

Integrate Social Media With Print Advertising to Boost Your Marketing



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Many people have started using the Internet as their primary source for networking and information. Because of this, you might have considered cutting your print promotions, or at least downsizing them significantly. What if you looked at print and social ads as two sides of the same coin instead? By learning how they work together, you can get much more mileage out of your advertising, and both you and your customers will profit.

Make people the focus.

There are thousands of companies that provide the same goods and services that you do. What will incline the public to choose you over your many competitors? The answer is simple: consumers will care about *you* if they feel that your business cares about *them*. They want to

know that you don't just see them as walking dollar signs and that you actually want to help them get what they need. Otherwise, you're not going to be worth their time. To this end, focus your social media efforts on letting potential customers know that you see them as individuals worth serving. Here are some ideas for doing this:

- Facebook and Twitter are great places to feature discount codes or limited-time offers for loyal fans.
- Engage with social users who mention you or appear curious about what you do.
- Hold a Pinterest or Instagram contest where users can post tagged pictures and videos of themselves using your products, and let viewers vote for their favorites on your website.
- Whether you're doing a giveaway, product reveal or Q&A, remind social users to "join the conversation." Invitations to converse are a promise to the consumer that he's going to be heard at your business, so keep that promise and always reply!
- Feature a "follower of the month" on each of your social platforms.

All of these ideas work well for retaining follower loyalty, but to bring them to you in the first place, you have to be easy to find. Social network profiles are not enough on their own. You need to be listed in business search engines, such as Yelp! and Citysearch, and have a well-designed, continually updated website. Tag your posts and updates with specific keywords so you will show up more consistently in search results. Using your social posts to link back to your website, and vice versa, also improves your web search ranking.

Boost social engagement with current print advertising.

Print and digital don't have to be the bitter enemies that are portrayed in "e-reader vs. paper book" debates. Put your print materials to work for your digital campaign with the following suggestions:

- Launch a hashtag campaign, which will invite users to create their own content. Hashtag campaigns are great when you want start a buzz. They're also easy to track and you can throw the hashtag on any of your print advertising. Just make sure someone else isn't already using the hashtag for their own branded campaign or social awareness movement!
- Find out where your target market spends their offline time and advertise there. Don't say so much on your print ads that viewers can find out all they want to know about you without ever getting online. Tease just enough information to show that you deal with a topic of interest to them. Then direct them to your web presence to learn more.
- Use car magnets on your business vehicle and/or personal vehicle to advertise your company while you're on the road. Since conciseness is key, feature web addresses and Twitter handles on these materials, instead of transcribing your elevator pitch.

Fuse online and offline media.

In addition to print, there are other ways to bring the offline world online:

- Keep your logo, voice, and design consistent across every platform, so that you become recognizable anywhere.
- Create an event and invite attendees to track the party on Twitter and Instagram with a special hashtag. They can tweet song requests, be entered to win a contest for posting pictures, etc. Display a screen featuring a Twitter wall to make the interaction more visual.
- Put QR codes — or their newer alternative, clickable paper — in your offline ads so customers can investigate you online as they go about their daily activities. (Note that not all users care for QR codes.)
- Mention at your location that you're on Mogl, Foursquare, or similar sites, so customers can get online rewards for visiting you.
- Here are several more ideas and examples for letting offline material lead consumers online.

Print isn't dead, and it probably won't be any time soon. If you try to outrun the world's progress toward digital conversion by moving your business exclusively to online interactions, much of your potential audience will miss your advertising, and you will lose out on important opportunities for growth. Plus, a poster or other printed ad never has to be switched on or recharged! Take advantage of both promotional arenas to achieve maximum effectiveness in your business.

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