



THE LIGHTNING FLASH

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Getting Started in Social Media Marketing

It is rapidly becoming more important for businesses that are serious about connecting with consumers to participate in social networking communities like Facebook and Twitter. To the uninitiated, however, just thinking about creating a social media marketing strategy can be overwhelming. New social media networks like Google Buzz, Foursquare and Go Tribal are springing up all the time. Getting started in social media marketing, however, becomes much easier when you can answer this one question: Where are your customers spending their time online?

The online networking communities your customers are already participating in are the ones you need to target your online marketing efforts at when you are just getting started in social media marketing.

You may wish to begin your research by asking your existing customers what social media networks they participate in through the channels you already use to communicate with them. There are so many social networks on the Internet today, multiple ones in every imaginable niche, that I couldn't begin to list all of them here. With that in mind, this article is going to focus on the most popular social networks that are open to people in all industries. I encourage you, however, to apply the techniques we discuss in this article to the niche social networks

that your customers also likely belong to. You may also want to consider using these broader, larger social networks to start conversations with members about the industry-specific social media tools they utilize.

At least four out of five adults who use the Internet use social media at least once a month, according to the 2009 report *The Broad Reach of Social Technologies* by Forrester Research. Half of adults who go online actively participate in social networks like Facebook, with the most rapid growth among consumers aged 35 years and older.

In February, the social media networking giant Facebook celebrated its sixth birthday. It also celebrated another milestone that same month when it reported having more than 400 million users worldwide, with a full-quarter of them accessing the social network with their mobile phones. It is the world's largest social media site. It is quickly becoming the online marketing tool of choice for organizations of all sizes.

Although Facebook is the Internet's largest social media network, the microblogging platform Twitter is the fastest growing one. According to a report released by the Nielsen Company, the amount of time Americans spent on Twitter last year swelled by 368%. By December 2009, Twitter had 2.7 million users.

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From the Desk of James Lowry



We here at Lightning Labels are excited about where we are going and how it can enrich your business. I am especially excited about growing our relationship with you, the customer, so that we both have a successful, exciting year marked by opportunities, change, and growth.

I have been in the printing industry for 23 years with most of those years spent working with labels. My experience in this industry includes coating, printing, die cutting, and inventing labels. This has been in flexo, offset, digital, and screen printing operations. The places I have worked with include Moore Document Solutions, Ward/Kraft and Stoffel.

Over the years that I have been a part of the world of labels, I have grown to love the possibilities that a single label holds. Labels are flexible by design. Changing what appears to be a simple aspect of a label can make it capable of working in both hot and cold environments. The versatility of the label is tremendous. Simply changing the face material of a label can enable it to be printed on or protect it from moisture.

Labels can be powerful. A label that promotes your product by carrying your message impacts your business, as does one that deters theft. A label that encourages safety by carrying a simple message like "Danger" can stop an accident. It is my hope that as we here at Lightning Labels work more closely with you this year, you will grow to find labels as fascinating as I do and realize the value they can add to your business.

Getting Started in Social Media Marketing

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Other members of the Internet's top five social networks include MySpace, Classmates.com, and LinkedIn.

Once you have decided what social networks are most appropriate for your business, you will want to create profiles for each one that let the world know what your brand is all about. Then you will need to build your network on each social media site. Start by inviting people you already know to join your network. If you actively engage with your social network, no matter how small, and post interesting content, your network will naturally grow over time.

It is crucial to the success of your social media marketing efforts and your brand that you not only engage in conversation with other members of social media communities, but that you also publish your own quality content on a regular basis. Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Introduce new products and educate your customers about them with videos that you produce and post on sites like YouTube and Vimeo.
- Obtain feedback on existing products through Facebook groups and fan page discussion forums.
- Post articles and videos of interest to your target market on Twitter, preferably ones that are as entertaining as they are informative.

- Solicit ideas for new products and services from groups on LinkedIn.

- Build new relationships with potential supporters of your brand and enhance ones with existing ones through Twitter.

- Make new business contacts by connecting with fellow alumni on Classmates.com.

- Or, just dip your toes in the social media waters by finding out what people are already saying about your brand.

The Internet is a virtual market where an unlimited amount of information and products compete around the clock for people's limited time, money, and attention. Doing whatever you can to make yourself stand out is a wise move.

One thing you could do to set yourself apart from competitors is to draw attention to your online presence with your product packaging. A lot of brands are promoting their products using social media tools, but very few have leveraged the potential product labels they have to help their online marketing efforts succeed. Some of the product makers who are leading the way are VitaminWater, Papa John's Pizza, Pepsi, and a couple of Portuguese wineries that belong to Adeega, a social media site for wine lovers.

The label of Coca-Cola brand VitaminWater's newest flavor, "Connect," reads "Made by fans, for fans of Facebook." Named after Facebook's development tool for creating Facebook applications, the Connect label features many of the same design elements found on the top social networking site where Vitamin Water's fan page is now more than 1 million members strong

Starting last fall, VitaminWater asked its Facebook members to help create the new flavor with

a Facebook application called "flavorcreator." More than 116,000 Facebookers participated in the creation of the caffeinated black cherry and lime-flavored beverage by engaging in a series of quizzes and games that collected information about what flavors and ingredients they wanted the beverage to have. Later, Facebook fans used the flavorcreator to submit entries for a label design contest.

Papa John's Pizza celebrated its twenty-fifth anniversary by printing an augmented reality (AR) code on the bottom of its pizza boxes along with the URL of a Papa John's microsite. When consumers logged into the microsite online, holding the AR code up to their webcam gave them entry to an online driving game where they collected Papa John's coupons along their route. As a result of the AR codes, the promotional microsite received more than 200,000 visits within its first two weeks.

At least two Portuguese wineries have started incorporating quick response (QR) codes into their label designs. When one of these two-dimensional bar codes is scanned with a cell phone or webcam, the Internet browser on the cell phone or computer is directed to a page on Adeega about that particular wine. The wine consumer is then able to find out what members of this online community of wine lovers think about the wine, and compare prices, read about the winemaker.

Pepsi leveraged a social media tool in a more subtle, yet highly effective way than the other trailblazing product marketers I have already highlighted. The soft drink giant recently launched a "natural" cola product named Pepsi Raw. To encourage feedback about the new product, they printed the product's Twitter address on 1.4 million of the Pepsi Raw cans.

Printing the address of your social media profile or website on your product labels is a particularly easy and cost-effective method of encouraging consumers to connect with you online. If this is something you think would be effective for your brand, we here at Lightning Labels would be happy to help you produce high-quality product labels for this purpose.

But what if you are not a product maker? Can you still leverage the power of labels and stickers in the offline world to help people connect with you virtually?

Absolutely. Anyone with an online presence, not just product makers, can benefit from adding good old-fashioned promotional stickers to their marketing mix. For very little cost, you can have stickers custom-printed with your brand logo and social media address or website.

A local band, for instance, could have stickers custom-printed for very little cost with their name and MySpace address and distribute them at their shows. It would be an easy way for them to drive more traffic to their MySpace page, where fans could listen to samples of their songs, see where they are performing next, and find out how to buy their music.

Alternatively, you may choose to design your sticker around an image identified with your social media site of choice instead of your own logo. An illustration of a bright blue bird would work well to promote a Twitter URL, as a bright blue bird is Twitter's primary mascot.

If you are going to use one of a massive number of social media themed images available free of charge on the Internet, however, remember to use only high-resolution images that will look good when printed, and respect copyright laws.

~Christy Correll

Customer Focus



Kristin Fraser Cotte
Founder & CEO
The Grapeseed Company
Santa Barbara, CA

Although more famous for its Pinot Noir, Santa Barbara is also known for its environmental stewardship. So much, in fact, that it is one of the primary reasons Kristin and her husband, Peter, settled in Santa Barbara after their two-year adventure sailing around the Caribbean. Although Kristin was taught to respect the earth from a young age, the couple's travels ingrained in them an even deeper conviction for treading lightly on the planet. While living on their 30-foot sloop, they used solar power and harvested their food from the ocean around them by spear fishing and conch diving.

Kristin's travels also gave her further inspiration for launching The Grapeseed Company. She learned about the benefits of natural oils and plants from Caribbean women using coconuts to make soap in the islands they visited, and studied herbs, essential oils, and the art of making natural skin care products during the long ocean passages.

In 2004, having settled in Santa Barbara by then, Kristin launched a line of premium eco-friendly vinotherapy spa and skin care products. The Grapeseed Co.'s products are 100% paraben, sulfate and phthalate free, and use local and

certified organic ingredients. The company's wine-based product lines are The Grapeseed Company Vinotherapy Skin Care, Bath & Spa, Wine Bar Organic Soaps, and The Grapeseed Company 100% Pure Soy & Grapeseed Candles. The company also has a product division just for men, Mojito Man Skin & Shave, as well as one for pets, Dirty Dog Organics Grooming Products.

Although the almost six-year old company is thriving, some things have remained the same and probably always will. For instance, at the company's new location in downtown Santa Barbara, Kristin and her production assistant, Abbie, still make all of Grapeseed's products by hand. Kristin and Peter, who is her business partner as well as a full-time teacher, plan to keep the company small enough so that they can keep it that way.

Something that Grapeseed has changed over the years are its product labels.

Like many startups, The Grapeseed Company initially printed all of its product labels in-house before turning to Lightning Labels.

"That was just plain crazy," Kristen recalled. "When you are running your own business and

wearing so many different hats, the last thing you want to think about is labels."

The Grapeseed Company has been very pleased with the high quality of the labels and service of Lightning Labels. When asked if she had tried out any other label printers, Kristen seemed a bit surprised by the question. Why, after all, would she go anywhere else?

~ *Christy Correll*



Lightning Labels News

LL Unveils World's First Label Quoting iPhone App

Lightning Labels is proud to introduce iLabel, the world's first label quoting application for the iPhone. The free application allows iPhone users to calculate the cost of their custom label order in under a minute and can be downloaded from the iTunes store.

"Quote information is immediately forwarded to the appropriate customer service representative," said Lightning Labels General Manager James Lowry. "Users tap a button to call Lightning Labels and discuss details, deadlines and any other applicable information with a rep fully apprised of their needs—saving additional time and effort."

More information about iLabel is available online at www.lightninglabels.com/ilabel.htm.

LL Customers Exempt from Sales Tax Required to Provide Documentation to LL by May 1

In order to comply with sales tax laws and regulations, Lightning Labels is requiring customers who are exempt from paying sales tax to provide us with a Resale or Exemption Certificate or equivalent documentation. This exemption typically applies to customers who resell goods, and may apply to other customers as well.

Customers who do not provide proof of exemption will be charged sales tax in accordance to the laws and regulations of the states where they do business starting May 1.

Please contact Lightning Labels with any questions at 1-888-685-2235. We hope to make this transition as smooth as possible.

You Might be Addicted to Social Media If ...

You refer to door-to-door sales people as “spammers.”

You think email is old-school.

You tell family members you would be able to talk to them more if they would just get on Skype (that way you could talk to them while typing.)

You are going to spend the holidays with @grandma and @grandpa.

Instead of actually laughing when your friend says something funny, you say “LOL” or, even better, “ROFL.”

You refer to friends by their Twitter or Blog names.

You own an iPhone.

Your significant other is jealous of your iPhone.

You play Foursquare online.

You know what Foursquare is.

Learning About Labels

PDF vs Press Proof – Which Should You Choose?

When you place an order with Lightning Labels, you are presented with a choice. You can receive a PDF proof or a press proof of your labels before we begin production. Which one is right for you depends on your circumstances.

Before we get into the merits of each proofing method, let’s define exactly what we are talking about. A PDF proof is a low resolution representation of your label artwork that is emailed to you for approval.

A press proof will show you exactly how your labels will look. The proof is printed on the same press that will print your finished labels so you can clearly see the color and all the components of your label. You can even use scissors to cut out your label from the material and stick it on your

product. In fact, we encourage you to do just that.

Which should you choose? If you are in a screaming hurry and every minute counts, then a PDF proof is probably your best solution. It will be emailed to you as soon as your artwork has been processed.

However, if color is critical or if you are ordering clear or metallic labels for the first time, then we strongly recommend a press proof. For first time customers we also recommend a press proof just so there are no surprises.

Both proofing methods are free; the only difference is that with a press proof, you have to pay for shipping.

Regardless of the proofing method you choose, it is absolutely critical that you look



over your proof carefully. A mistake captured here can save you hundreds or even thousands of dollars in wasted labels. We have learned from experience that time spent analyzing all aspects of your proof is time well spent.

~Peter Renton

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