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Is Branding Enough to Make Social Sell?

If you want to make social media sell for you, take action on the materialistic truth: Branding is rarely executed as a consistent, reliable process. Branding is not enough to make social sell. Nor is B-to-B branding—or its “social cousin,” engagement—consistently able to produce customer leads. Direct response must be built in to the campaign for leads and sales to manifest. It doesn't “just happen” thanks to our friends branding and engagement.

Customers Expect Proof, Upfront

Customers are buying when the business behind the content is willing to prove effectiveness of the product or service (in some small but meaningful way) before purchase. This is so important you might want to read it again.

Here's the rub. In my experience, branding and engagement prove little to me, the customer. Branding and engagement usually fail to solve a problem that brings me closer to the purchase as part of a clearly defined process.

Think about how you use Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube, Twitter, etc., in your life. Do you buy based on what you see on social media? You're probably not buying based on sentiment very much any more. In fact, you're likely buying less based on how engaged marketers think your are, more based on what they'll prove to you up front!

Prove It or Lose It!

Today, people are buying purely based on a brand's ability to deliver some results before the purchase. Software? Give me a free trial—and don't give me any talk about limiting functionality of the trial version. Financial services? Solve a problem for me relating to my ultimate need—to get my act together with college savings or retirement. Consulting? Show me, materially, that you're worth your salt. You get the idea. And, no, this isn't about “free” as a new business model.

Delivering results before the purchase demands a systematic, yet practical, way to court your customer—to prove to them that if they buy your product or service they would have gotten full results. They've got to be sure to nothing creates certainty like actual proof! So, how can you begin to take next steps?



“In most companies, at least historically, marketing and sales have been measured, and driven by, different success metrics,” says Dan MacDade of Pointclear, a B-to-B lead generation firm who points at the classic misalignment of sales and marketing as problematic.

“This condition has been simply accepted by or ignored by most senior managers. I know this seems harsh, but unfortunately it is still true today in many, if not most, organizations,” says McDade.

Reach Past Listening, Toward Useful Insights

Recognition of the misalignment is step one, and I'll ask you to pair this recognition with a new perspective on social media. Start applying social media to uncover insights on customers' micro-problems, goals or burning desires, then putting those discoveries to work through traditional lead nurturing.

Some argue the big opportunity social gives us is to create more engagement in hopes of creating preference. But successful social sellers use social media to create demand.

In conclusion, which of the below seems more powerful to you?

1. Listening for customers' brand perceptions, sentiment, etc., and creating better ad messaging that creates more engagement (awareness leading to preference)
2. Understanding customers' problems or goals and finding creative ways to create organized, measurable response that helps customers “guide themselves” toward a purchase.

Where To Go From Here

To learn more about how to apply the structured methodologies of using social media to sell for you, using strategies and concepts, Azar and Associates conducts training workshops in cities throughout North America. To find out more, call us today at (661) 810-2446 or visit us on-line at www.azarandassociates.com.