



WHAT'S WORKING IN SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING & SELLING?

Humanizing Brands & Increasing Relatability By
Harnessing VOC Data

INTRODUCTION

Social media marketing and selling is deceptively easy – while it doesn't take much to fire off a tweet or update a LinkedIn status, the posts that receive the most engagement, and ultimately help close the most deals, are interactive, thoughtful and personalized.

But personalization isn't easy on social media, as its reach extends across the world: **95% of B2B marketers** utilize social media content in some form, making it the most widely-used content type. With such a massive reach, marketers often result to generic assets to hopefully cover everyone's interests, whether it's an up-and-coming intern or a seasoned CMO. But in a channel as loud, crowded and impersonal as social, blanket-type content won't suffice.

"When it comes to social, the best way to get better content is to have conversations and ask for people's opinions and feelings," said Brooke Sellas, CEO of **B Squared Media**, a boutique digital marketing agency. "And what you'll get through those conversations is voice of customer (VOC) data. VOC data not only makes your content better, it helps with marketing, customer support, sales, research and development, HR, public relations and more."

In fact, **LinkedIn research** found that B2B brands that connect with their buyers on an emotional level earn twice the impact compared to marketers who are still trying to sell business or functional value. This special report will uncover the latest trends in social media marketing and selling, with a focus on personalization efforts to help organizations diversify their content and stand out from the crowd. Specific topics of discussion will include:

- The content types that best resonate with prospects and customers on social channels, as well as how to personalize them;
- The role data plays in identifying the most frequented channels of prospects and customers;
- The most popular social channels and how marketing/sales can leverage them;
- How to harness customer voices in social media posts and content to lend credibility to campaigns and create brand influencers; and
- The role social plays in competitive analysis, such as monitoring new releases and accessing comments to see how customers truly feel about the competition's products.



LEVERAGING SOCIAL CHANNELS FOR COMPETITIVE ANALYSIS

A key component of social media strategies is social listening, which includes monitoring channels for mentions and conversations related to specific brands and industries. With those insights in hand, marketers can then understand how their companies are perceived and keep an eye on their competitors.

“Social media, while not a complete picture, puts performance metrics on display for almost anyone to see,” said Michael Hamburger, CEO of [Ezzey](#), a full-service digital marketing agency. “If the assumption is that a brand’s following is similar or the same as the audience you are trying to attract, being able to read and understand the performance metrics of your competitors can help inform your social strategy. Learning from both your competitor’s lesser-performing strategies as well as their higher-performing strategies can be invaluable.”

This is where data analysis comes in, as the nature of social platforms lends itself to generating first-party data, which “has huge value” for B2B marketers, Hamburger explained. But despite that value, first-party data has its shortcomings: Specifically in quantity.

“This is where third-party data comes in to supplement first-party, as it allows larger volumes of data to be collected by different sources and methods,” Hamburger explained. “Being able to combine accurate first-party data with the volume of third-party data when analyzing the use of social channels helps build robust and reliable insights as marketers determine where to place content.”

However, like every other facet of B2B marketing, practitioners are contending with the upcoming depreciation of third-party cookies. Though Google keeps moving the goal post, the search engine seems committed to finalizing the phase-out in 2024.

“We have the ‘cookie-pocalypse’ coming up, so it’s key to build those first-party data relationships and generate trust,” added Sellas.

Proof Point:

Sellas explained that one of her clients recently had “a lot of chatter” around their new coffee machine, because users couldn’t figure out how to change the coffee filter. The company expressed they didn’t understand why the clients were upset, because the 400th page of the service manual outlined the filter changing process. After Sellas explained that no one wants to read an entire book to solve one issue, the company created a video walk-through and uploaded it to their product page.

As a result, Sellas said the “negative chatter” dropped from 80% to 13%, and “positive chatter” went up to almost 90%.

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BROOKE SELLAS, B SQUARED MEDIA



IDENTIFYING & LEVERAGING UGC, VOC & INFLUENCER CONTENT

Leveraging multiple data sources — specifically first-party — to monitor social media channels helps practitioners find the most engaged accounts and help marketers uncover potential brand advocates, both paid and unpaid.

“Through social listening, you can start to understand who the influencers are in your industry,” said Sellas. “This helps you find inexpensive folks who fit directly with your brand to help amplify your content on social media. Unfortunately, a lot of times people just go for an influencer who costs a lot of money but doesn’t drive deep results. You need to do the deep work to find the right influencer.”

She continued that the other peer-contributed option for marketers is user-generated content (UGC), which represents unpaid opportunities by brand advocates who work to build trust with clients, not generate interest. According to Sellas, “people trust their peers more than they trust brands, which strengthens content and lends credibility to brands.”

But marketers need to ensure they’re not sacrificing brand messaging and positioning when generating awareness. During his keynote at the [B2B Sales & Marketing Exchange](#), Mitch Duckler, Brand Strategy Consultant and Managing Partner at [FullSurge](#), explained that branding often gets lost in social media, which serves as a detriment to relationship building.

He continued that even the most strategic marketers neglect messaging and positioning in favor of driving clicks, follows, shares and comments. Duckler recommended marketers find a balance between both, as “social media activities need to achieve those metrics in a way that’s consistent with your brand.”

Proof Point:

Illusive, a cyber security firm, teamed up with professional hacker Alissa Knight for a two-part experiential campaign that demonstrated how real cyber threat actors navigate networks. Illusive created a cyber range built specifically for Knight, where she recorded her experiences going head-to-head with Illusive’s active defense. Afterward, Illusive hosted a Q&A with Knight to provide a behind the scenes look at how the film was made to conclude part one of the campaign. In part two, Alissa attempted — and failed — to launch a ransomware attack.

Illusive and Knight promoted and amplified the campaign across their social media channels and, as a result, the brand’s social media connection grew 100%.

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UNDERSTANDING B2B BUYERS' CHANNELS OF CHOICE

Now it's time for the million-dollar decision: Identifying the best channels to reach buyers. The experts explained that while there are platforms that are more popular than others, the channel with the highest potential varies from company to company.

"Take a look at the platform you're considering in terms of its strengths, weaknesses and primary function — then line it up with your brand to see if it's a logical fit," explained Duckler. "And it's OK if it's not a logical fit, because you don't need to be on every platform. While it's true most brands are on more than three platforms, quality is more important."

Determining the right platform also harkens back to social listening, as marketers can monitor each channel to see where their prospects and customers are engaging most frequently.

"You can audit your channels to understand what types of conversations are happening there," said Sellas. "What types of frequently asked questions come in through that channel? How often do prospects and customers interact with brands? By asking those questions, you'll start to realize quickly which channels you should focus on and which ones you can leave behind."

In terms of specifics, Sellas acknowledged that LinkedIn is the obvious platform of choice for B2B — as it can generate **four out of five B2B leads**. She noted that Twitter has potential, but believes practitioners often overlook it because, "they think it's a news site; current events and peoples' opinions and feelings are usually at the top of Twitter feeds."

However, Sellas continued that there is a “sleeper” channel: YouTube.

“Any information you share on YouTube is searchable through Google’s engine,” said Sellas. “And, if you’re creating videos for your social channels, you can put a longer form piece on YouTube and shorten it to use on social. This way, you’ll always have a repository of content for nurture pieces, but also short, snackable content for awareness plays.”

Video is becoming hugely popular across all aspects of B2B marketing, and that’s no different on social media channels as, “less polished content is leading edge,” explained Hamburger. He continued that many of the most popular channels are video driven. Case in point: Instagram Reels, Facebook Stories and even TikTok.

“We’re seeing people use their TikTok videos throughout other social platforms,” he explained. “TikTok will continue to grow and become more globally accepted, as the platform has mastered and tapped into the serotonin reward people get from watching, liking and consuming content.”

Proof Point:

Toshiba Global Commerce Solutions, a provider of point-of-sale products and services, launched its “Wow Video Series” to highlight its products’ capabilities. The company released five YouTube videos where Toshiba products survived many dangerous conditions. These episodes were designed to be highly energetic, watchable and shareable for brand awareness and promotion on social media. The company authentically engaged its social media followers, opening the door to more curious and personal conversations.

Since its launch in December 2021, the “Wow Video Series” saw:

- More than 2,250 views and climbing in the first two weeks of submission;
- An average CTR of more than 10.5%; and
- An increase in video shares and impressions from employees, partners and buyers from all over the globe.



CONCLUSION

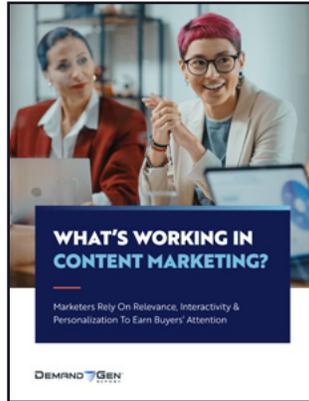
To form strong social media strategies, marketers need to identify the channels their prospects frequent the most and target them with relatable content. To help build trust and form deeper connections it is imperative for organizations to uncover brand advocates and deploy influencers, which add peer-based credibility to their content.

“B2B content is pretty drab — most of it lives in clichés and facts, which does nothing to help build trust or loyalty,” said Sellas. “And with **95% of buying** being emotional, you need to use opinions and feelings on social media — it’s showing versus telling. The options are endless if you’re having conversations and collecting that VOC data.”

LEARN MORE



What's Working In
B2B Advertising?



What's Working In
Content Marketing?



What's Working In
Demand Generation?



Demand Gen Report is a targeted online publication that uncovers the strategies and solutions that help companies better align their sales and marketing organizations, and ultimately, drive growth. A key component of the publication's editorial coverage focuses on the sales and marketing automation tools that enable companies to better measure and manage their multichannel demand generation efforts.

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