

# Three key factors for achieving social media success

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12 Jun 2014

Outbound marketing is in the intensive care unit, but it has also been certified dead in some quarters. This is largely due to the rise in appropriateness of inbound marketing techniques as brands reach out and connect with their always-on social media savvy consumers.

So what are some of the success secrets that brands can use to achieve profitability in this digital era? In my opinion, the starting point has not changed as brands need to get the basics right. The product or service must satisfy a specific need or help solve a real and pressing problem for the target audience. This is commonly known as the product-market fit. Without it there will be no reason to buy a product or engage a service provider.

Most importantly, these products and services must be of a high quality and provide a unique user experience for them to become market disrupters that stand out from competition. The excellence of a product or service is the fire whilst social media is the rocket fuel that sets off the "word of mouth" marketing.

Seth Godin, author of the bestseller *Purple Cow*, confirms this. He says that a product must be remarkable before anyone can remark about it. The Purple Cow must be part of everything brands build or do if they are to create something truly noticeable. Purple Cow describes something phenomenal, something counter-intuitive and exciting and flat-out unbelievable



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## Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM)

WOMM thrives on the numerous online conversations that take place 24/7 and social sharing, an important building block of social media marketing, gives them velocity and a wider reach. WOMM remains the most effective form of marketing as consumers trust recommendations from their friends than advertisements. Peer to peer recommendations actually carry a trust rate of 92% as opposed to 47% for advertisements.

A classic example is the story of Uber, the app that allows a user to locate a taxi cab. This start up effectively leveraged nothing but WOMM to grow their business and the results show its potency. The company, launched in 2009, is now valued at \$17 billion and has attracted investors like Google Ventures.

Uber boasts that its growth engine is spurred by new users who are won over by the experience the first time they use the app, that they become instant evangelists for the company.

So the bottom line is this, great products lead to a wow experiential factor which then triggers word of mouth marketing.

## Social media engagement

The other secret to social media success is engagement which is defined as communicating well enough that the target audience pays attention and begins to participate in the exchange of ideas and in conversations with the brand. Fans and followers respond either by a like, share, comment or click on a link or picture.

In short, engagement can be defined as the actions that are taken by fans or followers in response to a brand's post. Why are these actions important? Facebook records these responses and uses them to determine the popularity of the post via the Edgerank algorithm. EdgeRank is an algorithm developed by Facebook to determine what is displayed and how high on the News Feed.

In layman's terms, a more engaging post gets a wider audience reach than the one that has a poor Edgerank. The importance then for brands to invest in creating engaging content cannot be overemphasised.

Other social media sites have their own kinds of engagement which includes comments, retweets, +1, tags, pins and repins and all these converge to amplify a brand's content.

However, it is important to note that not every post receives the desired engagement value. Research has demonstrated that each platform has its own unique content types that trigger engagement with fans or followers. For Facebook trending topics, vintage pictures, picture quotes and posts that request fans to complete a sentence by filling in a blank do the trick, whilst for Twitter it is stats, event hashtags, trending topics, questions, quotes, article links as well as tips and tricks that do well.

## Knowing when to post

Another key determinant of enhanced engagement is knowing when to post updates on the brand's social media pages. Marketers should target the times when their audience have the highest chance of seeing their content.

According to an article on entrepreneur.com, "If you aren't posting to a social media site when most of your audience members are on it, all that time you spent crafting the update goes to waste."

There are a number of tools that can be used to determine the best and most rewarding times to post. Tweriod is a free nifty Twitter tool that shows when a brand's audience is most active and the Post tab on the Facebook Insights reveals the best times and days of the week when usage is high.

Once a brand creates an excellent product that satisfies a pressing need on the market and engages its customers, fans and followers through compelling and contagious content, then social media success can become a reality.

## ABOUT JOSEPH NEUSU

Joseph Neusu is the founder and CEO of Sales Qualified Leads Inc, Africa's leading digital agency specialising in WhatsApp Business API marketing and conversational marketing in the Programmatic and DOOH spaces. Joseph is a top conference speaker, thought leader and trainer.

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