

## Social Media Best Practices

1. **Do not ignore the new frontier.** Social Media is equivalent to eCommerce 10 years ago. More than half of Fortune 100 companies ‘Tweet’. Customers expect companies to engage with them on social networks. The choice is how to engage.
2. **Understand your customers and the benefit to them.** Best practices are still being established and metrics can be hard to come by. Determine how your customers can benefit from social media. A teen apparel retailer’s needs are different a B2B paper retailer needs.
3. **Use Social Media to increase the contact points that you have with your customers.** Offer both public and private ways to be part of the brand’s community. Not everyone starts out a brand advocate.
4. **Create value in social media.** Whether you use social media for communicating new product launches, beta testing, local promotions, coupons, breaking news, or just to talk to your VIP customers, there has to be a reason they will sign up (adopt) and continue to be vested (retention).
5. **Be social; just don’t “do” social.** Customers know the difference between customer centricity and ‘marketing’. Getting ‘20,000 friends’ on Facebook doesn’t matter unless you passionately engage them. Human involvement is what gives brands their strongest competitive difference in social media today.
6. **Go ahead and compliment yourself.** Your strategies for social media should be done alongside what you are doing currently in lifecycle marketing. Facebook pages are a more modern email newsletter. You should still strive to be top-of-mind, engaging and eventually turn consumers into brand advocates.
7. **Don’t oversell in social media.** Sending too many ‘salesy’ emails will turn off your customers from engaging. Try to have 5 or more helpful interactions to 1 sales pitch. And when you throw a sales pitch at them, make sure it is relevant for them.
8. **Monitor what is being said about your site thorough Social Media.** By continually monitoring, getting alerts when your brand or site is mentioned will help you understand issues that need to be resolved or understand what is working well, how you are perceived by customers, etc.
9. **The conversation’s happening with or without you.** Social Media is becoming increasingly prevalent. Customers expect companies to engage with them. With millions of twitter updates every hour, the conversation is happening. You can’t beat them so you must join them.
10. **Treat social as your other arm.** In marketing emails, affiliate placements, keywords, landing pages and promotions, you test and retest to meet your ROI goal. Social is no exception. Ensure that you optimize your tweet times, your blog topics, your Facebook postings as you would a normal campaign activity.
11. **Make sure you think of Social Media Optimization, SMO.** SMO can help drive SEO by having customers write content, reviews, tag products, etc. These all are benefits to SEO that come from Social Media.
12. **Listen and learn to see the 360 view.** By integrating social media with your CRM, you can use social interactions to learn about customers’ needs and desires, and improve the relevancy of your emails. Social media provides a remarkable opportunity to understand what customers want and deliver a real-time experience with your brand, whether it’s on Facebook, Twitter, You Tube, Kaboodle or blogs – or anything that has just been invented since we wrote this.

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