

Converting Followers... Social Media Marketing

(Source: Social Media Marketing Mastery by Robert Miller)

Businesses must learn to use social media marketing effectively to increase sales, build brand awareness, and increase customer loyalty.

Instructions:

- Read the article (see below)
- After reading the article, answer the questions on the last page.

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Producing a constant stream of relevant, quality content, and doing everything in your power to ensure that it is the type of information that your target audience is interested in, is a crucial part of a successful social media marketing campaign. However, creating content isn't the end goal, of course, and when you get down to it, is really just a means to an end and that end is conversions. You can have the best content in your niche, but if you don't take the time to maximize your conversions, your commission rate is going to be nowhere near your total views.

Luckily, research has shown that users who are on Instagram are inclined to spend \$65 per sale, while users on Facebook spend \$55 and only \$46 is spent on Twitter. Additionally, posts on Instagram tend to have a conversion rate of 1.85 percent, second to Facebook's conversion rate of 1.08 percent. However, Instagram exceeds Twitter where the conversion rate is 0.77 percent and Pinterest at 0.54 percent. Consider the following tips to ensure you can meet or beat the average.

Determine your goals: First and foremost, it is important to understand that there is more to a successful marketing campaign than simply bringing the right type of people to your page. You may be interested in generating a higher rate of brand mentions, improving your social media mentions, improving your search engine ranking, improving your email newsletter metrics, generating sales leads or just improving your website traffic to generate additional advertising revenue. It doesn't matter what your goals are, you are going to need to track your results properly if you hope to gain any traction.

Luckily, there are metrics that can be used to track your goals, whatever it is that they might be. If you are looking to track the number of times your website is mentioned elsewhere, then you are actually looking to track a metric known as voice share which can be done with a free tool called Social Mentions which compares your overall mentions to others in the same niche. If you are looking to improve your search engine results, then there are plenty of SEO tools that can help you track your rank in real time.

Create customer personas: While effective social media marketing speaks directly to a specifically targeted audience, if you are looking to maximize the conversions of the content you create there is still more you can do to be even more specific. The secret to doing so effectively is to create what is known as customer personas which will segregate the customer base into easy to target chunks based on things like lifecycles, purchasing patterns, emotions, behavioral motivations and more.

In order to use customer personas to their fullest potential, you will need to take advantage of all of the data you have hopefully been gathering from your users. Look back through it and see what types of patterns emerge, these are the characteristics it will be helpful to give extra focus to. You will really want to strive to be as precise as possible during this process which means you will need to keep an eye out for points where you can segment your audience that are mutually exclusive from one another. Things like location, age, and gender are all fine starting places but you will need to find more actionable characteristics if you want your customer personas to be as effective as possible.

Questions you should ask of your users include things like:

- What about their lifestyle impacts their buying choices?
- Who makes the decision in the households my users live in?
- What might cause them to start using the competition instead?
- What are their tastes and preferences?
- What are their goals and dreams?
- What are their precise demographics?

One of the reasons that customer personas are so useful is that they can make it easier to remember that each set of numbers in the metrics you are looking at is an actual person with real dreams, hopes, and goals. They make it easier to look at your users as individuals which, in turn, makes it much less difficult to understand their unique buying habits, especially when it comes to walking away from an uncompleted purchase. This level of deeper communication can then ultimately make it easier for you to generate the type of content that they are looking for and will respond positively too.

Increase engagement

An easy way to increase your engagement is by posting when your followers will see it. In a study conducted by Forrester, 11.8 million user interactions on posts made by 249 branded profiles were analyzed to find that top brands are posting on average 4.9 times per week. Every niche and target audience is unique, so it might take some research on the front end and a bit of work and planning, but it is well worth it since posting and scheduling tools are available to you at no cost. Knowing your audience and when they are online is especially important since the change of Instagram's algorithm moved away from chronological and now gives priority to the posts with the most engagement.

Start increasing engagement through regramming. Use high-quality content that is consistent with your look and feel and supports your brand. When a fan receives a personal shout-out from you it will only strengthen their engagement and encourage them to continue following and could quite possibly turn into a brand ambassador for you. You turn a somewhat emotionless connection into a meaningful one while cross-pollinating your Instagram accounts. In seeing this, other fans will be motivated to submit great content and voila, you yourself have even more great content and supporters.

Maximize your conversion rates

The ultimate goal of everything you post on your site should be to sell viewers on a specific merchant's products. As such, it is important to formulate your postings in such a way that they ensure you convert as many viewers as possible to paying customers.

Phrase the content properly: As previously discussed, one of the best ways of doing so is to make the posting appear personal, a personal story on your page is worth a closer look when a more generic ad simply won't cut it. Additionally, it is important to always include the type of person the product in question is for, this will make people who are that type of person take interest because it says the product was created with them in mind. Assuming the group in question has a positive association, you will also attract people who want to be identified in that way.

State, don't imply, the benefits of the product in question: A recent study found that simply by listing 5 bullet points related to the benefits of using their service, a major online booking website was able to increase their conversion rate by nearly 200 percent. While you might feel as though you are elucidating on the benefits of the product you are discussing, it turns out that people really like it when

the benefits are stated as bluntly as possible. While you might not experience a 200 percent increase in conversions, you will likely notice a real difference.

The benefits you are talking about don't need to be revolutionary or even that far outside of what is expected, the most important thing, however, is that whatever benefits you list have to be true and easily verifiable. For example, the online booking site listed its benefits as being easy to use, 100 percent secure, guaranteed, free from excess charge and promised to have always available customer service. It doesn't matter that these are the types of things customers expect from this type of service, simply seeing it reiterated upon is enough to make a difference.

Avoid ad fatigue: Running the same ad for too long can become tiresome for your audience, and they will stop responding to it. You can experiment with different time periods, but changing your ad completely or changing the offer every week or two could help with ad fatigue. You do not want your audience to begin ignoring your ads, because they think there is nothing new for them to discover, so find new ways to excite your audience. Using humor, video, or an irresistible sale every so often can help reenergize your ad, if you are sensing ad fatigue.

Match your tone to your brand: The tone of your ads should match the existing tone of your brand. For example, if you used "luscious locks" to refer to your hair care products, then this terminology should be made apparent in your Instagram ad for those hair care products too. You must post regularly and remain active on your social media platform. A constant and consistent flow of content is how your audience knows you're still in business, and how they keep up to date on your latest, exciting business offerings.

Use what Instagram has to offer: Instagram has got some unique offerings, including Layout and Boomerang, two exciting features which offer businesses a unique opportunity to present and show their products in exciting new ways. Experiment with it and see how you can use it to your brand's advantage.

Picture before you post: Stop and have a think about how your ad is going to look on a mobile phone. Instagram is a heavy, mobile-first experience platform, which means that almost (if not all) your viewers will be seeing your content first and foremost on their mobile devices. Picture how your ad is going to look like on these devices and see if there's anything else you could do to optimize it

before you submit your post. Are your images the right size? Is the video aspect ratio according to specifications? Did you remember to include closed captions?

Put your call to action in the spotlight: The best way to get people to take action is to get them to sit up and pay attention. If your ad has got a call to action, put it right smack in the middle of your video where it's going to be hard to miss. This is also great for capturing the attention of already interested viewers who are engaged and watching your video. Call to actions at the start of videos only had a 3.15 percent conversion rate, while the call to action placed at the end of videos were at 10.98 percent.

Utilize Google AdSense

By taking advantage of Google's advertising program you can take advantage of every single individual who visits your site via impression based targeted advertising. Additionally, if you include a search bar that works for the entirety of Google then any purchases that come from that search bar will be credited as your commission as well. This is a particularly useful feature if you are fond of comprehensive reviews as it can be a way to mitigate the fact that people tend to leave a comprehensive review without clicking through to a merchant site.

The first thing you will want to consider is the types of block formatting available to find the one that will best fit your site. According to Google, 160x600, 300x250, and 336x280 are the shapes that routinely see the best results. It is important to stick with a color scheme for the ad in question that doesn't immediately contrast with the rest of your site. The location you choose for the advertising is also important as if the potential customer sees the ad too quickly they could easily be turned off from your site completely. As such, the far left or right of either sidebar or in the footer are generally considered the least intrusive placements.

If you are interested in giving AdSense a try, you can download a plugin to set it up easily from the plugin installation menu where you traditionally add new add-ons. Search for the Google AdSense plugin and choose the option to install. Once the plugin has been installed you simply find the plugin list and choose the option to activate AdSense. You will then need to visit the plugin settings menu and chose the option to Get Started.

You will need to start by signing into your Google Account, from there you will need to check the information it can find regarding the site in question. Assuming everything is correct you will want to

click the option to Verify. Once your account has been verified you will need to go back into the plugin settings to activate it. You can set up automated ads for both the mobile and primary versions of your site. Once you have turned on AdSense you can manage the placement of your ads by using the Manage Ads option found in its settings.

The next step is to choose the template that you want to add the ads to, each template can have a different set of advertisements. You will want to Review the template in question by finding the relevant option near the Design button. This will show you a preview of the template in question with green boxes placed where the ads will ultimately go. You can place new AdSense boxes, 3 maximum, by dropping markers in specific places or delete existing AdSense boxes by selecting the X next to their locations. Save and you are ready to start profiting from impressions.

Answer the following questions:

1. What is the end goal of creating content?
2. Based on the article, how much is the average sale on Twitter? Facebook? Instagram?
3. What are the conversion rates for Instagram? Facebook? Twitter?
4. What are 3 ways to improve a marketing campaign?
5. What is “voice share”?
6. Describe the purpose of “Customer Persona”.
7. Describe 3 questions that a company should ask their users? Why are these questions important?
8. Describe how companies increase engagement with customers.
9. What does the writer mean by State, don't imply, the benefits of the product?
10. Describe “Ad Fatigue”
11. What does Instagram have to offer companies, based on the article?
12. How do companies put their “call to action” in the spotlight?
13. Describe Google's advertising program.