



The Recipe for a Successful Social Media Campaign

by Anthony "Bert" Bertino

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There are many ways to make chili or to smoke salmon, but ultimately it's the recipe that makes it a success for the chef. The same is true with social media – you can add a concoction of Facebook, blend with a mixture of Twitter and add a splash of Yelp and Foursquare. If you have a hotel, then Trip Advisor or Hotels.com may be appropriate or if you have gas pumps at your facility, Gas Buddy may be helpful. Utilizing all these together will give you the reach to your present customers and those who may be passing your facilities.

Everyone wants to be innovative, but most of the innovators in the gaming industry have utilized minimal budgets to find the one or two projects that will take their enterprise to the next level, and then the next, and so on. The cost of social media can be expensive, but innovation can actually reduce your direct marketing costs.

Over the years, filling the customer's mailbox was seen as the appropriate measure to entice and maintain the customer. With the cost of postage, cost of producing a mail piece, worry of who sees the offer and will the offer make it to the destination always causes anxiety to the marketer. Now with social media, the customer opts to be part of the program, gets direct access and will maintain their membership as long as your offers are compelling, exciting and not annoying. The best part of a social media program is the instantaneous response your organization receives.

How do you reach those who are in your market, friends of your customers and their extended network? Many companies will contact your organization about improving your social media reach, but do they have original ideas? One organization in Las Vegas has a unique concept of doing promotions that use the present customer's email, Facebook and Twitter databases to offer customers the opportunity to reach out to their friends and connections within these social mediums.

Being skeptical is important when doing marketing promotions. Setting realistic goals concerning returns is paramount. Twenty percent improvement should be realized when doing a unique concept. Getting a return that exceeds 300% is astronomical, but can be achieved.

There is no one social media program that will get you to nirvana. When you speak to representatives who have the next great idea, what will it do for your organization? Where has it worked already that is similar to your property? Soul searching is the first step to finding what will work for your enterprise. Casino organizations are always approached with "this will double your social media reach," but will that reach actually make customers flock to your casino, hotel and restaurants?

The test that any social media company must pass, in a brief period of time, is to improve current customer visits and to pull in new customers. Why should an organization care about a "brief period" to grow their social media footprint? Because the quicker a foothold is gained, the quicker more customers will utilize your property. Does the presenting company have the ability to pass this test? Does the plan sound logical and make sense to you? What logistics and diagnostics can the presenting organization show to prove their success and ultimately your property's success?

Defining success is an important aspect of your marketing plan. If the social media company can show a significant growth in markets you targeted to improve on, then that is a success. Adding numbers is not always a success – adding revenue from existing customers, new customers and differing market expansions is key. We have all suffered through spending money to drive customers to our facilities, only to find that we provided a nice lounge for people to hang out in. Social media produces heavy results in younger demographics, but many grandparents also have Facebook accounts, and are active in watching and responding to offers that intrigue them.

It is important to create the right social media recipe. Make your offers boring and your competitors will thank you by stealing your market share. Make the offers exciting and your present customers will share with their friends/connections, and the market will beat a path to your door! ♣

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