

Getting rid of so-so social media

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In the past, marketers have stressed the importance of brand visibility. The argument has been that having your brand visible in all the right places is important, even without interaction with customers. Unfortunately, living in a world where consumers see and hear an average of 3000 marketing messages a day, there is simply too much clutter out there to stand out from the crowd.



The majority of brands, no matter how small, have a presence on social media platforms. But simply having a Facebook page, Twitter profile and Pinterest board does not guarantee success.

Advertisers started waxing lyrical about brand engagement, emphasising the importance of a two-way conversation. 'Don't treat your customers as leads,' conventional wisdom dictated. 'But as friends'... 'Don't be pushy. Don't sell. '

The theory is sound, of course, but more often than not, companies fall short when it comes to the execution. One Facebook group for a fast food chain I've followed would constantly ask their followers questions that would get a great deal of responses, such as "How was breakfast?", "How are you going to celebrate the weekend?" or even, "Who is going to win the rugby on Saturday?"

Others upload photographs of cute kittens and funny memes and are rewarded with hundreds of "likes". But although these companies can pat themselves on the back for getting activity on their pages, are they really getting their customers to buy more burgers or shop in their stores?

Easy to confuse

Branding is not about making friends (although that is a means to an end) but about making sales. And it's easy to confuse the two.

Social media offers companies the opportunity to interact with customers online in a cost-effective, uncomplicated manner - opening the door for more offline interaction. If your social media campaigns aren't doing that, they aren't worth the effort. It's not about likes, followers or a constant stream of posting.

Challenge your customers. Give them an incentive to enter your store or to buy your product. Don't just splash your logo over the page, use your followers' network to showcase the product experience - photo uploading means that your customers can show their friends exactly what they missed out on at your restaurant's karaoke evening or just how big the Whopper Burger is in real life. And most of all: make it fun. Activity on your page has to lead to activity in your business.

It's not complicated. There are platforms that exist that will allow you to have a campaign up and running in minutes, with their own dedicated followers. Move away from the traditional Facebook pages of the world, but don't eradicate them.

It's time to get rid of so-so social media and to create a world where customers become your advertisers.

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