

Social Media Marketing

Since the inception of the first recognizable social media site in 1997, there's no arguing that the reach and power of voice across social media has grown beyond what most might have considered possible.

With such broad and diversified impact, social media is now critical for any business – large or small – making its value contribution to a brand's bottom line and reputation more important than the simplicity of vanity metrics. So much so, that 63% of marketers regularly report social data to their bosses.

Not only is social media a key channel for engaging and attracting employees, customers and prospects, but it is an amplifying extension to core marketing and communication channels that drives meaningful interactions to help educate, inform and nurture long-term value to the brand.

Social Media + The Buyer's Journey

Like anything else in your marketing arsenal, it's important to understand your brand's digital value – social media being a key part of that. In fact, according to a recent survey of CMOs and CCOs, **53% of today's communicators believe integrated PR impacts brand reputation, but only 36% believe that it also impacts deal acceleration and revenue.** Enter social media.

Often times, social media is one of the identified gaps of a buyer's journey. This is why understanding the role social media can play along the way is important, in order to set appropriate strategies to create opportunity. While social media may not be the last click before purchase, to ensure your social media is playing the right role in your marketing ecosystem, you must first understand its role at every milestone of the purchase journey:

Awareness/Attraction

Describe the opportunity and help your audience to agree they have the need to engage. You can help achieve this by promoting your owned and earned content, such as media coverage, research and thought leadership, in combination with third-party content from reputable and respected sources important to your audience and industry. Your actions at this stage determine the quantity and quality of your leads.

> **See how one brand increased job applications by 690% with social media**

Questions to Ask

- What is the buyer's intent?
- How do buyers educate themselves on their goals and challenges?
- How do buyers prioritize their goals?



Approach

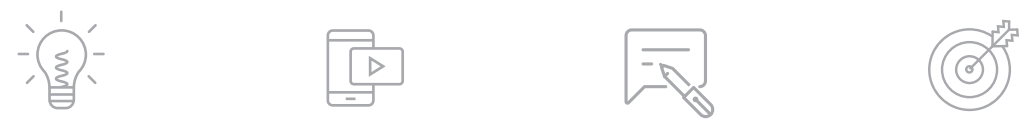
- **Know your target audience:** Invest some time in defining the type of customer who is interested in your products; their age, education interests and online behavior
- **Determine which social media platforms** would be suitable for your business, and figure out the best time and frequency to post
- **Have a content plan:** Inform, answer questions, and solve problems
- **Explore different kind of content forms for your promotions:** eBooks, blogs, images, videos, live stories, infographics
- **Advertise on all relevant social networks,** if budgets allow
- **Organically connect with influencers in your industry** to create a buzz around your brand's products and services

Metrics that Matter

- Audience growth
- Impressions, reach, likes
- Shares and rate of engagement
- Social mentions
- Sentiment
- Share of voice
- Top of mind awareness

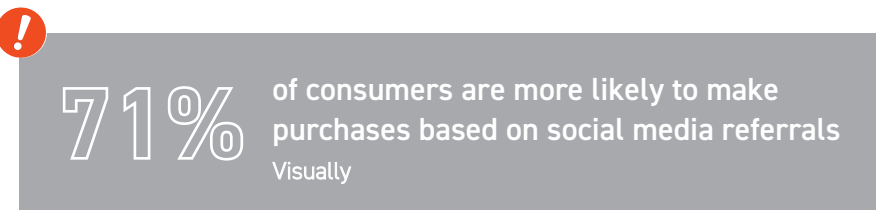
Discovery/Consideration

Outline opportunities for your audience, introducing your brand as the partner that can help them. Using supporting proof points and data-informed storytelling, your owned (eBooks, short-videos, customer case studies, events) and earned (media coverage, user-generated reviews) content is a powerful way to not only tell your audience how you can help create opportunities for them, but shows them how you've helped others.



Questions to Ask

- What types of solutions are the buyers searching for?
- How do buyers educate themselves on these solutions?
- How do they realize the pros and cons of every alternative?
- How do they decide on the best option?



Approach

- **Build your social media messages** using your persona metrics collected in the previous stage
- **Determine the nature of posts that generated maximum interest** and create content that engages your customers and differentiates your product while answering why should they buy from you
- **Invest time in replying to reviews,** comments and brand mentions
- **Host contests, surveys or giveaways,** and organize events including live Q&A's, webinars, competitions, or live events
- **Use data collected at this stage to create targeted offers** for people who have regularly engaged with your posts
- **Install dedicated social tracking codes on your website** or use UTM parameters to track use behavior on your website and show targeted messages to website visitors

Metrics that Matter

- Channel impact
- Web traffic
- Purchase intent
- Click-through rate
- Bounce rate
- Return rate
- Number of signups
- Email list growth
- Landing page conversions

Conversion/Purchase

Close the deal and help your audience realize that your brand is the best partner to help define opportunities. Have a live demo or free trial available? How about existing customers who have a success story with your brand? Social can help target and drive those "toe in the water" hesitators to become "backstroking in the deep end" evangelists – going from trial to customer.

Questions to Ask

- What do customers like the most about your offer?
- What scares them off?
- Who else will be involved in the decision-making process?
- Are we answering consistent questions at this stage with content?
- Are we providing buyers with an easy way to experience our product/service?
- Do prospects have to make any preparations before making a purchase?

Approach

- **Use Paid Social ads** with limited time offer or coupons to create a sense of urgency
- **Run re-marketing campaigns** spotlighting offers
- **Cross-sell and up-sell** to already existing customers with relevant offers
- **Integrate your ordering platform** into social media channels
- **Encourage social buying** by offering "friends & family" discounts

Assess your digital footprint with DiVA
Evaluate your online presence and advance your communication organization

Metrics that Matter

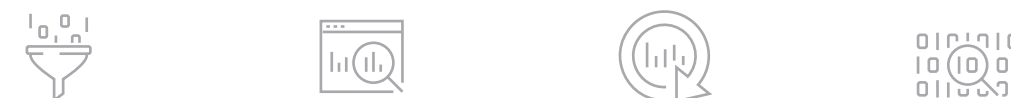
- Purchases
- Subscriptions
- Virtual event attendance
- Downloads
- Sales through social media
- Sales through landing pages

Nurture and Delight

A brand's job is never done, once the new client business has been won. A lot of time, effort and (likely) money went into conversion, but retention is where the rubber really meets the road. Social media has fast become a preferred point of contact for customers when they want to communicate with a brand. In fact, according to Social Sprout, **74% of consumers use social media channels to reach out for customer service** or support from brands they follow on social. To ensure your audience, and now new customer, feels appreciated and continues to get value from you, use your social channels to help your customer experience shine. Just remember to keep it timely, authentic and transparent. Done right, you'll build a community of brand advocates.

Questions to Ask

- Do your customers have the opportunity to provide feedback whenever possible, including surveys and evaluations?
- Do you have incentive programs for current clients who bring in new business?
- Do you have a loyalty program tailored for your most enthusiastic customers?



Approach

- **Collect feedback** on your products and services
- **Offer assistance** or after-sales services
- **Solicit and generate reviews,** then showcase and build on positive sentiment
- **Encourage your loyal customers** to follow you on social media
- **Launch frequent buyer programs** or a loyalty program, and provide your loyal customers with discounts
- **Promote your loyalty programs** via social media post and ads
- **Involve social actions in your rewards program** to increase sharing across social media channels

Metrics that Matter

- Customer testimonials
- Customer satisfaction
- Customer loyalty
- Referrals
- Product/service usage

Some marketers believe that social media is all about generating brand awareness, but smart marketers know that social media can influence decision-making from brand awareness to advocacy.

Optimizing the customer experience at each of these touchpoints is crucial when it comes to turning a lead into a customer. A social media funnel mindset can help you create a strategy to build engagement with your audience and increase conversions at each stage of the buyer's journey.