



Datran
media

A Datran Media Whitepaper

Get Social with Your Audience



What Every Marketer Needs To Know

About Reaching Customers on Facebook

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Introduction

Social media is changing the way we communicate. New technology platforms are giving people new-found freedom to share content, voice their opinions, exchange ideas and openly discuss everything from political issues to popular culture. These shifts in communication are poised to have a profound effect on the media industry as a whole. Marketers who are slow to adapt, or are more skeptical about the power of social media, may be in for a rude awakening.

Now, more than ever, it is the time to join the conversation.

Social Media – The New Media Frontier

If you've ever shared a photo online, written a product review or watched a viral video, you can call yourself a social media user. Social media platforms have gotten so big so fast you may have not even noticed that it has become part of our daily routine - both at work and home. Until recently, many marketers associated social networks with a fad of the younger generation, but sites like Facebook are clearly changing that perception.

So just how big is the social media landscape? According to a new report by *eMarketer*, social networking is an activity that 37% of U.S. adult Internet users and 70% of online teens engage in every month, and the numbers continue to grow. The report projects that by 2011, one-half of online adults and 84% of online teens in the U.S. will use social networking. It is no wonder advertisers are expressing interest in this emerging media channel. *eMarketer* estimates that Facebook could generate \$305 million U.S. in revenue this year, double what it produced just last year.

If done correctly, advertising on social networks offers limitless opportunities.

Enter Facebook

With more than 70 million active users, Facebook is the second most popular social network after NewsCorp's MySpace, and the 6th most-trafficked website in the world, according to *comScore*. However, Facebook is quickly gaining momentum and attracting an even larger audience. While MySpace's audience was up 8% in March compared with March '07, Facebook's doubled, growing 98% from a year earlier, according to custom lists compiled by *Nielsen Online*.

With so many users joining Facebook on a daily basis, it would be a disastrous oversight for any business not to establish some sort of presence on the network. Unlike other social media networks, Facebook is dedicated to making it simple for brands to reach their consumers.

Facebook for Business

Facebook recently opened its social infrastructure to businesses by providing them with the ability to create dedicated "fan pages" and interact with customers on a whole new level. These pages are completely free to set up, and allow marketers to send updates to their audience or "fans", post events, upload photos or videos, and engage their audience with discussion boards. What's more, the audience can interact on these pages with other members by writing messages on a company's virtual "wall" or sharing opinions and reviews.



The screenshot shows the Facebook profile page for Datran Media. The page header includes navigation links for Profile, Friends, and Inbox, along with utility links for home, account, privacy, and logout. The main content area features the Datran Media logo, a 'Browse more Products' link, and a list of administrative actions such as 'Edit Page', 'Edit Admins', and 'Send an Update to Fans'. A 'Share' button is also present. Below this, the 'Fans' section displays 6 of 65 fans, with individual profile pictures and names like Robert DiGioia, Debbie Zeidner Goldberg, Sharon Marcus, Alison Corbat, Rachael Benjamin, and Heather Skinner. The 'Events' section shows one event: 'iMedia Connection Agency Summi...' at Hyatt Regency Lost Pines Resort and... in Austin, TX, on Sunday, May 18 at 9:00am. The 'Photos' section indicates there are no photos by Datran Media. A 'Blog RSS Feed Reader' section is visible, featuring a post titled 'Datran Media Outperformance Marketing Online Journal' with a link to the feed and a 'Subscribe to this feed in your RSS Reader' button. Below the feed reader, a 'Latest Articles' section lists two articles: 'You've Got Aroma?' and 'Proof that email is always...'. The left sidebar contains a search bar and a list of applications including Ads and Pages, Photos, Groups, Events, Marketplace, Love Your Drink!, and FunWall.

Datran Media's Facebook page informs our community about news and events, and has been a great, informal way to stay in touch with prospects and clients.

Word-of-Mouth at its Best

When your fans interact with your Facebook page, the actions they take are automatically generated into social stories. These stories are published to the News Feed, which friends may see the next time they log into Facebook. The stories link back to your Facebook page, increasing the likelihood that others will notice and interact with them, which generates more social stories and drives even more traffic to your page.

What is a Facebook News Feed and Notification Feed?



The News Feed is one of the main components of the customized home page presented to each Facebook user. It sits in the center column of the page and serves as the hub of the Facebook experience. The bulk of the messaging users receive comes into their News Feed, and it is the most conspicuous place for marketers to message to Facebook users. channels.

The Notification Feed is the other main component of the Facebook home page. This area of the page is generally reserved for information regarding requests made by the user – friend requests, relationship requests, event and group requests, photo tag requests, and others. The Notification area is also where friend birthday reminders are served.

Why Communicate with Users on Facebook?

Many users spend a large percentage of their online time within the Facebook interface and rely on it heavily to stay in touch with their friends and organizations. For these users, Facebook has become their inbox of choice. Highly targeted, relevant messaging to these users within the Facebook interface will surely yield better response rates than traditional messaging to their email inbox.

You can also increase the viral distribution of your Facebook Page with Facebook Social Ads. Attach an ad creative to stories in News Feed or in the left-hand Ad Space. Social Ads increase the number of friends who will see the story when they visit Facebook, and you can also target the ads to specific demographics.

However, if you want to create a natural conversation that lets you interact with your customers, you should think about deploying messages directly to their accounts. You can think of social media messaging in the same way you think about email marketing.

The Parallels between Social Media and Email Marketing

So how can marketers connect with social media users? They simply need to look at their most successful email programs. Email, which can be called the forefather of social media, features some basic strategies that can be applied to the social media Inbox. From delivery and segmentation, to reporting and personalization, email marketing has laid the foundation for successfully communicating with consumers in the social media space.

Just before email really opened up, there were a number of separate, proprietary networks that looked a lot like social networks of today. There was America Online, CompuServe and Prodigy. Each service a walled garden - users of the same service could send emails to each other but not across different providers. Each service had similar, but slightly different capabilities - for example, some allowed the sender to "withdraw" a message after sending it as long as the recipient had not viewed it yet. Others had pictures or styled text.

Then slowly they opened up and allowed their members to send messages outside their service. This was a huge win for users, even though they had to give up some of their fancy features in favor of the "lowest common denominator" solution.

Jump forward 20 years and we see striking similarities. The names are different, but the rest is the same. Now it's Facebook, MySpace and LinkedIn. Originally closed networks, all 3 have opened up more messaging with outside users. Facebook's platform and OpenSocial both promise to bring standardization to social messaging.

Possibly more significant is how deliverability and reputation are evolving similar to email. Social networking marketers will have all the same deliverability challenges as in email, only this time the receivers get more user feedback and are building smarter reputation systems from the start.

Already, Facebook uses a combination of implicit and explicit user feedback to build a reputation for applications and decide how many of its news feed notifications actually show up for users. Just because you send a notification to a user's mini feed doesn't mean that all of his or her friends will see it. Facebook looks at how many active users your application has, how many "thumbs up" you got and how many users blocked your messages to determine how many messages they let you deliver tomorrow.

Applications with lots of users can send lots of messages. New applications are throttled while they build reputation. Applications that get lots of complaints in various forms are penalized. Does this sound familiar?

From a technical perspective, high volume senders will need to customize their solution for different social networks. Just because both networks have implemented OpenSocial doesn't mean that they will work exactly the same. Yahoo and Hotmail both accept SMTP connections, but sophisticated senders customize the number of IP addresses used, number of connections per IP address, number of messages sent per connection, header content and other factors to optimize delivery for each receiving domain. We can expect to see the same technical optimizations for the various social networks. And just like email, we can expect to see them change frequently!

It's not just technology. Email ISPs also have different business rules and quality standards. What permission level is required to send email? How many messages are too many? How many complaints are acceptable? What's the best way to resolve problems? In the same way, different social networking sites will have different best practices for messaging to their users.

Like any successful marketing strategy, it is a lot to think about. The good news is email and social media are complementary channels. E-mail marketers need not develop entirely new communication strategies to reach social networking audiences. Many of the same segmentation and targeting strategies that proved successful in

email can be easily leveraged across channels, though specific messaging tactics will certainly differ.

Delivering Your Messages Directly to Facebook Users

Last month, Datran Media announced the release of StormPost 4.0, the only Inbox marketing system that gives retailers and media companies the ability to communicate their marketing messages to Facebook subscribers - directly into their social media accounts. Integrating social networking features into the interface of an ESP was a natural progression, one that was long overdue, as a greater number of consumers gravitate towards social networks and marketers face greater challenges reaching them.

"Facebook is a real game-changer. We've found that there are folks who spend a lot of time on Facebook and do a lot of messaging there," said Dave Hendricks, VP of marketing and strategy at Datran Media. "So we wanted to build a tool that would give marketers the opportunity to message there. It works great, since Facebook accepts messages from outside systems. Unlike email, where everything is address-centric, Facebook is relationship-centric and doesn't require its users to remember or type in a recipient's message for member-to-member communications. That same relationship extends to applications, and messaging to an application requires a relationship of a user to an application. That virtually eliminates spam from the Facebook equation and makes the messaging experience superior for users, and for app developers."

"To my knowledge, Datran Media's StormPost is the only company doing this now," said *ClickZ* columnist Jack Aaronson in his recent article, *Social Networking and Email Marketing Converge*. "Though other marketing companies certainly have the ability to post one-off messages to Facebook, Datran Media is different. Its Facebook integration is truly integration. It's added the Facebook channel to its existing suite of tools, including personalization, testing, and analytics."

Getting Started

As you have learned, Facebook offers you an unparalleled opportunity to connect with your consumers – in an environment they are comfortable and in which makes your message more meaningful. Here a few actions you can take to get started immediately.

1. Set up an account on Facebook. You need a personal account to be able to create a page for your company.
2. Follow Facebook's simple steps for creating a Facebook page. Be sure to label your page under the appropriate category.
3. Click on "edit page" to add a logo, company description, products, photos, etc.
4. Be sure to become a "fan" of your own page. Once your page has at least one fan, it will be indexed by Facebook's search engine so others who enter your company name will be able to find you.
5. Promote your Facebook page on your website, blog and in emails with Facebook's prerequisite promotional banner.

Learn More

For more information on Datran Media's social media messaging capabilities, please call us at (212) 706-4911 or email dhendricks@datranmedia.com to view a demo.



And please join us on Facebook!

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Datran-Media/6044868284?ref=s>