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Why Companies Need to Quit Social Media in 2015



By Marc Gordon

If you're relying on "Likes" from social media to generate business then you need to know what Marketing Expert Marc Gordon has to say about this as he explains why "likes" and followers no longer mean anything when it comes to attracting customers and increasing sales.



Toronto, ON – Marc Gordon believes 2015 is the year for businesses to stop wasting their money and resources trying to market themselves on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google Plus and Instagram. “No one is seeing your posts, no one is sharing your posts and no one cares about your posts,” says Gordon to companies of all sizes and industries. “The fact is, for the last few years companies have been brainwashed to believe they have to be social and engage with their market. We now know two things. First, it’s impossible for a company to be social. Second, people don’t want to be social with a company.”

As of January 1, 2015, Facebook is reducing the organic reach of business accounts. This brings the percentage of those reached from a January 2014 high of 2% (and falling by .5% per month)* to a number that’s almost immeasurable. Combine that with the fact that six of the top seven social media sites garnered an engagement rate of less than 0.1%** and businesses have to start asking themselves what’s the point of using social media at all.

To illustrate, McDonald’s Facebook page has over 55.3 million “likes”. A New Year’s greeting on its time line received 1,020 “likes”. That represents just 0.00002%. In addition, only 58 comments were made, of which 27% were negative or self-promoting.

Let’s take Red Bull, a social media darling in the eyes of many, with almost 45.8 million “likes” on its Facebook page. A December 31 unbranded video of extreme BMX riding received 20,525 “likes” representing just 0.0004% of

its Facebook audience. A similar video posted on its Twitter account January 1 was “favourited” 231 times representing just 0.0001% of Red Bull’s 1.82 million followers.

With any other media, these stats would result in the campaign being pulled immediately and declared a huge failure. Yet companies of all sizes and industries keep allocating resources to posting and tweeting – most of whom never see engagement numbers even close to popular consumer brands.

So is there a solution? Should companies shut down their social media accounts and focus on tried and true media like print, direct mail, radio and television?

“I believe that for the vast majority of companies with a social media presence, if they were to shut down all their accounts today, no loss in business would be experienced as a result,” states Gordon.

But Marc Gordon is also a realist and knows no company is willing to be the first to pull the plug. So for those companies that insist on staying the course in their social media activities, he is sharing six innovative, yet simple, strategies that can make it work:

1. Encourage others to be social on behalf of their favourite brands using photos or hashtags. People naturally love to share where they eat, travel and what they buy. Make it easy for them to share their experiences by creating pre-defined opportunities.

2. Be reactive instead of proactive. Instead of talking about themselves, their products or pointless information, companies should focus more on being a soundboard for customers. Surveys, customer service enquiries, feedback and technical support are all great ways to keep social media fresh and relevant.

3. Reward those who spread the word. Encourage others to share by rewarding them with access to new products, special events, gift cards or just a personalized thank you.

4. Use social media in tandem with traditional media. This can be as simple as advertising a sale in print or on the radio, then offering additional savings for those who “like” or follow the company.

5. Let others know how to find you. It’s amazing how many companies are using social media yet don’t make it known at opportune times. Let others know of relevant Facebook accounts, Twitter handles or hashtags at the time when people would most likely be sharing online.

6. Be platform picky. Instead of trying to establish a presence on every new social platform, pick a few that allow for easy management and use by both the company and its customers.

*Ogilvy, February 2014

**Forrester, April 2014

Editor’s note: Marc Gordon is a specialist in the fields of branding and business growth strategies. His firm, Fourword Marketing, provides marketing services to small business and startups. Marc is also a respected writer and corporate speaker. For more information, please visit marcgordon.ca