



## Ford's Social Drive

### HOW THE AUTOMAKER BUILT A COMEBACK ON SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT

**IT WASN'T THAT LONG AGO WHEN IT LOOKED AS IF FORD MOTOR CO. HAD RUN OUT OF GAS.** But even back then, Ford was retooling itself, leveraging a \$9 billion government loan and strategizing its way out of the recession with new products and targeting consumers in new and different ways.

"The video game industry does a great job developing demand for the product before it even exists," said Jim Farley, CMO of Ford at the ANA Masters of Marketing Conference. "This concept has been a game changer for our industry. We're showing products a year before they come out and using social media so people can opt-in to learn about the new product. We now have months of sold orders before we even run one traditional ad. It's totally changed the way we go to market."

It all started with a small experiment with the Fiesta in Europe and not much of a budget. The car was to be targeted to young people. It even had a cup holder sized to hold a can of Red Bull. Young marketers suggested delivering 100 Fiestas a year before the launch to "agents," (left) young people who would drive the cars around for six months, chronicle their activities and posting it all on social media.

The agents would be handed some zany assignments, too, like fill up the car and drive it as far as you can before running out of gas. And, instead of suited up executives and sexy girls launching the vehicle at the auto show, the young drivers would do it. The idea sparked some interesting internal debate among the marketers.



"You can image the conversations. 'What if someone smokes weed in the car? We can't have these young people drive our cars!'" Farley said.

But Ford did. Some 5,200 pieces of original content were posted, producing 28 million views and 58% awareness before one traditional ad even aired. Ford also discovered that social listening was helping it develop and engineer cars based consumer suggestions, even car colors, enabling it to ramp up production early.

"We spent nothing. It showed me the scale of social media and that little experiment totally changed the way we go to market," he said.—PATRICIA ODELL

## CHIEF MARKETER'S ANNUAL SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY *Why Are You Social?*

**THREE QUARTERS OF MARKETERS POLLED IN CHIEF MARKETER'S ANNUAL SOCIAL MEDIA SURVEY SAY THEIR BRAND MARKETS ITSELF IN SOCIAL MEDIA—INCLUDING A STRONG 68% OF B2B MARKETERS, TRADITIONALLY SLOWER TO ADOPT THE SOCIAL CHANNEL.** But adopt they have, although the platform of choice for B2B is not Facebook but LinkedIn, where 85% of B2B brands run a marketing presence. B2C also favors Pinterest more than B2B (39% to 20% respectively.) But both show equal favor marketing via videos aggregated on YouTube, Vimeo and other sharing sites.

As for why marketers are going social, the most prominent reasons include getting a message into multiple points of contact (84%), reaching customers where they're spending increasing amounts of time online (62%), and fulfilling customers' expectations for a social presence by the brand (56%).

More than half of marketers polled (56%) said the primary goal was to drive traffic to a website, to produce sales leads (43%) or acquire hand-raisers for their brands (37%). This survey also asked about social's role in publicizing new content; about one-third cited that as a goal—rising to 39% among non-agency B2B marketers.

While most polled rely heavily on sharing buttons on their web pages to integrate social channels, about half make sure to include Facebook and Twitter addresses in their offline messaging, make their email shareable to social pages, and offer unique rewards targeted to social followers.

For a full download of the results from this survey, please register at <http://chiefmarketer.com/2013-social-marketing-trends-survey>—BRIAN QUINTON



## Slow, Steady and Strategic

How xerox  began making social connections

MANY OF XEROX'S SOCIAL MEDIA INITIATIVES INVOLVE CROSS-PLATFORM CAMPAIGNS, EXTENDING FROM AN AREA IN WHICH THE COMPANY FEELS CONFIDENT TO ONE IN WHICH IT'S RELATIVELY INEXPERIENCED. For example, Xerox has had a YouTube presence since 2006, and has posted some 400 videos. In April 2012, the company posted a new video, "A World Made Simpler," designed to further the company's repositioning from "the copier people" to a business-services solution provider, a shift made possible by the 2010 purchase of Affiliated Computer Services.

Beyond simply posting the video to its websites and to YouTube, Xerox also promoted the two-minute clip in social media, including its first use of paid Promoted Tweets on Twitter and a "Who to Follow" campaign that targeted Twitter members with an express interest in B2B topics.

The results, says Jay Bartlett, head of global social marketing, confirmed that for achieving defined tactical aims, social marketing can be a very effective tool for Xerox. "We've had 2.6 million views on YouTube since we first joined" he says. "The 'Simple' video now represents half of those views." The campaign paid off in retweets, replies, favorites and clickthroughs, and also increased Xerox's twitter followers by about 50%.

Its technical expertise even spawned a follow-on behind-the-scenes "Making of" video on the Xerox channel.

In all its social initiatives, Xerox is looking for brand engagement over qualified sales leads. "We're approaching social media as a space where we're able to build brand advocacy," Bartlett says. "You have to follow along with what your customers are doing in a channel like social media. If they really want to understand the high-level view of what you do, and there's not already a propensity to talk in terms of sales leads, you have to follow that trend and talk high-level."

But here, too, Xerox has the building blocks in place that will now let it pilot some highly focused refinements to that social engagement strategy. The company has deployed social listening tools for some time now, monitoring conversations about its brand and business lines. The practice began largely as a PR precaution to detect and resolve issues before they could escalate. But Bartlett says Xerox is now customizing those listening tools to flag discussions the brand wants to be part of.

"We're building out a data set of listening streams that are very specific to the areas we're interested in," he says. "We've got capacity in place to capture the big things [going on in social media], but there's a lot of scale that can still happen here. Over time we hope to encourage our internal colleagues across various regions and business groups to start listening on their own, so they can get a more granular look at their businesses." —BQ



## 'Ten-Hut! Forward-Socialize!'

The Army engages with potential

recruits and their families

**IT'S A BASIC CONCEPT FOR MARKETERS: GO WHERE YOUR PROSPECTS LIVE.**

The U.S. Army's best prospects (a.k.a. potential recruits) are young Americans, ages 17 to 24, which means there's only one logical place for the Army to deploy the bulk of its efforts: social media.

"We want recruits and their families to have an open and transparent understanding of what the Army is about," says Bruce Jasurda, CMO (center, above). "This audience can't be sold to, and they consume information very differently from those in years past. We have to be where the conversations occur and be part of that dialogue."

Of course, the Army also wants to reach out to those who influence and support recruits and soldiers, like parents, teachers and guidance counselors. To do this, the Army maintains a variety of social presences. One of the most significant is ArmyStrongStories.com, a blog launched nearly five years ago that now has 930+ contributors. The majority are soldiers of all ranks in over 60 Army occupations ranging from medics to infantry to public affairs. They all share their real experiences and respond to readers with their own candid comments.

"You could ask, 'Dude, what's it like being shot at in Afghanistan?' and chances are you'll hear back in a few minutes: 'Dude, it sucks,'" says Jasurda. "Or if you want to know what basic training is like, you can talk to drill sergeants, who can help allay fears. At the end of the day, we want to make prospects aware of who we really are, engage with them, and have a dialogue."

Comments on the blog are completely uncensored. "I've never met one of our bloggers, or talked to one, or influenced one," he says. "Once you do that, it becomes a house organ. We can't just give people pat responses [from PR or marketing]. It wouldn't ring true." —BETH NEGUS VIVEIROS

