



Why Social Media?

When any business looks at a marketing strategy an important consideration is the media mix. In other words, where are you going to reach your customers? Depending on your target customer, budget, and strategy, it might be print, a website, email, or some combination of the three. For some businesses in certain markets, radio or TV might also be a part of the mix.

Social media has changed everything because, unlike all the media mentioned, it is a democratic medium. Everyone with an Internet connection and a computer or smart phone can have a voice. Even more importantly, social media is a two-way conversation. That means that a brand does not talk to its customers but rather with them. What did you do when you wanted to complain about a product or

you had a question about it? Maybe you wrote a letter or picked up the phone, hoping to eventually get a response or find the right person to talk to. Compare that to the Starbucks Facebook page, to name just one example. Customers respond to the

content, ask questions, and even criticize the company. Through it all, Starbucks is there having a conversation with their customers.

At this point you might wonder where the value lies in this sort of engagement. If you have ever read articles about effective sales skills or attended a sales class you have been told that you should have a conversation with your customers before even thinking about getting to the design and sales. You talk to your customer about the weather, ask questions about the art, talk about how the kids are

On social media, a brand does not talk to its customers but with them



This tweet from Oreo during the Super Bowl blackout is a textbook example of how social media can spread a message. It was shared over 15,000 times and likely seen by about 4 million people.

doing in school, and congratulate your customer on a newly earned diploma. This builds a personal relationship, and only after you have established this relationship have you earned the right to make a sale. All of this is Sales 101 no matter the industry or product.

In a typical framing business there is a trickle of customers coming in and out during the day and you might be lucky to see a regular customer three or four times a year. That's a lot of catching up every time you see them, isn't it? Imagine the possibility of having a conversation with customers every day of the year. If you succeed at social media, you have the opportunity to reach not just existing customers but their friends and family as well. A well-crafted post has the potential to reach literally thousands of people.

Are you skeptical about that? Take a look at one great example to see how many people a message can reach. During the 2013 Super Bowl in New Orleans the stadium lights went out for about thirty minutes. Oreo had their social media team on call during the game, ready to respond within minutes. Pouncing on an opportunity, they sent out their famous “dunk in the dark” tweet. So many people liked it and found it amusing that over 15,000 shared it by retweeting it. Oreo has about 750,000 Twitter followers, so all of those people had the potential to see it. Even more impressive is the fact that an average Twitter user has 208 followers, and all of the followers of the people who retweeted Oreo’s picture could see it. Simple math shows us that the



Dawn Fraley at The Great Frame Up in Carmel, IN, used Facebook to promote a show opening. A clear call to action asking followers to share it and a \$10 boost helped it reach over 2,000 people.

message had the potential to reach nearly 4 million people. In reality the number is far higher since it was extraordinary enough to make the news. That’s called going viral!

Of course, the average framing businesses, and even the big manufac-

turers in the industry, do not have the sort of budgets and resources available to brands like Starbucks or Oreo. The good news though is that an effective social media strategy can be carried out at no cost or with a very modest budget of \$20 or \$30 a month.

As an example of the power of social media for small businesses, consider this post by Dawn Fraley, the owner of The Great Frame Up in Carmel, IN. It was liked 104 times, shared 25 times, and received six comments, reaching a total 1,260 people. To give it extra reach, Dawn boosted the post, which is a paid option. For \$10 it reached another 819 people. This is roughly one cent per person reached, a bargain by any measure.

These numbers are modest

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compared to the big brands, but consider their relative sizes. For the minute or two Dawn spent posting the message and \$10 to boost it, she was able to reach over 2,000 people with the message of how her business cares about the local community and its arts. Ask yourself how much it would cost to get the same message out by direct mail or other traditional media and you should start to see the potential.

Another important consideration is the fact that it was shared 25 times. This means that not only did the message resonate with her followers, but some of them also thought it was important enough to share with their friends and family. In no other medium can you get your customers to do your marketing work for you.



By sharing a story about her support of the local arts festival, Dawn was able to promote her business as a strong supporter of the community and the arts. The only cost involved was the time to copy a link, write a short headline, and click a button.

You may still be wondering if this is all a good idea. After all, Facebook is for sharing silly cat pictures and Instagram is full of people showing us what they're having for lunch. Yes, there is a lot of that, but at the same time there are millions of great conversations going on all day long in social media.

Have a look at some numbers:

- Number of tweets per second: 6,000
- Instagram photos per day: over 80 million
- Facebook content posted per month: over 30 billion updates, photos, links, etc.

That is a staggering amount of information and if you dismiss social media you are missing out on an incredibly powerful medium. Who's doing all the talking? Your customers are; you just need to know where to look. Here are some facts about Facebook and Pinterest, to look at just two platforms.

Facebook

- Users worldwide: 1.49 billion
- Users in US: 134 million
- 30 percent of female users are

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- 25 to 34 years old; 17 percent are 35 to 44; 20 percent are 45 to 54
- 72 percent of people with an annual household income of \$75,000 or more use Facebook
- 74 percent of college grads use Facebook

Pinterest

- Users worldwide: 100 million
- Users in US: 47 million
- 68.2 percent of users are female
- 27.4 percent of users are 25 to 34; 22.1 percent are 35 to 44; 17 percent are 45 to 54
- 34 percent of people with an annual household income of \$75,000 or more use Pinterest
- 32 percent of college grads use Pinterest

If some of the numbers seem familiar, there is a good reason: these people are your customers. Con-

sumer research over the years has consistently shown that a typical custom framing customer is college educated with an average annual household income over \$100,000, and about half are 44 or younger. Even a quick look at the numbers shows us that your customers are on social media. Shouldn't you be there with them?

Now that you appreciate the potential of social media, it's time to get going and get your marketing off to a great start by planning your strategy and developing content. **PFM**

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