

The Human Touch

Social media is all about relationships

By Wendy Lewis

Social media marketing does many things right. We all know it works great for raising awareness of brands, products, and services, and most marketing wizards would also concur that it drives search engine optimization to some extent as well.

Proving this, however, is a different story altogether. Social media is all about human connections and emotions. How do you really measure this on a spreadsheet?

It starts by setting your Key Performance Indicators (KPI). What are your primary KPIs? Fans, likes, followers, shares, comments, retweets, and regrams are just a few important ones. These are leading indicators that tell you that you are doing something right, but the real goal of social is to drive business outcomes—ie, revenue and growth, customer satisfaction, brand awareness, word-of-mouth referrals, brand advocates, and, ultimately, sales. Ka-ching! An increase in likes or shares only hints at the full value.

You don't have to go it alone. Utilize one good app along with individual platform analytics (such as Facebook insights and Twitter analytics) to help you stay on top of how you're doing.

Today's top tracking tools include:

- Hootsuite.com
- Sproutsocial.com
- Tweetdeck.com
- CoTweet.com

CONNECTING THE DOTS

Social media is a volatile and often precarious place to play because it is in a constant state of flux and one-upmanship. The rate of change in digital marketing can make your head spin. Google changes its algorithms all the time, and marketers are left scrambling to change strategy to keep up. Facebook is largely becoming an advertising platform. If you need confirmation, look at the level of engagement you get from an average post with an attractive visual and relevant hashtags versus how many likes, shares, and comments you get when you throw some marketing budget at an individual post by boosting it? The difference is staggering.

You can't really own your social fans and followers. They are a fickle bunch, and just liking a page or entering a contest does not a true customer make. Your true capital lies in the customer relationships sired by all of these collective efforts.

Your customer database is your most valuable capital. No techie guru, no app—not even Facebook, Instagram, or Twitter—can take that away from you. Building your database is the real end

game. From there, you can engage with fans and followers in more meaningful ways, because these prospective customers are really invested in your practice.

RETURN ON RELATIONSHIPS

Connecting the likes, followers, shares, and other indicators to your database is where it's at. This is what my friend, social media strategist Ted Rubin, calls Return on Relationships (RonR). The best way to boost RonR is to turn the like, follow, or RT into a consultation.

The first step is to figure out which social channels appeal to your target audience, and focus your efforts there. You don't have to be on a dozen platforms to do good work and be effective, but you should become a master at the platforms that matter most to your customers and target audiences.

Next, listen to what your fans, friends, and followers are saying. What do they really think, like, and want? If it matters to them, it matters to you.

"Relationships focus on getting to know your consumer and giving them reasons to stay engaged—not just getting them to react," Rubin writes. "This needs to be all the time... not simply campaign- or initiative-based. That is the biggest mistake being made today by marketers and brands... with consumers, and especially with influencers."

Thus, it is becoming increasingly tricky



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to navigate the social space—both for experienced marketers as well as for practice marketing managers who are trying to prove to their doctor bosses that it's worth their time to post happy snaps on Insta, and that Twitter really can help sell skin care products and fill up the appointment schedule. So the pressure is on. If we don't come to the party, we are at risk of being left out and losing some of that hard-earned social capital we all strive for. ■

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Special Breast Cancer Awareness Month Social Tip Sheet



- Create a series of branded graphics for social media posts during October using hashtag #BCA2015
- Add a pink ribbon image to all of your social content.
- Do something in a pink theme for each week of the month; examples are bake or buy pink mini cupcakes or iced cookies with the BCA ribbon to serve; or give each patient a pink long-stemmed rose.
- Start a drive in your practice for BCA donations to your charity of choice, such as the local Susan G. Komen chapter. For every patient who contributes, offer her a complimentary product or service, or donate 10% of the proceeds from a particular treatment during October.
- Keep a glass jar of pink sweets—like jellybeans or chocolate foil-wrapped kisses—at the front desk during October.



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