

COLUMNS

Marketing your mobile products by leveraging social media

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By AN AMERICAN MARKETER COLUMNIST

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Mobile is becoming increasingly ubiquitous and, as such, competition in the mobile space is soaring.

In December 2011, The New York Times reported that the number of mobile applications surpassed 1 million with more than 15,000 new apps being released each week. In this environment, the need for companies to market their mobile products in new and innovative ways becomes more important than ever.

Most consumer brand companies know the importance of leveraging social media platforms to increase their presence within the industry and their engagement with target customers.

However, what gets overlooked is that there are opportunities with social media that go far beyond an online social presence. Here are some of the ways that marketers with a mobile play can go beyond the norm with social media and more meaningfully connect with consumers.

Creating integrated campaigns

Instead of thinking of mobile apps and mobile Web sites in one bucket and social media channels in another, look at how you can integrate them and, therefore, strengthen the approach to promoting your company and its products.

When Jackthreads launched its mobile app in January, it not only sent a dedicated email to its 1.6 million members, but it also promoted the debut to the company's 23,000 Twitter followers and 104,000 Facebook fans.

Not only was the Jackthreads app downloaded 65,000 times in the first week of launch, 20 percent of total company sales during that week came through the app.

Sharing across social media platforms

Social media is all about building relationships by participating in conversations.

While it may seem obvious to talk to your customers, if you look, it probably will not take you long to find a brand Facebook or Twitter account that has unanswered comments and questions. These are the basics.

Assuming you have that down, consider providing prompts in your mobile products to encourage users to share through their social media channels.

For example, an app can include a bonus freebie such as a music track, which will provide motivation for a customer to post download links to their social networks.

You can give further incentive by offering extra goodies if the customer hits a certain number of people adding the app based on his or her referral.

Leveraging user testimonials

Companies leverage user testimonials because the most important opinion about your company is that of your customer.

However, it can often be challenging to identify and make contact with the people behind your most compelling user stories. Social networks are a great outlet to quickly and easily obtain feedback from your users.

Ask your social networks to tell you about a positive or unexpected experience they have had with your product.

Additionally, by asking your social media followers for candid feedback and more closely engaging with them, you have created an authentic public dialogue on what makes your app useful. What better way to promote your app than having users do it for you?

YOU ALREADY TOOK the first step toward making an imprint in the booming mobile market by hopefully creating an innovative and substantial mobile offering, along with setting up profiles on the most popular social media platforms.

Now, get the most out of all the channels at your disposal to stand out in the face of ever-increasing competition.

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