’s it gonna be, ladies? The mini or the maxi? Hint: There are no wrong answers.



The Enterprising:
ModCloth
www.flickr.com/groups/modclothstyleexchange

In 2010, ModCloth was named one of America’s Fastest Growing Retailers by *Inc.* What started in a college dorm room has now expanded to a 275-person global operation. ModCloth pins most of its success on its forward-thinking social media efforts. ModCloth’s recently launched “Eye on the Enterprise” campaign focuses on real-life women entrepreneurs who share fashion tips across all their social media channels, and their “Be the Buyer” feature allows users to select which items go into production. Best in class? The Flickr “Style Exchange,” where members can post images of themselves wearing ModCloth fashions—and get instant feedback.

What if your products aren’t couture or custom-made? There’s still a story to tell, and customers want to hear it, particularly from a designer or another insider who can serve as a friendly guide. Two of the most popular fashion feeds on Twitter are @DKNY (of **Donna Karan New York**) and @OscarPRGirl (of **Oscar de la Renta**), both run by the communications veeps for those brands. The feeds (which attract hundreds of thousands of fans; @DKNY has close to 390,000 followers) offer intimate, personal, seemingly unfiltered access to behind-the-scenes elements of these big-time fashion companies, including real-time links to Instagram and Pinterest mood boards, or simple musings on life in the fashion lane.

Note that VPs are crafting the clever tweets. (A recent one from @DKNY: “I made an appointment with my creativity for now and it seems my creativity is late.”)

“Unfortunately, a lot of companies have assigned their social media initiatives to an intern or low-level marketing manager, and this is a huge mistake,” cautions Leung. Fashion brands know better than anyone that image matters, and company communications—even in 140 characters—can speak louder than the latest runway trends.

Tweets are just one part of the new customer accessibility. **Macy’s** “Backstage Pass” program allows users to snap QR codes in various departments and get style and fit advice from Macy’s celebrity partners. And **Maurices** is now in the second year of its “Main Street Model” contest, which allows fans access to the selection process, as well as insider elements of styling sessions and photo shoots. Whatever your brand strategy, it’s all about letting customers in. Remember: You’re still the one who decides what they get to see.

Social Commerce

With everyone at the social media party, the dynamics of commerce are changing as well. Ratings, product reviews and the “share” button all have gone a long way toward transparency and well-informed consumers. But when it comes to product creation and selection, involving your fans and followers from the start can be just as important.

Some brands are effectively utilizing crowdsourcing to support social commerce. **ModCloth**, a vintage-inspired e-retailer whose internal company motto is “ModCloth is a company you’re friends with,” embraces this ideology. Users essentially act as fashion buyers, writing product descriptions and voting on clothing samples. Similarly, **Grunt Style**, a fashion line aimed at the military set, regularly lets fans decide which products go up for sale. For the brand, this is not just a fun social media gimmick; it’s part of its business strategy.

“I’ve had several items that I thought were awesome, but apparently our customers didn’t agree,” says Daniel Alarik, owner of Grunt Style. Now, he posts new designs on Facebook and within seconds has a resounding response from his 10,000 fans: yea or nay. “If they’re interested in buying, I’ll make it available for pre-order on our website, and within a few minutes, the orders start rolling in.” If the proposed design is a dud, he scraps it.

To encourage more commerce through social media, the fashion world is paying close attention to a couple of new platforms. One is Fancy, which combines the social engagement of a photo curation website like Pinterest with the ease-of-shopping experience of Amazon. So far it’s a fashion destination that feels more male-oriented, focusing on high-end travel gear and modern home furnishings. But anything is possible; Facebook started out as an online yearbook for college students.

In addition to Fancy, Fantasy Shopper, just launched in the U.K., combines features of popular online games with real-world fashion merchandise. Users can spend “fantasy money” on virtual clothes, share their outfits with friends and buy real items online or in store. Meanwhile, retailers are tracking user behavior and product “likes”—turning that data into personalized deals, discounts and specials.

“One of the myths of social media is that brands are talking to the masses,” Wright says. “It’s not true. The power is in the intimacy. Brands speak to a small group of individuals and then those individuals pick and choose the coolest items to share with their friends.” This is how the dialogue starts, and where the story begins. ■



In the Wild West of social media, where brands are people and people are brands, where does the brand begin and the person end?

By Adam Wren

WHOSE FOLLOWERS?



THE SUMMONS ARRIVED ON A SUNDAY.

Noah Kravitz, a former star blogger for the mobile phone news-and-reviews website **PhoneDog.com**, heard a car pull up to his Oakland, Calif., home.

Who's coming to the house now? Kravitz recalls thinking. What happened next unfolded like a scene in a movie, he says. Kravitz peered out the window. Watching the man walk toward his door with a sheaf of papers, he began putting the puzzle pieces together.

PhoneDog, his former employer, was suing him—for what, he wasn't sure. For the last six months, since December 2010, he'd been locked in a bitter dispute with the website's owner after Kravitz says the company cancelled a residual payment he was due.

But as he rifled through the stack of papers the officer of the court handed him, trying to determine the cause of the suit, Kravitz was shocked to find the answer: PhoneDog Media was suing him for his 17,000 Twitter followers, a collection of names that, since he accumulated them under its aegis, amounted to a proprietary customer list, the company argued.

The amount PhoneDog's lawyers were asking: \$2.50 per follower, per month, for a period of eight months, totaling an eye-popping \$340,000. "I was really just stunned," says Kravitz, now an editor at TechnoBuffalo.com, a tech lifestyle site.

As the case enters the discovery phase in a federal court, it raises fresh questions for brands operating in the Wild West of social media: When employees post for your brand on Twitter, Facebook or another social channel, whose brand are they building—yours or theirs?

"It's a confluence of both," answers Kravitz. "Part and parcel of your corporate culture has to be understanding exactly what the answer is to that question."

There Are No Rules

When he first joined the Mount Pleasant, N.C.-headquartered PhoneDog as a freelance blogger in April 2006, there was no official social media policy for Kravitz to sign. That's because Twitter was only days old at the time—the first tweet was sent March 21—and social media as we know it today was in its infancy.

Over the next four years, PhoneDog, like other websites and brands, began building its social media presence, including Twitter, Facebook and YouTube accounts. "From all of our efforts, the site's popularity continued to grow, and Noah essentially became a micro-celebrity of sorts," PhoneDog's owner, Tom Klein, wrote in a January statement offering a rebuttal to critics who had painted the company in an unfavorable light.

Kravitz tells a similar story, one of a company finding its way on the new frontier of social media, making things up as it went along. "We were figuring it out as Twitter became popular," he says. "I was sort of using it the most and the one that suddenly had this following."

Four years later, in October 2010, Kravitz resigned from PhoneDog to

pursue new opportunities. When he did, he says, he had an agreement with Klein to carry his Twitter followers from @PhoneDog_Noah to a new handle, @noahkravitz.

Kravitz drafted a final post for the site, which ran on Oct. 18, 2010: "Thanks for all of the support," he wrote, "and I'll see you around ... on Twitter—and maybe even back on these pages one day."

In his only company blog post on the issue, Klein contends Kravitz violated the terms of his exit agreement by completing freelance work for other tech publishers while still cashing checks from PhoneDog.

In an emailed response to a request for PhoneDog's side of the story, Klein told **orange**: "We are not publicly discussing the case with the media at this time."

Who Owns the Followers?

In some ways, the PhoneDog case is not unique. Similar high-profile social media transitions have occurred, though they did not result in lawsuits.

At **BBC** in July 2011, for instance, the British Broadcasting Corporation lost 60,000 Twitter followers when Chief Political Correspondent Laura Kuennsberg left for competitor **ITV**. In the process, Kuennsberg changed her handle from @BBCLauraK to @ITVLauraK.

Former **CNN** host Rick Sanchez encountered the same predicament when he was ousted from the news organization after he made anti-Semitic remarks in 2010. After amassing 140,000 followers tweeting as @RickSanchezCNN, he kept his followers by simply renaming his handle @RickSanchezTV.

The PhoneDog case will be precedent-setting because it will likely be decided in court, says New York City attorney Henry Cittone, who litigates intellectual property disputes with the firm Cittone & Lindenbaum LLP. Once and for all, he says, the case could settle the issue of who owns followers accumulated by an individual working for a company.

As the law stands now, "it's somewhat murky," Cittone says, when asked whether a brand owns the social media account of an employee who tweets on its behalf. "If an employer says we do social media, and [we] want to tweet about specific things, then arguably [the company owns] that feed."

What's a Tweet Worth?

What happened: PhoneDog Media is suing former employee/blogger Noah Kravitz for his 17,000 Twitter followers, a list of names, the company argues, that amounts to a proprietary customer list, since Kravitz amassed the followers while working at PhoneDog.

How much is the suit?: The company is seeking \$2.50 per follower, per month, for eight months, totaling \$340,000.

A recent digest of tweets from @noahkravitz:

April 25, 2012: Instead of going to the gym I played drums for the first time in months. #FatAndHappy

Feb. 28, 2012: The other day I broke my Chemex coffee nerd appar[a]tus. Today I replaced it with a Clever Coffee Drip[p]er piece of foolish awesome.

On the other hand, Cittone says social media is designed for personal use. As such, it's personal property. "At the end of the day, you're following an individual, not a company," he says.

Either way, he says a company should spell out a specific social media policy for its employees—something even Kravitz acknowledges was the root problem in his case. "It needs to be set out very clearly who is going to own those followers when [a person] comes to the company," Cittone says.

Let Social Buzz Bloom, Wherever

In Kravitz's estimation, the predicament is symptomatic of a quickly changing work force.

"There are bloggers and journalists who are moving from company to company at a much faster pace than, say, my parents' generation changed jobs," Kravitz says. "With social media, there's a much bigger importance put on a person's personal brand, and so there are plenty of people who will become fans of a particular writer, and follow them from job to job." (Imagine Edward R. Murrow jumping TV stations every few years.)

So how can modern brands manage the tension of building employees' brands—while at the same time building a company's brand—on social media, only to have those employees switch jobs later?

The secret is to take an open-handed, not close-fisted approach, says Joe Chernov, vice president of content marketing for **Eloqua**, the fast-growing, cloud-based marketing automation company in Vienna, Va.—and one of the most successful generators of social content.

"We have a very different approach than most companies when it comes to employees and social media," says Chernov, whose company authored the *2011-12 Social Media Pro Book*, a how-to guide for all things social for brands. "We want to create a culture of content creators."

Kravitz, who's amassed about 7,000 new Twitter followers since the follower fiasco unfolded, says companies that dominate employees' approach to social media could risk stymieing such a culture.

"As new things come up, you don't want to discourage your employees from getting out ahead or hopping on the bandwagon with the latest and greatest ways to engage with your customer base," Kravitz says. "But you also need to make that understanding [of the company's social media exit policy] clear."



Digital Vision

To navigate these murky waters well, brands may ultimately have to loosen their grip on employees' virtual Rolodexes. In the short term, this has its downsides: A company forfeits its social media investment in an employee—not unlike a company losing out on an intensive-training investment when an employee left for a competitor.

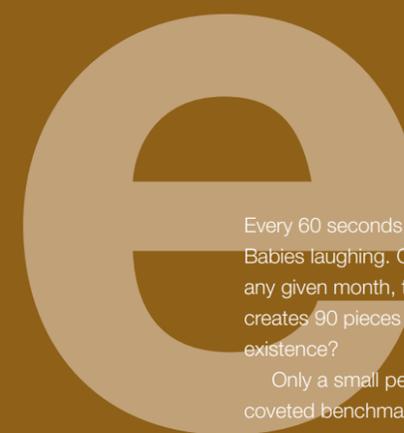
In the long term, though, this strategy is worth the tradeoff, says Chernov: The thousands of positive, engaging tweets sent out by the employee while they posted on your behalf, and the new members of your tribe those tweets garnered.

Chernov sees little upside for a company that disincentivizes employees' social posts by demanding they turn over their followers when heading out the door for a new opportunity. "What you can't buy is trust. That's what [your employees' followers] lend," he says.

In an age where the spread of information and advertising has been democratized, and the balance of power has tipped away from marketers on Madison Avenue and toward the masses, brands such as Eloqua, CNN and BBC are learning that sometimes it's worth losing followers to maintain goodwill.

"The public will always side with David, and not Goliath," Chernov says. ■

**AT THE END
OF THE DAY,
YOU'RE
FOLLOWING
AN INDIVIDUAL,
NOT A
COMPANY**



Every 60 seconds, another 48 hours of video is posted on YouTube. People tripping. Babies laughing. Cats farting. Any given day sees another 250 million tweets. And in any given month, the average Facebook user—there are about 901 million in total—creates 90 pieces of content. And did we mention the estimated 164 million blogs in existence?

Only a small percentage of this content ever reaches more than a million hits—a coveted benchmark and a sign the content has "gone viral" to become part of the pop culture lexicon. Should that content be attached to your brand, congrats! Such recognition could translate into exponential growth in brand awareness.

Olive Garden executives discovered that in early 2012 when a small town newspaper's review of a North Dakota location of the chain restaurant went viral.

But why the heck was this seemingly unassuming article viewed millions of times?

Breadsticks and Bloggers

In order to become an Internet sensation, content needs to be found by **tastemakers**—influential bloggers, reporters, pundits or celebrities who share content with the masses.

For 85-year-old journalist Marilyn Hagerty's piece, that meant The Denver Omelette. The North Dakotan food blog was the first to pick up her *Grand Forks Herald* piece touting the Olive Garden's appealing atmosphere and generous food portions. Blogs Guyism and City Pages followed, and soon the much larger Gawker covered the story.

Thanks largely to the Gawker post, in just hours Hagerty's review was shared 21,000 times on Facebook and tweeted 14,000 times. In days the Web page displaying Hagerty's story surpassed the million mark and became the *Grand Forks Herald's* most read story ever.

This **community participation** fuels all viral content. People aren't just sharing their opinions on Hagerty's article around the water cooler. They are a global part of her story.

In Hagerty's case, a wave of criticism flooded her inbox from people fussing over the **unexpectedness** of the article. The day after Hagerty's report was published online, she received an email titled: "Your column is pathetic." She thanked the sender for his interest and then headed off to play bridge with friends.

Foodies mistook the octogenarian's profile as an earnest review of the Olive Garden, and they were **surprised**—and angry—that someone might find the good in a chain. "People criticized me because I didn't analyze each bite of food, each grain of meat," Hagerty says. "But I'm just a news reporter in North Dakota. It is a description of the place."

The Olive Garden subtly capitalized on the attention. When The Huffington Post, for example, asked for a quote from the general manager of the Grand Forks location, company representatives denied the request and informed the online news outlet that the manager was in Italy at the brand's culinary institute.

For Hagerty, the fame translated into appearances on national news shows and a book deal with celebrity foodie Anthony Bourdain. "To me," she says, "it's a little bit ridiculous—and amusing." ■

How Content Goes Viral



Ryan McVay/Catly

Holding Back

By Rebecca Rolfes



B2B companies enjoy some clear advantages over B2C companies in using social media. So why aren't more of them doing it?

Insufficient resources. That's the excuse 70 percent of B2B companies give to explain their dormant social media presence.

And it is an excuse. More than half of companies surveyed in *BtoB* magazine's report, *Emerging Trends in B-to-B Social Media Marketing: Insights from the Field*, remain firmly committed to more traditional marketing communications channels, such as advertising and public relations. In other words, the resources exist; companies are just allocating them elsewhere. The report says social comprises only 5 percent of the typical B2B marketing budget.

However, for B2B companies that are active in the space and have a strong social strategy, the results are staggering. Social-savvy B2B firms gained 230 percent more leads via social media than their peers, says Ann Handley, chief content officer of MarketingProfs, an online portal for marketing advice. In fact, B2B companies that do social media well generate, on average, 17 percent of their leads from social sites efforts. (See "Content and Conversations" on pg. 23 for a full interview with Handley.)

In addition to the misallocation of resources, misguided goals prevent companies from building a successful social media presence. Most in the B2B world want social marketing to support sales, while experienced marketers say its biggest benefit is community building. According to the *BtoB* report, social is

a "more subtle media" that garners customer feedback, good and bad, and strengthens the relationships B2B companies have always relied on to succeed.

But instead of thinking about social media in terms of resources, sales support and marketing tactics, B2B companies should think about how they connect with customers every day to understand where social should fit into their organization. It's a strategy that's working well for their peers.

B2B sales are built on relationships.

B2C companies use social media to create and build relationships with customers who traditionally have had only a transactional relationship with a brand. With B2B firms, on the other hand, long-lasting, trusted relationships are the foundation of a successful sales strategy. That's why B2B companies should have a leg up on their B2C counterparts on social channels. However, many B2B firms that use social media rank "building a community" lower on their list of goals than branding, increasing Web traffic and promotions, according to the

BtoB report. That means they're using social media wrong. It's no wonder, then, they'd rather spend money on more traditional channels.

Interestingly enough, companies that are experienced in social media placed community building much higher in the survey, and 21 percent have gone so far as to create customer communities. **Intel**, for instance, has five communities in addition to Facebook and Twitter accounts. All of Intel's communities, open to qualified users, are actually robust blog pages, so no expensive site building is required. They achieve the excellent SEO benefits of a blog with the engagement and listening potential of a community.

While InsideScoop, a community for anyone who owns Cisco equipment, is the most consumer-oriented of the bunch, the other four are clearly purpose-built B2B communities. The Intel Embedded Community for hardware and software developers, for instance, houses more than 2,000 pieces of content, from whitepapers to blog posts, and almost 800 discussions. The Intel Software Developers community is divided into more targeted groups. For the most part, community members are talking to each other and to company representatives; Intel is part of the conversation at every step, from troubleshooting technical problems with community members to merely joining the software shop talk.

The B2B target market is smaller and more focused.

One of *BtoB* magazine's 2011 social media winners, **Firehouse.com**, is a trade media company for firefighters and EMS personnel. As an industry leader, the company produces a lot of content through its 75,000-circulation magazine and its website, and it has an events business, as well. Realizing the changes in media taste and consumption, however, the company implemented a Facebook campaign in the fall of 2010 to retain control of this highly targeted audience.

Today, the Firehouse.com Facebook page has more than 162,000 likes and almost a thousand talkers. It's newsy, topical and timely, and it generates healthy levels of engagement. Once Firehouse got serious about social media—regularly supplying content and monitoring the feeds—its number of Facebook followers doubled in only six months.

B2B companies can more tightly control their social presence because there is less noise.

Given all the chatter—positive and negative—about B2C brands, they have control issues on their social media channels. (Read about unfortunate, recurring incidents with **McDonald's** on Twitter, pg. 46.)

Rackspace, a hosting and cloud computing company based in San Antonio, leverages social media to communicate with customers, including the disgruntled ones. Rackspace tracks activity across the social Web to locate detractors, wherever they may be. The social media team of six engineers engages the unhappy customer, sometimes emailing or calling them personally if the issue can't be resolved quickly and cleanly in the social space. Not only is the customer's problem solved, the argument is no longer out in public and potentially viral. The company has 180,000 customers and 80,000 servers, so social media is staffed for 24/7 monitoring. Probably not something a consumer brand could handle.

Most B2B leads come through referrals.

Social media makes referrals from satisfied customers easier and more immediate. **Aon Corp.**, the global insurance broker, uses the Client Promise Initiative program, which rates each customer contract against certain goals: timely service, claim assistance and so forth. This program also enables Aon to identify brand promoters in their social media platforms. But instead of asking for



Content and Conversations

An interview with Ann Handley, chief content officer of MarketingProfs and co-author of *Content Rules*.

orange: Are B2B marketers using social media less than their B2C counterparts?

A: Maybe. But what I've seen is that the smartest B2B companies use social tools effectively. A study MarketingProfs ran recently showed that social-savvy B2B firms gained 230 percent more leads via social media than their peers.

orange: Is social media inherently a person-to-person medium that does not lend itself to company-to-company conversation?

A: In a way, yes. But even B2B companies are made up of people.

Social media offers all businesses a chance to communicate with customers (also people!) in human terms. So even the most buttoned-up, traditional B2B companies can use social tools and platforms to communicate with and engage prospects and customers. How they choose to do that varies, but I don't see "social" and "B2B" as inherently allergic to one another.

orange: Much of the good B2B social media efforts (*BtoB* magazine's 2011 award recipients, for example) are campaigns rather than ongoing daily conversations. Why is that?

A: That's true in the B2C space, too. Marketing is still evolving from its campaign mentality roots. Social media and content marketing are not one-and-done campaigns; they are ongoing, long-term commitments. I think we'll start to see more recognition for that going forward.

orange: There is a heavy reliance on blogs in the B2B social media space. Is blogging a better option for complex B2B content than the shorter Facebook post or tweet?

A: I see blogs as a kind of hub to any content or social strategy—so in other words, it's not "either-or" (blogs vs. Facebook or Twitter or Pinterest). Rather, it's both, or it's more of an ecosystem ... all parts of the same whole. But blogs are a definite staple for B2B companies for obvious reasons. Generally, the longer sales cycle and more complex products lend themselves to blogging. So you might see blogs that focus on thought leadership (positioning the company as an expert). Or blogs that focus on helping customers—offering solutions by sharing resources or solving problems.

orange: What is the best example you've seen of a B2B company using social media?

A: A lot! **Cisco, Hubspot, Eloqua, Dell, SAP, Marketo.** Oh, and **MarketingProfs**.

SHELF LIFE

Once you post something, how long does it last? And is that long enough for the higher-priced, more complicated sale of a B2B product? Bitly, the URL shortening service, researched the shelf life of various social media channels, the time in which a post will receive over half its clicks.

- Twitter has the shortest average half life at 2.8 hours.
- Facebook links average 3.2 hours.
- Direct sources (like email or instant message links) average 3.4 hours.
- YouTube averages 7.4 hours.

Source: Bitly.com

online recommendations, the company asks them to participate in case studies and testimonials that are used in marketing materials. Deployed in 60 or so countries, the system has improved the aggregate promotion of Aon's risk business by 24 percent (calculating the percentage of promoters minus the percentage of detractors).

B2B companies rely on their reputation as experts.

B2B firms pride themselves on providing "solutions" rather than simple products. Social media is the perfect way to project a smart, responsive, reliable brand. B2B companies also rely on blogs as content engines and destinations for existing and potential customers. There, too, social media provides the marketing pull necessary to drive users to content and showcase a company's knowledge in the more complex B2B sales environment.

General Electric Corp. uses social media to promote "the people behind our most innovative technologies" by hosting blogs from in-house experts. Each blogger at GEblogs.com has an individual social media presence—their own Twitter handle, LinkedIn profile, etc.—in addition to the main GE platforms. This broadens the reach and makes the experience more personal, and less corporate. (Read about the risks associated with individual branding in "Whose Followers?" pg. 14) GE is also exploring the use of Pinterest, a platform dismissed by most in B2B marketing.

Cisco uses The Network, a website that looks more like a social media page, as a content-creation engine. The networking giant launched the site last year and presents the latest technology news using top-flight writers from all over the world. The content rarely mentions Cisco, even though the company refers to this as an experiment in "brand journalism."

Social media outreach using all the major platforms, with a heavy reliance on Twitter and multi-media sites like Flickr and YouTube, is deployed to create the type of user experience one would expect from a leading technology company. For instance, a nine-part series on Cities of the Future, written by such well-known authors as Wendy Tanaka, the technology editor of *Forbes*, includes videos that load instantly—a key tenet of user friendliness for video on the Web. Between the high-quality content and the flawless technology, you get an exceptionally sophisticated branding message. You "know" the company through what it does and how it thinks. Interestingly, Cisco does not try to control published content. The site says, "We welcome the re-use, republication, and distribution of The Network" content, asking only for attribution. A fairly genius approach, considering that free and high-quality content are tenets of Web 2.0.

Social media can expedite the B2B sales cycle.

Most of **Omni Hotels & Resorts'** social media efforts are geared toward consumers. Guests

submit reviews and photos, enter contests and look for promotions. But the high-margin meeting and conference business is crucial to the hospitality company's bottom line. Last year, an Omni campaign used social media to target those who influence meeting planners early in the planners' research.

Omni specifically targeted bloggers in the meeting and event industry with information and invitations to tour Omni properties, either virtually or in person. According to *BtoB*, the program resulted in more than 290 conversations with meeting planners and their influencers. The company reached about 70 percent of its target audience and generated six large sale leads.

B2B has a longer tail than B2C.

B2B customers are less fickle than B2C customers, which makes social media for B2B companies more cost-effective and gives social posts a longer shelf life. (See Shelf Life, pg. 24.)

In its bite-sized content updates, much of social media seems too short and attention-deprived to adequately address the less fickle B2B customer. There are, however, platforms that invite the same sort of attention and longevity as a good white paper, albeit in a totally different way and with a completely different aim. Blogs are one example, and video is another.

Video is a sticky medium that creates visit duration. YouTube videos have the longest shelf life—the time in which a post will receive over half its clicks—of any social media channel and pay off much more quickly. The average social media effort takes 10 months to prove effective; video takes only two to six months. And video can be a lot more fun without being overly consumerish or inappropriate.

Xerox, for instance, produced a video promoting its document-management capabilities by showcasing work with the motorcycle company **Ducati**. The emphasis was on speed and safety, watchwords for both brands. The video has been watched more than 51,000 times on YouTube.

EMC Corp., the IT company concentrating mostly on cloud computing and big data, features the sort of videos you could watch forever on its popular Facebook page. For instance, the beautiful Perpetual Oceans video is set to soothing music and shows water-movement patterns among the world's oceans. This, next to a post about EMC's latest scientific white paper.

It's impossible to say whether the 46 people who "liked" the video in one Facebook post are the same as the 44 who downloaded the white paper from the adjacent post. Suffice it to say, whatever drew them to the page resulted in clicking on the type of sophisticated content EMC can provide.

And that is the essence of the ever-changing role of social media in the overall B2B marketing mix: Pull, not push. Community, not sales. ■

MISS

HIT

HIT

For brands to capitalize on Americans' growing mobile usage, companies need to introduce apps that are a lifestyle solution—a cure for boredom, an efficiency tool and a means toward empowerment—for their target consumers. Here, we look at businesses that hit an app popularity home run and those that struck out.

By Ana Fernatt & Mary Cusick

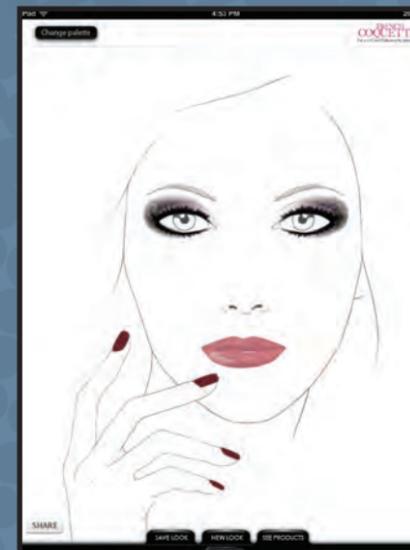
HIT



Disney went to the birds—the Angry Birds, that is—to promote its animated movie *Rio*. The partnership created a spinoff app of the wildly popular mobile game that allows users to launch birds at antagonist pigs. Rather than substituting the Angry Birds' main characters for the movie's avian animated stars, Disney kept the familiar fowl. Happy with the choice, enthusiasts downloaded Angry Birds Rio 10 million times in 10 days.



MISS

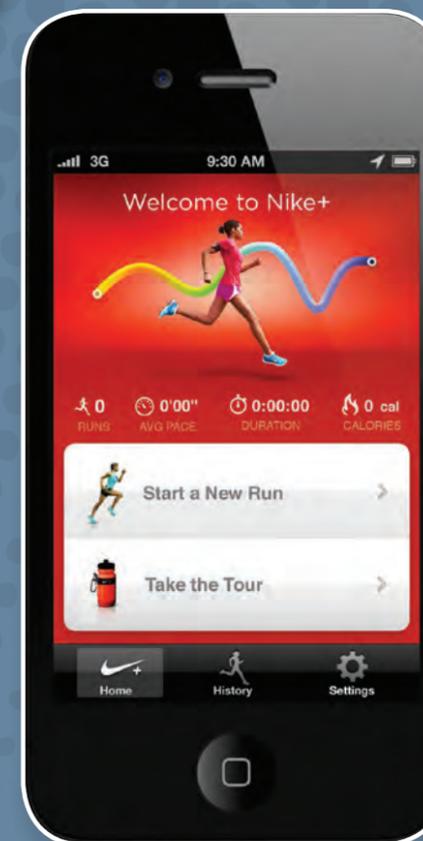


With French cosmetics brand **Lancôme's** app, users could test makeup virtually by applying hues to drawings of models. Though the content was shareable, the app failed to engage with the company's target audience because it felt more like paint-by-numbers than an app that provided tips on shades and products that would work best for individual consumers and their skin tones. Lancôme missed an opportunity to position itself as an expert.

HIT



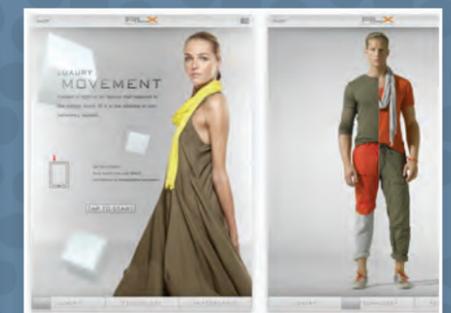
Nike strode into the mobile world with Nike+ GPS, an app for its active consumers. The app doesn't sell shoes; it simplifies a runner's life by tracking distance and pace. The GPS function gives trail tips, and Nike went the extra mile by adding a social function for sharing progress with friends.



MISS

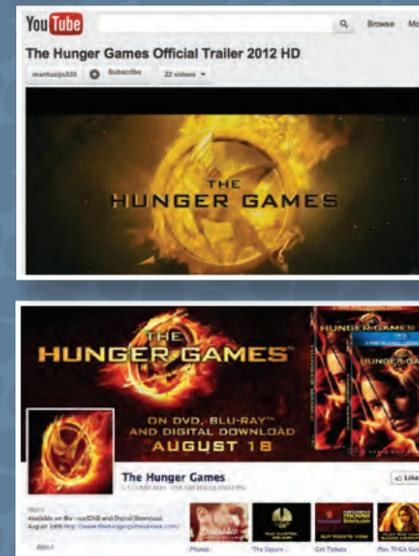


Ralph Lauren earned high marks for interactivity for its iPad app. Designed to be a virtual showroom for the clothier's new lines, fingertip swipes generate new colors of clothing, and blowing into the microphone makes the fabric move. Innovative? Absolutely, but it's an entertaining, one-use app. It's more of a showcase of the iPad's features than the designer's collection.



For every brand that uses social media to connect with fans, another has a heck of a hard time seizing that opportunity. But when used properly, social media can grow brand awareness, drive sales and establish customer loyalty.

HIT



 *The Hunger Games* was a monster at the box office, grossing more than \$155 million opening weekend and breaking all Fandango records for movie pre-sales. In part, **Lionsgate** can thank social media for the phenomenon. The production company capitalized on numerous platforms, launching the campaign a year before the film even debuted.

The movie didn't have just one Facebook page; it had 13 mirroring the districts of the film's fictional nation, Panem. The campaign also used Twitter, Tumblr, YouTube and social games to create buzz.

MISS



 Following the economic recession caused largely by the big financial firms, the Facebook page with the **Goldman Sachs** name atop it feels more like a complaint board than a platform for brand engagement. While Goldman Sachs has not claimed the page bearing its name, the wall is a stream of nasty remarks aimed at the investment bank giant. Also, the investment bank's Twitter handle has not offered one tweet—despite having nearly 4,000 followers. Its hands-off approach isn't eliminating the problem or reversing its incredibly unpopular public image.



MISS



 When a **NASCAR** driver crashed into a safety truck containing jet fuel at the 2012 Daytona 500, a huge fire spread across the track. Throughout the cleanup, driver Brad Keselowski tweeted updates to his followers.

The Twittersphere exploded, and Keselowski gained more than 100,000 new followers before the race even resumed. What fascinated his followers most was the fact that the clean-up crew turned to **Tide**'s powdered detergent to clean up the mess. The accident was like a free 30-minute national television advertisement.

But when it came time for Tide to hit the accelerator on a free brand exposure opportunity, the soap company was asleep at the wheel. Ten hours—an eternity in social media time—passed before Tide responded.

MISS

 When streaming video provider **Netflix** announced a raise in rates and change in service, customers took to the company's Facebook page to express their outrage, leaving nearly 11,000 negative comments that day. Netflix's response to the attacks? The company posted one cheerful comment thanking followers for their feedback.

The Netflix faux pas proves why it is essential for every brand to have a planned, strategic response—and a staff to handle it. If Netflix had one, perhaps more than 800,000 customers wouldn't have cancelled their subscriptions.



LET'S BE
HONEST:
THE REAL REASON
MARKETING
DEPARTMENTS
EXIST IS TO
SUPPORT
SALES.

Measuring Social's Success

By Christina Galoozis

Image Source

That doesn't mean every marketing campaign needs to drive in more revenue than it costs—but ideally, it would.

Measuring the return on social marketing investments, however, isn't yet a science. What's the value of a "like"? Do retweets turn into transactions? And has all that money spent on staffing page management been recovered?

To gain some insight into how big brands approach social media's ROI, we chatted with four top marketers about how they measure success in the social sphere. From rewarding brand loyalists to predicting the next big platform, here's what your peers know—and still don't—about measuring social's success:



Kobie Fuller
Chief Marketing Officer, Revolve Clothing
@kobiefuller

What do you think defines success for a specific social media initiative?

We focus on revenue and the number of new customers we're able to attract through the initiative. At the end of the day, we are in the business of selling clothes. However, part of how we leverage social media is developing a deeper emotional connection with our followers. That's a lot tougher to measure.

Of the resources that Revolve allocates for social, what percentage goes to just measurement and analytics?

I'd say very, very little. We get the basic metrics through our Web analytics package in terms of revenue and referrals. With each platform, too, we see what's trending well, what's not, and the social media manager puts together a weekly report. A lot of time, what's popular prompts our social manager to push that content through another channel, like a blog post.

Which social platform do you think will be the next big thing? What tells you that?

It's hard to say what's next. I like POSE, which is kind of like an Instagram application but centered around people taking pictures of themselves and tagging the designer in the post.

Do you tweet?

I manage the individuals who tweet; I'm more in charge of strategy. I personally feel like our social media is not close to where it should be. We've done a good job of growing our social following organically—all of our 50,000 Facebook likes and 16,000 followers are from organic growth; nothing is paid. But there's a lot further we could [go] to leverage our current customer base and, also, ensure there is a more cohesive experience across all our channels. We are hiring more staff to address this.

Who is measuring ROI?

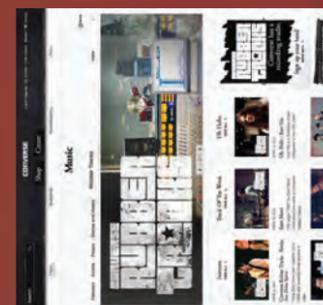
Does your company have standard frameworks in place to measure the value of social media?

	Yes!	No ☹
Advanced* Companies:	44%	56%
Intermediate Companies:	26%	74%
Novice Companies:	16%	84%

*Level of social media integration

Source: Altimeter Group, Aug. 2011

Converse is helping amateur musicians pursue their musical ambitions with Rubber Tracks, a professional recording studio where bands or individuals can record songs, free of charge. The space opened in Brooklyn, N.Y., last July, and offers to publish all tracks online. Converse recently set up pop-up studios in Austin for the 2012 SXSW Conference, and Toronto for the 2012 NXNW Music Festival.



Geoff Cottrill
Chief Marketing Officer, Converse
@yogmoney

What do you think defines success for a social media initiative?

We're fortunate enough to have a massive and loyal following that we don't do contests or campaigns to drum up numbers. But we define success in other ways. I like to tell this story: About a year after we set up our Facebook page, my team came to me and asked, "What are we going to do with 6 million Facebook fans?" My question was, "What have we done with the followers so far?" Their answer: nothing. "Good," I told them, "let's keep doing that, because it seems to be working." Our approach has been to let the consumer lead the conversation in this space. Because of that, we've grown to 30 million fans.

What's your on-the-ground experience with social media?

I tweet. I also have my own blog (yogmoney.wordpress.com) where I write about music and sometimes my daughters. Not a day goes by that I'm not actively seeking out, exploring or learning about social media.

How do you measure ROI?

Sometimes when we talk about ROI and social media there's always the question, and it's a dangerous one, "How are you going to monetize Facebook?" When I'm asked that question, I immediately take a step back and say, "We already have." Of our 30 million Facebook fans, 98 percent have already bought our products. They're joining in a way to express love for what they've already bought. We see it as a value-add for the brand, rather than driving incremental revenue. If we build the right kind of relationship with these folks, more revenue will follow.

How do you build your content, then?

Take the average person, who buys four pairs of shoes throughout the year—let's say they spend 3 hours on each purchase. That's 12 hours out of the entire year they spend thinking about shoes. For that person, talking about shoes over and over again gets pretty boring. You need to think of other ways to talk to your customers and add value in their lives.

And how do you add value to their lives?

By giving people the right kind of experiences and interactions. Our core consumers are creative people—they're artists, and many of them are musicians. Converse set up a recording studio in Brooklyn last year. We bring in our consumers, and they get to retain all the rights to the music they create there. They walk out after having a great experience, and they're all over social media talking about it.

Is there a proven formula for viral content?

If there is, I don't know it. Others who are smarter than me might have a proven formula. In my mind, you just [focus] on creating the kind of content experience that is going to resonate with consumers. If the word "viral" enters a conversation around here, we immediately kill that idea. Because if you start out wanting something to go viral, you've already lost the creativity.



Kerry Cooper
Chief Marketing Officer, ModCloth
@kerrywcooper

What do you think defines success for a social media initiative?

We measure success in three ways: engagement, brand awareness and reach. We evaluate engagement in traditional ways, like the number of entries, votes, shares and likes we receive. For brand awareness, we determine buzz using a variety of tools. And we evaluate reach both in terms of the growth of our community as well as traffic and revenue to ModCloth.com. We can't necessarily expect every initiative to hit all three—some events are better for brand awareness, whereas others are better for traffic and revenue.

Which social platform do you think will be the next big thing? What tells you that?

That's a hard one. Pinterest came from nowhere. In April 2011 it barely cracked one of our top 50 sites; six months later, it sprang into the top 15. Now it's in our top 10.

Visual discovery naturally fits into our customers' behavior of exploring and sharing. There are other niche players that we're watching in this space. Also, we've been talking about video being critical for a while but haven't found the perfect social platform fit yet. It's something we continue to experiment with.

What's the best way you've discovered to find and recognize brand ambassadors?

We have a group of our most loyal and engaged customers called the ModSquad. We hold a yearly call for applications for interested community members to enroll or re-enroll. These brand ambassadors are engaged on a weekly basis through a private Facebook group and for customer research.

Through new tools, we are also identifying advocates on Facebook, Pinterest and Twitter, and are excited to reward our biggest fans on these platforms.

Is there a proven formula for viral content?

The short answer is no—virality can't be planned. Facebook defines the virality formula as "people talking" over "reach." For us, the type of content that performs well under those parameters is pretty simple: delightful images and words about a resonating subject matter. We achieve viral content on a weekly basis, thanks to our office dogs and cats in ModCloth boxes.

Top Social Marketing ROI Metrics



Source: State of Social Media Marketing, Awareness Networks, Jan. 2012



Gary Armstrong
Former Chief Marketing Officer, *Rolling Stone*, *US Weekly* and *Men's Health*
@vanityman

What is your social media philosophy?

I like to think of social media as a bar. Every bar sells the same brand of vodka. If I'm in a Bannigan's, I can order the same Absolut martini as when I'm at the W Hotel. I want to hang out in bars where I like the crowd, I can tell my friends to meet me there, and I like the way my martini is served. I'll even pay a premium if I like the bartender, and he remembers how I like it prepared.

What do you think defines success for a specific social media initiative?

Contests on social media are great at engaging your target consumer, but they don't effectively measure consistent, positive interaction—it's a reward benefit, not a brand enhancer. Generally, though, success is defined by a positive change in your brand perception, hopefully with intent to purchase, but increased awareness is an obvious benefit.

Which social platform do you think will be the next big thing? What tells you that?

I'm amazed at Klout. While it's not a social platform, I like its point of view of inverse marketing. In the magazine industry, many titles claim influence but struggle to prove it. If I were buying ads and couldn't decide between *Vanity Fair*, *The New Yorker*, *Entertainment Weekly* or *US Weekly*, I'd insist on running their titles through the Klout algorithm.

Do you tweet?

I am constantly on Facebook, LinkedIn, Klout and Twitter. I don't quite get Google+, and I think iTunes' attempts at social interaction are complete failures.

What's the best way to find and recognize brand ambassadors?

Sadly, too much of [social media] is about contests, which are training consumers in the wrong direction of purchase intent and brand alliance. We've become a "task-oriented, reward me" culture so our brand behavior is transient based on the next-best reward. So to answer your question, not contests.

Klout scores social media users who share and create content. It uses data from social networks to evaluate a person's (or brand's) influence online, and has scored more than 100 million users worldwide.

Want to see these programs tailored to your brand? Contact Erin Slater, Vice President of Marketing and Business Development, at eslater@imaginepub.com.

BUY THIS IDEA

By Paige Anderson

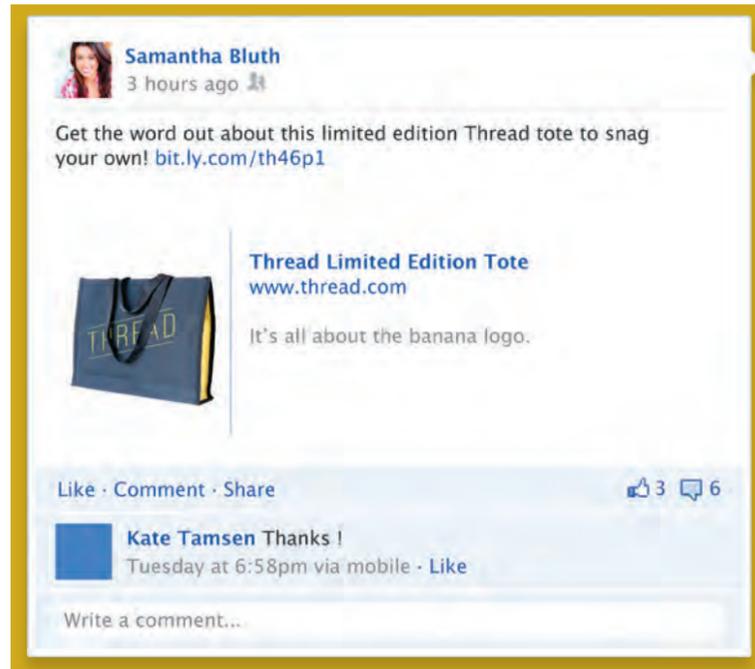
The screenshot shows the 'THREAD' brand website. At the top right, there are links for 'SIGN UP' and 'LOG IN'. Below the brand name 'THREAD', there are three social media icons: Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest. The main content area features three product listings, each with a social media icon and a point value in a blue triangle:

- Tee**: 10 points. Short Description: 5 Social Points.
- Scarf**: 5 points. Short Description: 5 Social Points.
- Tote**: 5 points. Short Description: 5 Social Points.

It takes more than a social presence to propel a brand to success—it takes inventive strategies that go beyond the expected. The fashion and retail industry typically struts first with innovative approaches to reach customers. But in a world inundated with social media tools, how do you stand apart?

SOCIAL POP-UP SHOP

Here are two conceptualized, ready-to-wear social strategies from Imagination that are the perfect fit for this segment:



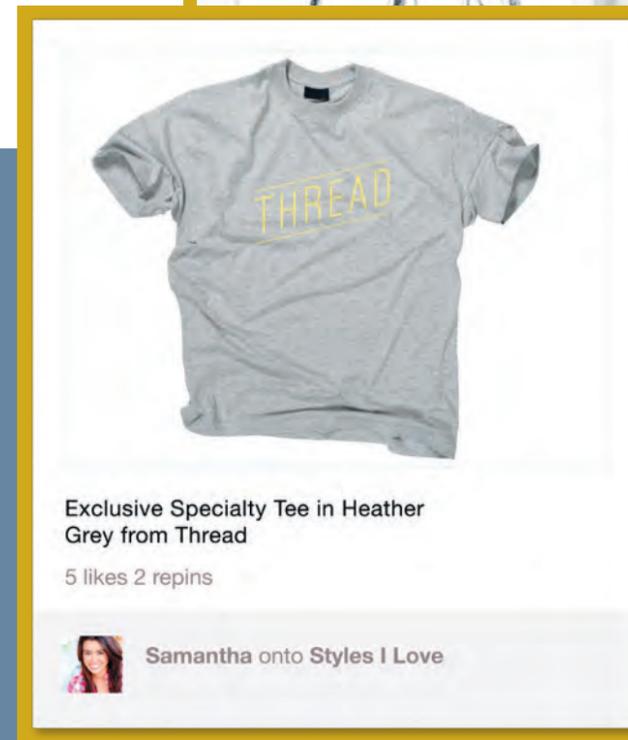
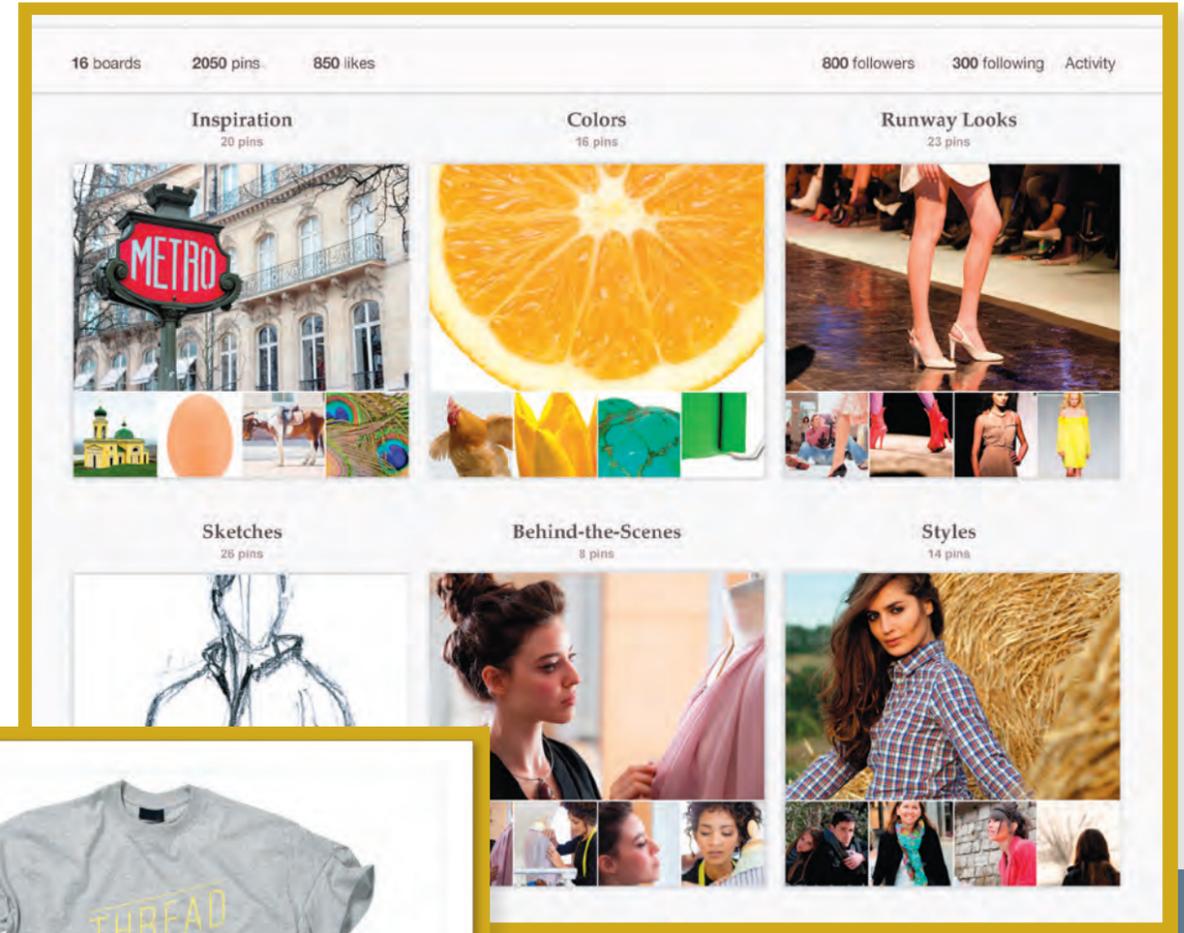
Idea: Create a microsite with unique, limited-quantity items—ranging from an exclusive trendy T-shirt to a special-edition tote—that consumers can “purchase” through social sharing. Invite consumers to earn points for each social action: Tweet about the deal for one point, share it on Facebook for two or pin a favorite item on Pinterest for three points.

Why it Works: This idea incentivizes peer-to-peer persuasion and capitalizes on the fear of missing out.

Going Beyond: Integrate advertisers, brand partners or charitable initiatives into the products offered.



PIN THE PROCESS



Idea: Leverage a branded Pinterest account to create an all-access guide to next season's line. Ask fashion editors and buyers to create personalized boards under the account. Pin color swatches, trends or steps in the design process. Launch the new line in an exclusive board and link back to where users can purchase items.

Why it Works: This idea builds brand equity without a direct product or promotional focus and creates excitement and anticipation.

Going Beyond: Partner with influencers by inviting them to cover events behind-the-scenes and pin what they capture.

What

is

a

Modern

Brand?

By James Meyers

Watch

one episode of “Mad Men,” and it’s easy to see times have changed. Where once marketers could control a brand’s image by pounding away at consumers with creative top-down messaging, the real-time, always-on digital channels of today have put customers in the driver’s seat.

Customers have unlimited and instantaneous access to information about a brand and its competitors via the Internet and social media. Marketers who understand that technology has fundamentally changed customer behavior have adopted a new vision for success in today’s digital world, taking their brands to new heights. I call them “modern brands.”

Purpose drives modern brands.

Traditional brands focus on one mission: to sell a product or service. They measure success through the number of transactions they generate. To build and sustain customer loyalty today, though, brands must communicate and demonstrate a greater purpose—what the product or service stands for, what makes it unique and how it fits into the lifestyle, beliefs or needs of customers and prospective customers. That leap separates modern from traditional brands. Remember: Technology makes for a well-informed customer. The smallest, most remote instance of poor quality or poor service can instantly alter the public position of your brand.

Customers, not companies or agencies, define modern brands.

For many years, advertising agencies created brands. Those agencies determined the brand position, as well as the advertising slogan, pushed out to the masses. Branding for traditional marketers like **Marlboro, Sears, Alka-Seltzer, JELL-O** and **TWA** has been built on iconic imagery delivered through mass media: television, newspaper, radio.

Today, marketers still might define brands, but they are ultimately affirmed, rejected or altered by a million consumers armed with smartphones, sharing, liking, commenting, retweeting. Marketers can devise whatever slogan they want,



Although the success of Apple can seem over-discussed, the company deserves credit as one of the original modern brands. Long before consumer product companies tried to position themselves as aspirational, people simply identified with Apple because of the lifestyle promised through its positioning: “Think different.” If consumers believed they thought differently about anything, not necessarily about computers, then they somehow connected to that brand and its message. I remember in the late 1990s seeing people proudly display the Apple logo on their windows or cars as a sign of their resonance with the brand. They weren’t advertising a computer. They were advertising a way of thinking: Never settle for the status quo. As a result, Apple’s positioning centered—“think different,” rather than “we make computers”—gave them license to extend beyond computers to other opportunities, like music, phones and tablets, and has resulted in unimaginable success.



Starbucks has created an inviting experience for its customers. For its worker-bee patronage that demands efficiency, Starbucks manages to strike a balance between personal attention—baristas know customers’ names and drinks—and speedy service. For students, work-at-home types and coffee enthusiasts, Starbucks has effectively created environments in which people hang out and buy not just one cup, but maybe two cups of coffee and a snack. Additional benefits, such as free downloads, community bulletin boards and quick reads on relevant political issues, position Starbucks as a local gathering place for productivity.

but almost instantaneously, consumers register their belief, or non-belief, in that position. Modern brands not only understand this but use it to their advantage.

If marketers are powerless to define their brands, how can they make sure their brand resonates with consumers?

Companies create products with the customer in mind, and marketers will continue to use their knowledge and creativity as a starting point in establishing the brand. But marketers for modern brands—the smart brands—will not take the approach, “This is who I think my customers are, this is the message that I want to deliver to them.” Instead, modern marketers will listen and learn from customer conversations online and in social media.

Given the options and opportunities consumers have to provide feedback and connect with other like-minded consumers, it is essential for modern brands to listen to and participate in that conversation. Those brands that don’t listen, or act on what customers are saying, risk becoming obsolete and eventually extinct.

Modern brands are all about experience.

Ultimately, when the consumer market defines a brand, the brand becomes an experience, not a product. It’s not the Marlboro man and it’s not an Alka-Seltzer tablet on TV. It’s really an experience, a way of life.

Modern brands cultivate two-way communication.

Implicit in this comparison between traditional and modern brands is messaging. Traditional brands are steeped in one-way messaging from the marketer to the



Bisquick used qualitative feedback on Facebook to reposition its product as not just a breakfast food but an ingredient for every meal. After seeing Facebook fans tout Bisquick-based recipes for pot pies and pizza crust, marketers realized, “Maybe Bisquick isn’t just a mix for waffles and pancakes.” From there, the company grew market share.

customer. But, because of social media and the Internet, two-way dialogue is now critical, and modern brands embrace it.

Traditional brands conduct focus groups to test products and determine if people like them. The company then rolls out the winning product on a larger scale. Modern brands, on the other hand, recognize the opportunity every day to learn more about themselves through social media. They constantly listen to customers and change their product or service experience, quickly shifting gears based on real-time customer feedback, not information from months or years prior.

Modern brands depend on quantitative *and* qualitative results.

Social media for modern brands is not just about quantitative results—how many people are following them, how many people like them, or how many people are engaging because of their social media presence. Modern brands are also concerned with the qualitative information. When customers talk to you through social media, you have the opportunity to listen, learn about their lifestyle and how they use a product and adapt accordingly.

Modern brands see customers as ambassadors.

Traditional brands see customers as end users, but a modern brand sees customers as ambassadors—those who spread the brand’s message. Brands like **Apple** or **Zappos** are driven largely by people’s happiness with that brand, the complete experience they have with that brand. We used to call this word-of-mouth advertising. Social media takes it a step further: Thanks to the emergence of social, it’s easier (and cheaper) than ever for brands to convert customers into ambassadors, with shares, likes and re-tweets taking only seconds of a person’s time. In the end, the experience is more powerful than any billboard or radio commercial or magazine ad.

Content fuels modern brands.

Traditional brands are propelled by and dependent on advertising to survive because they are always transaction-based. “How do I sell more product? I need to keep advertising. I need to keep telling people about this brand. I need to keep reminding them why this brand or this product is so great.”



One of the best examples of brand loyalty is Harley-Davidson. When’s the last time someone got a tattoo of your brand’s logo? Harley’s secret: The brand has always meant more than just a joyride on two motorized wheels. It’s really about a lifestyle—the freedom of the open road, a community of motorcycle enthusiasts and a non-conformity that sets apart in the same way that it unites.



General Mills’ Nature Valley brand uses social media to talk with customers about their lifestyle. Its Facebook page is geared toward outdoor adventurers, inviting them to not only share their experiences in words, but in photos and videos in a robust conversation. Nature Valley in turn gets constant access to that audience and is viewed as a brand that fits the outdoor adventurer lifestyle. If you’re a fan of Nature Valley—let’s say you’re a rock climber—then you’re probably interested in equipment, locations and destinations, and in people who like the same things you do. That kind of content on the Nature Valley page keeps its 840,000 fans coming back.

Because of social media’s viral nature, modern brands depend less on advertising and instead enlist customers to do the sharing for them—sharing the brand’s purpose and why it’s perfect for a given lifestyle or a given need. The modern brand, understanding the nature of social media, knows it’s vital to continually feed content into its channels. Consumers will keep coming back to the social channel when there’s interesting, relevant and valuable information that defines and extends the brand experience (i.e. lifestyle) into their daily lives.

Content helps brands accomplish the three Is: inspire, interact, inform. Content inspires customers to live a certain lifestyle, to purchase products, to build a connection. Customers can also inspire brands to try new things, to do things differently.

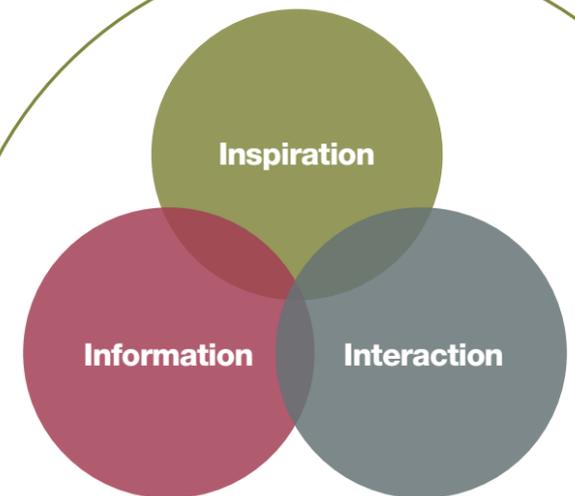
Interaction, too, is a two-way street. Content merely creates the interaction opportunity. It’s not just you pushing out a slogan or an advertising theme or a commercial to someone. It’s actually asking them what they think—about news, stories and trends that relate to their lifestyle and your brand. (Find a great example from **Grunt Style**’s Daniel Alarik in “A La Mode,” pg. 8.)

There is an opportunity to inform through content—tell your audience about a product or service, and about your brand’s purpose. Modern brands also use content to inform themselves about customers—what topics do your followers like? What don’t they like, and why?

What’s next for modern brands.

As technology leaps forward, brands will have an even more intimate understanding of their customer’s lifestyle and purchasing preferences, and will choose to integrate themselves even more into their audience’s lives.

To be a modern marketer, you can’t stand still on what worked last year, last month or even last week. A modern brand has to truly be modern. It has to think differently than it ever did before because you never know what is coming next from technology, consumer behavior or competition. ■



Tying the Knot

When it comes to social, what are you measuring? What is that telling you—if anything? And where, oh where, is the ROI?
By Karen Bannan

When **McDonald's Corp.** invested in a sponsored Tweet last January it asked the Twitterverse—using the hashtags #MeetTheFarmers and #McDStories—to share their favorite memories about the brand. The company was likely expecting wholesome stories about families bonding over Big Macs and getting to know the salt-of-the-earth people who grow the food. Instead, thousands inundated the hashtags with negative tweets, equating the food with garbage and citing health problems, among other even less savory topics. (One example: @jfsmith23 Watching a classmate projectile vomit his food all over the restaurant during a 6th grade trip. #McDStories.) Less than two hours later, McDonald's pulled the #McDStories hashtag.

This wasn't the first time a McDonald's-sponsored hashtag has been hijacked by the chain's critics. The company is a continual online target for rants on everything from obesity to the infamous "pink slime" once a component of its burgers. The \$24 billion company with a reported \$2 billion marketing budget could stick to traditional channels with slickly produced, highly controlled marketing messages. So why does it keep coming back to social media?

Simply, social media is where the customers and prospects are. According to market research firm Nielsen, visits to social networking websites and blogs now account for a quarter of all time spent online. Those in the most sought-after demographic, between the ages of 18 and 34, make up the majority of social media visitors. McDonald's, like countless others, wants to reach people where they are hanging out. Social media is becoming a must-participate channel for every company with a marketing message.



Social media advertising revenues will reach nearly \$10 billion by the end of 2013, according to research firm eMarketer, and companies will spend another \$6 billion on organic social efforts. This is still tiny in comparison to the \$65 billion they'll spend on television commercials, but ROI metrics exist for the traditional channels. Although social media provides no end of data—number of followers and fans, levels of engagement, surfing paths—what do those numbers really tell you? And where is the ROI? Social media marketing is a lot of work, but

marketers are still struggling to find the payoff.

"The number of followers you have or the amount you engage with a fan or follower isn't a business goal," says Jeremiah Owyang, an industry analyst with research firm **Altimeter Group**. "CMOs should care more about raising awareness of a product offering or making existing customers happy—those are business goals."

THE RIGHT GOALS

That's something PepsiCo Inc.-owned **Gatorade** understands. In April 2010, the brand created the Gatorade Mission Control Center in its Chicago marketing headquarters. There, five social media marketers track



conversations and phrases relevant to Gatorade on everything from Twitter to blogs. They don't reach out to everyone who mentions Gatorade, but they try to help athletes when they can, dispelling rumors, offering advice and providing product and purchasing information.

In other words, Gatorade is not interested in the biggest audience. They're interested in the right audience, the heavy user. They want to create loyal customers who see the brand as part of their training equipment.

Meeting that strategic business goal has a big impact on the company's overall marketing mix, according to a Gatorade spokeswoman Katherine Montiel. Gatorade has seen its website's product pages and video engagement spike 250 percent, and its bounce rate—the number of people who come to its site and leave immediately—drop "significantly," she says. "Mission Control has fundamentally changed the distribution of conversation around the brand."

Craig Cuchra, senior brand manager at **Mentos Brand USA**, has taken both the growth and engagement approaches. But the end goal, he says, is getting people to buy the product. When Mentos launched its Facebook page in April 2010, it spent a good bit of time simply building a fan base. "[At first] we needed to have someone to talk to," Cuchra says. The company hired an outside agency to attain a fan base, now at 1.3 million likes, with more than 10,000 people talking about the brand at any given time.

Many Metrics, One Goal: CLTV

While metrics and measurement tools are finally catching up to the social platforms—and there are hundreds of such tools—integrating them into a campaign and analyzing the data takes time and knowledge, and there's

very little to measure against. Plus, there's the cost. The actual cost of being social, from a management and personnel standpoint combined with acquisition costs, has no benchmark either.

Many marketers are forced to stick with measuring eyeballs, says Jim Sterne, the founder of the Digital Analytics Association, and potentially overspending or under-spending on social media. "It's like we're back to the 1990s when people were measuring how many hits go to their websites," he says. "It's just not useful."

John Souza, chief strategist at Social Media Magic, suggests starting small and choosing one social media platform to analyze based on your company's products and strategies as well as the size of your marketing team and overall budget. People who don't have time to post to Twitter several times a day may want to look at another more manageable social media platform, for instance.

"You're looking to get the right people in the room, so you need to make sure whatever 'room' you're entering is where those people hang out," Souza says. But even before that, you've got to be able to identify the leads and prospects on a platform and identify the value of that lead and the potential customer lifetime value. It's then, he says, that everything comes together and social media marketing makes sense. — K.J.B.

Mentos, which has taken social media back in-house, realized that "at some point, there's a diminishing return for adding or paying to get more fans," Cuchra says. While that cutoff point varies, for Mentos the number was 750,000. "Where we are at now is that the content we post and the 'Liker' base we have already established is

organically creating new likes on our wall without having to pay for likes," Cuchra says. His emphasis has now shifted to uncovering the "super loyal," those who love the candy and advocate for the brand both on and off social media. He's also trying to come up with new campaigns that position Mentos as a friend, not a faceless candy company.

"The best way to determine a 'super loyal' is if they treat our wall as they would a real-life friend on Facebook," says Cuchra, "with genuine responses that are generally positive in nature and occur on a regular basis."

On April Fool's Day, for instance, the company hinted at a new bacon-flavored candy on Facebook, even going so far as to take photos of a mocked-up box in a convenience store. "The conversation that happened around the prank and bacon-flavored Mentos helped us be top-of-mind," Cuchra says. "We had one person who went into his local store and asked about it and, realizing it was a joke, added a good-natured post on our page. If I could clone that guy, I would." The fact that the fan was not only willing to talk about the stunt but to paint himself in an embarrassing light publicly told Cuchra that Mentos had moved from corporation to friend.

CONTAGIOUS ACQUISITION

Loyalty and brand advocacy are certainly business goals, as



Last year, K-Swiss created a social campaign around the Ironman World Championship in Kailua-Kona, Hawaii, using Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Flickr and a Tumblr blog. The company, one of the event's sponsors, shot video every day and posted it on the blog via YouTube. Breathtaking photos of the race course, funny pictures of the annual underwear race, triathlete biographies and details about the company-sponsored team all ran as well.

"We told the brand's story in Kona in real time," says Ogle, which meant people just waking up on the mainland could watch, read and share the content. Many of the photos and videos went viral, something that not all brands can make happen but all dearly hope for. In the process, K-Swiss established contact and built relationships with potential customers they might never reach any other way. "We're speaking to our customers in a voice that they understand and identify with whether they are runners, play tennis or just live an active lifestyle."

Yoram Wind, a professor at the Wharton School of Business and author of a study on viral content, says that viral content yields much better business results than things that don't go viral. Viral content creates fame and "fame campaigns achieve the highest results for profit, price sensitivity, sales, loyalty and penetration." Fame produces word of mouth and turns consumers into brand advocates.



CUSTOMER-LED MARKETING

While many brands are bringing their own messages to social media, some win hearts and minds—and, in this case, stomachs—through one of the newest social media platforms: Pinterest. (See "Now What?," pg. 6.) Yogurt

equally important to her brand, and uses Pinterest to join conversations about pop culture, also manages to drive sales. You can't complete one of the recipes without buying the yogurt, obviously. Much of this Chobani doesn't even have to generate itself. One recent pin—a photo of raspberry dark chocolate banana bread containing Chobani yogurt—originated on Recipeboy.com.



Another, this one for avocado egg salad, came from Skinnytaste.com. More than 1,300 pins on the company's 22 boards have come from Chobani's almost 6,000 Pinterest followers as well as bloggers and other media sites.

"We're really fortunate that our blogger community is out there creating recipes on a daily basis. At the heart they—and we—are all food lovers. We pin them so they can be shared and used. We look at it like a casual conversation you might have with a buddy," Schildt says. "People are not on social media to connect with brands, and it would be a naive point of view if we thought that."

Although the company's Facebook "focus is always engagement, engagement, engagement," Schildt says, it too drives sales. In 2011, three years after launching on Facebook, Chobani made ad buys that grew its fan base from 400,000 in January to 500,000 in March. The ad buys and coupons drive both traffic and sales but the company uses them as the hook to start real relationships with customers. "We're interested in seeing the number of posts on our [Facebook] page increasing," says Schildt. "We want to add to the conversation. We want actual fans and not just people who come to the page, get a coupon and leave."

People who are passionate about something like to connect with each other, and that's something that's absolutely worth investing in.

is cost-effective customer acquisition. Clothing and shoe brand **K-Swiss** has been at social "full-tilt" since Q1 2010, says Bryan Ogle, senior director of digital strategy. Ogle is not focused solely on engagement but uses it as a proxy for building reach. "If you have five engaged followers, it can be better than 100 unengaged followers," he says. "Engaged followers are the ones who are socializing and spreading your content."

brand **Chobani** joined Pinterest in October 2011 after it found recipes and pictures of its Greek yogurt that fans pinned to their boards. The company was already active on Twitter and Facebook, with almost 40,000 followers and 600,000 fans, respectively, who interact with the brand all day long, according to Emily Schildt, Chobani's digital communications manager.

Schildt, who says engagement and growth are

Engagement in and of itself may not be a metric but it "builds a bridge to the cash register," according to Eric Yaverbaum, associate publisher of Socialmediamags.com. Other people, not companies, are the most influential voices on social media. "People who are passionate about something like to connect with each other, and that's something that's absolutely worth investing in," he says. ■

The Never-Ending

Ending

Media Ride

Social platforms are reinventing media so today's trends go as fast as the thrills on a roller coaster. Up, down, round and round with no end in sight.

By Rebecca Rolfes



Trend #1: Off the grid. Niche social media for specialized audiences.

Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter have the most users but don't always have the right users, the specialized audience that wants a little more privacy and to hang out with a like-minded tribe.

"Every industry is a little bit different as far as where to put the best content and considering where their audience is," says San Diego-based Internet marketing consultant Holly Berkley, whose clients range from nonprofits to medical groups to restaurants. "A lot of people have certain issues, especially in the medical field, and they don't feel comfortable posting everything on Facebook and some of these bigger networks. Instead, they go to these niche networks."

Trend #2: Pop-up content. Short time frame, blitz approach, intense impact.

Like pop-up retail, more and more social content is a limited-time-only affair. Last summer, music promoter Giant Step teamed up with shoe retailer Steve Madden to promote a summer-long concert series. The concerts were free but available via invitation only to specifically targeted people via a social media campaign. A unique microsite with content from staff and concert attendees was leveraged with a live Twitter feed, highlighted Facebook posts, professional videos of concert performances, fan reactions and interviews, and raffles and contests held several times a month.

And then, poof, it was gone.

Trend #3: Loyalty programs for the truly loyal.

The future of loyalty programs—frequent flyer, frequent purchaser, frequent diner programs and the like—is in social media. Digital media makes keeping track of actual purchases easier, and promotions have largely moved online as well, but customers are delighted by surprise gifts that reward brand advocacy and user-generated content.

TripAdvisor recently rewarded frequent reviewers with a free personalized luggage tag. General Mills surprises its biggest social fans with baking supplies at times. It needs to feel spontaneous and have no strings attached—like getting flowers without any special occasion.

Trend #4: Game it. Aspects of gaming are creeping into all sorts of social media content.

Fantasy Shopper in the U.K. combines popular online gaming features with real-world fashion merchandise. You can "buy" virtual clothes, share new outfits with your friends and purchase the actual pieces online. The "kaching" of winning a game comes from the deals and discounts that retailers provide based on what you do and what you "like."

Trend #5: Content, conversation, customer service. Whatever lines you put between your social media content, users will erase.

Intel has five communities in addition to using Facebook and Twitter. One of them, the Open Port IT Community, was intended for IT managers but receives a lot of customer service-related comments, things that would usually end up under the Support tab.

The lesson is that once you start a conversation with your customers, they can choose to take that conversation anywhere. You have to be listening and monitoring to make sure that, whatever their issues are, they end up in the right place and, if resolution is necessary, it's handled quickly.

Trend #6: Social citizenship. The happy marriage of social activism and social media.

Los Angeles apparel company Multeepurpose uses all the big social platforms—Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Tumblr, Wordpress, Reddit and Digg. On Pinterest, the company goes after a young demographic who loves clothes but also cares about nature, activism and environmentalism. The activist content brings people in and they get a positive image of an environmentally conscious company.

Nonprofits like Charity:Water have found that good stories prompt more action than stats. The charity uses social media and events to ask people to give up birthday presents and celebrations to pay for water in underdeveloped areas.

It's a new leaf in the socially responsible corporation playbook.

Trend #7: Making it up as you go along.

Not only is social media reinventing media, journalism, marketing and branding—to name only a few—it is reinventing ownership of organizational assets.

A popular PhoneDog blogger amassed 17,000 Twitter followers before resigning from the mobile phone news and reviews site in 2010. But he kept tweeting. Now PhoneDog is suing him for essentially stealing what they say is a proprietary customer database and treating it as his own. In a similar instance, one that did not involve a lawsuit, the BBC lost 60,000 followers when a correspondent jumped to a different network.

For now, the general feeling is that companies should protect their assets without alienating their following. In other words, the PR fall-out from pursuing a blogger is probably worse than starting from scratch on a social media platform. If they loved you once, they'll love you again. Trust is not something you can betray and survive in social media.

Trend #8: Sell the dream.

In this, social media is no different from aspirational advertising: If I buy this dress, I'll be thinner, younger and more beautiful. In the social media space, creating a world the user wants to live in is part of storytelling.

Kate Spade New York creates a perfect world where all the food is delicious, all the vacations are fabulous and all the clothes are wonderful. Who wouldn't want to be part of it?

Oscar de la Renta's social media presence makes you feel like you're in an episode of Project Runway—in the atelier with the designers, back stage at the fashion show, behind the scenes with the in crowd. It's a dream, but it's close enough and a lot more engaging than watching reality TV. ■



Christoph Jorda/Getty

2012
Content
Marketing
Agency of
the Year

imagination.

Content that Fuels Modern Brands

- Communications Strategy
- Content Strategy & Integration
- Content Creation
- Content Curation
- Content Management
- Magazines
- Digital Strategy
- Social Media
- Community Management
- Website Design & Development
- Video
- Mobile
- Podcasts
- Infographics
- Research
- Analytics
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