# Chief Marketer
TIP SHEET

HOW TO:

CREATE AN ONLINE CONTENT CALENDAR

So you've used social listening tools to monitor to what customers and others are saying about your brand. You've determined where they are congregating and what they are talking about. Now it's time to create an actionable, results-oriented online content calendar—here's how:

Step 1. **Audit Internal Assets:** Take a look around. What internal assets do you have to promote? What is going on within the agency that you can utilize? Is there video content other departments may have created that would be useful? Are there existing partnerships with outside brands or others that you can leverage for content or use as a distribution tool? Locate people within your

show your love for your dog
create the perfect entrée
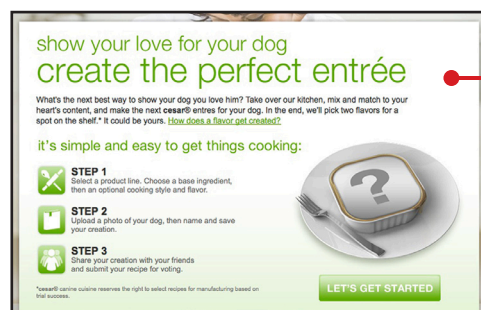
organization—not necessarily those who work in your department—who have a real passion for social. Is there an active blogger who could work on your team? Dust off the archives to unearth retro TV spots or other memorabilia that would be fun to put out there.

Step 2. **Content Closet:** Make sure you have the right amount of content to carry you through. This can be as simple as building an Excel spreadsheet with the days of the week and the content that you want to push out during specific time frames. You don't want to be scrambling at the last minute and push out content that will disappoint your customers.

Step 3. **The Gatekeepers:** In most agencies and brand houses there are typically multiple

people involved in promotional content creation and distribution. Everyone involved should know exactly what they need to do—assign those tasks and create job descriptions. Who creates the content? Who is responsible for the calendar? Who gets content approved? Who monitors responses from consumers? Who responds to consumer comments?

Step 4. **Pay Attention:** There are numerous occasions where brands and agencies will be so excited about getting content up online that once it's up there they just assume it will catch fire with no problems. You need to test and monitor any content put online. If you see people aren't responding listen up and use that information to adjust the program. If they are responding, what are they saying? Is your content being shared and retweeted?

Step 5. **Co-Create:** Allow customers to participate in the creation of content is something that should be investigated. There are plenty of brand examples out in the market and multiple ways of going about this. Cesar Canine Cuisine brand food for small dogs is running a contest where consumers create doggie entrées that will be put up for a public vote with two winning recipe flavors developed for retail. And Wrangler is underway with a jean design competition ending with the winner's design appearing as part of the Next Blue jean collection launching this fall.

Step 6. **Keep It Up:** As the months go by, use those social listening tools you relied on to get things started in the first place to check up on what people are saying about your content and brand.

"When you look at a lot of brands, they just go out there and create a blog or twitter feed and then go dormant after a few months," says Mark Evans, vice president of digital for Catapult Action-Biased Marketing. "That says somebody wasn't really thinking about this. It requires someone to really spend time and be committed to it. They almost have to work that much harder the second time around to get the consumer back."—PATRICIA ODELL

Better Together

IN ITS SIMPLEST TERMS, INTEGRATING SOCIAL MEDIA AND EMAIL SERVES TWO MAIN PURPOSES: encouraging people to engage with your brand in multiple media, and using the data from the multiple media to better target your messaging.

Most marketers focus almost exclusively on the first purpose. What's more, when doing so many think it's enough to include in their emails links to their Facebook pages and Twitter feeds and to post an email opt-in link on their Facebook walls.

BUT THERE'S MORE YOU CAN DO.

▶ **Make sharing content effortless.** Share-with-your-network (SWYN) buttons embedded within an email enable recipients to post content from the message or a link to an online version of the message to social media sites. Many organizations already have SWYN links on their websites; including them in emails is the next logical step.

▶ **Offer email subscribers coupons and discounts in exchange for following you on Facebook or other social media.** Let's face it: Most people click the "like" button of a brand's Facebook page primarily to receive special offers. Shannon Aronson, senior director, strategic and analytical consulting group at Epsilon, recommends addressing this from the get-go by offering subscribers incentives to follow your brand in other media.

▶ **Post links to your social media outlets on your email unsubscribe pages.** You might think this a ridiculous suggestion: After all, if they were happy to engage with your brand, these consumers wouldn't be unsubscribing. But it may be the medium and not your brand that these unsubscribers are unhappy with. Acknowledging this with copy along the lines of, "We understand that you no longer wish to receive emails from us. But perhaps you'd like to continue to stay in touch through Facebook instead" could maintain the customer engagement.—SHERRY CHIGER

BY THE NUMBERS

TIP: GET SOCIAL WITH CREATIVE COUPONING EFFORTS

The Gap has taken another step to re-engage customers, this time with an innovative adaptation of web couponing that let online shoppers negotiate for the price they were willing to pay for a narrow range of inventory: in this case, men's khakis.

The time-limited promotion, offered only on March 16, used Gap's Facebook fan page and Twitter account to lead shoppers to a web page, GapMyPrice.com.

Users at the site could click on a "Let's make a deal!" button that took them to the first of 18 product pages, offering khaki pants in a specific combination of fit, color and style. Each combination appears on its own page, and users can flip through the pages to find the specific item they want. Each page contains a product photo, a bare-bones product description, a suggested retail price for the item, and an invitation to "Make an offer?" by entering a price in a text box.

MAKE AN OFFER

In most cases, the customer offer was met with a counter-offer from the Gap, for example matching a $30 buy offer for a pair of $49.50 khakis with a $35 sell counteroffer. The shopper could accept that offer or decline it, but no further counteroffer would be made.

If the shopper accepted, clicking a "Get coupon" button would lead to a uniquely coded coupon page. The shopper could either direct that coupon to an email box or click to print a .pdf version of the coupon. Eventually the coupon would have to be printed and presented in

store to receive the negotiated sale price.

Visitors could then choose to share the news of their final rebate to their Facebook wall or Twitter account with a one-button click, sending an automate message to either network. For example, the Twitter share message read, "I just scored a sweet deal on Gap khakis! You can too. Say your price now at www.GapMyPrice.com."

A "Winners" page scrolls through a listing of the deals already made in the promotion. That list indicates that the retailer was willing to accept lower bids for merchandise early in the day; for example, $35 could buy a coupon for a pair of straight leg casual khakis on the morning of March 16, but by 6 p.m. the price point was up to $40.

The Gap could not be reached for comment on the promotion, but the name-your-price tactic, run on a social-buying engine from web startup Dealkat, seems designed give the chain more power to target and control discounts. If a customer comes back with a $37 offer on $50 pants, that could ease the pressure to run a 30% in-store rebate on all men's pants across the board.—BRIAN QUINTON

Don't Ignore Negative Comments

WE ALL KNOW THAT "LISTENING" TO CONVERSATIONS AND COMMENTS ABOUT OUR BRANDS ON THE SOCIAL WEB IS VERY IMPORTANT, which is why social listening tools have become an indispensable part of marketing. But what marketers *do* with that information is even more important.

Retailers who act on negative comments in social media can actually regain disgruntled customers loyalty, and even convert them to advocates for the brand, according to a study from RightNow and Harris Interactive.

The study, which asked about the holiday shopping period, found that 68% of consumers who posted a negative review on a social networking or ratings/reviews site after a poor holiday shopping experience got a response from the retailer.

Among consumers who did get a response from the retailer to their negative review, the survey determined that:

- 33% followed up and reposted a positive review
- 34% deleted their original negative review
- 18% turned around and became loyal customers and bought more.

Shoppers who post comments or suggestions, particularly negative ones, often don't much in return from retailers. Among the third of consumers whose negative review did not get a response, 61% said they would be "shocked" to receive a response to negative feedback.

The survey also found that 50% indicated they were influenced to buy from a specific online retailer by great customer service or a previous positive experience with the retailer. Twenty-eight percent of respondents said they while shopping online they researched what other customers wrote on social networking and reviews sites.

Among consumers surveyed that had a positive shopping experience with an online retailer, 21% recommended the retailer to friends and 13% posted a positive online review about the retailer. On the not so sunny side, 22% were frustrated by information that was inconsistent between the retailer's website and customer service agents.—PO