

The Social Business Textbook

REQUIRED READING FOR SOCIAL COMMUNICATIONS PROFESSIONALS





EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Social business has emerged and accelerated into a bona fide business practice at an incredible pace. By their very nature, social media and thus social business are constantly evolving and social practitioners must sprint to keep up. **And social is growing; brands now rely on an average of 29 employees to manage over over 20,000 daily interactions across 50 social accounts.**

While social media practitioners must continue to expect and adapt to change, it is important to take note of the lessons we have already learned and to bring new members of growing social teams up to speed. The Spredfast Social Business Textbook establishes a foundational curriculum that gets back to basics, outlining eight major social business concepts with thorough explanations, textbook examples, and thought-provoking questions throughout to assess social media aptitude.

The Spredfast Social Business Textbook syllabus covers several important subjects, from social listening History to the Chemistry of combining paid, owned, and earned media. This 46-page Textbook provides an in-depth review of key concepts, strategies for success, planning action items, and brand examples for practical application.



INTERNAL BRAND ENGAGEMENT

51	SOCIAL ACCOUNTS
29	BRAND USERS
1,641	ACTIVITIES/MONTH
410	ACTIVITIES/WEEK



EXTERNAL BRAND ENGAGEMENT

1.8M	TOTAL NETWORK SIZE
47M	SOCIAL REACH
666,667	INTERACTIONS/MONTH
166,667	INTERACTIONS/WEEK

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HISTORY

[SOCIAL LISTENING]



History reveals details to help groups of people understand past events, inform current decisions, and improve future outcomes. And in social media, zeroing in on the people, conversations, and relevant activity about a particular brand, product, or industry through concerted listening efforts can provide valuable historic insights. Your social “history” might trace back to things said by customers, prospects, and influencers months ago, or it might be activity that happened earlier today. But knowing how to collect and study the social activity that pertains to your brand, and creating a plan to do so in an ongoing way, can provide you with a detailed history of the people, topics and focus areas that matter to your company.



Figure 1.1 Social Listening is a continuous process of monitoring conversations, users, and interactions for insights



IDENTIFYING PERTINENT CONVERSATIONS

Most of the millions of Tweets, Facebook posts and social conversations that take place each day won't have a direct implication for your brand. However, a subset of this activity represents social consumers talking about your brand, your products and services, your competitors, or your industry. For brands to be proactive social historians – learning what is being said, when it's being said, and by whom – a listening plan should be in place that identifies and tracks:

- Your brand name
- Acronyms associated with your brand(s)
- Specific brand product names and references
- Specific brand service names and references
- Names and acronyms associated with your core competitors
- Event or conversation specific hashtags used by your target audiences

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Catalogue the various names, topics, themes and users that are relevant to your brand to determine which should be monitored in an ongoing manner.

SOCIAL LISTENING

\ 'so-shəl 'li-sən-ɪŋ \

(v.) The act of monitoring conversations taking place across social networks

place to store this activity is critical for tracking trends and emerging preferences over time. The ability to store and reference these conversations will allow your brand to better create and assess a “big picture” perspective of the Who, What, When, Where and Why of important things being said across social channels.

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Evaluate how your brand is currently cataloguing and archiving social conversations, and assess if this current approach is allowing your company to view and access the entire breadth and depth of historical activity.

CATALOGUING CONVERSATIONS FOR FUTURE REFERENCE

History happens over time. But because social networks don't allow you to search for conversations that happened past a relatively short timeframe, having a

TRACKING HISTORICAL DETAILS ABOUT SOCIAL NETWORK MEMBERS

No two social customers are alike. Some have praised you in the past whereas others have given not-so-great feedback about you online, and both are subject to change with each new brand interaction, whether it

Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.

– George Santayana



happens socially or in real life. Some users have few followers while others maintain large networks, and the degree of influence is not solely based on that number. Important details to help assess the comprehensive relationship and impact of social users include:

- Biographical information – a social user’s autobiography, what do they want you to know about them?
- Conversation history – don’t rely on hearsay, track actual conversations

- Notes and relevant context – complete the picture with contextual notes for future reference



Document the types of information that are interesting and/or important for your brand to understand about social users and determine how your company can best capture this information so it can be referenced by team members in the future. 🔔

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Presentation:
[Knowing and Delighting Your Social Customer](#)



Tipsheet:
[Knowing and Activating Social Customers](#)



Tipsheet:
[Social brand interactions in 2012 at a Glance](#)



QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. What are the most important brand, product, or service keywords to monitor? Are there timely or campaign-specific monitoring efforts that need to be planned?
2. Are there existing chats, such as those on Twitter using hashtags, or taking place in LinkedIn Groups, which would benefit you to follow?
3. How is your brand collecting and storing insights about interactions with social users?
4. Would archiving social conversations help your brand analyze activity over time? And if so, how are you approaching this effort today?

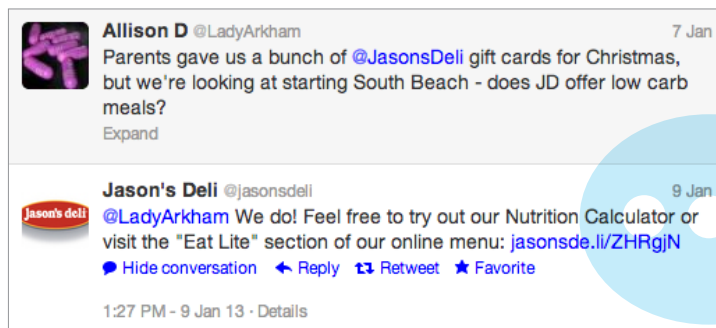


BRAND EXAMPLE JASON'S DELI

Jason's Deli listens for direct brand mentions (@jasonsdeli) as well as indirect mentions (#jasonsdeli, jason's deli) and responds to positive, negative, and neutral comments. Social customers are often pleasantly surprised just to be heard and acknowledged.

By listening proactively, Jason's Deli is able to:

Answer a
customer inquiry



Influence a
customer's
purchase decision



Address a
negative customer
experience



GOVERNMENT

[SOCIAL ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE]

Governmental bodies serve to provide oversight, guidance, and checks and balances to ensure harmony and prosperity. And while social media channels provide individuals with the ability to share and engage however they see fit, this laissez-faire approach doesn't scale for brands looking to achieve real business outcomes through social programs. The average company is managing more than 51 social media accounts with help from more than 29 internal employees. If oversight and governance are not built into corporate social programs, brands can quickly become unorganized and run the risk of employees participating in inappropriate activity. Brand anarchy can be combatted by defining internal structure and ensuring the right rules and guidance are in place to protect both the brand itself and the people behind the social activity.

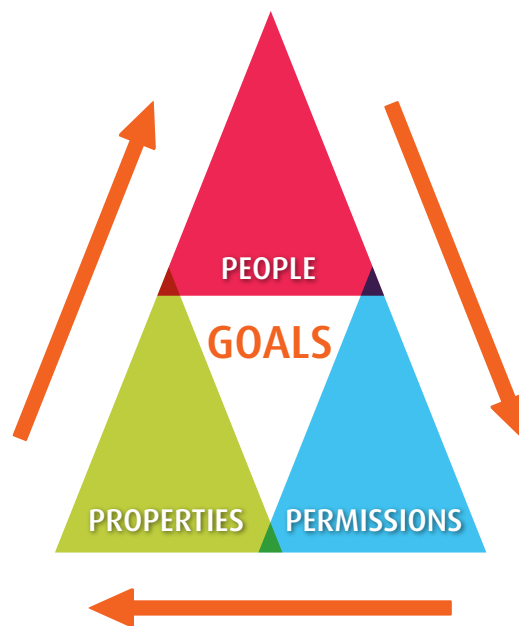


Figure 2.1 A governance framework that aligns the right people to the right social properties with appropriate permissions helps achieve social goals



DEFINING GOALS AND

PARAMETERS - A CONSTITUTION

Before a Tweet, Facebook Post or LinkedIn Company Page status update is made, smart brands have already defined the goals and parameters of their social presences. Brands must then clarify which people, departments, channels, and accounts should be activated to achieve designated business goals.

- Social business goals – defining progress. Clarifying the expectations your brand has for its social presence will aid in identifying who should be contributing, how they should be socially present, what activity will help drive these goals, and ultimately, how success will be defined. Some of the most common and highly cited goals for social programs include increasing brand awareness, providing a better customer experience, generating sales, tailoring brand experiences with key audiences, and building brand loyalty.
- Company departments – governing bodies. Just as there are multiple departments and agencies involved in running a healthy government, a robust social program involves multiple departments, not just Marketing. Social media can provide utility and value across many, if not all, areas of the business. Perhaps your sales department is interested in increasing online sales or lead generation efforts by converting social community members. Or your Public Relations team wants to increase word of mouth and brand loyalty through social engagement. Aligning the right departments with their corresponding social goals will help identify the right people and resources to fuel social success.

SOCIAL ORGANIZATION & GOVERNANCE

\ 'so-shəl 'or-gə-nə-shzā-shən
ən(d) 'gə-vər-nən(t)s\

(n.) A set of rules, guidelines, and procedures put into place to establish and protect brand activity in social media

- Specialized presences – local branches. Municipal, state, and federal government structures exist to provide scale-appropriate services to their constituents. Similarly, many brands have an opportunity to engage with their customers on a more localized or specialized level. Beyond a central set of corporate social accounts, brands with multiple store or office locations, geographically diverse audiences, or differentiated product offerings can expand and personalize social experiences for their communities by segmenting social presences. Proven approaches include: location-based accounts for retail stores to accommodate hyper-local interests, state-based accounts for membership-based organizations to communicate local issues, or national accounts that provide language and culture-specific content.



That government is the strongest of which every man feels himself a part.

– Thomas Jefferson



BRAND ACTION ITEM

Assess the current status of your social programs and determine which goals you plan to achieve as your programs grow. Define which departments should participate in ongoing activity and align them with the proper social media channels and accounts.

Smart Social Tech Tip:

Structuring and growing social programs for brands can be more effectively organized when centralized from one location – such as a social media management system – where all social network accounts can be run, different levels of access can be assigned for users and all social media activity can be seen and assessed by corporate strategists.

IDENTIFYING CONTRIBUTORS - ELECTING SOCIAL OFFICIALS

For maturing social brands, social media is no longer one person's job. The Marketing department, or perhaps even a dedicated Social Media Director or team, might oversee the lion's share of social activity, but independent contributors across the organization can help a company flex its content and expertise muscles. Based on predetermined business objectives and desired social presence, your social team might include:

- Team leads to oversee department activity
- Dedicated community managers to respond to customer needs, questions, and ongoing social conversations
- Subject matter experts to contribute specialized knowledge
- "Field" contributors such as part-time contributors from specific locations
- External and guest contributors

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Map out the ideal mix of potential social contributors based on content needs determined by your business objectives and audience expectations.

comes in many shapes and sizes, but its core purpose is to protect both brand integrity and the employees who are creating public conversations on behalf of a brand. The resources to achieve both of those often include:

- A Social Media Policy outlining the Do's and Don'ts for socially active employees
- A best practices guide for engaging with online communities and audiences on behalf of the brand
- Training on how to use social media sites and software programs to manage corporate social activity
- Ongoing education, covering everything from emerging social trends to platform feature and functionality updates, to lessons learned across your team
- Third party resources like conferences, online webinars, or written resources to help educate and inspire team members

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Consider the tactics for social guidance above and evaluate which elements you currently have in place, what else is needed to better equip socially active team members, and what you can incorporate moving forward to fuel ongoing social success.

PROVIDING GUIDANCE - THE SOCIAL BILL OF RIGHTS

Equipping internal teams with guidance and best practices is a precursor to social success. Guidance



IV. ASSIGNING ACCESS AND PERMISSIONS - IMPLEMENTING CHECKS & BALANCES

With a growing number of brand accounts, social contributors, and activity taking place across multiple channels each day, having an organized plan in place to scale social programs is essential. Just as governments use a system of checks and balances to ensure that no single group or branch has disproportionate power, the same should be considered for social brands. Every company has a unique structure based on various organizational elements, however each should start by:

- Equipping internal teams with the right level of access (planning, publishing, analysis) to appropriate social accounts
- Providing strategic direction and functional guidance through initial and ongoing training

- Organizing the infrastructure of accounts and people using systems and tools to help scale productively and reduce the opportunity for oversight or security errors



Assess and align individual social contributors with accounts and strategic direction to enable social contribution. Identify infrastructure needs such as a social media management system to organize and scale ongoing social growth. 🚩

Learn More Online



Tipsheet:
[Social Structure and Organization Trends](#)



Presentation:
[Scaling Social Media Programs across the Enterprise](#)



Blog Post:
[Adopting Social Media Company Wide](#)



Tipsheet:
[How Does Your Social Garden Grow?](#)





QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. What are your strategic business goals for your social programs? How do they align with other internal goals and which are highest priority to illustrate social success?
2. Who are the people who should contribute to social activity for your brand? What is the difference in the strategy and approach of different groups and accounts to best engage social audiences?
3. What type of guidance does your company need to provide to social contributors? Do you need to have legal or executive guidance? Which ongoing resources will maximize success?
4. What is the ideal organizational structure for social activity? Would centralizing social activity via a technology solution aid in consistency, permissioning, and reporting?

A social business understands that not all employees are created equally, and yet some of them are not only connected to multiple social networks, but they are actually great representatives of the organization itself. These companies match up employees with opportunities in social both internally and externally.



*Social Business for Complex
Organizations*



– David Armano, Edelman



BRAND EXAMPLE

AARP/AT&T/ USA TODAY

There is no one right way to organize your social presence. A few common configurations include organizing by business unit, geographical location, or product offering.

In addition to operating a corporate handle, AARP uses state-level accounts to provide relevant local information to members of the non-profit organization geared towards serving people 50+.



Want to connect with AT&T? To keep tabs on company updates? To get customer support? To find a deal? To find a job? Whatever the case—they have a tailored account to connect with you.

Some brands choose to organize by specific product or service offering. Take USA Today, the nation's number one newspaper in print circulation, for example. They organize their social presence by news category.



MUSIC

[ORCHESTRATION]



The difference between a symphony and a cacophony of sound is the orchestration of many musicians hitting the right notes at the right time. Similarly, brands building social programs must orchestrate multiple people having multiple conversations across multiple accounts on behalf of their company. But as in any orchestra, not all social contributors should play the exact same part. Some will be more skilled in creating custom content to build awareness around brand marketing. Others may be focused on finding, responding to, and resolving customer needs. Some contributors may solely focus on analysis of and reporting on program success. And at the administrative level, a smaller group might be responsible for providing access, assigning activity, and approving content.



Figure 3.1 All social team members need to be supported with resources and workflows to coordinate social activity



COMPOSING DIFFERENT TRACKS

. WITH USER APPROVAL PATHS

Not all social contributors need the ability to publish. In fact, many companies find that having approval processes helps maintain brand integrity and decreases the likelihood of erroneous or “off-brand” messages from being published. Company-specific traits such as industry or organizational structure can influence the level of oversight necessary, but other key factors in determining the need for approval paths often include:

- The number of contributors to specific accounts – more content contributors often require the need for more oversight
- Industry regulation – brands in highly regulated industries such as Financial Services and Healthcare often require more concerted approvals from Legal or Public Affairs
- Message content – corporate-sanctioned messaging such as official news, information or public announcements often require corporate communications sign-off
- Legal Matters – content that could include corporate disclosures regulated by agencies such as the FTC or SEC should take a pass through Legal
- Triaged Community Management - conversations with an escalated response path such as complaints, public harassment, or sensitive information

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Audit the types of social content, contributors, and legal implications that may impact the need for approval processes for social activity. Outline the correct pathways to route this activity before public publishing.

ORCHESTRATION

\or-kə-'strā-shən\

(v.) The act of concerted coordination across brand activity, contributors, and interaction on social media channels

. ORCHESTRATING ACTIVITY WITH WORKFLOWS AND ASSIGNMENT

With the average brand activating 29 people across the company in social initiatives, a standardized workflow is a necessary element for efficiency. Social team leads often find that assigning outbound activity days or weeks in advance can help ensure activity continuity and message harmony across accounts. The team member who first reads an incoming item might not be the right person to provide an answer and needs a way to pass the message along. Further, individuals may surface valuable insights that should be shared with the entire team. Establishing a workflow that enables the following actions can increase efficiency and free up time for meaningful, real-time customer engagement:

- Schedule and assign activity to teams or individuals to encourage a regular cadence such as weekly blog posts, daily Tweets or timely Facebook updates
- Triage inbound communication and assign activity follow-up to individuals or teams best suited to address social customers' needs
- Highlight activity that does not require a response but provides valuable insight to team members



BRAND ACTION ITEM

Decide your company's ongoing activity assignment, internal social sharing, and conversation workflow needs. Establish processes and assess whether technology solutions can make this a scalable reality.

Smart Social Tech Tip:

Implementing workflows and approval paths isn't offered through the native social networks, however, this orchestration can be made possible across small and large teams alike through the use of a social media management system.

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Audit which content, such as approved responses, timely content for promotions, and approved multimedia, should be easily accessible to your brand's social contributors. Establish a way to centralize this content and provide access to social team members for efficient and scalable engagement.

III. SING FROM THE SAME HYMNAL- CENTRALIZING CONTENT FOR DISTRIBUTION

Social conversations revolve around content and message creation. Creating on-brand, accurate content for real-time conversations can be challenging. From an orchestration perspective, one of the largest tasks companies face is equipping team members with a centralized repository of content or approved messaging for scaling conversations. If a customer poses a product or services-related question on Twitter, the Care team should be able to access approved content to Tweet an appropriate response immediately. If a Marketing team member wants to include a picture in a Facebook post, they should be able to easily locate a suitable image that adheres to brand guidelines. Having these resources readily available provides real-time, on-brand messaging and reduces bottlenecks that delay or prevent response.

IV. CONVERSATION MODERATION

Each of the tactics within social orchestration builds up to a larger need for brands to moderate conversations across teams and internal stakeholders. Taking actions of assigning content and response and putting activity into workflows are often the first level of helping moderate conversations. But what about when something needs

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✍ Blog Post:
[5 Steps to Operationalizing Social Media](#)

🖥 Presentation:
[Using Processes, Workflows and Organization to Optimize Social Programs](#)

✍ Blog Post:
[Strategic Social Media Means Thinking Internally First](#)





to be escalated to higher level of scrutiny? And how to do brands prioritize tens, if not hundreds, of daily conversations to decide what needs response, and then track how long it's taking the team to actually take action? To better prepare for effective conversation moderation, brands should:

- Create an escalation path for conversations that don't have an easy or "out of the box" response
- Decide what types of conversations, mentions and activity deserve a prioritized response and what time goals should be set to respond
- Assess how the team will have visibility into responses and engagement to ensure

conversations have been responded to, or that team members aren't double responding

- Decide how to best track response times and actions across team members so that the brand can measure response times and average performance across team member activity

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Map out a plan for better insight and tracking across prioritizing inbound conversations, how they can be escalated and audited when needed, and how your team can track response times and individual-level activity. 🎵

Companies who run and deploy blogs/communities/FB pages are at risk by not first getting ready. We found that advanced companies have deployed internal readiness such as governance, education, policies, process, and a roll-out program in a pragmatic method -not jumped to implementation.



Breakdown: 
Corporate Social Media Team

- Jeremiah Owyang , Altimeter Group

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. Are there types of activity such as company announcements or specific content promotions that need to be approved by specific people or departments before they are shared publicly? Which types of content are these? And what specific approvals do they require?
2. What are the types of planned content, general community management, and escalated response scenarios that your brand regularly plans for or experiences? What are the processes that ensure the right people receive notifications when action is needed?
3. How does your social team share or provide content to be used by the larger group of social contributors? How can you optimize this process or implement a content repository to make it easier and more efficient to distribute content?



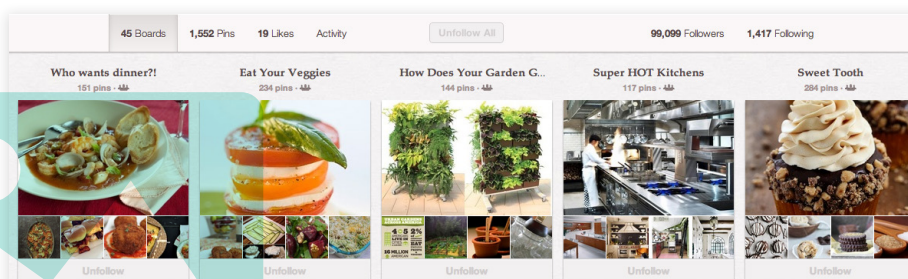
BRAND EXAMPLE WHOLE FOODS

In addition to maintaining globally managed presences on Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest (among other social networks), Whole Foods enables over 2,500 employees at its 340+ stores to provide relevant, local, and timely content to their communities. This allows each region to share its own local flavor while preserving brand integrity.



Whole Foods has more than 250 Facebook Pages to serve specific metro areas with local, relevant information.

Over 300 Twitter accounts engage with and share timely information with local shoppers and residents.



Whole Foods' Pinterest page curates visual products, food and lifestyle ideas, as well as company-related causes.

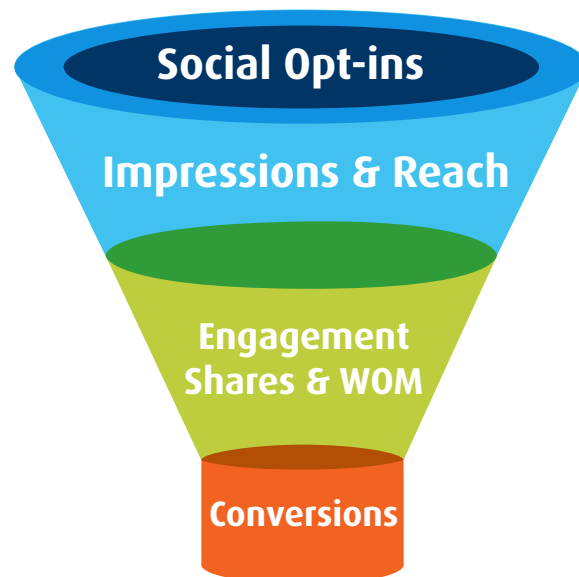
MATH

[SOCIAL MEASUREMENT]



Complicated calculus aside, nearly everyone needs a rudimentary understanding of basic math principles in life. Embracing metrics to better measure social media effectiveness is an emerging math discipline with many variables. As with any business endeavor, the approach to measurement should first and foremost be based on the goal(s) at hand. Do you want to reach more people to build brand awareness of your brand or is your company focusing on providing a more valuable experience to existing customers? Regardless of goal, the ability to calculate and assess performance demonstrates business impact and aids in program optimization.

SOCIAL MEDIA USERS



SOCIAL CUSTOMERS

Figure 4.1 The journey from social media users to social customers can be mapped with social media measurement



EVALUATING SOCIAL OPT-IN

. AUDIENCE

Social network size can be seen as a vanity metric, but the truth is, the more people who Fan, Follow, or Subscribe to your brand across social channels, the more opportunities you have to regularly reach your target audience. By digitally “opting-in” to receive updates, social users make it easier to communicate with them via social channels. You are also more likely to reach members of their networks when they engage with your brand and that activity surfaces in social feeds. To measure your network size or “social housefile,” brands should benchmark and then continuously measure the following metrics:

- Facebook Fans
- Twitter followers
- LinkedIn Company Page Followers
- LinkedIn Group Members
- Google+ Connections
- Blog subscribers
- YouTube subscribers
- Instagram followers
- Pinterest followers
- SlideShare subscribers

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Identify the networks on which you are active and define the best way to benchmark growth of network size over time. Establish a regular cadence to assess and measure these metrics.

SOCIAL MEASUREMENT

\ 'so-shəl 'me-zhər-mənt \

(v.) The practice of collecting aggregate data from social media accounts and interactions and analyzing how these findings impact and/or enlighten social business goals and future strategies

CALCULATING SOCIAL . IMPRESSIONS

Bigger network size allows brands to reach more people with their social activity and marketing efforts. But a higher level of impressions, or people who are served your content through their network, is achieved by publishing more often and sharing content that is valuable to network members. More on how to create better content in the English chapter, but measuring impressions across your multiple social channels will help your company gauge how well your brand is building awareness and affinity with social users. Not only do certain networks reward engaging content by surfacing it more frequently with their algorithms, but your Fans and Followers do as well, by sharing, re-tweeting, or Pinning your compelling content. Metrics to identify and measure the number of people who see your social content include:

There are two possible outcomes: if the result confirms the hypothesis, then you've made a measurement. If the result is contrary to the hypothesis, then you've made a discovery.

– Enrico Fermi



- SlideShare Views
- Facebook Impressions
- Twitter Impressions
- YouTube Views
- Blog Visits
- LinkedIn Impressions
- Google+ Impressions

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Identify the networks on which you are active and define the best way to benchmark and collect impression metrics across each network over time. Note that each network provides different ways to collect this information, and oftentimes a social media management system is the only way to truly collect and compare all of these metrics and calculations.

Smart Social Tech Tip:

Benchmarking and measuring reach and engagement – both from the granular level to the corporate view – can be achieved across all social accounts when pulled into the tracked through a social media management system.

SlideShare, YouTube, Pinterest and Google+

- Mentions, Replies, and Retweets on Twitter
- Shares on Facebook, Blogs, LinkedIn
- +1 on Google+
- Repins on Pinterest
- Messages on Facebook and Twitter
- Clicks on links in Blog posts, Tweets, Facebook posts, Google+ posts, SlideShare content and LinkedIn posts
- Favorites on Flickr, Twitter, YouTube and SlideShare

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Determine the most common, and most important, types of social interaction across each of your social network presences and how you will track this engagement from the corporate overview to the individual account level to show engagement trends over time.

III. MEASURING ENGAGEMENT THROUGH INTERACTIONS

Growing a large network and publishing regularly allows social brands to heighten visibility and awareness across social channels, but measuring the social interactions taken by users actually pinpoints moments of engagement and message resonance. While knowing that your messages have been seen thousands, if not millions, of times is valuable. Proving that community members are interacting with you demonstrates digital endorsement. This builds both brand affinity with your network over time and increases visibility of your brand to their networks. The following engagement metrics aren't necessarily created equal but each can be tracked as indicators of audience interest that will help your brand make better decisions over time about your audience's content preferences:

- Likes on Facebook, Instagram, and Pinterest
- Comments on Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Blogs,

IV. DEFINING AND TRACKING SOCIAL CONVERSIONS

Social activity and measurement can be thought of as a funnel. As with other types of media, building an audience and increasing impressions is important. But with social media, brands then have the opportunity to convert community members in meaningful ways. That may mean driving people to a website for more in-depth information, getting them to take a specified action like filling out a form or driving them to a digital



point of purchase or donation. Through the use of link tagging or integrating website analytic goals with a social media management system, brands can track this activity with a high level of accuracy to move beyond social activity measurement into proof of conversion. Common conversions to consider tracking include:

- Traffic from social activity to website
- Form downloads, originating from social links, that capture additional user information for follow up
- Online Sales originated from social activity and links
- Special redemptions such as online coupons shared via social and redeemed either online or offline
- Social Downloads on sites such as SlideShare
- Online action taken such as petition signatures or donations originating from social activity

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Define the types of conversions that matter to your brand's business goals and how you plan to track them through link tagging, website analytics, and social media management integration.

V. USING SOCIAL DATA TO FORMULATE FUTURE DECISIONS

Social media measurement isn't a single-dimension activity. Collecting the data is only the first step in the measurement process. Social brands can and should use this data to analyze performance and trends across audiences, content, and activities. These findings can help determine:

- Content Preference – which content maximizes engagement
- Content Efficiency – which content drives conversions
- Audience Technographics – who comprises your social audiences and what do they seek from your brand on social channels?

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Determine what constitutes "successful" social activity and create an approach to percolate and assess trends at a programmatic level. Unearth takeaways on which social activities work best universally and identify audience or channel specific trends.

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Presentation:
[Best Practices for Measuring the Impact of Social Engagement](#)



Worksheet:
[Measuring the Impact of Social Engagement](#)



TipSheet:
[Benchmarking Engagement and Interactions](#)





QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. What is the current size of your social networks? How are you tracking growth over time to assess interest in “opting-in” to social communications? Are some of your networks much larger than others? Does this signal that some networks are more pertinent, and deserving of time, to your social activities?
2. What is the average number of impressions your social content is receiving on each network? Is this number growing or shrinking? If the number is not growing, does this signal that your content is not being seen by, or shared across, your networks?
3. What types of engagement does your brand track? Are some interactions, such as clicks or shares, more valuable than others such as likes or comments? Is your level of engagement increasing, consistent, or decreasing over time? How do these interactions help support success for your social initiatives as a brand? Can you assign a value – numeric or financial – to these engagement types?
4. Are business conversions such as driving traffic to your website, on-site sales or user information capture part of your social program goals? How are you tracking these across your digital presences and how can your brand track when these are sourced from social activity? How can you report conversion completions regularly to show the success of social programs?
5. Which engagement data will help your brand make more strategic social decisions in the future? How are you gauging the success and traction of social content to learn what resonates best with social users? How are you assessing community interests and needs to fuel meaningful engagement? Which social networks are highest in terms of size? Impressions? Engagement? What does this mean for future planning?

If you want your whole company supporting your social initiatives, it will help if the whole company (more or less) has access to the scoreboard. Don't treat social media measurement results like the nuclear codes. Sharing your results will inspire the internal discussions and ideas necessary to take your program to the next level.



Social Media Measurement

A 6 Step Process



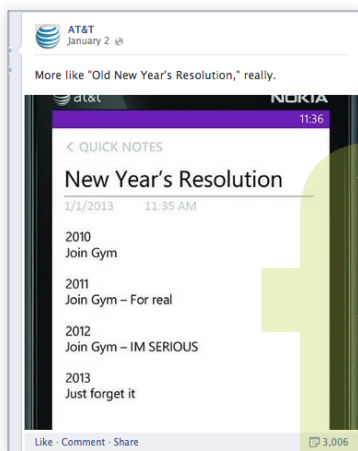
- Jay Baer, *Convince & Convert*



BRAND EXAMPLE AT&T

One of the opportunities and challenges about social business, is the sheer volume of data that can be collected and analyzed. AT&T manages this data overload by focusing on a channel-specific “ultimate metric.” Learn more about how AT&T uses data to drive strategy by viewing our Social Prep School Webinar.

3,006
Facebook: Shares



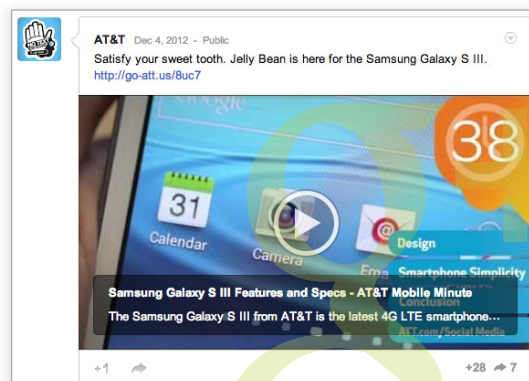
74
Instagram: Hearts (Likes)



24
Twitter: Retweets



28
Google+: +1



ENGLISH

A

[CREATING SOCIAL CONTENT]

The written word holds great power. And with the introduction of social media into business programs, brands are finding that quality content is a key contributor to social success. Whether a message is a 140-character Tweet, a brief reply written to a comment on Facebook, or a 1,000 word blog post, each action taken in social is rooted in content creation. Social activity can be categorized into three areas. Content development for social activity can be created directly by a brand, such as status updates, long form materials such as white papers, or multimedia such as images and video. Content can be curated from social users, media, or industry sources and shared to build relationships and engage with social audiences. And of course, brands can respond to or join existing conversations to build richer, meaningful relationships with key online communities.

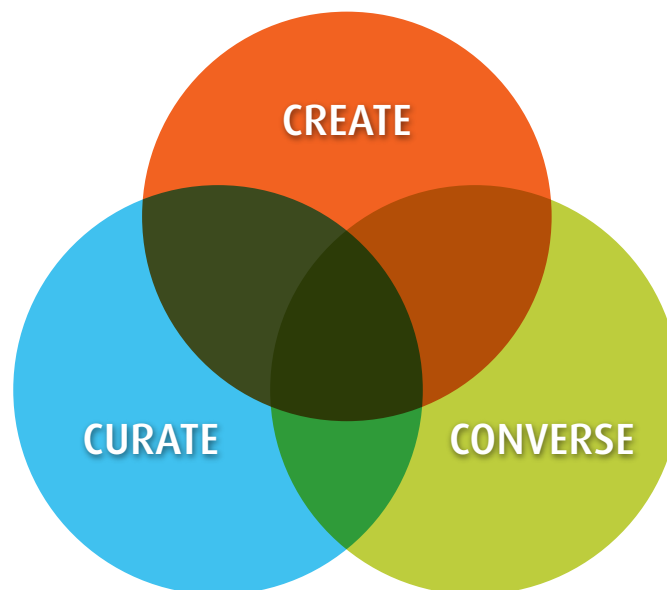


Figure 5.1 Successful social programs look at content through three lenses to create, curate, and converse.

THINKING LIKE AN AUTHOR AND CREATING GREAT CONTENT

True, content is king. But not just any content will spark social conversation with your audiences. Ask yourself two key questions when planning content: What is your objective in publishing to your online communities? And, what is your customer's objective in connecting with you on social channels? When considering your brand goals: Is it to raise awareness? Inspire engagement? Or to convert users in a defined way? When considering customer goals: Is it to learn something? To get a good deal? To be heard? Depending on your answers to these questions, multiple types of content can be used and shared with social communities. Some of this might need to be created from scratch, but other content might already exist within your company. To best assess what types of "owned" content your brand can share in social:

- Audit your brand's existing content library. Content such as case studies, customer stories, rich multimedia, or industry relevant knowledge or advice can be repurposed for social consumption.
- Use social measurement insights to determine new content needs. Examine social engagement metrics and determine which types of content receive the most interaction. Use this insight to guide decisions around new content creation.
- Assess implications of length and media type. You might have 140 characters to Tweet, but keeping messages short enough to Retweet can make your message easier to share. Text may provide richer messaging options, but remember, a picture is worth a thousand words (and is shown to be more engaging and shareable).

SOCIAL CONTENT

\ 'so-shəl kən-'tent \

(n.) Content that is created, curated, or part of a conversation to fuel social program activity and engagement

- Identify which actions you would like your social network to take. Map these potential actions or conversions to the types of content and calls to action that help motivate the corresponding activity.



Make a list of content your social team needs to create on an ongoing basis – from status updates on Facebook and LinkedIn to long form blog posts and videos – and create an editorial calendar to address timing for creation and sharing.

ACTING AS A PUBLISHER AND CURATING CONTENT TO SHARE

Social media activity inspires word of mouth sharing. In this vein, companies shouldn't focus singularly on sharing brand-only content. Rather, they should use a critical eye and share the most valuable and relevant content with their networks. Often, this might be shared from community members, industry experts, or media

If you would not be forgotten as soon as you are dead, either write something worth reading or do things worth writing.

– Benjamin Franklin

sources. Publishing a diverse set of content both ensures you are keeping audience members (and their values) top-of-mind and helps build community by giving credit and attention to other valuable industry resources. When building a curation framework for your brand, consider the following sources and how they may bolster your regular social content rotation:

- Timely industry news and implications
- Content from channel or business partners
- Customer/client content, news, and updates
- Industry conversations and commentary

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Identify relevant information sources – such as news outlets, industry blogs or sites, specific users, pundits, and partner social accounts – and outline the most useful ways to curate and share this information as part of your ongoing social activity plan.

Smart Social Tech Tip:

Planning, creating and scheduling content in advance through a social media management system allows brands to engage across all social networks and ensure the right mix and cadence of content is shared per the company's desired strategy.

- Prompts for users to respond, reply, or provide feedback in daily content to stimulate interactions
- Calls for content that allow users to submit and/or share their own ideas and creations
- Open-ended questions to begin organic conversations
- Keywords, hashtags or specific accounts that your brand, through listening efforts, can monitor for opportunities to add insight on existing conversations
- Responding to mentions, brand-related conversations, and questions to fuel existing customer conversations involving your brand (or competitors)
- Discussion threads, groups, chats, and industry leaders' sites where your brand can add value and feedback to other respective communities

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Brainstorm—create a list of relevant and strategic conversations where your brand can participate and assess which of these you should start yourself on owned accounts and which of these are already taking place elsewhere where you can begin participating as a valuable community member.

OPERATING AS A CORRESPONDENT AND ENGAGING IN CONVERSATION

Social media is, after all, about being social and interacting with others. This is why the conversation part of the content framework is so important. You will undoubtedly want to share content and updates about your company, products, and industry, but your brand also has a keen opportunity to participate in conversations already taking place. The obvious conversations are those surrounding your company or products. But what about the organic conversations taking place among your customers? Or relevant discussion threads taking place across hashtags, groups, or news sources? Better yet, what conversations can your brand start? To get an idea of your most valuable conversation engagement options, consider the following:

Content isn't just another channel. It's a mindset.

It's not new, but instead, technology and social tools and platforms have created new opportunities, which continue to evolve, and afford us new ways to respond to customers and communicate with them.



Putting Content in Context 

- Ann Handley, Marketing Profs

Learn More Online



Presentation:

[Spruce up your social with great content](#)



TipSheet:

[Making Facebook Content Newsfeed-Worthy](#)



Blog Post:

[Adopting Social Media Company Wide](#)



Tipsheet:

[How Does Your Social Garden Grow?](#)



QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. Creation: what content does your brand already have at its fingertips that can be shared to seed conversation across social channels (overviews, guides, presentations, multimedia)? How often can you commit to creating new content like multimedia, blog posts, or shareable assets?
2. Curation: which relevant people, topics, or conversations should your brand monitor to find shareable content for your own social accounts? Are there customers, pundits, influencers, or news sources that regularly provide content that your audience would find valuable?
3. Conversation: where are existing conversations taking place that you can not only share (curate) but also participate in? Are there specific blogs, Twitter accounts, or hashtags or LinkedIn Groups where you should become active in ongoing discussions to add more insight and value?
4. What is your brand's ideal mix of creation vs. curation vs. conversation?

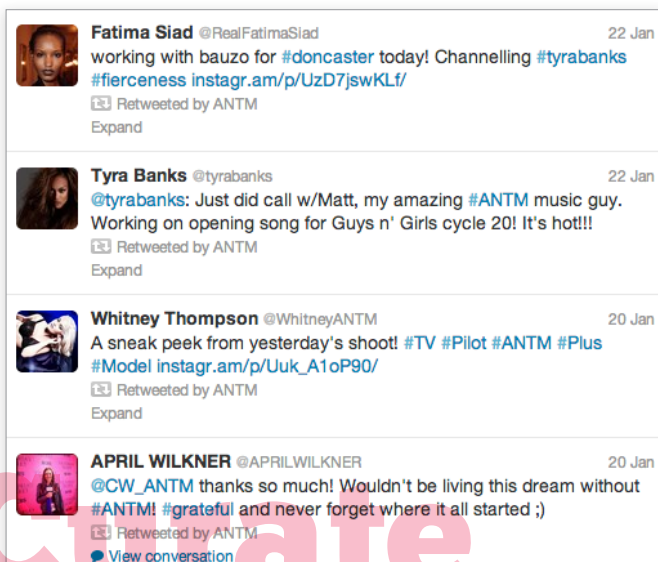
BRAND EXAMPLE THE CW

The CW Television Network is home to shows like 90210, Gossip Girl, The Vampire Diaries, and the Sex and the City prequel, The Carrie Diaries. The social presences for each show are tailored to the style and audience of the show. For instance, in addition to sharing updates on the show, cast, and crew, @gossipgirl dishes on the latest celebrity gossip (you know you love her). See how other CW shows create and curate great content and converse with their fans.

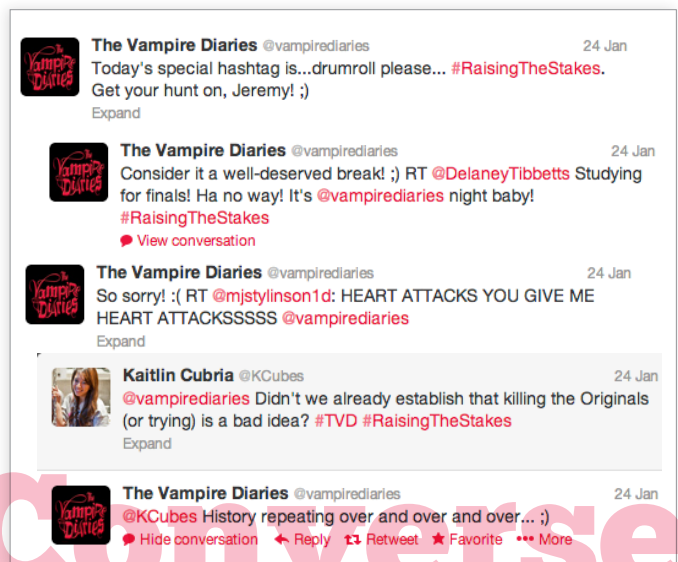
To promote the new Carrie Diaries, custom images of characters from other series in “8-Bit” mode were created to spread the word about the premiere.



Most of the tweets in the America's Next Top Model Twitter feed are curated from past contestants, fans, and Ms. Tyra Banks herself.



Fans of The Vampire Diaries can join in on weekly live chats on Twitter during episodes using a custom hashtag created to start and keep track of the conversation.



SOCIAL STUDIES



[SEGMENTATION AND TARGETING SOCIAL AUDIENCES]

Studying a group's activity over periods of time can unearth cultural, social, and behavioral trends. In social media, being a member of a brand's social network doesn't mean that you share the same interests and motivations as other members. Similar to groups of actual customers, different social segments have diverse needs, desires, and motivations for engaging socially. Target audience profiles in business are built based on emerging demographic, psychographic, and behavior patterns. The same is true across social media. The great news is, social networks like Facebook and LinkedIn are allowing social brands to better access these data points to learn more about the people within their networks. Brands can then utilize features on networks like Facebook and LinkedIn to actually target activity to distinct audience profiles based on age, location, language, work title, industry or interests.

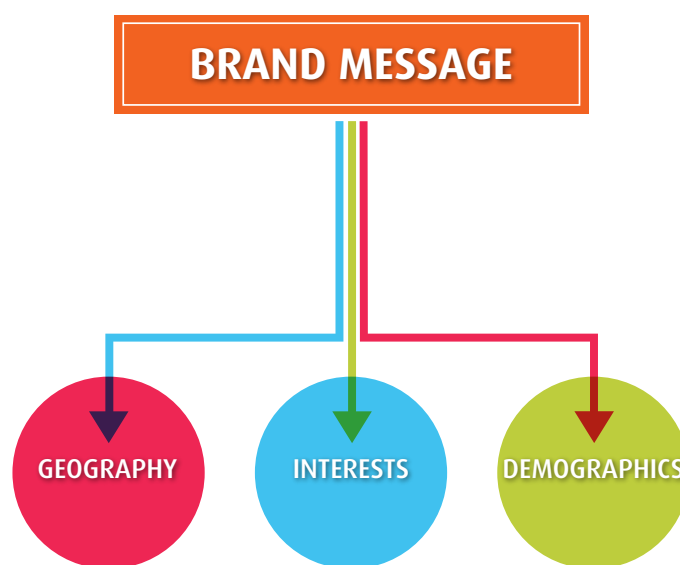


Figure 6.1 Brand messages can be tailored to reach distinct social segments based on geography, interests, or demographics

STUDYING AUDIENCE

• CHARACTERISTICS - DEFINING TARGET AUDIENCES

The first step in identifying specific social audiences is to classify the different interest and user segments within your networks. These will likely be different from network to network, but diving into audience insights provided by social networks like LinkedIn, Facebook, and YouTube will key brands into who makes up their community and why they are interested in the brand's social content. To start understanding the audience segments within your brand's social network:

- Learn about your audiences' demographic compositions. This includes audience traits such as age, gender, and location. Are there distinct age groups within your Facebook network? Are there more Senior and/or Manager level users within your LinkedIn following? Can you identify key geographic concentrations of Fans, Followers, or Subscribers? This information can be obtained through insights provided natively by social networks, and an aggregated view created using analytics from social media management systems can help identify cross platform trends. Brands that familiarize themselves with this information will be better suited to provide content and create conversations that resonate with social audiences.
- Identify critical masses. Many brands choose to share wide-casted activity across social networks instead of, or in addition to, targeting messages. Activity such as company news, product launches, and special announcements may be relevant to your entire network, but understanding the composition of the audience majority can help create messages that connect most broadly. Are most community members located in North America? Do women outnumber men? Is a specific age group or professional cohort most engaged?

SEGMENTATION AND TARGETING

\seg-mən-'tā-shən ən(d)
'tär-gət-īŋ\

(v.) The act of defining groups of similar audience members – based on demographics, psychographics or behaviors – and directing specific activity and/or conversations directly towards these groups

These discoveries will help in crafting activity to connect with the largest group possible when wide-casting across social networks.

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Study the audience composition of your networks from the data provided in Facebook Insights, LinkedIn Insights and YouTube analytics and your social media management system to identify specific audiences to whom your brand can begin targeting more personalized messages.

• TALKING TO THE RIGHT PEOPLE - EMBRACING NETWORK TARGETING

When wide-casting doesn't provide a personal enough experience, the social networks now provide brands with the publishing power to share tailored content with specific network segments. Rather than wide-casting social messages that pertain to a specific community segment, brands can personalize and target specific messages. This ability to laser target messages based

on age, geography, language, and areas of interest – across Facebook and other networks – means that social activity can now be more personalized, and effective, than ever before.

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Build “social profiles” based on your network analysis, and use these profiles to target messages when appropriate (e.g. use geo-based profiles to promote regional sales, professional cohort based profiles to promote an executive level training).

Smart Social Tech Tip:

Social media management systems allow brands to both target specific audience groups, as well as define “pre-determined” segments to communicate with to make message targeting simpler and accessible to larger groups of contributors.

- Views
- Clicks
- Shares
- Likes
- Comments

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Assess and decide how particular social audiences within your network(s) are more likely to engage in specific ways (i.e. comments vs. shares) or be responsive to specific messaging and optimize content for those segments to enhance likeability or sharability. 📌

III. PICKING UP ON SOCIAL CUES - OPTIMIZING MESSAGING FOR KEY SEGMENTS

Zeroing in on user behavior helps social brands better engage their networks. As you begin targeting specific segments with personalized content, track how individual segments react to and engage with this activity to gain insight about which content is most engaging to each of your targeted segments. LinkedIn Insights and the Facebook Message Dashboard are two places that brands can find information about audience engagement. Whether wide-casting or targeting specific groups with specific messages, the following engagement elements can teach your brand what activity is most compelling and how to utilize specific content better in the future:

Learn More Online



Blog Post:
[Targeted Status Updates Bolster Engagement on LinkedIn](#)



Blog Post:
[Facebook's Page Post Targeting Reinforces Importance of Engagement](#)



QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. How do your audiences vary across your brand's different social channels? Are there noticeable differences between age, gender, location, language, or education/professional level?
2. Based on knowledge of audience segments, which groups should your brand be targeting on Facebook? On LinkedIn? What are the overarching traits of your entire audience to keep in mind when publishing to your entire network?
3. Do engagement trends exist that highlight high performing content and activity? Do specific types of content, like pictures or videos, out-engage text updates? Or vice versa? Are there themes or specific conversation focus areas that yield more interaction than others? Is this based on targeting to a specific segment?

The place where [social is] going is hyper local. So, it's not enough to just post to the broad Facebook fan page community, you have to think about what do people in Austin, Texas care about? What do people in Chicago care about? What do people in Minneapolis care about? Because if you've got a really diverse customer, you can't just be posting generically, you have to be thinking about what customers in each of those markets would care about.



Social Brands Chime in: Social Business in 5 Years



– Chuck Hemann , WCG

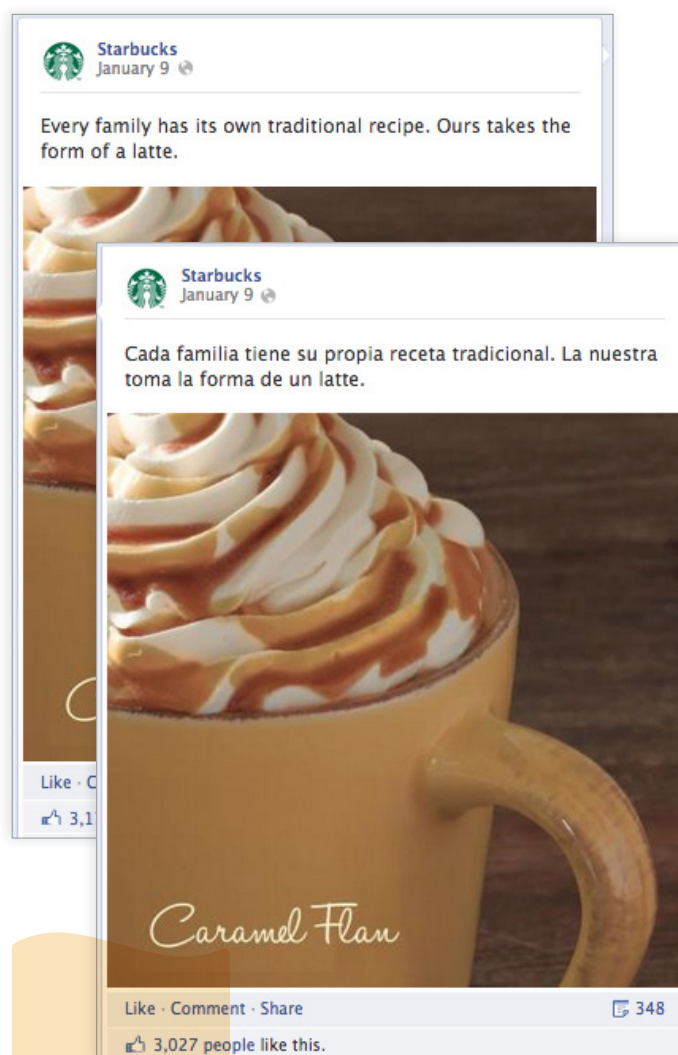
BRAND EXAMPLE STARBUCKS

With 18,000 retail stores in 60 countries, Starbucks customers are as diverse as the iconic coffee chain's handcrafted beverages. In addition to segmenting social presences by consumer interests (Starbucks Frappuccino has over 10M fans on Facebook and 27K Twitter followers), Starbucks also segments audiences and utilizes message level targeting by:

Location



Language



STUDENT COUNCIL



[SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY]

Student councils engender democracy, leadership, and civic engagement. And what is social media, if not democratic and engaging? All the content and sharing in a social brand's world is only as strong as the interaction, conversation, and response it inspires. For this reason, building community and inspiring engagement is one of the most important subjects for social brand practitioners to master. Regardless of company size or industry, social media engagement can bolster positive brand perception and create meaningful experiences.

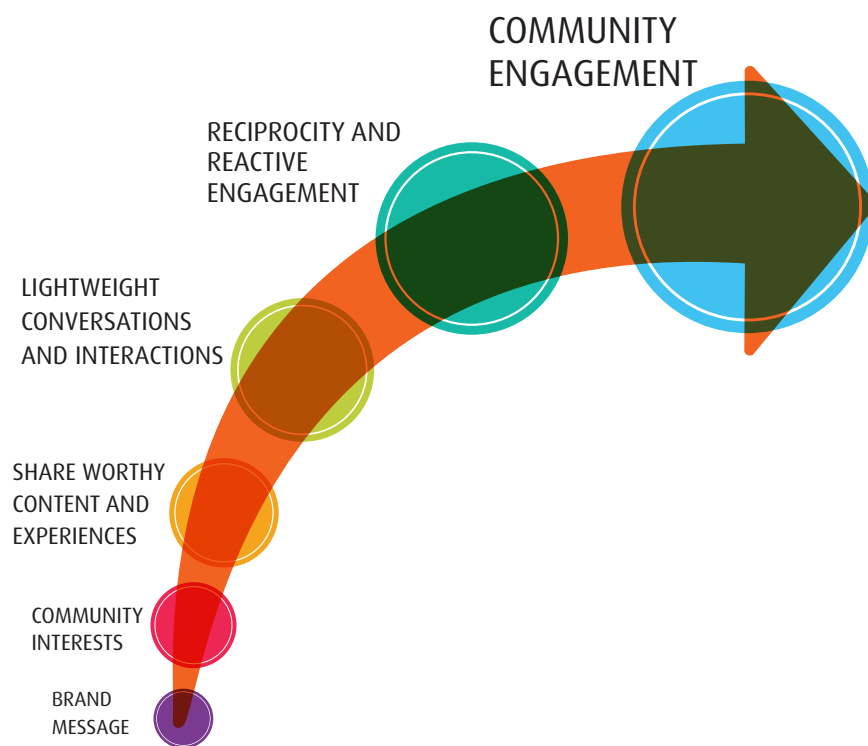


Figure 7.1 Understanding and interacting with network members can translate a brand message into community engagement



GETTING A PULSE ON THE COMMUNITY - UNDERSTANDING USER NEEDS AND WANTS

The first step to connecting with social users is understanding what matters to them. While your social media programs may focus on furthering your business goals, no audience will engage and interact if you don't make the experience relevant to them. Any solid relationship is built around mutual interests and values. When examining opportunities to build meaningful connections, start by asking:

- What do existing community members talk about on social channels?
- What do customers and partners that are not part of your social community talk about both in social and offline?
- Why do your social connections follow you? Why do they follow other similar brands in social?
- What are the specific needs of your social network?



BRAND ACTION ITEM

Identify what your brand is willing to do to meet or exceed the needs and desires of your social customers.

LEADING THE PEP RALLY - CREATING SHARE-WORTHY EXPERIENCES

Social engagement is a measure of genuine user interest and can help build awareness and loyalty over time. A user's interactions are shown in their newsfeed, making the interactions viewable to their network. And when content is really good, users will share it directly with their networks. For these reasons, optimizing content to be interaction-worthy and share-worthy will exponentially increase the reach and word of mouth effect your social presence will have.

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT & COMMUNITY

\ 'so-shəl in-'gāj-mənt
ən(d) kə-'myū-nə-tē\

**(n.) The interaction that takes place
between brands and their social networks**



BRAND ACTION ITEM

Assess which social activity across accounts has inspired interaction or direct shares in the past, and incorporate more of these activities in your content editorial plan.

PREPPING FOR THE BIG EVENT- PLANNING AHEAD TO ENABLE REAL-TIME ENGAGEMENT

One of the core advantages of social media, in comparison to other channels, is the ability to interact in real-time across a variety of networks. This reactionary engagement may range from quickly answering questions asked by customers and responding, to feedback about content on one of your owned channels, to externally engaging with digital chats, Group discussions or industry blog posts. However, if your brand doesn't proactively plan out (and schedule) activity to inspire engagement beforehand, you will have less bandwidth for real-time interaction. As with other communication channels, outlining content and communication plans in advance ensures the creation and sharing of activity with strategic timing and



distribution across channels. But on social, it also means you have more time to monitor, interact, and find new ways to engage. To get the most out of your interactions on social, brands should:

- Determine the ideal cadence of sharing and publishing content across your individual social accounts
- Map out the ideal mix of created content, curated materials, and conversation starters
- Assign team members to regularly create, share, and start conversations with an consistent cadence

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Follow the above three steps and add the assigned activity and content to your social editorial calendar –aligning each of the areas with ongoing content and timely, campaign-specific activity.

Smart Social Tech Tip:

Planning out content and activity with a centralized social editorial calendar within a social media management system allows social teams to plan in advance, ensure a regular cadence of engaging activity and aids in productivity with pre-scheduling across a wide variety of social network accounts.

same is true for brands. By sharing easily consumable content more often, brands are more likely to surface in a newsfeed and can cover a broader variety of topics to cater to diverse audience interests.

BRAND ACTION ITEM

List out the evergreen and timely topics that your social audience is interested in and determine short, interesting ways to share and encourage feedback for this content across your social presences.

IV. MINGLING WITH THE CROWD- CREATING LIGHTWEIGHT INTERACTIONS

Lengthy content contributions – such as blog posts, videos, and long-form digital assets – are great ways for brands to establish thought leadership, provide in-depth explanations to complex topics, or aid in brand positioning. But consistent, lightweight activity can be just as powerful. Like most interpersonal relationships, we regularly have many small conversations interspersed with less-frequent, more in-depth interactions. The

V. INITIATING COMMUNITY SERVICE- EMBRACING RECIPROCITY AND RESPONSE

If social media is all about engagement and interaction, don't focus solely on your brand. Create engagement that builds relationships and positive brand perception, while also creating a positive experience that will delight your social customers. We don't usually maintain friendships that only revolve around one person in the relationship. It's crucial to find ways to acknowledge and reward the

We were born to unite with our fellow men, and to join in community with the human race.

– Cicero



individuals in your social networks. There is no limit to the types of reciprocity and return engagement your brand can create, but things to consider including are:

- Thank social users when they give feedback, share, or give praise to you in social
- Answer questions asked by social users
- Acknowledge social users to prove you are listening and attentive
- Provide bonus content or valuable add-ons to conversations taking place about you or your industry
- Share content from customer and industry accounts to help foster a sense of social community

- Comment on or about relevant conversations – whether they are on your own channels or directly on other relevant channels like blogs or social Pages

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Determine the different opportunities to share, react, and add conversational value to the different touchpoints you have with your social networks. 🔑

Learn More Online



Presentation:
[Building Social Community and Increasing Loyalty](#)



Worksheet:
[Increasing and Cultivating Brand Engagement](#)



Tipsheet:
[Generating Buzz Among Your Social Customers](#)



Worksheet:
[Building and Increasing Social Customer Loyalty](#)





QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. From action taken and feedback given, what has your brand learned are the interests, needs and desires of your social networks? Are they following you for a particular type of activity? Content? Reward?
2. What types of content and activity have proven most shareworthy or conversational in the past? Are there opportunities to provide more of this in the future? Should your brand be considering asking for specific feedback or actions to generate more engagement?
3. How are you planning ahead to pencil in specific content creation, activity and sharing prior to actual publication? Does your team utilize a social editorial calendar to plan out social activity in advance? If not, how can you introduce a more programmatic way of planning social to leave time for real-time interactions and conversations?
4. Aside from campaigns and planned communication activities, what opportunities are there for your brand to create regular, lightweight conversations and interactions with community members?
5. How are you responding to or acknowledging community activity? Are there ways you can find to “delight” and surprise social users with more value?

Businesses must learn that relationships are earned and earned again and communities are built upon a foundation of mutual value, entertainment, and empowerment.

- Brian Solis, Altimeter Group



*What Your Business
Needs to Know About
Facebook's EdgeRank*





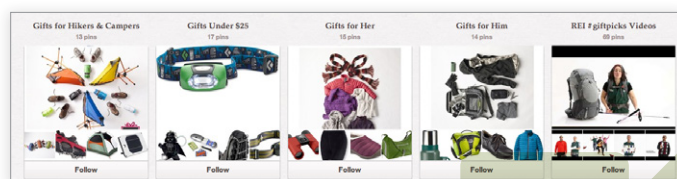
BRAND EXAMPLE REI

As a member-owned co-op, REI knows a thing or two about building community. Committed to providing gear, guidance, and inspiration to get outdoors, REI does a great job of providing all of the above via social channels.

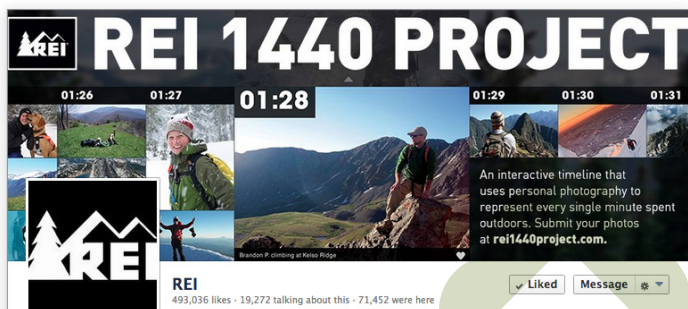
Guidance: It's the oldest trick in the (social) textbook. REI uses infographics, like this clever "Zombie Survival Gear" to convey information about products and outdoor activities.



Gear: Taking a queue from the "Man your Man could Smell Like," campaign REI "Green Vests" employees made instant video responses to holiday gift questions in their #gift picks campaign, and created easily accessible Gift Guide boards on Pinterest to inspire shoppers.



Inspiration: With the multichannel #REI1440 campaign, REI is creating an interactive timeline of all 1,440 minutes of the day spent enjoying the outdoors from users' content.



In addition to brand specific activity, REI participates in community conversations surrounding National Parks and National Geographic—two obvious topics of interest to their consumer demographic.



CHEMISTRY

[PAID / OWNED / EARNED]



Like most chemical compounds, social media marketing success isn't composed of a single element – it's a mix of multiple aspects of internal and external engagement. An effort to classify the many social elements into a periodic table would result in three distinct categories: owned, earned, and paid activity. It is not enough to simply create great owned content, brands must also learn how to best harness the earned activity that it yields. Paid options across networks like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn allow brands to build awareness and engage broader audiences, often utilizing owned and earned elements to do so.

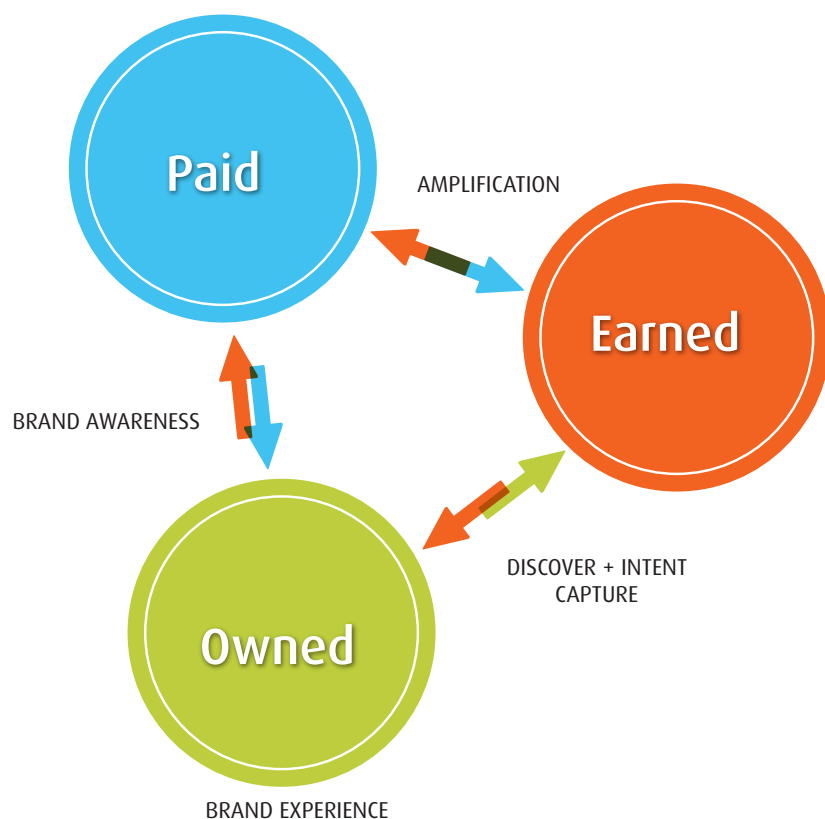


Figure 8.1 Paid, owned, and earned media elements work in concert to amplify messages, build brand awareness and surface user intent



I. CALIBRATING OWNED CONTENT

Covered in depth in the English chapter, great brand content is a critical element in interesting, inspiring, and engaging social customers. If your content accomplishes any or all of those three things, social network size will grow, interactions will increase, and social activation will lead to word of mouth sharing from brand network members to their own connections. The key to concocting optimal content lies in understanding and targeting key audiences, measuring engagement to understand performance, and using these two takeaways to continually optimize content. The good news? Optimizing owned content drives earned media and can be promoted using paid media, all of which combine to exponentially grow social reach, engagement, and conversions.



Review your brand's optimal content creation and sharing activity from the English chapter and identify the most engaging and/or furthest reaching content published by your brand.

II. HARNESSING ORGANIC REACTIONS - EARNED MEDIA

Great owned content created and shared by a brand is a driver of online word of mouth sharing. When users engage with social content, those interactions are shared across those user's networks and broaden brand recognition beyond its opt-in networks. This

PAID/OWNED/ EARNED

\ 'pād 'ōn-əd 'ərn-əd \

(v.) The artful science of combining content on owned media channels with earned audience interactions and paid advertising options to increase the impact of social marketing

user engagement, a digital endorsement of sorts, exposes your brand to new, likeminded audiences over time. Earned media is often the result of great owned content. Did someone love a post on your website and share it with their friends on Facebook? Did a follower feel compelled to Retweet your 140 character message to their own audience? Was an in-person event such a hit that attendees took pictures and shared them on Instagram? While a lot of earned engagement is a direct response to a brand's owned content, don't forget about spontaneous reactions-the organic conversations that unfold on social channels when customers have something to say about your brand-positive, negative, or neutral. In either case, the key to cultivating more positive earned media is delighting social customers with consistent, high-quality content and experiences across channels and in real life.



The whole is greater than the sum of its parts

- Aristotle



BRAND ACTION ITEM

Identify engagement trends across your networks. Are there specific types of audience activity or responses that you could leverage further? Could you Retweet customer praise? Repin an image on Pinterest that features a creative use of your product?

Smart Social Tech Tip:

Make the discovery of high-performing content and audience engagement easier and streamlined across your team by tracking and assessing performance across all channels with centrally-provided analytics in a social media management system.

|||. CATALYZING ENGAGEMENT WITH PAID OPTIONS

If owned and earned media are key elements of social success, paid media is the catalyst that drives the reaction. As brands and individuals create and share more and more content, user consumption habits and social network newsfeed algorithms have evolved to manage content overload. The harsh reality is that organic brand content is rarely (if ever) seen by the brand's entire network. Fans check Facebook at different times throughout the day, hundreds of thousands of Tweets are made each minute, and users' LinkedIn feeds are constantly being updated with notifications from connections. By augmenting organic social activity with paid media buys, brands can reach more people by increasing visibility of owned and earned touchpoints in the heart of the social networks – the newsfeed. The three networks with the richest paid options today include:

FACEBOOK

Facebook offers three paid ways to reach and engage social users.

Promoted Content: To guarantee Facebook posts surface in the newsfeed of more Fans and friends of Fans, brands can pay to “juice” organic content. Brands can promote content at the time of posting or later, once a brand determines whether that content is organically engaging and should be given additional exposure. This option is tiered based on estimated post reach.

Social Ads: Facebook ads exist on the right-hand column of the network site and allow brands to include personalized creative elements to call attention to the message. These ads can link to a Facebook Page or other owned online destinations and can be targeted at a granular level to users based on demographics, psychographics, or online behaviors.

Sponsored Stories: Sponsored Stories use earned behavior to promote your Facebook Page to friends of people who already “Like” you on Facebook. Since people tend to connect with others that share similar interests, Sponsored Stories allow brands to promote content to like-minded social users often with the objective of getting those individuals to also opt-in to the brands network or to answer an explicit call to action in the post.

TWITTER

Twitter's paid options focus on surfacing existing organic content and elevating a brand's presence on the network and offers the following paid options:

Promoted Tweets: Brands can pay to promote Tweets made from a corporate account. These promotions can be targeted based on a number of options such as geography, Followers, friends of Followers, and search terms such as relevant topics, events, and keywords. This type of promotion can be used to share an important announcement or specific call to action.



Promoted Accounts: For brands looking to raise visibility of their presence on Twitter, they can promote their account to appear in the search results for specific keywords or in the “Who to Follow” prompt for users that have similar interests as the brand’s existing followers. This type of promotion specifically encourages Twitter users to follow a brand account.

Promoted Trends: Twitter’s “trending topics” is one of the most highly visible sections on the site, and informs users of the most popular topics and trends at any given moment. Now, brands can pay to amplify topics or trends in order to help grow conversations and engagement.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn, the social network aimed at connecting professionals, provides companies with paid advertising options to reach target users.

LinkedIn Ads: LinkedIn Ads, served in various locations across the social network, can be used to promote products, promotions, or direct calls to action, as well as advertise a brand’s LinkedIn Company Page to drive traffic and gain Network Followers.

BRAND ACTION ITEM

After assessing what social networks are the focus for your brand, determine what your goals are with social activity and align the types of paid social promotions and advertising options that meet these needs.

IV. ALCHEMY - TURNING PAID, OWNED, AND EARNED MEDIA INTO SOCIAL GOLD

Most brands experience noteworthy growth in social impact when they incorporate paid, owned, and earned elements into their social programs. Determining when and how to combine these elements should be based on the business objective you seek to achieve. Is your brand issuing a call to action to convert on a new product or promotion? Social ads and promoted posts might be most appropriate. Are you trying to raise visibility of your brand and grow your network of interested Fans and Followers? Leverage your existing networks to reach their likeminded friends with Promoted Accounts, Sponsored Stories, or LinkedIn ads. Are you are looking to fuel engagement of timely, relevant, or organically popular content you’ve already shared? Promoted Content and Tweets can help grow the impact of your already-successful organic posts.

BRAND ACTION ITEM

Evaluate your existing content, user engagement, and available paid social options. Develop and test hypotheses on the optimal combination of paid, owned, and earned media to achieve specific social business goals like building awareness or converting users. 🧪

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QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION:

1. Create a list of your brand's optimal "owned" media. This might be specific types of content or online destinations and channels like websites. Form an opinion on which content and destinations are best suited to share, highlight or promote for social engagement opportunities.
2. Assess user engagement trends that are prompted by brand content or are occurring organically. Consider reinforcing top performing content with paid elements. Assess opportunities to create or engage in existing conversations to help propagate positive online discussion.
3. Evaluate the options for paid social promotion and advertising and determine which will help you achieve your social business goals. Develop a budget to both promote high-performing social content and to create custom social advertisements. Coordinate with your media team to identify areas of overlap and collaborate across traditional and digital media channels.

Paid, owned, and earned media? It's rapidly becoming all just...media. Ads, blog post, social interactions – either they're interesting (or entertaining, or engaging, or helpful, etc.), or they're not. Brands must integrate paid, owned and earned channels now. It will not only make marketing more effective and efficient, but it will prepare them for the future.



The Converged Media Imperative

– Rebecca Lieb, Altimeter Group



BRAND EXAMPLE RACKSPACE

Rackspace Hosting combines paid, owned, and earned elements to connect with users and fans of the open cloud company. By sharing great owned content, amplifying positive earned media, and using paid options to promote the company on social channels, Rackspace increases brand awareness, builds brand loyalty, and guides social network members to points of conversion.

Paid Advertisements Point to Website with a Direct CTA. These right rail Facebook Ads include a clear call to action and compelling purchase info.

Earned media improves brand perception. By Retweeting an excited partner or engaging with a user's positive review, Rackspace continue to build positive brand awareness.

Compelling owned content builds awareness and loyalty. Rackspace created a video asking kids to explain the cloud. When shared on Google+ and Facebook, the video was Shared and Liked/+1'd many times.

Putting it all together: Paid, Owned, and Earned. In a single post, Rackspace is sharing an earned media impression (press coverage) from an owned social property (Facebook page) and amplifying the message with paid promotion (Facebook Sponsored Stories.)

ABOUT SPREDFAST



Based in Austin, Texas, Spredfast provides social media management software that allows organizations to manage, monitor, and measure their social media programs at scale. Spredfast enables more people, in more places, to engage in more conversations from a single platform on supported social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube, Foursquare, and popular blogging platforms. Some of the enterprise and agency adopters on board with Spredfast include AT&T, Jason's Deli, Warner Brothers, Whole Foods Market, AARP, AGAIN Interactive, Coty Beauty, HomeAway and WCG.

For more information:

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