



How do you really **leverage social media?**

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“ The power of
social media is
it forces necessary
change.”

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“Socialnomics: How Social Media Transforms the Way We Live and Do Business”.



Facebook's
IPO may have been
less smooth than anticipated
but at ASI Digital we don't believe that
means the relevance and importance of social
media is weakening. Social media has become an
integral part of our daily lives: we use Facebook, Twitter,
LinkedIn, YouTube and other social networking platforms to
communicate with our friends, family and colleagues, being
able to share photos, videos and important moments in our lives,
at any time, from anywhere.

Social media offer marketers a great canvas to actively interact with consumers, engage them and identify strong advocates. However, in order to maximise this opportunity brands need to listen to and engage with consumers, offering them relevant and motivating content. This is hardly news, and as it has been noted many times, there is no one recipe or golden formula for social media success. However, there are strategies and tactics that can help marketers to make the most of social media. Here we wanted to bring together, for reference, a quick summary of the best tips.



Social media is about conversations between people ...



Set your objectives from the start & determine your metrics

Start with a clear vision of what you want to achieve and set your brand objectives. What are the intentions behind engaging in social media? What are you trying to achieve for the brand? Is it awareness? Appreciation? Action? Advocacy? How is that different from traditional media? How will it complement other initiatives? Is it better to invest in paid media or owned media? Keep the objectives consistent and remember that it takes time for organic growth to build.

Once you have set your objectives, define your Key Performance Indicators to understand if you succeed in achieving them. Consider how the activities compare to other media and other social media platforms. Also pay attention to your competitors. Take time to understand and analyse what worked and what didn't, and use this to improve.



Choose the right platform for your brand

Just because there are multiple platforms, from Facebook to Twitter to Pinterest, this does not mean that you need to leverage all of them. Before you decide which social media vehicle to leverage, understand which sites your (potential) consumers frequent. Prioritise the sites that your target prioritises. Also determine if the platform's focus aligns with what your brand is hoping to achieve. Remember that platforms may change, so be flexible and prepared to adapt to any changes that may happen: are your consumers now spending more time on Instagram? Be where they are.



Integrate social media with your traditional advertising

Nobody lives their life exclusively online (at least not yet). We are still exposed to thousands of messages every day on TV, billboards or magazines, so why should marketers feel they have to choose between digital and traditional advertising? Developing traditional advertising in conjunction with social media can help brands create more engaging and interactive campaigns that connect with consumers through different platforms, allowing the audience to communicate with the brand and with others. Combining the consistency and control of traditional media with the reach and engagement of social media offers a great opportunity to reinforce your brand and message.



... and between people and brands



Maintain a consistent brand Big Idea

Integrating all communication channels can be a very powerful strategy. As we said, social media provide you with the opportunity to create more engaging and interactive content, but it should always have a purpose and be linked to your brand strategy, your pre-defined objectives and the role that your brand has in people's lives. Use your brand's Big Idea as the glue that holds together all of the elements.



Know your brand's social media voice

You are speaking, tweeting, blogging and chatting on behalf of your brand and your brand's personality. You need to develop a brand voice that reflects and engages with your consumers: identify your character, set your tone and establish the appropriate language for your audience. Without having a clear concept of brand voice, your brand's social presence will risk being either too impersonal and boring or end up getting mixed with the personality of whoever is posting.

And be social. Social media is about conversations between people, and between people and brands. Create conversations, listen and engage in the ongoing conversation. You are talking with your consumers, not at them.



Remember that in social media, consumers have more control

Don't look at that as a negative, as this means that brands can become the curators, rather than the sole executors. So, you should see this as a positive and meaningful way to learn from and co-create with the people that love your brand as much, if not more, than you do.

For example, brand advocates often leverage the power of social media to pass along your branded message and communications to their family and friends, along with their endorsement. This re-transmission effect will positively benefit the impact of your message on your brand. And, if consumers are passionate enough to engage in a conversation about a brand, then they are often passionate enough to help you move your brand forward. Embrace that energy and leverage it for new ideas and initiatives.



... listen to what consumers are saying and do something positive in response!



Commit to great content

Content should be fresh. And it should be excellent. It should tell a brand story that provokes conversations that consumers want to engage in, and share with family and friends. It should even generate “next expressions”, or consumer generated stories. Even for Coca-Cola, which has the largest fan page on Facebook, a “like” is important, but a “share” is even more so because the brand recognises that re-transmission drives earned media, which helps build stronger brands.



Embrace your mistakes

There are great examples of social media success stories, but there are also examples of failures. Learn from others’ mistakes. And learn from your own as well. As you develop your social media strategy you will inevitably come across obstacles and hit walls. Once you have finished one initiative reflect on what you discovered, what worked and what didn’t, use this to make improvements. Sometimes you can even turn a mistake into an opportunity, listen to what consumers are saying and do something positive in response!

The background is a dark grey-blue gradient. It is populated with numerous faint, light-grey icons, each enclosed within a speech bubble shape. These icons include a lightbulb, a Wi-Fi signal, a gear, a speech bubble with an arrow, a battery level indicator, a pie chart, a truck, a maple leaf, a smartphone, a cloud with rain, a speech bubble with a cloud inside, and a folder icon. The quote text is centered in the upper half of the image.

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Ipsos MORI is one of the largest and best known research companies in the UK and a key part of the Ipsos group, a leading global research company. With a direct presence in 84 countries, our clients benefit from specialist knowledge drawn from our five global practices: public affairs research, advertising testing and tracking, media evaluation, marketing research and consultancy, customer satisfaction and loyalty.

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