



GUERRILLA
SOLUTIONS

SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT
53 METHODS TO ENGAGE WITH YOUR
CUSTOMERS

www.golutionsinc.com



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Intro

Social media has changed the landscape of marketing. In the past, it was all about pushing your message to your consumer base:

“Here is our product, it has these great features, it can benefit you by...”

As social media is a two-way communication channel -- one of which you post your content, and your fans decide whether it is worthy by responding with a Like, Comment, ReTweet etc -- the idea behind a successful strategy has shifted from concentrating on “pushing” your message to “pulling” it from your fans.

It’s a complicated idea to grasp at first, as while you want to “pull” from your fans, you still must “push” the content. Once it is comprehended, it will allow you to make a content strategy for your social media efforts that drives interaction and puts the spotlight on your fans, not your brand.

Your fans and followers already have a deep understanding for your brand. They are the loyalty, and should be treated like royalty. It’s their voice, not yours that builds relationships and trust, and it is their influence that will grow your brand, and ultimately increase your social ROI.

We’ve gathered our Top 5 methods to give your social profiles a boost, and to increase engagement that will ultimately drive more traffic and revenue. While they are not geared towards any specific industry, the concepts behind them can be executed by any business due to the fact that your customers are your brand advocates; they have value, they have an opinion, and they want to be heard.

For the sake of a unified example, we will use Joe’s Bakery & Cafe to detail our message.





Method 1: Unique & Useful Content

Your customers follow your company because they find utility out of it. Even if they're not sure what that benefit may be at first, they Like or Follow because they enjoy what your brand stands for and what you offer. In retrospect, your social following is your most passionate customer base, and the most important advocates.

They will spread the word, share your posts to friends, check-in on Foursquare and promote your business. As customers, you want to please them at all times and spark that passion whenever possible. How can you do this? Through content that is both unique and useful.



Method 1 continued:

Joe's Bakery & Cafe:

With a product line of various types of bread, baked goods, coffee, tea etc., you must first decide what is it that makes your company unique? And, what if your company isn't unique? Then you have your work cut out for you. But there's still a solution. You want your social profiles to become the source of information for all things baked goods, bread, coffee, tea and so on. How is this possible? You have to dig a little bit:

- Do you offer anything that your competition doesn't?
- What flavors of coffee do you offer? Different origins?
- What baked goods are your specialties?

By promoting your industry, as well as your own products, your fans will begin to trust you as a baker or barista, not as a baked goods shop or coffee company.

- Post about the history of Columbian/Arabic coffee
- Where the first donut was made
- How a loaf of the finest bread ended the War of 1812 (ok, not really)

Your goal should be to showcase your products, but also showcase your knowledge of these products as a whole; every post you make should leave your customers saying, "Wow, is that so?" or "Hey, that's really interesting."

Your content will be respected, and it will be much easier to showcase your own product line based on the customer's trust of your passion and insight.



Method 2: Fill in the _____

With respect to the “Pull” marketing strategy from the Intro, there are many ways to encourage your fans to interact with your social pages. Let them answer the questions for themselves. By asking questions that are specific to a certain time of day, or season, fans will be eager to tell the world their opinion.

Through questions and Fill in the Blank posts, you will be ‘pulling’ your customers in by letting them engage in a way that lets you know a little bit more about them. Keep in mind, every customer that participates in these posts should be complimented. Whether it’s responding, making a suggestion, or simply “Liking” their posts, they will be more inclined to participate on a regular basis knowing that somebody is listening.



Method 2 continued:

Joe's Bakery & Cafe:

It's October 20, and the weather is finally start to turn. You want to promote a new Joe's White Hot Chocolate, made with white chocolate, topped off coconut shavings. How could you let your fans know that it's that time of year for hot cocoa? More importantly, that you have a featured Joe's White Hot Chocolate?

Facebook Post: "FYI we just introduced Joe's White Hot Chocolate, made with rich white chocolate and topped with coconut shavings. We want you to answer this question: My favorite time to drink hot chocolate is _____"

Comment 1: I love hot chocolate after I go snowboarding.

Joe's Bakery: They'll be plenty of time to do that this winter!

Comment 2: I'm allergic to coconut, anyway I can get chocolate on top?

Joe's Bakery: Of course! We're here to serve :)

Comment 3: I hate hot chocolate, do you still have your Joe's Famous Cappuccino?

Joe's Bakery: Of course. I'll tell you what though. Come on in, and try a White Hot Chocolate on the house! Just let us know it's the guy who hates Hot Chocolate!

By responding to three comments, you have provided customer service to two of them. Your customers now know of a new product you have, and they know that you are flexible. You don't think they will be more inclined to visit Joe's Bakery now? There's your Social ROI.



Method 3: Feature Your Fans

Your fans have a voice...

...and they go out of their way to provide you answers, comments, concerns and participation. When you ask your fans for their input, you should always give them credit, and in some instances, feature their answers. This can come in the form of posting "Thanks to Bob Smith for showing us his favorite Joe's Bakery sandwich." Or, it can come in the form of a ReTweet.

You Tweet:

"@JoesBakery: You got ham, bacon, Swiss and pesto. What bread would you use? Let us know and get 25% off and you can choose your own bread!"

In this case, you would ReTweet every response, as well as respond to every customer who answers.

You ReTweet & Respond:

"RT: @SandwichMan: Hey @JoesBaker. Give me that sandwich on a hoagie roll any day."

"@JoesBaker: Not a bad choice @SandwichMan. Hoagie is universal for "Good times." Come on in for your 25% sandwich!"

Depending on how involved your social media strategy is, you could even feature this sandwich and give credit to whoever chose it.



Method 3 continued:

You Tweet:

"@JoesBaker: Our sandwich of the month comes from our customer @SandwichMan. Ham, Bacon, Swiss, Pesto on a... Hoagie Roll. 25% off all month long!"

This can be supported in your store by a simple Point of Purchase display, showing who chose this sandwich, and to advise fans to Follow @JoesBakery on Twitter for a chance to get your sandwich featured next month.

By encouraging your fans to take part in your social community, others will see this and be more inclined to participate knowing there is the potential for rewards... Who wouldn't want a featured sandwich?

On top of that, how many friends do you think @SandwichMan would tell if he got his choice as a featured? It's not going to get 10,000 ReTweets, but it does go viral within your micro-community.

Finally, the most important thing about requesting fan input is to **ALWAYS** remember to respond and thank any customer who participates. They'll appreciate it.



Method 4: Social Linking

This method is a bit tricky. Facebook and Twitter both offer to link the accounts, so that if you post a Tweet it will show up on your Facebook wall, and vice versa. The problem with this is that they are formatted differently, and if you post your Tweets to your Facebook wall, there will be a bunch of “@’s” and “#’s” and it will look very awkward.

We suggest that you don’t link them directly, rather you direct people to them. For example, on Facebook, you can create apps for your Twitter & Blog feeds, and your YouTube Channel. The apps will have the recognizable logos so when a fan sees it, he will say to himself: “I’m on Twitter, they’re on Twitter, I’m going to follow them.” Or something like that.

On Twitter, you can post your Facebook, Blog, and YouTube Channel’s in your bio. Mind you, you are only allowed 160 characters in your Twitter bio, so we suggest that you use a link shortener such as bit.ly, which will take "http://www.facebook.com/JoesBakery" and make it "http://on.fb.me/JKFrRw"



Method 4 continued:

Twitter Bio Example:

Joe's Bakery & Café
@JoesBakery

Joe's Bakery opened in 1982 and has provided Buffalo with the freshest bread, sweetest deserts, and most exotic coffee ever since. Find us on Facebook! <http://on.fb.me/JKFrRw>

By having this revolving "circle" of social networks, it will allow your Facebook Fans to become Twitter Followers and vice-versa. Each social network is different and serves a different purpose, so your fans won't mind following you on multiple networks, especially if each one is unique and provides them with different content.

If your company is active on LinkedIn, Pinterest, or YouTube, you should share links to Facebook and Twitter on all of them. Not only will this increase traffic, but it will help with respect to search engine optimization.



Method 5: Manage Consistently

Your social media strategy should consist of a post every day your open for business. Besides the fact that fan's might want to know about the sandwich of the day, Facebook's algorithm is set up to show posts from Pages that are actively posting new content every day. If you wait a few days in between posts, the chances that is will be seen by any of your fans will be very low.

Facebook insights provides you the information on how many people are viewing your posts, as well as the reach and impressions (how many friends-of-fans will see a post based on "Likes" and Comments that show up in their Feed).

While a strategy for what type of content to post on which days isn't necessary, it might make it easier for your company to be consistent and in the long-run your fans will know what to expect from your page.



Method 5 continued:

It's also important to respond to any questions, comments or concerns your fans may have. Social media provides a great way to increase your customer service by simply answering your customers. For example:

Mad Fan Posts: I had your Hot Chocolate and it was horrible! I'll never get any hot beverage from Joe's Bakery ever again! What a waste of \$4.00.

If gone unanswered, this could not only cause you to permanently lose one customer, but some other customers could notice it and think, "Hey, I didn't like their Hot Chocolate either." A timely response is crucial to put out the fire before it starts. For example, you could diffuse the situation by responding:

"Sorry to hear about your Hot Chocolate. Any particular reason why you didn't like it? If you would accept our apology, we will gladly refund you your money or give you a free large drink of your choice the next time you visit."

By doing so, you show the upset customer and all those who see the post that you are dedicated to making every customer happy, and that you're very intuitive with how to approach customer service face-to-face and online.

Who knows, due to your timely response the customer might give your bakery a second chance, and even tell his friends of how impressed he was with how you handled the situation. It's a win-win.





Conclusion

There are five methods to improve engagement across your social networks. It doesn't occur overnight, but if thought out and executed properly, these methods will greatly improve the worth of your social media marketing efforts, and you will see a return on investment in the form of customer loyalty and exposure of your business. For every customer that posts a picture of their favorite lunch sandwich or the apple crusted croissant they purchased for breakfast, your business will be featured on feeds and seen from a new demographic that was usually unreachable.

If you have any questions, please contact Michael Tasner: Michael@Tazsol.com





About Guerrilla Solutions

Located right outside of Buffalo, New York, Guerrilla Solutions is a leading digital marketing and web design firm. With an in-house video and audio production capabilities, and a team full of passionate, creative and diverse employees, GSolutions is capable of marketing your business or brand, no matter the size or niche. Guerrilla Solutions offers top-of-the-line Social Media Marketing, SEO marketing, Video SEO, and Web Design.

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