

Four Brand Marketing Best Practices to Up Your Game on Social Media



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For [brand marketers](#), one thing is clear: social media is here to stay. What's less clear, however, is how to get it right. Far too many great businesses are guilty of having a not-so-great social media presence, and in today's world of digitally savvy consumers, simply posting for the sake of posting isn't going to cut it.

Consumers expect content to be engaging and authentic, and can easily see through a generic sales pitch. In addition, as social networks have evolved, so too have the algorithms that determine the posts consumers see. Facebook and Twitter have made the plunge to order feeds based on popularity and now Instagram has announced it will shift away from reverse chronological order and will place the photos and videos most relevant to their users toward the top of their feed. This makes it more important than ever for brand marketers to produce stand-out content. While this takes a little more time and thought, fortunately there are several best practices marketers can integrate into their social strategy to ensure success. Here are four best practices to make sure your social media game is strong:

Flip the Funnel & Lead with Engagement

The traditional [marketing](#) funnel has been turned on its head and brands that fail to evolve their marketing approach will get left behind. Consumers are less responsive to brands casting out a huge net with impersonal ads and email marketing blasts, hoping consumers will eventually relent and buy something. Social media marketing allows brands to take a different, more personal approach by opening the lines of communication and really engaging with their core audience. At the end of the day, people want to interact with other people and really be heard, so be social! Respond to questions from your fans, interact with them, and be proactive about starting a conversation. Listen and learn!

Connect with Influencers

Working with [influencers](#) – or social media users with a large and dedicated following – is a great way for brands to reach a more targeted audience via social media. In fact, a recent Collective Bias study found that nearly a third of consumers are more likely to purchase a product by a non-celebrity blogger than a celebrity. That number jumps to 70 percent for millennials, who mostly value non-celebrity endorsements, particularly from influencers they consider peers. For brands considering this option, there are plenty of social influencer marketing platforms and social listening tools available to help hone in on the right influencer for a particular campaign, start driving sales, measure success and scale their influencer marketing efforts.

Be Transparent

Trust is the foundation of any relationship and it's no different on social media. Take, for example, Lord & Taylor's recent scuffle with the FTC. The retail giant landed in hot water for a series of Instagram posts made by more than 50 fashion influencers and bloggers with Nylon magazine to promote a paisley dress from its new collection. The Instagram posts never acknowledged that they were paid for by Lord &

Taylor's ad agencies and the company is now facing financial implications, media scrutiny, and worst of all, distrust from its loyal customers. This is just one example of not being upfront, but a cautionary tale to face problems – and your social community – head-on, should something go wrong. The bottom line: Don't be the proverbial paisley dress! Perception is everything, so don't make people question the integrity of your business. Openness goes a long way.

Track Progress

How can you measure success if you haven't set goals and aren't tracking progress? You can't. Decide what's most important to your business objectives and measure it! This will differ for brands – it could be views, follows, traffic to your website from social links, or a number of different metrics – what matters is that you're seeing what works, what doesn't, and are constantly improving. Still not convinced? According to research from eMarketer, 49 percent of marketing executives use social media monitoring to better understand customers, prospects and markets. Luckily, there are a ton of social listening tools available to help you start turning your data into actionable insights.

Social media presents a huge opportunity for brand marketers – if you're doing it in an authentic and meaningful way. With these four best practices, you can start engaging with your audience and driving results in no time.

About the Author: An entrepreneur, producer, and self-proclaimed YouTube super fan, Brendan Lattrell is the founder and CEO of Grapevine, connecting consumer brands with the world's best creators through the industry's most comprehensive and reliable influencer marketing platform.