

Students Name

Professors Name

December 1, 2014

Social Media: Have Advertisers Found Their Perfect Promotion Forum?

In today's society, social media is considered the most important aspect of a person's smartphone, tablet, or laptop. As the forefront of media, advertisers are finding more ways to incorporate their advertisements into Internet vehicles. With the emergence of social media, one company is able to reach hundreds of thousands of people through one post about their product. Business-to-consumer communication has become even easier for people just by a click of a mouse! Even consumer-to-consumer communications through social media help people make decisions on what to purchase these days. As social media grows, advertisers can promote their products via forum sites, social networking sites, and other new wave sites.

Social media is built to create communities – communities of people who have similar interests, beliefs, and customs. By having these online communities, they can share, comment, and engage together while developing relationships – these relationships can influence if a person should buy a certain product or not. This can affect how a company does. Word-of-mouth advertising is difficult to control and can hurt a company's financial future and reputation. Kimberly Whitler, a writer for Forbes.com, says that according to Nielsen, almost “92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising.” Suzanne Fanning, the President of WOMMA – the Word of Mouth Marketing Association – says that over the past few years, “marketers have been focused on “collecting” instead of “connecting” (Whitler).

As a result of the “collecting” lifestyle for companies, many forget that rather than watching the number of followers, friends, and likes they have on their social media accounts, they should be reaching out to those followers and creating a relationship between a business and a consumer. Fanning believes that “having 100 really passionate fans that love your brand or product is exponentially more effective than having 10,000 “fans” who signed up just to win a free iPad from you” (Whitler). In that sense, social media should be used to help create a memorable relationship with brand lovers rather than begging for customers through giveaways. Although it’s always great to have customers, businesses should use social media as a way to market themselves as a stand-up business that believes in the lifetime value of a customer.

As businesses move towards digital and media based advertising, they have started to create more social media pages with Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, Facebook, and many other similar linking sites. It has always been a big push in the marketing world to create a “social media campaign,” which most businesses believe involves gaining the most recognition and the biggest following or offering incentives to those who already follow them. Tracking your followers and counting them up should not be a goal for growing businesses. According to Leslie Nuccio of meltwater.com, a “coordinated social media marketing effort that integrates community, conversation, and channel toward a measurable business goal is what makes up a social media campaign.” Nuccio considers community, conversation, and channel to be the most important parts of a social media campaign. By finding a target audience, delivering a message, and finding the perfect social media outlet, a company can create a great social conversation with their potential and current customers. Fans and customers will get excited over a

company's product if its through a big online giveaway. Just sending them a tweet or mentioning them in a Facebook post could make that customer feel important to the company's dynamic. Whether it's using a basic vote or coming up with a crazy campaign, companies must approach social media campaign as if it's networking.

Over the past year, Facebook has rebranded itself and recreated its homepage. The news feed, according to Giancarlo Massaro of the website Business 2 Community, has been changed so that it focuses on "showing users content that is more "relevant" to topics they have clicked or liked previously." If a company's products or services do not match a certain person's Facebook habits, there is a chance that the company could lose out on potential clients. In 2012, Facebook implemented Promoted Posts. Businesses were able to pay a reasonable price to feature their posts in all news feeds (Melton). Then, in December of 2013, the company introduced video ads, which are sponsored videos that automatically play in your news feed, but unlike back then, they now play silently (Melton). So can you guess the reaction to these new ads? 83% of those surveyed by the Wall Street Journal said they found the videos "intrusive" and would likely ignore them (Albergotti et al). During 2014, Qdoba launched a social media campaign on Facebook that allowed their fans to vote for their new favorite Qdoba queso. Qdoba updated the results in real-time throughout the contest and allowed their fans to feel like a big part in their company's decision making. It proved to Qdoba lovers that Qdoba is putting in a huge effort to make connections with their customers and in the process they generated buzz and excitement over their food products (Young). In comparison, Twitter launched similar promotion options for expanding businesses.

For many years, Twitter avoided advertising. In 2010, they launched Promoted Tweets, Promoted Trends, and Promoted Accounts. If a person had recently searched for an item or company on Google or Twitter or had gone to a website recently, many times the ads or promoted tweets and accounts were based off their recent search history. This is called “tailored audiences” (Melton). Twitter has not received as much hate towards their advertising unlike Facebook because there is “usually only one, and it takes up a tiny amount of real estate” (Tassi). Twitter news feeds are read by millions of people on a daily basis, but many times people scroll right past tweets without even reading them. To draw attention of Twitter users, Twitter has developed a small seal they put on their Promoted Tweets. Before the SuperBowl of 2014, Doritos launched a Twitter hashtag campaign called #CrashTheSuperBowl. Twitter users were encouraged to create commercials for the company and if Doritos chose your ad, it was shown during the SuperBowl in front of millions of viewers. It helped generate tons of brand awareness, exposure, and customer connections (Young). Using hashtags on Twitter has generated a lot of publicity for companies by adding something fun for Twitter users to get involved in. After asking a couple friends what they thought of Twitter advertisements, many said they did not notice the Promoted Tweets, but noticed when they had apparently started following random companies on the site that they never went to the page of. This is called “Twitter Auto Follow.” According to TechCrunch.com, this allows companies to follow a person and gain an automatic follow back from that person. Although it quickly builds up a “fan base,” this can affect the way a person sees a company.

Instagram was relatively ad-free until Facebook purchased the social media app for billions in 2012. The photo- and video- sharing site began selling ads to businesses

right around the time their parent company started rolling advertisements out (Melton). Advertisers can purchase sponsored photos and videos to show up in news feeds, and – if they want – Instagram users can now hide these ads or provide feedback on the ads (Melton). There have been positive results for some companies, like Levi's and Ben and Jerry's, after advertising with Instagram. Kevin Systrom, co-founder and CEO of Instagram, looks at every ad before they are launched on the app. He has the power to reject, suggest changes to content, and approve the photo or video for upload (Taylor). Systrom believes in only allowing companies that set the bar high – including companies like Burberry and Lexus. Although this may attract an Instagram user more based on the beauty of the ad, many Instagram users are teenagers who cannot afford luxury brands like these. As a result, Instagram has been allowing more affordable companies to promote paid advertisements with them. Instagram may be strict on who purchases their paid advertisements, but that cannot stop companies from setting up their own Instagram accounts. Millions of large and small businesses have Instagrams promoting themselves these days. An amazing example of a company that does a great job with their Instagram is Vince Camuto. Vince Camuto is a fashion company with locations all over the world. They use Instagram to show their bags and shoes in action, their clothes styled with other companies' products, and promote events they have going on (@vincecamuto Instagram page).

Pinterest is still fairly new but that has not stopped them from implementing ads onto their site. In 2012, they were caught trying to sneak ads onto the site without informing their users (Melton). They had quietly been adding affiliate links to pins through Amazon, eBay, Target, and thousands of other merchants without users' consent

(Segall). These links benefited Pinterest financially; especially when someone clicked through the post and finds themselves on Amazon, eBay, or Target. They were paid even more if that person purchased something (Segall)! Pinterest eventually stopped this after the horrible reactions from their users. In September 2013, they announced the implementation of Promoted Pins. When a person searches for a certain topic or goes onto a category feed, a clearly tagged “Promoted Pin” is seen once or twice while a user scrolls through their feed.

I created a discussion forum for our class where I asked students how they felt about advertising on social media sites. Many students did not find pop-up ads or social media ads to be bothersome. A couple even suggested that the ads that are created from using a person’s search history lead them back to a product that they were originally wary of purchasing. This is extremely strategic advertising done by data analysts and the marketing department that works because they directly target consumers that have previously expressed interest in the product. While some did not mind the use of a person’s search history, others were irritated with this and believed search history should be more private. While data analytics and search histories become a huge part of social media and pop-up ads, they can benefit Internet users as well as companies.

A data scientist named John Young explained that most data used in advertising comes from what you Google or what websites you visit. Young says marketing directors “want to tie the relationship with what’s happening in Google analytics and Twitter and what impact is that having on their revenue and their website” (Tuff). This can bother some people as they feel their privacy is not protected when it comes to data analytics. But Young stays positive suggesting that “it benefits consumers on Amazon

because [they] get these nice, relevant recommendations” (Tuff). Data collection allows companies to measure how social media is impacting their businesses.

While companies adapt to the fast paced life of social media, social media sites are making huge strides to help these companies promote themselves. Companies cannot only create their own pages but they can pay small charges to have an advertisement run through mostly every platform user’s feed. This can easily attract new and old customers to their social media sites. But just getting the customers to their media site is not enough. The company must make an effort to connect with their fans through posts, tweets, and promotional events. Social media is helping companies take on a more personable characteristic rather than a big, scary conglomerate feeling.

Works Cited

- Albergotti, Reed, Suzanne Vranica, and Ben Fritz. "Facebook's Video Ads Risk Alienating Users." *The Wall Street Journal*. Dow Jones & Company, 17 Dec. 2013. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.
<<http://online.wsj.com/news/articles/SB10001424052702304403804579263371125671670?mod=djemalertTECH>>.
- Massaro, Giancarlo. "Stop Running Giveaways on Social Media! Run Them on Your Website." *Business 2 Community*. 26 Nov. 2014. Web. 27 Nov. 2014. <<http://www.business2community.com/social-media/stop-running-giveaways-social-media-run-website-01078111>>.
- Melton, Sam. "Why 2014 Is the Year of Social Media Advertising." *Brandwatch*. 14 Jan. 2014. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.
<<http://www.brandwatch.com/2014/01/why-2014-is-the-year-of-social-media-advertising/>>.
- Nuccio, Leslie. "A Social Media Campaign Is More Than a Retweet." *Meltwater Social Media Blog*. 25 July 2013. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.
<<http://www.meltwater.com/social-media-blog/a-social-media-campaign-is-more-than-a-retweet/>>.
- Perez, Sarah. "Why Twitter Finally Killed The "Auto Follow" For Good." *TechCrunch*. Weebly.com, 8 July 2013. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.
<<http://techcrunch.com/2013/07/08/why-twitter-finally-killed-the-auto-follow-for-good/>>.
- Segall, Laurie. "Pinterest Quietly Profits off Its Users' Links." *CNNMoney*. Cable News Network, 10 Feb. 2012. Web. 20 Nov. 2014.
<http://money.cnn.com/2012/02/10/technology/pinterest_affiliate_links/>.
- Snyder, Kathryn. "Topic: Do You Find Social Media Ads Annoying?" *Canvas Discussion*. University of Delaware, 24 Nov. 2014. Web. 30 Nov. 2014.
<https://udel.instructure.com/courses/1252728/discussion_topics/3638400>.

Tassi, Paul. "Facebook's Advertising Is Starting To Spiral Out Of Control." *Forbes*. Forbes Magazine, 1 July 2013. Web. 20 Nov. 2014. <<http://www.forbes.com/sites/insertcoin/2013/07/01/facebooks-advertising-is-starting-to-spiral-out-of-control/>>.

Taylor, Chris. "How Kevin Systrom Controls Every Ad on Instagram." *Mashable*. 15 July 2014. Web. 30 Nov. 2014. <<http://mashable.com/2014/07/15/kevin-systrom-looks-at-every-ad-on-instagram/>>.

Tuff, Deborah. "Social Media Plays a Big Part into How Ads Pop Up Online." *KSHB Kansas City*. 14 Nov. 2014. Web. 20 Nov. 2014. <<http://www.kshb.com/news/science-tech/social-media-plays-a-big-part-into-how-ads-pop-up-online>>.

Whitler, Kimberly. "Why Word Of Mouth Marketing Is The Most Important Social Media." *Forbes*. Forbes Magazine, 17 July 2014. Web. 30 Nov. 2014. <<http://www.forbes.com/sites/kimberlywhitler/2014/07/17/why-word-of-mouth-marketing-is-the-most-important-social-media/>>.

Young, Heike. "The 30 Most Brilliant Social Media Campaigns of 2014 (So Far)." *The ExactTarget Blog*. Salesforce Marketing Cloud, 28 Apr. 2014. Web. 20 Nov. 2014. <<http://www.exacttarget.com/blog/the-30-most-brilliant-social-media-campaigns-of-2014-so-far/>>.