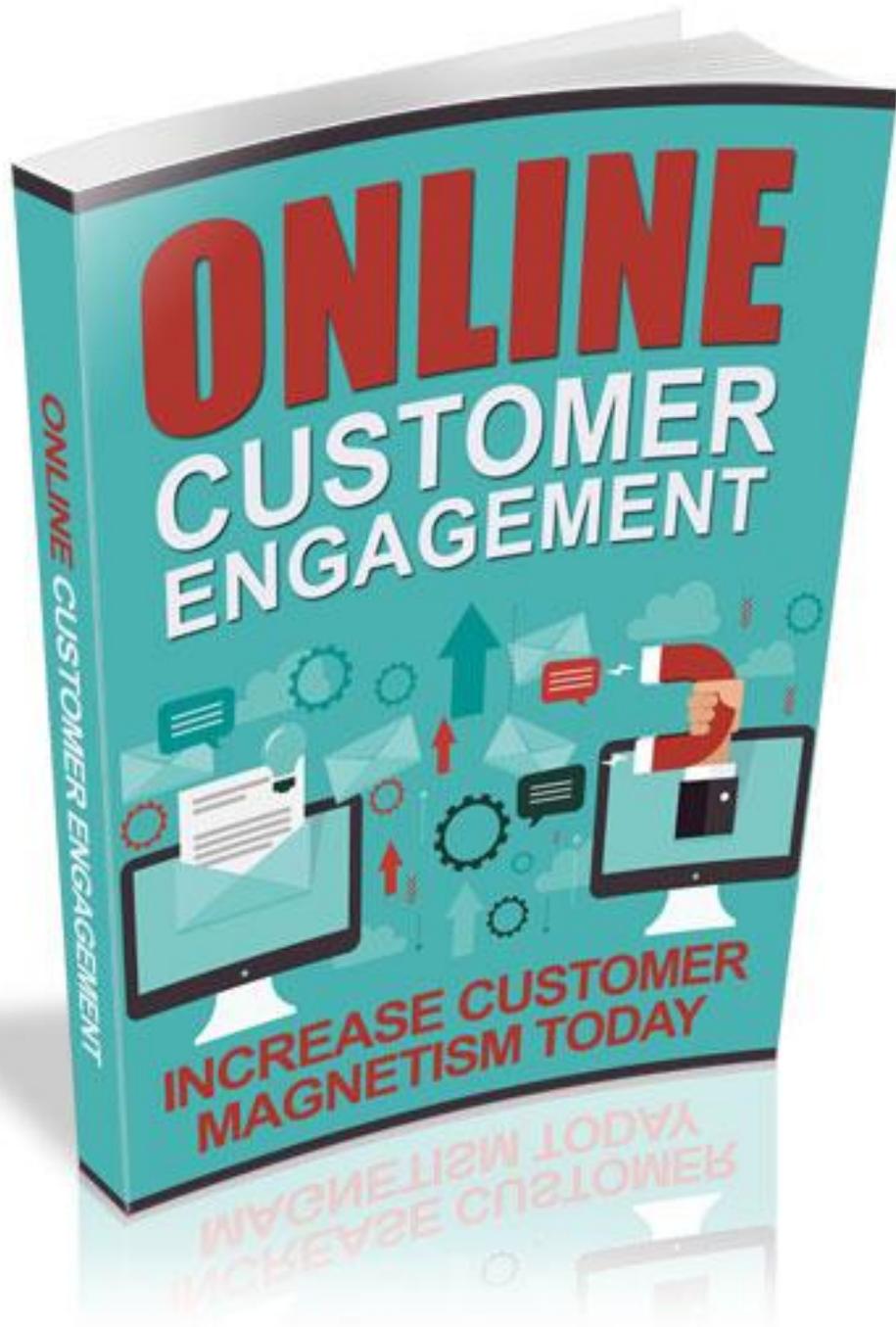


Online Customer Engagement



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How You Can Increase Customer Engagement Online

Small businesses will often rely on their website for consumers to find them, so this is your opportunity to make a good impression with potential leads or returning customers. Therefore, you want to make sure that site keeps your visitors engaged and interested.

There are few brands that aren't aware of the importance of being engaging on the web, but smaller companies often don't believe they have the resources or time to be updating their websites on a more continuous basis with fresh and new content.

So what many small businesses do is create a Facebook page and forgo the website. There is no question that Facebook and other social media outlets are an excellent place to begin but if you want to gain the trust of your customer you need a website – it really is that important, because it shows that you have a company that is established.

You want to make sure that your website experience will match your customer service experience. We live in a world that is increasingly mobile and so consumers expect the same shopping experience online as they would get in your store. Therefore, it is a good idea to offer a seamless customer experience such as providing in-depth details on your products/services, purchasing information, easy contact, and a way for customers to quickly reach you such as live chat.

You should also personalize your site in a way that works for your business. Enhance your customer experience by tailoring your site to their needs. Don't use flashy gimmicks. Use big data analytics to learn what it is your customer is looking for when they arrive at your site and then create an experience that pleases them.

Make sure you are using social media as a tool to communicate and engage with your customers online. Social media's role has changed a lot in the last few years. Not only is it a way to share and promote your content from your site, it can be an extension in your customer service – a quick and easy way for your customers to contact and connect with you. You can also reach your customers quickly and in a very cost effective way, that costs only pennies per customer.

Engaging your customers online is no longer a novelty – something you can think about offering. It is what consumers want and if you aren't providing it, you need to expect that they will look elsewhere.

Why Customer Engagement is Key to Your Success

Customer engagement focuses on you encouraging your customers to share and interact with your company staff. It encouraged them to share their experiences and in return, what you create from them is your brand. When you execute this well, you will develop a solid customer engagement strategy that will promote loyalty and growth.

Those companies that focus on customer engagement focus on value creation rather than on extracting revenue. These companies are well aware of how to engage their customers online. They know how to provide them with real value whether they offer an superior end to end experience for their customer, exceptional content on their website, the best possible customer support and service, what they are doing is making sure they deliver more than just your typical sell. Incorporating these customer engagement strategies can be healthy for your business.

Remember Happy Customers are the Life of Your Business

Obsess over your customers! It's necessary to success! It begins with the culture you establish for your company and making sure that your support team is at the frontlines to make sure your customers are happy and their needs are addressed. Your entire company from top to bottom needs to share that providing an amazing customer experience is necessary for the key to your company's success.

Think about how your company model can service your customers in the best way possible. What is it your customers need from you and when do your customers need you. What hours should you be available? Do you offer a seamless process for your customers?

Your customer experience allows you to offer you a way to increase your customer satisfaction and loyalty, which in turn leads to them advocating for you. Your company grows because you have happy customers. Companies that miss this may stick around for awhile but they will eventually falter.

It is much more difficult to continue to build new customers than it is to keep your current customers engaged and happy, and wanting to return to buy more products from you. Companies that actually value their customers and work hard at engaging them are wise companies and they are far more likely to be here a decade or two from now.

Your customer is the lifeblood of your business and it is important to ensure that all of your employees treat the customer with the importance that they deserve. What an interesting and engaging relationship one can build with their employees.

The KPIS and Customer Engagement Goals

Customer Engagement is often overlooked. Yet every company should have their KPIS and customer engagement goals set. So what should that look like?

ROI or return on investment is key to every business and Ro, which is the return, is up to you. What one sees is a good return on their investment is personal and it is defined by the company and the shareholders or by management. You need to make sure that you define this.

You do not need to make sure that all is directed in a commercial direction, but it is a good idea if it ties back to your commercial venue. It is easy to make sure that your commercial goals are linked to your marketing KPIs or you customer engagement by simply developing your own matrix.

You can use this approach so that people from varying levels that each have their own perspective within the company can see the value of having a retention program or customer engagement program. For example, look at a referral of your product to a friend vs. a customer who makes their third and fourth purchase. Both of these matters. Both of these are linked to the traffic on your website. As a result, you can easily tie them both to sales.

For the repeat customer it is clearly visible that there is lifetime value just as there is for the new customer. So when it comes to new vs. return visitors Google Analytics is an excellent tool for marketers who are trying to establish commercial goals and need to see if those goals have been met.

You will be able to easily see where the customer engagement takes place and the direct relationship is built. For example, you could see that Facebook, which is generally customer orientated, is where you had your first customer engagement. You might have a customer group on your website. You might have a customer form. Your goal is to find the simplest way to judge customer engagement.

With social media usage growing at exponential rates, it is key to amplify your message. When you engage your customer on some level, you can look at just how well your content/message is resonating to your audience.

Sales are your end goal; however, before the sales, the KPIs can make things more manageable for those on the front lines and it will certainly make it more meaningful.

How to Improve Your Online Customer Engagement

If your goal is to improve your online customer engagement, there are a number of things you can do. One of the main things you should consider is how simplistic your store is. You achieve simplicity by focusing on your customers resources – those resources that they have the least of are what you should be focused on. For example, for some it might be mental effort for others it might be time, and for still others it might be the overall shopping experience.

If you are able to simplify an existing customer routine, you are much more likely to have them engage. In fact, if you just remove the distractions you will have made great strides in improving the simplicity of your site and making your customer happy and more likely to engage.

Consumers look for shortcuts to reach their goals. For your customer it is important to discover a unique value and then to find the shortest way to get to that unique value. When you highlight things that help your customer find the shortest path to get what they want, they are much more likely to be interested in making the purchase. You will have a very engaged customer when you have one that sees a simple way to get what they want from your site.

You need to be always meeting the expectations of your customer. In fact, it's a sure fire way to enjoy customer engagement online. You can meet your customers' expectations by increasing your

product/service relevance and communication. You achieve product relevance by providing testimonials, reviews, and complete instructions on using your product/service.

You need to have open lines of communication with your customers so that they can quickly get their questions answered. Online live chat is one way to accomplish this. You should offer as many lines as communication as possible, including email, live chat, telephone, social media, etc. Make it convenient for your customer to get in contact with you.

You also need to make sure that you focus on creating the right channels with the right message at the right time, for your customer's first step. Because if you miss them on the first step, they become your competitors customer not yours. All of your customers will have their own preference. Some will like social media, some will like email others will like a follow up call from you. It's a good idea to test your customer market before you choose.

Customer engagement is key to the success of your business. Being able to engage customers online has made it easier in many ways, but has also complicated the situation too.

What Content Will Engage the Different Types of Consumer Audiences?

Customer engagement – in the world of consumerism it makes the world go round. So what type of content or offer do you engage in to keep the different types of audiences happy? Good question!

Capturing data and then using that data to make sound choices is how you are going to customize the content for your audiences. When you are able to understand your consumers' needs, intent, and past purchasing history, you can leverage that information to re-engage and re-market to that audience. You can easily achieve this because now you really to speak to their needs. How you do this will depend on what kind of company you are, what resources you have available and what your budget looks like.

At the root of these strategies is useful content that is on topic and allows you to show a continuous relevance to the consumers who are purchasing specific products from you. Through your consumer engagement, you should be getting an indication of what motivates the consumer and then you should be diligently working at helping to solve their issues.

Blogs are a good way to have all of the information centralized. If you create a content hub and then you can repurpose that same content to Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Instagram, Tumblr, and the list goes on. You can use as many of these social media outlets as you feel you will benefit from. All provide you with additional opportunities to reach your audience and re-connect. Add scheduled email communication to your program that promotes brand recognition.

When you offer useful information that the consumer finds valuable they are more receptive to hearing and sharing your message. It keeps your product on the front lines online and good branding means your product has the potential to grow into being a household name.

This approach means that you can address the needs of the many different audience types that you have. You can keep each engaged in something of value for them, so there is no need to lose any of your audience. This approach also provides the opportunity to re-promote your products/services the right way and at the appropriate time, which add value. When you re-engage you re-affirm the relevance of what you have to offer. In that way, it is right side up marketing, because it has an inbound effect, rather than an interruptive outbound effect.

This is how you engage your different types of consumer audience and keep them happy along with keeping your company's bottom line happy.

Discover the Video Content Your Competition is Using to Engage Customers

Typically, marketing agencies benefit by using tools that allow them to see what the competition of their client are up to. From the results they find, they will then create their own campaign. It saves them time as they can use what's already proving to be working (or not working) within the industry.

You now can take advantage of tools available to you and find this information out for yourself. Whether your company is small or medium in size, you will find these tools to compare video marketing campaigns extremely helpful. You can download the results into an Excel spreadsheet for ease of use. Never has it been easier to see how your competition is engaging customers with videos.

Rivalfox hit the market in 2013 and it offers on demand competitor analysis using an algorithm that collects the results from hundreds of different competitor KPIs. It collects information from all the social media venues in real time. You can engage in the pure statistics to measure the success of your competitions video campaign or you can invest in user testing to really understand what your customers are saying about the competitions website and the videos posted. You get a 14 day trial period and then the cost ranges from \$49 to \$299 depending on the number of users.

Unruly is another software tool that you can turn to. You will find larger companies like Adidas, HSBC or Evian use Unruly. Clients use analytics from owned, earned, and paid media using Unruly Analytics. You can use the Benchmark Edition or the Campaign Edition. With the latter, you can assess the performance of each campaign and measure the success of these campaigns at engaging customers. You can also look at your own videos and KPIs along with the competitions. You create the parameters that will measure success. You also choose if you want to bundle videos together. You can identify trends and look at social media avenues where the biggest effect is being seen.

Once you have the information you need to create your marketing strategy and decide how you are going to engage your customers. This does not mean you should run out and copy what your competition has done, but it does mean you can find things that work and you will be able to emulate the success of your competition.

3 Ways to Increase Your Customer Engagement

Customer engagement is a critical component in building a strong customer base. 3 ways to increase your customer engagement include clustering, content and copy. Let's have a detailed look at each.

Clustering

Anytime you can add a dose of reality to the online shopping experience, it is desirable. What I mean by this is being able to create the same type of experience that your customer would get from being in your store.

When you cluster products together that you might not necessarily find sitting together in a store or in website navigation it is a method you can use to add a human feel to your website merchandising. A reminder, you must never forget about cross selling. You want to encourage people to see wholes rather than pieces. For example, with clothing you want your customer to see an outfit rather than an individual piece.

Content

We find that commerce and content tend to collide. What we are talking about is the content that is in addition to the descriptions that describe your products or services. Your content marketing should be related to your products/services and is often referred to as lifestyle content.

For example, food providers often will offer recipes, clothing merchants will often provide tips on various ways to wear different pieces of clothing, tech merchants will often provide information on website design or content, etc. You get the picture. You are going to first do an excellent job of describing your products/services for sale and then you are also going to provide value added content that your customers will want to read.

This will need to be updated on a regular basis to keep it fresh and have your customers returning. Remember, your content can be used to provide information on how to make the best use out of your product(s) and thus help to increase sales.

Copy

When it comes to selling your products or services, you should always be selling the benefits, not the features of the products. Make sure to include SEO benefits and to keep it light and add some fun if it is appropriate, which it won't always be.

It is important to know your audience and provide copy that works for them. The better you know your audience the better you will be at doing a great job of this and you'll be rewarded by repeat customers to your site and an increase in repeat sales.

Put these 3 practices into play sooner rather than later!

Focus on the Right Channel to Optimize Online Customer Engagement

Establishing the right channel for your business to excel in online customer engagement involves having the right message at the right time for each customer segment. Customers like to engage in different ways. Some prefer social media channels like Facebook while others prefer email. Test your market and determine what will work best for your customers. Check out these suggestions. They've been known to work very well.

1. Become the authority figure for your products/services in your business. Bring your expertise out in the open so that your customers can clearly see you are the expert. Offer free advice through your website, social media, or another company's website. In today's market the only way you can establish that you are an authority figure is to offer something of value to your customers. This type of engagement increases your authority while interaction with no value will lower your authority image.

2. Supporting a customer community is a good way to establish a group of buyers but the best way for you to actually engage your customers online is have open channels that flow back to your business. Provide access to product designers, your shipping managers, your production team, etc. all of which can offer insight into the how and why of the way things work. This is generally deeply engaging to your customers. You can even provide a 'how we get things done video' that walks customers through the steps. This type of engagement increases customer loyalty.

3. If you can offer your customers some type of game like experience this can be a real hit! Visitors love to compete and they like to have a unique shopping experience. So create a contest that has a number of different milestones so the customer sticks with it. Offer a draw for something free weekly. There are many different consumer type games and contests that you can offer. Whatever you come up with make sure it fits your customer profile. This is an excellent method to engage your customers. The majority of customers like something that breaks them out of the routine shopping experience and grabs their interest.

There you have it – three excellent methods that you can use to engage your customers online in a more effective manner. Those companies who are successful at engaging their customers excel in their markets. You too can be one of them!

Fixing the Gap Between Customer Needs and Delivery by Prioritizing Customer Satisfaction

Too often, the customer makes their purchase and then the delivery is scheduled and occurs, but there is little or no more contact with the client. The customer experience becomes nil, nonexistent. This is not acceptable. There must be online customer engagement before the sale, during the sale and after the sale.

How do you feed back the customers experience with your product/service? How do you make sure this happens? You certainly have many tools and options to choose from. The two elements you want to proceed with to help you value just how big the opportunity was or is; include looking at the reactive and the proactive approach.

Reactive

Many companies have made excellent use of customer reactions. Zappos might be one of the best examples out there. This company is obsessed with their brand and making the consumer just as obsessed by using the tools that are out there. Tools like Facebook and Twitter offer channels for your customer service regardless of what the customer wants.

Tools like User Voice are becoming more commonly used, where feedback for product development can be gathered, and where you can gather information on what might be missing in your product. Very valuable information and important in customer engagement.

Proactive

This is an approach that some companies are highly successful with and Dell is one of them. Dell listens to the entire market and then looks for the happy and unhappy customers so that they can pro actively resolve any problems their customers are having. They actually have a command center. By engaging with both happy and unhappy customers, they can clearly see what they are doing right and what they are doing wrong.

These methods are not mutually exclusive to one another. They are simply individual processes that a company can use. One or both may be valuable to the company. Both do require staff that are focused on customer engagement. These programs will not run themselves.

Customer engagement is more overlooked now than any other time in marketing history. Ironically, right now, we have more tools available to use than any other time, so companies should be flocking to the tools to find out more about their customers so they can do a better job of finding them, keeping them, marketing to them, branding their product to them and creating a product that their customer wants. A handful of smart companies are doing just that. What is your company doing?

Google Example of Brand Marketing That Engages Your Customers

When it comes to running a successful marketing campaign, it is pretty hard to argue with what Google has to say. They deliver the simplest form of services. Google doesn't just promote the spirit of its own innovation, it also encourages its audience to participate in self discover, telling them they have the potential to make the most out of the interne, out of the web.

Are you targeting the correct audience? If all your marketing efforts are not focusing on your customers, it's a waste of money and effort. You need to focus on your customers and you should be able to recognize your ideal customer so that you can base your efforts on those customers.

What is the gender, age, or job profile of your customer? What are your customers' abilities, interests, likes, dislikes, etc? When you do a proper audit, you will know your customer inside out. You are busy promoting your brand with zeal. You might be looking to send out a message, increase your followers, or improve your conversion rate. For each thing you want your audience to do, you will need to have a call to action that is effective. In fact, this call to action is a key part of promoting your brand and engaging with your customers, yet another reason why a brand audit can be extremely beneficial.

Let's have a quick look at the best brand audit process.

1. Learn how your company is placing across the internet. There are many tools you can use to see where your brand is being mentioned – Google Search, Social Mention, Google Alerts, etc. You should be monitoring whether your brand is doing good or bad, where it needs to be improved, what your customer base is, what their needs are, and whether you have any bad reviews.
2. Take time to analyze your content. This can be tedious but since your content plays such an important role in your brand becoming established, it is worth your time to do a solid SEO audit. In fact, it's mandatory. Check how your pages are ranking, identify the purpose of each page, and figure out if the information is properly targeting your audience.
3. Make sure to analyze your traffic being generated on your site. It's an important part of your brand audit so that you can see how your site is attracting visitors
4. Monitor your social media channels and see what your customers are saying. Anytime there are complaints address them immediately. Make sure your interaction with your customers has the tone you want.

Managing your online brand and your engagement with your customers means you need to always be focused on what's going on.

4 Ways to Improve Your Online Customer Engagement

Improving your online customer engagement is key to your overall success. Let's look at 4 ways you can use to improve your customer engagement.

Value Proposition

For the majority of ecommerce merchants or any store with a website, taking advantage of value proposition can be a useful tool to engage your customers. In fact, many of the experts believe it to be vital. Your website design will leave your visitors with an impression about your products and website.

Web users don't like to read unless they must, but that said, you need to make sure that you clearly state what your company stands for, your return policy, history of your products, and anything else that is valuable and important. Of course, value added content is important too, just make sure that it is written in an easy to read format and includes plenty of lists.

Create a Product Video

Many businesses have found that adding product videos to their website gives them a boost in their conversion rate. What we know for all websites is that when you add video it creates a richer, more impactful product page that is going to engage and interest your customer much better than straight text. They say a picture is worth a thousand words and that has been proven true time and time again online. If you can't create a product video than at least make sure that you add pictures that are relevant to what you are talking about.

Personal Customer Reviews

Customer reviews are very powerful, which is why they are so popular. They can take many different forms but it seems the most powerful customer review has a picture of the face of the person making the review. So encourage your customers to post their pic when they write a review.

Create New Categories

You want to make sure that you don't confuse your visitors but you should still constantly tweak your categories and your filters to ensure that your visitors have the best possible navigation. The navigation on your website can engage your customer or have them hitting the back button in two seconds flat. So, make it user friendly. Also, add categories for special events or holidays that apply to your products or services. You might also add a sales page or a promotion category. Don't be afraid to play a little here. It's good to keep things alive.

These 4 things are sure to help you do a better job of engaging your customer, so why not plan on implementing them today?

Does Your Content Need More Personality?

We all know that there is a need for relevant and targeted content for your audience. But do we have to stick to the corporate image or can we show who we are personally and perhaps even add some humor. That depends. Many companies tend to play it safe and show no personality while others are much lighter and share more of the personality of those responsible for their posts as long as it aligns with their tone of voice and brand. Once content is shared, it never goes away so before you post it is important to know your market. Then you can decide if your content could use some personality.

The Top Emotions We Invoice In Social Media Content

Buzzsumo analyzed more than 10,000 of the most shareable articles for topic and tone. What they found is that the top three emotions invoked were laughter, awe, and amusement.

When you publish for content marketing, it engages a psychological contract, which is why it is so important for you to comprehend how you can call upon the correct emotions to make the online connection a positive one. We understand that people sometimes become angry and this can cause damage to your brand, which in turn can cause a loss of sales. But can we still be controversial if we are not being political or personal?

It is important to balance engaging, positive content that is sharable – there is no question that this can be a challenge. Although in some market sectors like B2B it can be easier. The question becomes should you play it safe or should you take the chance and push your boundaries by including content that is entertaining and thought provoking and that may not be agreed upon by all.

According to the experts the benefits of sharing entertaining positive content far exceed the risks (at least in most cases) because it is this kind of content that is likely to be shared for its value. Your visitors are likely to share this type of content with others who may not be currently following you and this can lead to a growth in followers and potential customers. An interesting topic can be an excellent ice breaker, and when you add a little personality it can take you from zero to one hundred in no time – at least when it comes to sharing your content and that's the goal here right?

It's important to not be worried about showing personality but rather to ensure you have set boundaries around that personality so none of your followers or visitors are negatively affected and you do not negatively affect your brand.

Creating Integrated a Communications Lifecycle that Engages Your Customer

If you want to keep your customers connected, you need to create some type of communication lifecycle. You can't just sell to them and forget about them. In fact, you might call this the Holy Grail in engaging customers and keeping them connected to your company and your brand.

You can take advantage of marketing automation to accomplish this task. There are a number of marketing automation tools on the market. Be sure to check them out and find one that works for you. This is an area that is in its infancy but it is being developed by some of the best in the integrated marketing automation industry like Eloqua or EDialog. Smaller companies are making this kind of technology available to smaller companies. Marketo, Office Autopilot and Genius are three of them.

Marketing automation is very large and there are a number of different platforms, each with their own strengths and focuses. Marketing automation will include the gathering of information, analytics, auto lead generation, lead conversion, and cross department flow. This is going to save a great deal of time

and it is going to make it much easier to stay connected with existing customers and potential customers.

The best starting point is a lead from a B2B marketer, who focuses on the automation of lead generation and conversion. Focusing on email that is outbound is the simplest example of automated marketing. From there it grows and grows. It is complex and has so much to offer. Information is constantly being added, changed and updated and at the end of the day, you have an incredible amount of knowledge to help you to keep and grow your customer database.

The power is in having the ability to layer on the purchasing intentions through web forms and click through behavior, and then to turn up/down the intensity of promotions and to strengthen the offers that are applicable to the consumer.

You need to integrate your email communication, SMS, direct mail, etc. and it is completely doable using these platforms because you will design your own communication sequence for each of the segments and sub-segments.

Your communication with your customer needs to begin before the sale and carry through long after the sale. Your communication needs to complete a lifecycle so that consumers are engaged from the beginning to the end and beyond.

Follow These 5 Tips to Test Whether You Are Successfully Engaging Your Customers

You create a marketing campaign, but do you know if it actually working or do you just go on a wing and a prayer and hope for the best. Here are 5 tips you can use to test whether you are successfully engaging your customer.

1. Test the audience – You need to ensure that your Twitter followers, LinkedIn network, Facebook followers, Google+ followers, etc. are actually the people that you need following your business and that they are the people you plan to be doing business with. If you are not posting the best content to engage your customers, it will be a waste of time and you will not reap the benefits. The same applies if you are not targeting the right people.
2. Test the content – Once you have identified who the target audience, it is time to test your content on your social media sites. You need to know what content is getting the most comments, likes, shares, etc. Take notes and post content that is similar in the future to keep enjoying the benefits.
3. Test the depth of your content – You might get plenty of comments, tons of shares or likes, but do you actually know why you are getting them? Find out if it is your content that motivates them to actually respond. This helps you to understand the issues at hand.

4. Test what the best time of day is – Whether you schedule your posts or manually post them, you should be checking to see what time in the day your posts are getting the most engagement from your customers. Once you have a good idea of what content is working best, then you can figure out what time is working best.

5. Test each site individually – You have limited time so it is better if you do your checks one social media network at a time. By doing so, you will not be taking on more than you can handle at a time. You need to make sure that you look at each of the sites that you are marketing to your customers on.

That's it in a nutshell. Five tips that when you put into practice can help you to ensure that you are engaging your customer is the best possible way and that you are maximizing your marketing to your existing clients and potential clients.

The Value of Likes and Shares in Engaging Your Customer

Engaging your customers online is an important undertaking of every business and one of those ways is to engage them through social media. The social response is a way for your customers and potential customers to weigh in on what is being said on social media.

When a follower likes your content it generally means they have read it and they found it interesting or agreed with it. For the most part if a person, likes something it means it didn't offend them. A like is similar to a 'thumbs up.' If they share your content then generally it means that they see it as having some value to others.

If you earn a comment, you need to realize this takes the most amount of effort so it is apparent that you have successfully achieved a high level of engagement and that is what your goal should be. To know that you are engaging with your customers online in an effective manner, you want to see them leaving comments on your posts. If day after day your posts get little engagement then you need to consider what you can do to change the situation, because it is apparent that you are not successfully engaging.

Of course, results you can measure relate to why you are on social media to begin with. If you are there just to raise your brand's awareness than you will likely have to accept getting likes and shares and little more. However, if you are there to engage with your followers or connections then you will want to create a two way conversation as much as possible.

You need to recognize that the more you can create these two way conversations and engage with your customers and followers the more interested they will be in visiting your pages and seeing what's new and exciting in your company world and what new products/services you might have to offer.

Generating this kind of interest is good for business. It takes little effort to click a like button and really not even read what's in front of you. It takes much more effort to engage on a post and that means your followers are actually paying attention to what you have to say and they find it valuable enough to have

a conversation about. That's true customer engagement online and that's what is going to grow your business and improve brand recognition.

How to Engage Your Customers With Holiday Marketing

It seems there's always a holiday around the corner. When it comes to online marketing no longer, do we wait for Black Friday to send our online marketing into overdrive? Instead, we now address the holidays as they arrive. In fact, smart businesses think about starting their marketing kick offs earlier rather than late.

At one point, we recognized the main holidays like Christmas, New Years, Easter, etc. Now we recognize many holiday (as far as marketing goes) including Black Friday, Halloween, Martin Luther King Day, etc. It seems retailers from all walks have learned that holiday marketing can be extremely beneficial to them.

Let's look at Halloween as an example. When you are planning your Halloween campaign consider this, 71.5 percent of all adults plan to celebrate or participate in some kind of Halloween activity. There is no specific demographic that is more likely to participate than another. This would indicate that no matter what demographic you serve you can benefit from running a marketing campaign through Halloween. This is one example of how knowing the stats for a particular holiday can be beneficial in helping you decide whether to run a campaign. Generally speaking, if you ignore a holiday you will be missing out on a marketing opportunity and a way to engage your customers.

How to Engage Your Customers With Holidays

1. Have a loyalty program where holidays build additional bonus points. You can even run a separate loyalty program from just holidays if you want. Always test the waters first. See how receptive your customers are to a loyalty program. Try to design one specific to your brand and your customer needs. Your options truly are endless.
2. Offer free giveaways with purchases on holidays or create mystery packs that you sell on holidays. You can use this in many ways to participate in the festivities of the holiday season. Don't be afraid to be extremely creative with your giveaways and try to tie them to the holiday.
3. A holiday is an excellent time to give your site a facelift. Work with your website designer to make small holiday related changes to your pages. You can have a lot of fun to this! You might even be able to make the changes yourself depending on your skills or how much access you have to your site.
4. This is an excellent time to reach out to your customers and engage them. You can combine your marketing for that period with the holiday. Include social media and email campaigns. Let your customers know that you love to celebrate these special times.

Learning how to engage your customers by incorporating holiday celebrations is a skill you won't want to miss out on.

Online Customer Engagement Means You Need Insight on Your Customers

If you think about it, the customers that have purchased from you are special. You have their money - they liked what you had to say and offer and so they made a purchase. These customers now have their own unique perspective on customer engagement with your company, from finding your company online, to comparing you to the competition, and deciding to buy from you. What happens after that? Your company might reward them, simply re-sell to them, or maybe even ignore them.

The first thing you need to understand is how they see you based on their experience with your company. This means you need to harness the insights you have on your existing customers and these insights could help you do a much better job of generating sales.

There are numerous ways that you can generate customer insight. However, you should incorporate some of it into the day-to-day operation of your business. Other components can be carried out during key periods throughout the year. It's a good idea to ask questions around their satisfaction with their purchase, how their online customer experience was, what it was like to deal with your company from an outside perspective, did you meet your customers requirements and expectations, etc.

Here are some ways that you can use to gather this information:

If you don't have a steady stream of data and prefer to ad-hoc, emailing out a survey works great. For example, once a year, you can send out a large questioning based on your database. It is the most common way to gather insights and it can be done last minute when you feel like things are sliding. However, it is better if you use your email survey to capture insight on your marketing and sales process.

You can gather data from the masses who do nothing on your site using tools like Kampyle or 4Q – these have low commitments. In addition to learning about your customers, it is important that you learn about those who visit and leave without making a purchase.

It is better not ask all the questions at once. You can overwhelm your customers by doing so. Try to build ways to capture relevant data at different stages of the online customer engagement so that you learn about your potential consumer, as they get closer to making their purchase.

Feedback and insights are an important part of understanding your online customer engagement and determining whether it is effective or whether it has weak areas that should be addressed. Make sure that you make use of it.

How One Company Uses Viral Video to Engage Customers at Minimal Cost

Every year there are a number of digital conferences that occur, sharing how they have enjoyed brand success as well as the obstacles they have overcome. Recently at one of those digital conferences, Tesco shared their international marketing campaign and we think it's worth sharing further.

The challenge that Tesco was facing in their international marketing is that while they were a household name throughout the UK, they were entering new markets, which included their online grocery delivery service. This did not have much awareness – in fact, Tesco would call it poor. So its goal was to raise the awareness of this service with a younger generation who generally was watching less television than previous generations.

Part of Tesco's solution to this was their lighthearted, funny, videos that aired on YouTube. These videos went viral in Poland in no time at all. This is an excellent example of how a marketing campaign can use entertainment to create a message that is appealing to different cultures. It is an excellent example of how you can engage your customers and potential customers on a low budget and enjoy great success.

Tesco began this trial in Poland and YouTube videos reached more than 740,000 views in just a few months, peaking at a more than 1 ½ million views. The cost – only a few thousand dollars for each of the videos. The benefits far exceeded the cost of producing and airing these videos. In fact, it exceeded their own expectations.

It's time to back away from promotion driven videos that are very expensive to produce and instead think about creating marketing videos on a low budget that will engage and interest your customers. It's time to look at how your company could produce a video that was entertaining and that your market wanted to watch, without spending a huge amount of money.

You may not have even considered videos as a marketing tool you can take advantage of. You should! More and more companies are recognizing the value of videos. YouTube remains the most popular mode of distribution but there are others such as Vimeo. Don't be afraid to explore the various channels.

In addition, to creating and sharing these videos to engage your customers don't forget to share them through your social media networks such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc. – there are many! Take advantage of a fun and interesting way to engage your customers!

How to Make Sure You Engage Your Customer and Give Them a Valued Experience

Your customers are important to you. In fact, they are your business. So how do you make sure you engage your customer and give them a valued experience? Good question!

You need to layer your customer's experience, but how do you do that? The best way is to build social objects that create a sense of community that operates like a hub. You have a center point and then everything flows out from there. This is a great way to re-affirm your brand relevance. Why?

There are two reasons. You connect consumers with other customers and create a deeper more meaningful experience on your brand and related subjects. In doing that, you are able to re-sell. Two powerful reasons! This hopefully helps to make it clearer for you.

A platform for sharing – One of the most powerful methods to stay valuable in the consumers eyes is to allow consumers to connect and share amongst themselves with other like minded people. This creates the 'perfect storm,' because like minded people are flocking together so you can deliver ongoing information and insight about your brand to one solid platform. Here discussion can take place and these people can share with others. You are directly engaging with your existing customers, which is so important and they enjoy a value added experience. Tons of discussion can go on here. A blog on your website is the perfect central point and from there it can branch out to social media networks that are relevant such as Twitter, Facebook, Google+, Tumblr, etc. You can post one new blog a week that will carry you through the week. Of course, more is better, but the point is this is what you can get away with.

Interactive tools – Make use of the many interactive tools that are available to help make it easier to engage with your customers and potential customers. There are Q&A tools the help you make decisions, there are analytical tools that help you see where your audience is coming from and whether you are on target, there are tools that can ... well the list goes on. Take advantage of any of the tools that can make your life easier. Google Analytics is a must.

Engaging with existing customers not only helps to keep them as an active customer, it helps you to learn more about this customer and how you can continue to offer them products/services under your brand.

3 Key Ways to Engage Your Customers Online

Engaging your customers online is an important part of your business success. To do so takes some work and planning on your part. Here are 3 key ways that are guaranteed to help you engage better with your customers online.

1. Social Media

Social media a very broad arena. It includes many things such as crowd sourced imagery, simple embedded tweets, social sign-in for comments, incentives against content, trending items, share imperatives and much more.

Social media is a tool that should never be overlooked. Because there are so many social media, networks to choose from you need to know your customer well and then choose what social media

avenues would work best for your business. Use as many social media outlets as you feel will be beneficial to engaging with your customers.

2. Site search

Make your site search as simple and as useful as possible. For example, ToysRUs has their search setup to auto complete. It also shows the SKUs for each term the user types in. Take this example and use it on your website, even on a smaller scale.

The accuracy of your results is very important so focus on that as your number one priority. Then make things simple for your visitor to use. Make the search as functional as possible and the easier it makes your visitors ability to find what they want the better.

3 Live chat

The call to action is important on every ecommerce site, and live chat can play an important role in achieving your call to action. It is a valuable feature it has so many uses. You can have live chat to solve customer complaints, answer questions, provide inventory lists, etc. and it can include a call to action. Live chat provides instant gratification for the customer and an excellent way for you to engage your customer online.

However, it is important not to frustrate your customer by claiming you have live chat and then having it seldom actually available, instead answered by a computer. No live chat is better than this method. Clearly state the hours when live chat will be available.

Make use of these 3 key ways to engage your customer online and keep them happy. Your customers are the key to your success, so make sure that you give engaging with them the attention it deserves.