

Building a Successful Social Media Strategy

Brittany Dorfner • 02-18-11

One thing's for sure - social media gives you the ability to tell your story anywhere, at any time.

Last month, I attended the *Lands' End Speaks Out on Social Media* presentation, hosted by [Social Media Breakfast - Madison](#), with information provided by Eric Gohs ([@ericgohs](#)), Lands' End ([@landsendchat](#)) senior manager of social media and mobile marketing. During the presentation, Gohs emphasized the importance of social media and offered advice and examples on how any organization could build its own successful social media strategy.

He began by acknowledging this key point: social media is all about content. In order to grab your audience's interest (and keep it), you have to share content that is useful and of value to them. Equally important, you should know where your audiences (customers, members, stakeholders) are engaging - are they active on Twitter, Facebook, Foursquare, all of the above?

After you've identified the networks your audiences are frequenting, include those tools in your overall social media strategy. Using these networks allows your organization to maintain a connection with customers, and provide live, real-time customer service. In turn, you can provide your customers with a voice and help amplify their story.

Aside from maintaining regular communication with your customers, members, or the media, social media allows you to control where your organization appears in search (i.e., does your organization appear before your competitors in keyword searches?). To monitor the conversations surrounding your organization or brand, integrate social media monitoring tools into your campaign. If you're just starting out, try free tools like [Google Alerts](#) and [Twitter Search](#); if you're already active within social media, consider using paid tools, such as [Radian6](#), to monitor online conversations and help influence where you want to be in search rankings.

Also, remember that social media management is not just a one-person job, especially if your organization is large. Identify groups within your organization that already interact with your customers, particularly those with a knack for connection. Then, organize your social media team based on company culture (e.g., assign the Communications/PR department to develop strategy and educate your team on tools, and use customer service reps to be on the front lines, engaging and monitoring).

Once you've decided how your brand or organization will be represented, set a single social media policy for everyone in the company, but make it simple because tools will evolve. As you develop your policy, consider the tone of voice in messaging, disclosures regarding employees' affiliation with the company for individual accounts, etc.

To develop the social media mindset, create a 140-character mission statement and set social goals (e.g., listen, amplify customer voice, reward loyalty, showcase real people, inspire, educate, entertain, convert sales). In addition, establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to demonstrate the ROI of social media. Use the number of followers/fans as a base, then identify the number of conversations generated online, including retweets and mentions, for further measurement.

Before putting your social media plan in place, help demystify tools for your colleagues. Gohs shared that Lands End made social media part of the company's orientation for new employees to prepare them for customer interactions online and to educate them on the use of specific social media tools for better company-customer relationships. Also, schedule recurring meetings with your social media team to review strategies, evaluate implementation and measure results. If multiple groups are involved, build a content schedule so teams are aware of what's being posted online.

To summarize, here are the key take-aways from Gohs' presentation:

- Everyone is already "in" social media.
- Listening is the most sincere form of respect.
- Let your audience lead the way; listen to them for ideas to engage via social media.
- Tools will always change.
- Establish a framework and goals to plan and evaluate against.
- Start simple, have fun.
- Remember: customers invite us in (to listen to their stories), we're just the guests. Give them something in return, but don't over communicate.

If you've already built your social media strategy, have you seen improved customer communications using specific social media channels? If so, where have you found the conversation to be most successful, and why?





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2 comments to Building a Successful Social Media Strategy



[Trish Forant](#)

[February 18th, 2011 at 2:33 pm](#)

Brittany,

Interesting insight from Lands' End. Thanks for reminding folks that social media management is not a one person job. I also believe that social media should be built into the company's orientation program for new employees. It's important that companies ensure everyone is on the same page when it comes to their social media strategy.

Thanks for including Radian6 in your article!

Trish Forant (@Dayngr)
Community Manager | Radian6



[Brittany Dorfner](#)

[February 22nd, 2011 at 4:00 pm](#)

Trish - You're welcome, and I'm glad you enjoyed some of the points made in the blog post. It's nice to have a channel where we can share some of the building blocks to social media strategy with readers.

Cheers,
Brittany (@Brittany_D)
