

Strategic Insights

Harnessing the Value of Digital Media



Contents

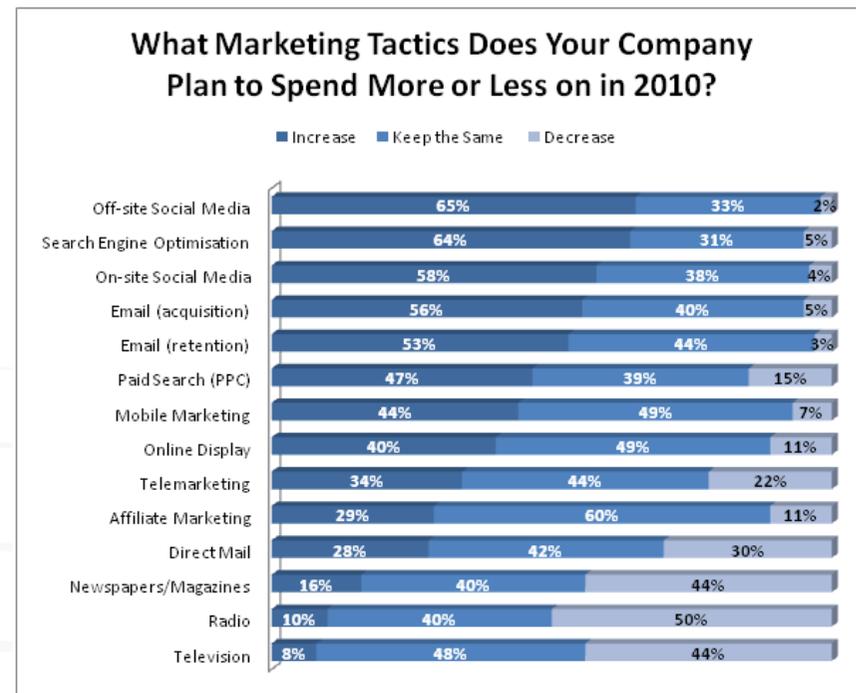
INTRODUCTION	3
SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING: THE AGE OF COMMUNITY	4
Penetration	5
Social media as a marketing tool	6
Higher brand value through sharing	7
Social media as a fundraiser: LIVESTRONG	8
Digital coupons	9
How social media affect companies	10
MOBILE MARKETING AND THE AGE OF APPLICATIONS	12
Smartphones as marketing instruments	12
Mobile applications and app-vertising	13
Mobile web	15
MEASURING RESULTS	16
Social media marketing, mobile marketing and metrics	16
Pricing models	18
DIRECT MAIL IN THE NEW MEDIA CONTEXT	20
SUMMARY	23

Introduction

The shift of marketing budgets from traditional channels to digital channels will continue to rise in 2010, with social media and mobile media emerging as hot favourites. A survey among 1,000 marketers conducted in early 2010 by Econsultancy in association with Exact Target indicates that 65 percent of companies plan to increase their budgets for off-site social media.

The marketers who focus on “brand reputation” are more likely to be increasing their investments in social media such as Facebook and Twitter, online display and mobile marketing . These channels are growing faster than other digital channels even though marketers feel less able to measure the effectiveness of these emerging media.¹

This dramatic shift in budgets to digital media is capitalising on the exponential growth in users. It took radio 38 years to achieve a penetration of 50 million users; it took television thirteen years and the internet only four. These numbers pale in comparison to Facebook, which reached 200 million users in less than one year.



Source: Econsultancy and ExactTarget, Marketing Budgets 2010; Effectiveness, Measurement and Allocation Survey, January 2010, N=265

¹ Source: ExactTarget Marketing Budgets 2010 research.

These trends have important implications for the postal industry, specifically concerning the effective integration of direct mail in a predominantly digital media landscape.

This issue of *IPC Strategic Insights* aims to help postal operators understand the evolution of digital media and the implications it has on direct marketing so that postal operators can more easily identify opportunities for integrating direct mail into this mix. To do so, we will take a look at the marketing domains covered by social and mobile media, define the concepts and focus on what is new in both worlds. We will also look at the results of social media marketing and mobile marketing campaigns, how they are measured and how their return on investment is defined.

Social Media Marketing: The Age of Community

Social media outlets have developed as an important element of the online media landscape, providing marketers with new ways to link and leverage other online media in order to achieve their marketing objectives.

Social media channels share key common characteristics:

1. Collective Contribution. Social media are not a series of individual contributions but a whole medium built on group interactions such as sharing, correcting and responding to content created by others.
2. Transparency. Participants use, share, improve, validate, criticize and rate each other's contributions. This requires a level of transparency and openness not available in traditional media.

3. Independence. Any participant can contribute completely independently from any other participant no matter where they are or whoever else may be posting content at that time.
4. Persistence. What participants have produced is captured permanently for others.
5. Emergence. The output and outcomes from social media interactions cannot be predicted, controlled or necessarily repeated.

The most popular social media are the social networks such as Facebook, Myspace, Bebo or LinkedIn. These are online communities where people meet, socialize, chat and share digital files.

Penetration

Between December 2008 and December 2009, social networking sites grew by approximately 65 million people,² or the equivalent to the total population of France. The United States, Japan and Brazil are leading social network growth in terms of unique audience.

The average use per person also is increasing. In December 2009, global consumers spent almost six hours per person on social networking sites, an 82 percent increase from the same period in 2008.

² Source: Nielsenwire. See also: <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/global/led-by-facebook-twitter-global-time-spent-on-social-media-sites-up-82-year-over-year/>

Average Time Spent on Social Networking Sites - 2009

Country	Unique Audience (000)	Time per Person (hh:mm:ss)
United States	142,052	6:09:13
Japan	46,558	2:50:21
Brazil	31,345	4:33:10
United Kingdom	29,129	6:07:54
Germany	28,057	4:11:45
France	26,786	4:04:39
Spain	19,456	5:30:55
Italy	18,256	6:00:07
Australia	9,895	6:52:28
Switzerland	2,451	3:54:34

Source: The Nielsen Company

Social media as a marketing tool

A survey of the top 100 companies in the Fortune Global 500 index by global PR and communications firm Burson-Marsteller reports that almost 80 percent of companies use at least one social media platform for marketing communication. In the US and Europe this is close to 90 percent.³

According to the MarketingSherpa *Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report*, the four categories of social media that are most frequently used for advertising in the United States are⁴:

³ The presented social media were Twitter, Facebook, YouTube or corporate blogs. *The Global Social Media Check-up 2010*. See also <http://www.slideshare.net/BMGlobalNews/global-social-media-checkup>

⁴ Source: 2010 Social Media Marketing Benchmark Report, p. 7. See also <http://www.marketingsherpa.com/SocialMediaMarketing2010EXE.pdf>

1. Social networks (Facebook⁵)
2. Microblogging websites (Twitter)
3. Multimedia content sharing websites (YouTube)
4. Blogs (Blogspot)

Higher brand value through sharing

Social media sites are about networking, centered around common interest and trust. Media such as Facebook and Twitter have revolutionised the way people consume online content, facilitating active content discovery, in near real-time.

The challenge for marketers in 2010 will be to create innovative content targeted to those highly engaged people who are most likely to share it widely. In addition, media such as Boxee, Netflix, Xbox Live, Facebook, YouTube and Hulu also allow friends to passively share interesting content; when using these services, content that is rated, commented on, labelled "like" or "favourite" is automatically shared with the individual's network of friends or contacts. In essence, consumers are becoming broadcasting and promotion channels. As it becomes easier for platforms to connect with one another, the speed of passive content sharing will increase.

This has important implications for marketers, who will need to pay more attention to media that aid content and link propagation among online communities. A research study conducted by Metrixlab, in cooperation with the Dutch social network Hyves, showed that the more interactive a marketing or advertising campaign is, the more positive effect it has for a brand.⁶

5 Source: 2010 Social Media Marketing Industry Report, p.20. See also: <http://marketingwhitepapers.s3.amazonaws.com/SocialMediaMarketingReport2010.pdf>

6 Source: Hyves & Metrixlab research 2009. See also http://clarice.hyves.org/images/advertiserenophyves/TVM_2009.pdf



In this study, they compared awareness, attitude and behaviour (preference and purchase intention) towards Crystal Clear, a Dutch brand of mineral water targeted at women. One group of women already active on the Hyves site was asked to take part in an interactive campaign from Crystal Clear (the experimental group) and another group, also members of Hyves, was not (the control group). All groups were exposed to traditional banner advertisements for Crystal Clear on the Hyves site.

Those in the experimental group were asked to complete a personality survey to determine which type of traveller they are and with which Hyves friends they would most like to travel. Participants could then invite friends to take part in the interactive campaign or add the Adventure Test widget to their Hyves profile page.

The group that did not take the survey but only saw a banner ad had a significantly lower level of brand awareness, preference and purchase intention towards Crystal Clear. The researchers concluded

that an interactive advertising campaign has a strong positive impact on all brand metrics. Moreover, the potential for earned media is higher when a brand is recommended or a campaign is shared by friends on social networks than when pushed by the advertiser.

Social media as a fundraiser: LIVESTRONG⁷

In May 2004 LIVESTRONG, the association founded by cyclist and cancer-survivor Lance Armstrong in 1997, began selling yellow bracelets for \$1 each. The bracelets created a sense of community among those who wore them that crossed political, geographic and age lines and raised \$50 million in its first year.

⁷ Source: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/how-livestrong-raised-millions-to-fight-cancer-using-social-media/>

The challenge for marketers in 2010 will be to create innovative content targeted to those highly engaged people who are most likely to share it widely.

To build on its initial marketing success, LIVESTRONG launched a blog to serve as the hub for all outreach, covering everything from cancer activism, to questions about cancer treatments and research techniques. It then added a Facebook site where fans post their own stories and support each other with advice.

LIVESTRONG also runs a highly successful Twitter account and has built a fervent community of followers made up mostly of people with a personal connection with the cause: those fighting cancer, survivors or those who have family or friends who have been affected.

The Twitter site has come the number one referral source for the LIVESTRONG website, with three times as many as followers as its Facebook fanpage. Three distinct voices make up LIVESTRONG's Twitter presence:

- @livestrong: Brooke McMillan, online community evangelist and social media voice of LIVESTRONG (69,043 followers)
- @livestrongceo: CEO and cancer survivor Doug Ulman (997,383 followers)
- @lancearmstrong: the founder of the association who also survived cancer (2,516,274 followers)

This social media strategy resulted in higher fundraising over a number of years. the "Wear Yellow, Live Strong" campaign has remained popular, even though the number of bracelets worn today has decreased. The message and campaign has continued to grow through social media. Typically, fundraising suffers in difficult economic times; however, in 2009, LIVESTRONG raised \$ 10.8 million from their Challenge events, a series of events across the United States to run and bike in support of cancer research fundraising.

Digital coupons

In April 2010, the leading American digital coupon website Coupons.com launched a platform combining the advantages of digital coupons with social media's interactivity.

Coupon.com allows users to share coupons with others on Facebook, Twitter and Google Buzz⁸ by simply clicking on the familiar Facebook, Twitter or Google Buzz icons. The coupon is automatically posted on users' Facebook Walls, sent as a tweet or added to Buzz. Others can then click on that link to get the coupon, post comments about it, share it further.

Or as Steven Boal, CEO of Coupons.com, summarizes it: "We are injecting coupons directly into the social media conversation, allowing consumers to easily share coupons with their social networks and allowing brands to engage in social media in a controlled and measurable way". Companies can maintain budgetary control over these promotions by restricting the number of friends to which users may send the coupons, the expiry date of the coupons or by limiting the number of prints once the coupon has been posted on a social networking site.



Source: <http://www.couponsinc.com/corporate/Portals/0/PressReleases/>

How social media affect companies

In today's media landscape the consumer has more control over a brand's message and reach. Forrester analyst, Augie Ray, has identified five important ways for companies to manage how they communicate with customers and manage their brand through social media:⁹

⁸ Source: http://www.couponsinc.com/Corporate/OurCompany/PressReleases/2010.aspx?udt_447_param_detail=88

⁹ Source: http://blogs.forrester.com/augie_ray/10-05-11-seven_things_your_organization_must_do_because_social_media



1. Companies must pay more attention to their business practices, as lapses in ethics - true or not - can spread quickly via the Internet. Nestlé for example had been linked to palm oil and deforestation for years, but it had gone largely undetected by the general public. When Greenpeace released a shocking video about this, it went viral through Facebook and reached the entire world.
2. Companies need to improve customer support. A company has to respond to every complaint, because everyone can start a Facebook group, post a complaint on a blog, make a video of a bad consumer experience or tweet about it on Twitter.
3. To avoid offending consumers, companies' responses to complaints should be kept positive - discrete to those who are wrong and helpful to those in need of support.
4. Companies must respond rapidly and genuinely to opinions that travel quickly via social media. For example, *De Telegraaf*, a Dutch newspaper. *De Telegraaf* was criticized for publishing an interview one of its journalist conducted with the only survivor of the recent airplane crash in Libia, a nine-year old Dutch boy, while he was lying in the hospital.

Many readers thought that this was extreme. Almost immediately, a Twitter account named “@telegraafboycot” was set up to call on other Twitter users to boycott the newspaper. Within 24 hours, @telegraafboycot accumulated more followers than *De Telegraaf's* existing Twitter account - more than 6,000 followers. The rapid negative publicity stemming from @telegraafboycot's tweets forced the newspaper to publish an apology for its insensitivity. However, *De Telegraaf* kept its response to a single-way communication. The public was not satisfied, and the boycott continued.

5. Companies must stay involved in the online discussions. In contrast to *De Telegraaf's* approach, Comcast, an American broadband internet company, used the online conversations to its advantage. Comcast had a reputation

for bad customer service and product quality. At one point, a dissatisfied customer started a blog chronicling customers' negative experiences (<http://comcastmustdie.blogspot.com>). The blog quickly became a huge success. Comcast reacted and made a Twitter account dedicated to their clients' questions and complaints in order to pass the message internally and help people as soon as possible. Customer services and product quality improved as a result of this and the blog simply stopped.

Mobile Marketing and the Age of Applications

Smartphones as marketing instruments

The introduction of smartphones enabled mobile handsets to incorporate more advanced applications, including web access. Some of the most well known examples of smartphones include the iPhone, Android and Blackberry.

Since entering the market in the early 2000s, smartphone sales have grown exponentially. In 2009, sales climbed to 172.4 million. Mobile internet and e-mail access allows marketers to communicate with potential new customers wherever they want with a personalized and creative message. Mobile marketing complements the more traditional marketing channels such as TV, radio, press or flyers, as invitations to mobile marketing campaigns typically originate via these other media.¹⁰

According to the *2010 Mobile Marketing Report*, mobile marketing has four key pillars:

1. Mobile messaging: SMS, MMS, mobile coupons, mobile e-mail

¹⁰ Geoffrey Tanakinjal et al, Management of Permission-Based Mobile Marketing Diffusion: A Conceptual Model, *International Journal of Business and Management*, Vol.2 No6, 2007.

2. Mobile website
3. Mobile advertising: mobile search, location-based services, mobile display, branded content, mobile video
4. Mobile applications: mobile search

Combining the pillars in mobile marketing with mobile marketing objectives of awareness, engagement, trial/sales and loyalty¹¹ produces the following framework:

Brand Awareness	Engagement/Consideration	Trial/Sales	Loyalty/CRM
Mobile Advertising	SMS	SMS	SMS
Mobile Search	Mobile Applications	Mobile Applications	Mobile Applications
Mobile Website	Mobile Website	Location-Based Services	
	Mobile Video and Branded Content	Mobile Coupons	

Mobile applications and app-vertising

A mobile application (or “app”) is a computer program running on a mobile handset that performs certain tasks. New apps are available in almost every online marketplace.

¹¹ Source: <http://www.slideshare.net/jlincoln/mobile-marketing-3642137>

Advertising and apps have become more and more sophisticated, resulting in a new concept called “app-vertising”. Although spending is quite low compared to other media, 2009 app-vertising revenue in the US was \$4.2 billion¹², and it is expected to boom in 2010 to \$6.8 billion.

App-vertising has two dimensions. The first is application can be owned by a brand, like the Adidas Urban Art Guide for Apple.¹³ This app was created specifically as a walking guide to Berlin’s impressive street art, which includes paintings, stencils, paste-ups and stickers from underground artists.

The second dimension is in-app advertising. Here, the brand does not create its own application but sponsors an existing app displaying a banner or a full-screen ad when the app starts and / or ends. The creative possibilities are unlimited and are stimulated by the extra smartphone capabilities such as camera, GPS, 3D graphics and video player.

To maximise returns from app-vertising, marketers need to understand how often, why, when and how the particular application is used¹⁴. Depending on the user’s profile and the application type and genre, frequency of use can vary from once a month to more than 50 times a day. The reach can vary from niche to mass market.

In-app advertising case: Bertolli

In June 2010, Bertolli, the Unilever-owned Italian packaged goods brand, entered a long-term sponsorship with the Today Recipes application for iPhone, iPod Touch and iPad.

Bertolli created a mobile banner ad for the application where the users could win a culinary trip into “the heart of Italy” among other prizes. The Bertolli banner ad links directly to a microsite where consumers are asked to fill-in their name and e-mail address.

Those who opted-in are added to an e-mail marketing list to receive special Bertolli offers.

¹² Source: <http://www.socialmediabiz.com/resource/is-app-vertising-the-answer>

¹³ Cfr. <http://itunes.apple.com/app/adidas-urban-art-guide/id308775146?mt=8>

¹⁴ Source: Mobile Applications Guide by MMA. See also: <http://www.mmaglobal.com/mobileapplications.pdf>





Mobile web

According to the Morgan Stanley *Internet Trends Report 2010*, there were almost 800 million mobile internet users in 2009,¹⁵ compared to 500 million in 2008. Based on the current rate of change and adoption, mobile web use will surpass desktop Internet use by 2015.

Five converging factors explain this success:

1. 3G - and since 2010 - 4G penetration.
2. Social networks. In the UK, Facebook is the leading mobile internet website.¹⁶ In the United States, social networking is, besides banking, the fastest growing mobile phone activity.
3. Video. Instead of watching TV, consumers now find, select and watch video on the internet on websites like YouTube.
4. Voice over Internet Protocol (VOIP). VOIP allows users to share text in a chatbox, voice and video. Skype, a popular service provider, enables people to phone each other over the Internet, see each other and share screens for free.
5. Hardware evolution. Smartphones such as Blackberry, Google Nexus and the iPhone, have become more powerful, richer and more interactive user experiences.

¹⁵ Morgan Stanley's definition goes broader than only people surfing on the internet on their smartphone. It also includes web-enabled tablets, GPS systems, video games and wireless home appliances.

¹⁶ Source: Guardian.co.uk, 8th February 2010. See also: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/media/pda/2010/feb/08/Facebook-rise-mobile-web-use>

Measuring Results

Social media marketing, mobile marketing and metrics

The performance of both social media marketing and mobile marketing are highly measurable. With web analytics, it is possible to measure an internet campaign to the finest detail at the user level to review user behaviours like click-through rate, click path or time spent on a certain section of the website.

Common metrics

Social media marketing and mobile marketing have the following metrics in common:

- Reach
- Click-through rate - the percentage of people having clicked on the ad to arrive at the destination site.
- Clicking path - the sequence of hyperlinks one or more mobile website visitors follow on a given site. Are they coming from another mobile website, mobile search, banner or from an SMS messaging campaign?
- Click trails - the exact Click Paths for each individual visitor of a mobile website. This can give the advertiser a sense of what people are doing on the website, after having clicked on for example a banner or an e-mail link.
- Engagements - the call to action, like subscribing to email lists, purchasing product, uploading user-generated videos, signing up as a Facebook fan, downloading a free trial subscriptions to email lists or requesting a mobile coupon.

Influencers are not all equal in their sharing behaviour. Some share lots of messages but have little influence, while others generate little buzz but carry more weight with their peers.

Metrics specific to social media marketing

The interactive nature and sharability of social media sites has to be taken into account when evaluating a social media campaign. Two specific components that need to be tracked in the case of social media marketing are:

1. Expanded reach to new audiences. Social media's friend-to-friend sharing. Previously unreachable prospects now also get the brand's message, thanks to recommendations from friends.
2. Influencer sharing behaviour. In social media marketing, customers who share marketing communication with their peers are influencers. As the Hyves study showed, they are much more positive towards the brand and became with their sharing behavior brand advocates.

However, when tracking sharing behaviour, it is important to note that influencers are not all equal in their sharing behavior. Some share lots of messages but have a little influence, while others generate little buzz but carry more weight with their their peers.

An example of a tool measuring both metrics is Facebook's new Insight dashboard, which was launched in June 2010. This tool provides deeper analytics on user demographics, "Likes" and shares (e.g. articles, Facebook applications). The data cover user gender, age, country, city, language user traffic, feedback on stories and other data on user engagement.

Each of these key performance indicators can be weighted to have a total campaign success. In the case of an awareness campaign, a marketer may place more weight on reach and sharing activity and less to call-to-action. If the campaign wants to push sales up, the opposite weighting could be applied.

Pricing models

Common pricing models

The following pricing models of online marketing can also be applied on social media marketing and mobile marketing:

- Cost per Impression (CPI)
- Cost per Click (CPC)
- Cost per Action (CPA)

The most common pricing model in the advertising world is the Cost per Mille (CPM). It calculates the costs of the advertising campaign based on the cost of reaching 1,000 viewers with a specific advertisement. However, marketers are always charged, even if the target audience does not click on the advertisement. In other words, there is the risk of paying large amounts for ads that are ineffective.

Better pricing models are performance-based pricing models. In this case, the advertiser pays only for measured results.

In the case of Cost per Click (CPC), also known as Pay per Click (PPC), the advertiser pays a predefined fee for every click on an online ad. This is useful for mobile search or a social networking banner ad.

In the case of Cost per Action (CPA) payment depends on an action a user performs as a result of the ad. This could be a purchase, subscription to a newsletter, or request for a follow-up call. An advertiser pays a predefined fee to the publisher based on the number of visitors who have taken that action.

Social media marketing pricing models

Social media add two extra models called Cost per Engagement (CPE) and Cost per Install (CPI). Just like CPC and CPA, CPE and CPI are performance-based pricing models.

CPI is based on users installing a widget, video or social network application on their Web page or social network site.¹⁷

CPE model is a submodel of the CPA model created in 2008. The action in this case is an engagement, which can be one of the following:¹⁸

- Submitting branded user Generated Content: uploading a video when a brand organizes a UGC contest and asks customers to make a video
- Viewing a video for a certain amount of time
- “Liking” on Facebook, following on Twitter etc., sharing something on a social network
- Writing reviews and comments or giving a rating
- Voting in a poll

¹⁷ Source: IAB Social Media Buyers' Guide. See also: http://www.iab.net/media/file/IAB_SocialMedia_Booklet.pdf.

¹⁸ Ibid.

Direct Mail in the New Media Context

Direct mail and social media: Café Express

It is important to prove the added value direct mail can give to marketing campaigns and for brands in general.

Café Express is an American restaurant chain with 17 locations in Texas. Café Express was already successful with its lunch and dinner menu in terms of awareness and customer loyalty, but they now wanted to expand awareness of their breakfast offerings.

The chain, already a direct mail user, felt that their average response rate of one to two percent was insufficient. Their goal was to increase this to 10-15 percent.

To achieve this, they combined direct mail with a personalized URL and a social media marketing campaign. They first mailed a special offer on a postcard with a detachable card displaying the Café Express offer. Each card was labelled with the recipient's name and a personalized URL, including the recipient's name.

When users went to their personal web space, they were asked to respond to a short survey to activate their offer. Survey questions asked:

- How often do you eat out for breakfast?
- What items do you prefer to eat for breakfast?

- What do you look for when you eat out for breakfast?
- How often do you eat at Café Express?

Forty percent of those completing the activation questionnaire online came through social media channels. The Café Express campaign did more than stimulate brand awareness and sales. The information collected enabled the restaurant to profile their core customer group - women in their 40s with a household income of \$100,000 - and to develop a targeted direct mail campaign to drive traffic to each of the chain's 17 locations.

The campaign's results were as follows:¹⁹

Number of DM sent	20,000	100,00%
Total Response:	4,728	23.64%
From Mail	2,941	14.71%
From Social	1,787	8.94%
Activations:	3,677	18.39%
From Mail	2,282	11.41%
From Social	1,395	6.98%
Redemptions:	1,500	7.50%

¹⁹ All percentages are calculated with the number of direct mail pieces sent as a base.

By adding a mobile component to their tradition direct mail marketing plan, Big City Burrito was able to differentiate themselves from their competitors, generate buzz and increased their appeal to their younger customer base.

Direct mail and mobile marketing: Big City Burrito

Big City Burrito is a chain of twelve Mexican fast food restaurants mainly based in Colorado. Traditionally, they relied in couponing via direct mail to entice new customers.

In 2008, however, their coupon supplier advised them to add a mobile feature to their couponing program. This tactic helped differentiate them from their competitors, helped generate buzz and appealed to the restaurants' young customer base.

In January 2009, the restaurant chain sent 10,000 direct mail pieces to 16–34 year-old people in the Denver, Colorado region. The coupons were valid for a little more than one month and were good for a \$5 discount on all burrito offers over \$20 and another similar offer for takeout orders over \$25. The third coupon was for a free burrito of equal or lesser value with the purchase of a regular burrito and two 22 oz. drink. On the front of the direct mail piece it said "Want a free Burrito?".

Interested customers were directed to text a short code listed on the piece to get a coupon for a free burrito. The offer drew droves of customers to the three Big Burrito restaurants. Those standing in lines to redeem the coupons who had a mobile phone aroused curiosity from other customers not exposed to the offer.

The code was not personalized; people were able to forward it to friends with their smartphone. At one local school, the campaign became popular: within the first two days Burrito captured 105 opt-in customers from the that school alone. In total, the campaign delivered Big City Burritos 300 opt-in customers.

Summary

Today, social media contributes directly to a company's bottom line. Companies that take social networking seriously are investing significant money and people power into doing it 'right'. It is obvious, that the marketer is no longer in charge. The consumer is in control, and companies that can capture, analyse and act on the data collected around the Web will gain the most from social media activities. Implementing and managing a successful social media strategy centers around key questions:

- How is the company monitoring conversations being conducted about their brands and offerings?
- Is the brand message carrying through, or being re-shaped positively or negatively by clients, prospects and competitors?
- Do consumers truly know the breadth and depth of what companies are offering? Are companies truly listening to and engaging with consumers in social channels?

The value of social media is in the opportunities they provide to reach people and to communicate with them (earned media). The benefits depend on how advertisers grab the opportunities that social media present: Whether advertisers really take the time to talk to people, to sell to them, to let them know the features and benefits of their products and to resolve issues proactively.

Social media marketing is a long-term process which aims at building networks of loyal consumers. It might comprise several short-term campaigns, but brands must have a long-term view of social ROI. Advertisers may also use social media to drive offline traffic into their stores.

The more an advertiser reaches, connects and effectively engages audiences on social media, the more the long-term ROI, brand perception and awareness, brand loyalty, connection & repeated purchases and organic marketing (facilitated online word of mouth) of their brands increase.

Big brands are pouring millions into social media, and moving away from traditional media. Social media networks are perceived as:

- Cheaper and more effective than most mass media marketing
- More targeted and audience specific
- Generating added brand empathy and connection with consumers
- Providing access to the brand, anytime, anywhere
- Allowing consumers to market & recommend brand products themselves
- Timely and compelling, moving consumers to take action
- Allowing consumers to actively engage with brands

Technologies can complement one another, as the value of social media, mobile and indeed direct mail combined can amount to a more successful campaign than when these media are all executed individually, in silos.

Overall, it is most important for companies to stay abreast with all upcoming sites and technologies and to actively participate in the online conversations about their brands and services. Marketers need to be flexible and sufficiently agile to change with technology and the unexpected ways consumers adopt and use these new media. Despite these challenges, digital marketing and social media marketing provide an unprecedented insight into consumer behaviour that can be leveraged by advertisers to maximize the value and ROI of their Direct Mail activities.

IPC Publications and Products

IPC produces a range of publications and other resources that provide insights into the postal industry from a number of different perspectives.

Market Flash - A biweekly newsletter covering the latest news in the postal industry, from financial information to personnel actions

Green Flash - A quarterly newsletter that provides our readers with insights into the latest sustainability trends among postal operators worldwide.

Strategic Insights – Our series of think pieces that provide in-depth analyses of key issues in the industry.

Member-only Publications and Online Tools

Regulatory Flash - Monthly newsletter detailing the latest developments emerging in the international regulatory affairs.

Strategic Insights (Member-only Issues) - Each year, IPC produces several special editions of Strategic Insights focus on regulatory issues and other key topics.

IPC Strategic Perspectives on the Postal Market – This annual report provides a distillation of the cooperative market intelligence projects carried out between member postal operators and IPC throughout the preceding year.

IPC Global Monitor – IPC’s quarterly report provides detailed information on how domestic postal volumes have evolved since 2005.

Global Postal Industry Report - A comprehensive yearly overview of the state of the postal industry.

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For more information about IPC, please visit our web site at www.ipc.be.