

Marketing Minute ~ Social Media Predictions for 2013 From The Pros

I try to stay on top of marketing trends by reading my trade publications and checking at online expert sites. One of the social media update sites I check often is www.socialmediaexaminer.com. One of the things you can count on is that marketing will keep changing, and one of the trends that of course we never thought was really going anywhere is Social Media. We thought it was just going to online 'partying'. Well, shows you what we didn't know.

There are many social media experts 'out there', and these are some of the top tips that we have found from some of them. I note who they are and what their top trend is. There is a link at the end of this Marketing Minute article where you can go for more details. But at least, this will get you started thinking.

Ecommerce and Social Media Grow Together

Gideon Lask (CEO and founder of BuyaPowa) feels one huge trend in ecommerce will be the continued empowerment of the consumer. "No one telling the shopper what to buy, when to shop and how much to pay. Too many retailers are failing by not realizing that consumers want to do it on their terms. Time to give them the key to the car. Empower them and you'll win loyalty."

Viveka VonRosen, known internationally as the "LinkedIn Expert" and author of LinkedIn Marketing: An Hour a Day, says that social media is a great venue for consumers because of the integrated communication features and potential ecommerce features. Look for the changes needed for Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn to add in those ecommerce options. You can use social media to build business, sell product and support our economy.

Visual Marketing

Ekaterina Walter, social innovator at Intel and author of Think Like Zuck, feels 2013 will be the year of visual marketing. Visuals and video done right are highly effective in cutting through the noise. Brands will need to understand what it takes to do visual marketing well, whether within their current communities or new networks like Pinterest, Instagram and others.

Improvements at Facebook

John Haydon, co-author of Facebook Marketing for Dummies, feels that in 2013, we'll see Facebook offering a premium version of Facebook Pages. This premium version will include advanced analytics that will give marketers greater insight around specific fan segments (top commenters, customers, new fans) and the ability to do frictionless email acquisition (click 'join' within a Page update to opt in). They've already acquired Threadsy and allowed third-party developers to create actions beyond Comment, Like and Share.

Content Marketing is The New Social Media Marketing

Dave Kerpen, CEO of Likeable and author of Likeable Social Media and Likeable Business, feels that brands need to realize that with unprecedented clutter coming from both people and brands, the need for beautiful and engaging content is greater than ever. In B2B, content marketing has already taken center stage with white papers, ebooks, webinars, infographics and articles. You will see more B2C brands using social media to produce and share beautiful photos, sophisticated comics and other visual aids, and brilliant TV-level videos.

SlideShare?

Joe Pulizzi, founder of the Content Marketing Institute, author of Managing Content Marketing and co-author of Get Content, Get Customers, shares that the fastest-growing social network will be SlideShare, while Facebook and LinkedIn each launch their own original content creation strategies to drive further engagement and open up sponsored content opportunities.

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Personalizing Twitter?

Rich Brooks, president of *flyte* new media, says that Twitter will start 'personalizing' your Twitter feed based on an algorithm that social media pundits might call "TweetRank", or perhaps "TwedgeRank." The algorithm will include these factors: influence, engagement, alignment, gravity, and your interests. Invariably, brands will complain that they can no longer get the engagement they once got on Twitter, at which point Twitter will roll out an advertising platform that allows you to buy a better TwedgeRank for your tweets.

Google+ Will Be a "Must" Place To Be

Anita Campbell, founder of Small Business Trends and author of Visual Marketing, feels that Google+ will be a 'must use' service. But it won't be due to the social elements. Rather, it will be because it becomes the central hub for managing your 'official' online public presence in the eyes of Google. Already it's the place to manage your local business presence within the Google ecosystem. But when it comes to pure social, its use will continue to be limited mostly to tech early adopters and marketers.

Ric Dragon, CEO and co-founder of the digital marketing agency DragonSearch and author of Social Marketology, feels that little by little the Google engineers have been quietly building features like Communities that might yet build up participation on this platform. Meanwhile, frustration may be building with Facebook, as it rolls out increasingly intrusive advertising. The differences between Google+ Communities and Facebook Groups are pretty slim right now.

Instagram Grows Bigger

Mark W. Schaefer, marketing faculty member at Rutgers University and author of Return on Influence, feels that 2013 will be a big year for Instagram. It's a comparatively minor platform currently, research from The Social Habit shows that social media users plan to increase their use of Instagram at a rate higher than that of any other network. Also, 85% of Instagrammers use the platform at work, way above any other social media format.

Mediapreneurs Focus More on Building Their Email List

Over the past year, there has been a major trend in the mediapreneur community (entrepreneurs who create media online; i.e., blogs, podcasts, webshows, whatever) and it's going to continue right into 2013. More are encouraging folks to subscribe via email. Because studies have shown that if you want an engaged audience and buyers, they are most likely going to come from your email list. Social media is still important, but you will see fewer sites next year encouraging people to follow them everywhere and instead focus on the often-forgotten but extremely important email address. This was a comment from David Siteman Garland, creator of the web show and resource The Rise To The Top and author of Smarter, Faster, Cheaper.

Social Media Advertising Becomes A Necessity

Kristi Hines, freelance writer, professional blogger and author of the blog Kilolani, sees social advertising becoming more of a necessity, whether people like it or not. Especially for businesses trying to reach a larger audience but who are struggling to build up an engaged community. Social advertising could be simpler and less expensive than paid search advertising such as Google AdWords. The most successful consultants in 2013 will be the ones who cannot only help their clients grow an engaged audience organically, but also help them craft their paid advertising campaigns on top social networks.

Facebook Ad Network Will Make Waves

Since going public in May, Facebook has been working overtime to uncover new and better ways to monetize its enormous user base. While Facebook is currently just testing the waters, 2013 will surely see the full roll-out of an ad network for third-party websites and mobile. This prediction is from Ben Pickering, CEO of Strutta.

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Social Media Will Focus on Business

As we enter into the next year with the economic realities of what's ahead, there is no doubt that 2013 will be the year social media stops worshipping the plumbing and finally turns back to focus on that which is truly important—ROI, customers, leads and sales. The power of social media is in what it lets us do and whom it lets us connect with. The story isn't that Facebook has 1 billion users, the story is that you now have the ability to connect with more than 1 billion people, thanks to Facebook. The story is that anyone with a story to tell can broadcast it to the whole world...on Google's dime. This is from Paul Colligan, education czar for Traffic Geyser Inc. and CEO of Colligan.

Social Brands Shift to Social Business

Brian Solis, principal analyst at Altimeter Group and author of *What's the Future of Business and The End of Business as Usual*, feels that in 2013, he thinks we're going to see a real shift from social brands to social businesses. Social brands are organizations that use social media as a form of marketing and communication. Largely run out of the marketing department, social media is typically siloed within the business. 2013 will bring about an expansion in social media beyond a marketing and engagement philosophy to that of oneness. Social media strategy will start to take a more integrated approach where social media becomes an extension of important channel strategies and business functions. It will be driven by a holistic effort where enterprise, business and functional strategies work to accomplish business objectives while meeting the needs and expectations of employees and customers. Where social media is managed today will start to evolve into a resource center to empower teams to engage around a common vision. The business itself thus becomes social and this paves the way for a focus in 2014 around a more human culture shift and business transformation.

Well, that's a good way to end these comments. I took the liberty of paraphrasing from Cindy King's article, which you can see in its entirety at:

<http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/social-media-predictions-2013/>

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