Reach Your Digital Marketing Potential

Some small business owners believe that their budgets limit their ability to “play with the big guys.” This is not always true. In fact, today’s digital marketing channels can help level the playing field, often giving small businesses an increasingly greater number of opportunities to compete successfully in the online marketplace. Cost-effective, targeted, measurable, and scalable, digital marketing allows you to help analyze your efforts quickly, and adjust accordingly to help achieve optimal results and a higher ROI.

The Brother Corporation recently published some suggestions for small businesses that will help the business’ marketing by using social media. The ideas have some merit and I will share a couple in this column.

1. Join the Conversation: Establish a Listening Program

Do you really know what your customers think about your brand? A listening program utilizes social media monitoring tools to help you gain an unbiased perspective of how your customers perceive your brand, services, industry, or products. These tools provide real-time monitoring of your brand (and other keywords you indicate) across Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and other social media platforms.

Social media listening programs can help provide a wealth of information that businesses can use to their benefit. They integrate into your customer relationship management strategy by allowing you to monitor and quickly respond to questions and negative mentions. You can track what people are saying about your products, services, and competition and work towards improving your business based on these findings. Listening can also help engage your target audience by identifying your industry’s most talked about topics and developing your content strategy around this subject matter.

A listening program is important for any business that wants to monitor and grow its social media footprint and remain competitive in the social channels. If your business does not have a strong social media presence, a listening program can help you see what your competition is doing and help you begin to develop a social media and content strategy. As your social media footprint grows, listening is an important way to monitor your brand and campaigns and connect with your audience.

2. Go Beyond the “Like”: Advertise on Social Media.

Many social networks have comprehensive advertising capabilities that let you reach an audience that may accurately represent your customer profile. Plus, many of these ads are “cost per click,” so you’re only paying when a person actually clicks on your ad.

Consider advertising on social networks like Facebook or Twitter that have a large user base. Over the past couple of years, the advertising platform of these social networks have evolved to be more direct response – focusing on driving sales and engagement over just generating likes.
Social media advertising can help give you the ability to segment your target audience by age, gender, interest, location, and dozens of other parameters. It helps your brand connect with the people who will find your ads most relevant. As your connections grow, so can the audience for your brand and marketing materials and promotions. Through social media advertising, brands can also advertise to users’ newsfeed and tie in a specific call to action that helps meet company goals and objectives whether it’s generating more sales or increasing engagement.

Social media advertising is often best used for driving awareness or traffic to a self-contained campaign, such as a contest. Facebook’s Promoted Posts/newsfeed ad unit (either as the only ad unit or in complement to the right column ad) is best used for campaigns focused on driving engagement, leads/sales, and/or driving users to a mobile friendly site.

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