

MARKETING TRENDS FOR TODAY: NEW MEDIA TO REACH CUSTOMERS BETTER

Established marketing approaches based on mass media, print materials, direct mail, and so on are still important and valuable – but relying on those entirely is a good way to not reach a lot of your customer base.

In today's communication ecology, new channels have become critically important to connect interactively with customers who may no longer be receptive to traditional marketing styles. For a growing number of people, these new channels are the primary mode of communication and information access. They present new challenges to an organization, but also offer rich new sources of data that can help you design & target marketing more effectively than ever.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Effective marketing today requires that you go where the customers are, not wait for them to come to you. Increasingly, this means that social media – Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and the like – are a necessary component of any marketing program. They are no longer a niche – they *are* the mainstream. Companies spent billions on social marketing in 2011, and that amount is only going to grow into the foreseeable future.

Social media provide an organization ways to give customers information and to open up interactive communications with them.

- Information can be **directed at specific groups of customers** segmented using the analytics collected by the channel provider or by the software tools you use to manage and distribute your messages.
- Use of social media **enhances a customer's engagement** with the product and tends to increase their commitment to it – as long as the social engagement is positive and timely.
- Social tools are particularly important within a customer-service context:
 - They enable the organization to provide immediate responses to customer questions and complaints.
 - They enable customers to provide immediate feedback on their experience, both positive and negative, and to make their reactions known to the broader public as well.
- Social interactivity represents a new **potential risk** for the organization, as well as an opportunity to connect with individual customers and provide them with messages and information they are genuinely interested in
 - Social channels need to be continuously monitored, so that nascent issues are spotted and

responded to appropriately (that is, by addressing and resolving them in a genuinely responsive manner) before they blow up and “go viral.”

MOBILE INTERACTIVITY

Smart phones and tablets represent a large (over 30% of existing mobile users) and growing base of customers, many of whom use their mobile devices instead of computers – at home, at work, and on the go.

- If you provide customers (actual and potential) with **mobile apps** that serve their needs, they *will* use them. Give them tools that can answer their questions and provide actionable information.
- **Mobile search** is a huge marketing opportunity for organizations that offer it. Enabling customers to find the products you want to sell them, and giving them the tools (e.g. calculators) to determine on the go what their needs are and which products meet them can give you rapid ROI on the new technology infrastructure.

LEVERAGING ANALYTICS

The effectiveness of marketing activity was at one time difficult to measure directly, but that's no longer the case. Technology solutions (e.g. back-end social analytics) exist to **acquire metrics around campaign effectiveness**. Marketing organizations need to develop effective ways to analyze and leverage it to target future spending, improve results and demonstrate ROI.

- Tools like social CRM that builds on social platforms via **back-end analytics and sophisticated data mining** can enhance the personalization of the customer experience, target messages to the right audience, and strengthen engagement.
- Analytics enable the organization to **identify the marketing best practices that actually work** for their customers and products. Combined with appropriate use of technology, the result is a direct and measurable impact on corporate performance.
- Social tools offer an organization the opportunity to acquire a **wealth of new data** about customers and others who interact with it.
 - **Response tracking** includes page views, likes, clicks, and content-sharing via email & links.
 - **Audience profiles:** Who is visiting your sites, or seeing and interacting with your content? Link logins to profiles you can use to drive sales
 - **Content monitoring:** What are people saying about your products or your organization? What are they saying about your competitors?