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TIPSHEET

Developing a Social Media Strategy



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DEVELOPING A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Social media is becoming an important part of the marketing mix, even within B2B marketing campaigns. In some industries – such as IT – social media is widely used, whereas in other B2B technology sectors there will be a core group within the target audience who do not value social media. As young people enter the technology industry, it's likely that the use of social media will grow steadily and become a more important part of the marketing mix. This guide outlines some rules that will allow you to develop and implement an effective social media strategy.



MARKET INTELLIGENCE

Companies can take advantage of social media to obtain market intelligence. By listening, companies not only gain insight into customers' perceptions about them, but also their competitors and the market sector in which they operate. If companies are to be successful in social media, they need to build it into the marketing mix as another channel to reach their target audience. It's important that companies don't simply experiment, but rather develop a clear strategy and set goals and objectives for their social media activities.

EMBRACE ENGAGEMENT

Perhaps more than any other media channel, social media allows a dialogue between a company and its customers. Social media marketing needs a different approach to other elements of the marketing mix such as advertising, PR and direct e-mail because interaction and engagement are critical elements of any campaign.

Customers expect responses to their questions and comments; many expect companies to proactively seek out mentions of their name on sites such as Twitter and Facebook and respond to comments, questions and criticisms in a positive and professional manner. Social media engagement requires time and commitment, and any strategy must allocate sufficient resources to make this possible.

EXPLORE NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Social media is continually changing: new platforms emerge and new techniques are developed to save time and increase the effectiveness of social media marketing. In general, the B2B technology sector doesn't lead the development of these innovations, therefore companies must watch what is happening in other sectors, particularly consumer marketing, to ensure they stay at the leading edge of this very dynamic marketing channel.

EDUCATE THE WHOLE TEAM

Just because members of your team have a Facebook page it doesn't mean they're social media experts! Education of the whole team is an essential part of any social media strategy.

This should extend beyond the mechanics of how the social media campaign will be executed, and include clear guidelines on how to interact with customers as well as and clear rules on what is regarded as confidential information or topics that should not be discussed.

EXECUTE WITH CONSISTENCY

Just like any other marketing activity, social media campaigns are more effective if executed consistently. Clearly defining the tone of voice that the company will adopt on social media platforms; metrics for response time and problem resolution; and the level of activity that will be maintained (for example number of posts per day or week) will make the campaign coherent and ensure a positive impact.

MONITOR, REVIEW & IMPROVE

The dynamic nature of social media requires continual monitoring and review of campaigns to ensure they are delivering return on investment. It's also important to regularly benchmark your campaign against the best in your industry sector, to ensure the goals you set are not made obsolete by changes in the way users interact with social media, or movements in the popularity of different social media networks.

Although social media has had a limited impact in some B2B technology markets, it is clearly a marketing channel that is here to stay, and that will continue to grow in terms of importance and reach for the foreseeable future.

At Napier, we have helped many companies develop social media strategies and run effective campaigns. By taking the right approach social media can be a highly effective part of any company's marketing mix.



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Launched in 1984, Napier was one of the first agencies in Europe to specialise in the electronics market, subsequently expanding to help clients in a range of B2B technology sectors. Initially a PR agency, Napier responded to the clients' need to manage information across every element of the marketing mix by bringing together a team of multi-talented and multi-lingual engineers, linguists and technical journalists as well as PR and marketing professionals.