



Knowing and using your social networks can make the difference between success and failure.

INSIDE: Latest tips & tricks for connecting with your customers and prospects through social media, based on real-world examples.



PAMPERING HISPANIC MOMS



PAMPERS HAS EXPANDED ITS FACEBOOK PRESENCE WITH PAMPERS LATINO, a page dedicated to Hispanic moms.

"Last year we launched our "Miracles" campaign within the Hispanic community before the general market, so we began with programming on the Facebook page pretty quickly," says Felix Olmo, Pampers brand manager. "This campaign seemed like a nice, natural progression and expansion of our "Miracles" campaign."

A sweepstakes and weekly giveaways are supporting the launch and will supply Pampers, a Procter & Gamble brand, with all important consumer information for it to stay in touch with these moms. Fans participate in weekly drawings for body suits customized to celebrate different Latin cultures. One family will win the grand-prize vacation to visit a Latin American country. The promotion ends May 31.



To get the word out about the new online community and promotions, Pampers partnered with key influential Latina mommy bloggers, or blogueras, from across the country. It monitors the site on a steady basis to update content and function based on users habits and feedback.

"The challenge is the same for Facebook as with every social media channel," Olmo says. "It's being 'on' every single day, 24/7. Social media has changed our brand, how we talk to parents and how we plan our campaigns to be more real time and change as we go along." — **PATRICIA ODELL**

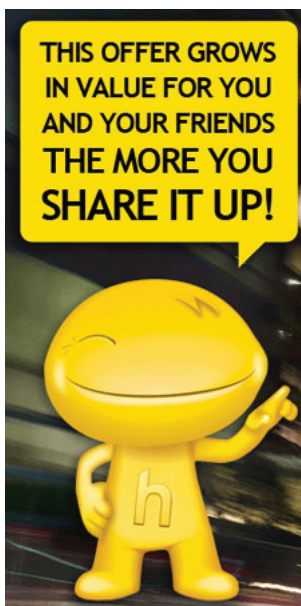
DRIVING UP WORTH

HERTZ COUPON VALUE INCREASES WITH FACEBOOK SHARES

IN AN APRIL PROMOTION, HERTZ OFFERED FACEBOOK FANS A COUPON that increased in value the more consumers shared the offer with their social network.

The offer worked on the Share It Up! social coupon platform. Hertz's more than 69,000 fans were encouraged to share a coupon posted on a dedicated page, as well as on the home page, by clicking the "Share It Up!" button. Once a recipient clicks on the coupon it unlocks greater discounts and increases the value of the coupon. The more the coupon is shared the greater the value becomes. Everyone who shares the coupon can take advantage of the savings; after five shares on Facebook, Twitter or via email, the maximum value of \$50 is unlocked.

"We know that customers who use this coupon are dedicated to Hertz as a brand so when they post and share the coupon they're giving the referral that Hertz is a great brand," says Lemoire Hecht, Hertz manager of communications and social media. "The real success of the program is not only how many people redeem and share the coupon, but how many people actually use the coupon for their next reservation," she says. — **PO**



REGIONAL CIRCLES



BRANDS TEST GOOGLE+ WITH LOCAL MARKETING PILOTS

GOOGLE HAS INTEGRATED GOOGLE+ CONTENT INTO ITS SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS TO IMPROVE RELEVANCE FOR USERS.

Whether or not you buy the reasoning, opportunity abounds for nimble brands that embrace Google+.

Remember, Google+ represents more than just another social network since its content now spills over into Google's search engine results pages, sharing real estate with more traditional SEO and pay per click results—two of the most profitable online marketing channels for many brands.

Never fear. Asking a few simple questions can get your brand headed in the right direction.

Are we thinking locally to boost visibility and success?

Some national and regional brands have found great success leveraging local dealers, agents, distributors, retailers and franchisees to boost the national brand along with local visibility and sales. Automated local search marketing technologies help brands scale programs focused on Google Places, Bing Local and more. This makes it easier to build and maintain a national web of visibility made up of hundreds or thousands of local entities. If your local and search marketing teams aren't working to leverage local in this fashion, ask them why as soon as possible.

Will Google+ deliver the same local benefits?

Even though Google+ is impacting search results in a big way, scalability for brands on the social network is limited until Google opens up an API for Google+ to anyone needing access. Unfortunately, that means brands must spend significant time to create and maintain Google+ brand pages for their brick and mortar locations.

Some brands that want to proactively embrace Google+ have chosen to run local marketing pilot programs on the social network to learn the ins and outs of Google+ and its potential impact on local marketing efforts. The test programs position brands for future success by learning now so they can scale later. —

JON SCHEPKE, PRESIDENT AND FOUNDER, SIM PARTNERS.



MOTIVATING COUCH POTATOES

What inspires TV viewers to interact with social media? According to a recent study by Accenture, the top motivators are:

- More information (43%)
- Coupons and promotional codes (32%)
- Contest or sweepstakes (31%)
- Watch another video (26%)
- Talk about the show or a product (26%)
- Connect with others who share interests (21%)
- Recommend the show to others (20%)
- Make a purchase (16%)

IT'S NICE TO SHARE

HOW TO GET CONSUMERS TO PASS ALONG FACEBOOK CONTENT

JENNA LABEL, MANAGING DIRECTOR OF STRATEGY AT LIKEABLE MEDIA, OFFERS FOUR TIPS TO IMPROVE THE SHAREABILITY OF FACEBOOK CONTENT:

1. Look at the data. How many interactions are you getting on certain pieces of content? Put that content into buckets, such as video, content with a photo, an article, etc. "This allows you to see and segment what's working and what's not," she said.

2. Experiment! Try short- and long-form articles and one- and two-minute videos to see what pulls best. Ask engaging questions. Post content related to that day's news or events. The Pampered Chef experimented with a variety of content and found that fans actually want to share recipes and feel good stories and put a focus on that. "There's not one form of content that resonates with everyone, so by switching it up you're collecting more data and figuring out what works with most fans," Label says.



3. Post content that's worth sharing. Posts like "Share this if you're happy it's spring," won't cut it. Content should be controversial, original and timely. Make people laugh, or give them a how-to lesson on something relevant to your brand.

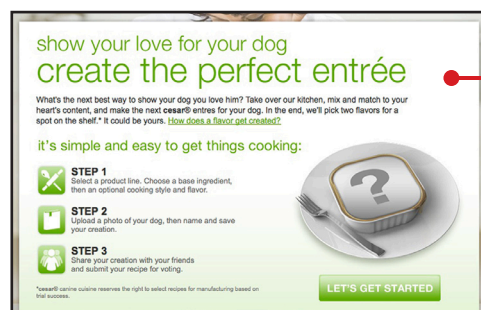
4. Give a call to action to encourage sharing. A study last year from Mometus Media found that asking users to "like" a post got 216% increased engagement on that post. "It's a no brainer, but they may not think to press that share button," Label said. — **PATRICIA ODELL**

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



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

The screenshot shows the Gap MyPrice website interface. At the top, it says "Say Your Price" and "Winners". The main heading is "Let's make a deal. Say your price." Below this are three numbered steps: 1. Check out our latest men's khakis and choose your favorite. 2. Say your price. 3. Win exclusive store coupons at your winning price! The main visual is a carousel of three men wearing khakis in different styles. Below the carousel, there's a section for "Classic Straight Khaki (Carmel)" with a "Best Offer : \$35" and a "Regular Price : \$49.50". There are "Yes" and "No" buttons to accept or decline the offer. A small "overview" section lists features like "high-quality wrinkle-resistant and fade-proof cotton khaki pants", "Six just below the waist", "Straight through the leg", "Straight leg opening", "Flat front, button closure, zip fly", and "On-seam pockets, back button welt pockets".

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

CUSTOMER FEEDBACK:

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.

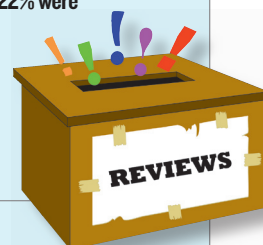
Among consumers who did get a response from the retailer to their negative review, the survey determined that:

- 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



WITH FEELING

Consumers will engage socially with brand if they feel an emotional connection

A new study from The Shopper Technology and Partners in Loyalty Marketing confirm that consumers are eager to connect with a brand through social media—but there has to be an emotional tie to the brand and the value delivered.



This means that to be successful, social media campaigns should offer something consumers can grab on to, like coupons, combined with intangible content such as recipes and tips that makes the user feel understood and valued by the brand.

“CPG manufacturers see potential in social media for connecting with consumers and creating brand awareness,” John Karolefski, executive director of the Shopper Technology Institute, said. “But there are challenges that need to be addressed in terms of measuring success and determining ROI.”

In the survey, 9 out of 10 CPG manufacturers (89%) reported including social media in their marketing plan, the survey found. The most commonly used social media platforms are Facebook and Twitter. Only 11% of those surveyed do not use either one.

As for the budgets, two of three respondents (66%) said that social media accounts for less than 5% of their marketing budget. But a whopping 76% say that the budget for social media has increased this year compared to 2010. About one of four (23%)

reported no change, while only 1% saw a decline, the survey said.

But the big sticking point, and the most difficult to justify to the boss is the measurability of social media with few marketers able to tie social media investments to sales increases. According to write-in comments by survey respondents, the lack of success in social media is often due to a lack of organization or buy-in, as well as inadequate planning and resources.

“To date, metrics are mostly limited to consumer feedback and fan/postings counts,” said Michael Schiff, managing partner of PILM.

Only 6% of respondents rely on qualitative measures, 31% use consumer metrics, and 20% use both. Some 21% look to increases in sales and unit volume, while 22% don’t even bother to measure social media at all.

On the qualitative side, 40% of those surveyed are analyzing conversations and gaining insights, while 43% aren’t doing so, but plan to. Seventeen percent aren’t analyzing and don’t have plans to start.

As a result, about half of survey respondents (48%) say social media has only been “slightly successful” in achieving their business objectives. Only 2% say it has been “very successful,” while 18% say it has been “moderately successful.” On the other hand, a third of respondents (32%) say social media has been “unsuccessful” in helping them achieve their business objectives.

When asked how measureable social media is in terms of ROI, only a quarter of survey respondents said “highly/moderately.” Some 43% said “slightly” and 13% said it’s not measureable at all. Nineteen percent didn’t know or had no opinion.

“The lack of evaluation and weak metrics have implications for future budgets and growth,” Schiff said.

The two main reasons why CPG marketers use social media are to “build brand awareness” (48%) and to “connect with consumers” (41%). “Building market share” was cited by only 5% of survey respondents, and “increase sales” garnered 6%.

The online survey was fielded in June 2011. The respondents included some 126 marketers of food, beverage, health and beauty care, and general merchandise brands. —PATRICIA ODELL

KICKER:

(Radio-) Active Links

A recent study by link-shortening platform bit.ly measured the “half-life” of shared links — that is, the rate at which the clicks they get fall off, similar to measuring decay in radioactive substances.

The findings: If you want a longer-lasting link, get it on video. Shared links from YouTube have a mean half life of 7.4 hours, compared to 2.8 hours for links shared on Twitter. Facebook shared links fall in the middle (half life of 3.2 hours), as do links shared over direct sources such as email or instant messaging (3.4 hours).

Of course, these are aggregate results; the most important factor in link life is what is shared. “The lifespan of your link is more connected to what content it points to than where you post it,” says the bit.ly blog. “On the social web, it’s all about what you share, not where you share it.” —BRIAN QUINTON



CASE STUDY:

A Look at Roaman's Leap into Facebook Commerce

Ever since ecommerce pioneer **1-800-Flowers.com** in July 2009 gave Facebook users a chance to initiate a sale via its page on the social network, the concept of F-commerce has generated a lot of buzz.

After all, merchants are eager to monetize the efforts they've put into maintaining a presence on the social network site — which now boasts more than 750 million users. But until now, few marketers have really bought into F-commerce.

"There hasn't been a lot of financial data shared about Facebook stores," says Sue Beckett, vice president-marketing for plus-size women's apparel merchant Roaman's.

So why did Roaman's launch a Facebook store this past May?

The cataloger's technology vendors late last year began telling Roaman's "that we need to be early adopters, and we need the exposure" of a Facebook store, Beckett says. But Roaman's—part of the Redcats USA retailer stable—saw Facebook commerce as an enhanced marketing tool and a branding opportunity. If its social store generated any significant sales, that would be a bonus.

"We looked at Facebook commerce because we wanted to be where our customers are," Beckett says. "The latest growth segment for Facebook had been women over the age of 50, and that is our target customer, so we wanted to be where we could make a connection."

WHAT IS F-COMMERCE?

Facebook commerce is a subset of social commerce. In this case, merchants create ecommerce storefronts within Facebook that are connected to their Facebook pages. By setting up shop in the social media platform, the end-users can "like" and share a merchant's items with their Facebook friends, and—in theory—make those items viral and increase sales of them.

Facebook stores can be either app-based, or built using Facebook's iframes platform. (Until this past March, the stores were built using FBML—Facebook's markup language.)

If a merchant already has a Facebook page, why would it need a Facebook store? While most



marketers tout the social network giant's ability to enable them to connect with customers and enhance their brands, let's face it: Everybody wants to make more money. F-commerce can help make that happen.

How? Keep in mind that the life cycle of any item you post on your Facebook page is short, depending on the number of friends you have,

says Christian Taylor, founder/CEO of social media platform provider Payvment. The people who like your page and have not chosen to hide your posts have an average of five minutes or less to react to your offer before it falls off their walls.

So while the items you post on your Facebook page have a short-term effect, a Facebook store allows a merchant to include promotions or other content on its page that has a long-term shelf life. Users can browse, share and buy your inventory at their leisure without having to leave Facebook.

BRAND BUILDING

There's no question that F-commerce helps with branding or, in Roaman's case, rebranding. The 109-year-old merchant last year reinvented itself to attract younger customers, with more fashionable apparel and a website/catalog overhaul. Social media played a big part in getting the message out.

Roaman's already had a large house file—1.2 million customers—but Beckett says its brand awareness was not where it should be. F-commerce enables the merchant to promote its fashion-forwardness via products.

For instance, using its web analytics, Roaman's changes its Facebook store top navigation based on sales trends. So if tunics are the hot item that day, tunics will get more play on the front page of the Facebook store than less popular apparel. But the entire Roaman's line can be searched through the Facebook store, since it is fueled by the merchant's RSS feed. —TIM PARRY

Slow Traffic in the Check-In Lane

LOCATION-BASED SERVICES SUCH AS FOURSQUARE AND GOWALLA HAVE BEEN LAUDED by marketers for their capacity to

know where a mobile user is and how often he or she returns, and to serve up special offers or rewards to encourage visits and other behavior.

But a new study from the Pew Research Center has found that only 12% of U.S. smartphone owners use their devices to tell their social graph where they are and what they're doing. Compared to the percentages who do other things on their smartphones, such

as accessing social media (59%) or getting directions or recommendations specific to their locations (55%), that's pretty small.

The percentage rises somewhat among those smartphone owners 18-29, but even among that group, only 15% of users check in on these geosocial platforms.

Bad news, Twitter. On average, only 15% of smartphone owners used them to post messages to the real-time service. —BQ





TAKE FLIGHT WITH GAMES



Think of web engagement and birds, and you're usually talking about firing them at shaky towers of pigs. But the National Audubon Society looked at two factors—the immense popularity of “Angry Birds” and the launch of the bird-watching-themed movie “The Big Year” from 20th Century Fox—and saw recruitment potential.

That potential took concrete form in October as “Birding the Net,” a Facebook-based game that challenged players to spot dozens of different bird species that appeared at various sites around the Internet.

Players were asked to like Audubon's Facebook page and then head out to the Internet to “spot” some 30 varieties of birds as they flitted across or perched inside some 100 sites, including those for AOL, Slate and The Discovery Channel. Clicking on those birds took users back to the Audubon Facebook page, where they could view the card for that species, including video and sound clips of its songs, and add the card to their collection. The game's rules were also explained on NAS's YouTube channel, which also featured bird-related interviews with the stars of “The Big Year,” Steve Martin, Owen Wilson and Jack Black.

The game's birds were released to the Web on a rolling schedule so that no one would collect all 30 species until Nov. 7, a few weeks after the mov-

ie's release. The first player to collect all 30 cards would win a trip for two to the Galapagos Islands; another 200 would win prizes ranging from Canon cameras and Nikon binoculars to Woolrich gift cards and free downloads of the Society's “North American Field Guide” smartphone app.

“We figured this was an opportunity to get people interested in our organization who are substantially younger than our current demographic,” says Jessica Green, vice president of engagement for the NAS.

All winners also won a year's membership in the society, and a link on the game's Facebook page allowed players to learn more about Audubon's preservation activities.

For deeper integration, the game allowed players to pick up hints about which websites to visit when by following two “spokesbird” Twitter accounts, @FloridaScrubJay and @RufHummingbird. They could also invite their Facebook social graph to join the game and trade cards with them, speeding the process of collecting all 30 cards.

And true to the Society's protective mission, participants could also sign up for code that would automatically place a virtual birdhouse on their own website or blog page.

Now that's a lot more feather-friendly than firing them from a slingshot.
—BRIAN QUINTON



STAR GAZING

TIP: HITCH YOUR SOCIAL WAGON TO A CELEBRITY

Social partnerships with celebrities like Nicki Minaj have given I-800-Flowers a way to reach new audiences that wouldn't normally think of the brand.

In the Minaj scheme, the florist offered co-branded arrangements in pink color schemes that would go perfectly with the singer's cotton candy hued hair, says Lisa Henrikson, vice president, retention and customer experience, I-800-Flowers.

The most successful social partnership so far has been with Justin Bieber, targeting not only the young singer's fans but the ones with the money, their moms.

While the conversion rate for visitors to the “One Less Lonely Girl” bouquet page isn't that high—around 4%—the partnership is great PR. “And I suspect that he's responsible for the 40% of email opt-ins that don't convert, but that's okay,” says Henrikson.

The arrangement—red roses in a clear vase that was shipped with Bieber's “Under the Mistletoe” CD for the holidays—may eventually be rolled out to franchise stores.

The company is also using social integration, allowing shoppers to sign in to the website via Facebook or join their email list via the network.

Fans who “like” the I-800-Flowers page are greeted with an opportunity to get a 20% discount on their next order using a Mastercard and access to flash sales.
—BETH NEGUS VIVEIROS





MAKE THE MOST OF SOCIAL DATA

By mining social data and combining it with purchase, CRM, and loyalty data, retailers can get real-time insights into what customers want and why. They can use this data to improve holiday sales on the fly this year—refining product mix, gift recommendations, and offers in real time—and also fine-tune marketing, merchandising and product design over the next 12 months.

IDENTIFY NEW REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES: Collect social data such as customer shares, likes, dislikes, ratings and reviews and then combine this with CRM, loyalty, and purchase data to get a clear picture of what your customers want—and why they want it—this holiday season. By analyzing a mix of qualitative and quantitative data, you'll see trends you didn't know about—such as a preference for a product you didn't expect to be hot or surprising positive or critical reviews. Based on your real-time findings, you can modify gift guides, promotions, product mix, and marketing messages on the fly to promote the most popular products. Data becomes a leading indicator you can use to maximize revenues right now.

SEGMENT TO IMPROVE MARKETING: By gathering social data in real time, you can see exactly what specific segments think of a product. This holiday, by analyzing social data, you can update messages and offers on the fly based on who is buying a product and what they're saying about it. With real-time social data, you can see why a particular segment loves a product—

great fit on a jacket, best gift for teachers—and then highlight these features in campaigns.

CO-CREATE NEW PRODUCTS WITH EVANGELISTS: Mine social data gathered over the holidays to identify your best customers—those who not only spent the most, but also those who shared the most. In a data-driven world, your best customers are those who contribute thoughtful reviews, comment on products, and share promotions with friends. Identify these influencers based on their advocacy, participation, and Net Promoter scores, and then assemble them into 24-7 digital focus groups so you can collect their valuable feedback over time. You can group top influencers by segment, product SKU, or category. Then, take their feedback into account to co-create products and fine-tune marketing campaigns.

CHANGE YOUR PRODUCTS: The bottom line is that your customers are a wealth of information. Listen to what they're saying this holiday, and then respond directly to their feedback by fixing problems with your products. If customers uniformly complain about an aspect of a product, create an improved product that fixes the issue. Reach out to disgruntled shoppers to let them know the problem was fixed and you'd like to offer them a replacement product. By taking your customers' authentic feedback into account, you not only will improve your products all throughout the year, but gain customer trust and loyalty.

—ERIN NELSON, CMO, BAZAARVOICE

GET CONNECTED

As TV watchers, moviegoers and readers increasingly consume entertainment with tablets and smartphones at their sides, the potential for marketers to connect with them via another screen becomes more and more enticing.

Enter GetGlue, a social hub for entertainment. Members can check in to let friends know what's currently keeping them entertained, like the latest episode of "Parks and Recreation" or the trailer for a movie like "The Muppets." In return, members are sometimes rewarded with a perk from the show, most typically a virtual sticker. Once a month, users can request real-world copies of those stickers.

The majority of GetGlue's 2 million users fall within the 18-to-34 age demographic. Broken down by gender, the user base is 55% female and 45% male, and users checked in to the site more than 75 million times in 2011. The site has a database of 225 million+ check-ins, ratings and reviews. In October 2011, for example, there

were more than 16.2 million check-ins, up from the all-time high of 13.4 million check-ins in September.

At this point, users are essentially on an honor system when they check in—there's no real way to know if they're actually watching a show in real time or if they really went to see a movie on opening weekend. But, founder and CEO Alex Iskold says, the possibility that users are checking just to get a cool sticker, even though they might not have really experienced the show/movie/book/etc., isn't a major concern.

"We've actually found that check-ins on GetGlue are closely correlated to third-party ratings system like Nielsen," he says, noting that many people are using the site as a recommendations engine—an appealing scenario for entertainment marketers.

"We use the data that users supply by checking in to suggest new content

that they might enjoy, so there is an incentive for users to check in only to the entertainment content they actually consume," Iskold notes.

One particularly successful campaign was for the Fox sci-fi series "Fringe." GetGlue partnered with Fox to reward fans with actual props used on the show, with a resulting 400% uptick in check-ins.

In the site's first co-promotion involving a retailer this past autumn, Entertainment Weekly's website EW.com curated a list of must-see fall TV shows. EW readers were then encouraged to check in to these shows as they aired to earn stickers. Once a user earned one of four stickers (Walk-On, Sidekick, Star and Showrunner), he or she unlocked instructions to receive a bonus reward of 40% off on a regularly priced item at participating Gap stores. —BETH NEGUS VIVEIROS

