

# How To: Grow a Social Community

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### Executive Summary

#### Building a Base of Fans, Followers and Friends

Social media is a strong force in the marketing world today. By utilizing the power of trust, sharing and interaction, brands can build personal relationships with individuals within a community to help meet business objectives (increased brand awareness, enhanced conversions, amplified customer service, etc). However, social media takes time and diligence to not only engage a community, but acquire and invite individuals to a value-added community.

The first step to a strong social media strategy and presence is the foundational community. Below are tactical activities a brand can perform to develop an acquisition strategy to build the most targeted, highly engaged community base and foundation. Working with a combination of Paid, Owned and Earned Media strategies, a brand will enhance its digital footprint and build the social credibility necessary to acquire the best community members.

### Paid Media

Paid media is the easiest and most efficient way to generate a large number of Fans quickly. By using a combination of current traditional advertising and strategic social advertising, we can acquire and build a strong foundation of highly targeted, highly engaged individuals to our community. Below are some steps brands should take to begin integrating paid media into their acquisition strategy.

#### Facebook

Engagement Ads. Drive awareness and engagement through the various types of ads that Facebook has available. The more engaging and relevant the ad, the more likely the user is to click and interact with it. Be sure to target the audience accordingly and align ad content with the interests of the user.

#### Twitter

Promoted Tweets. Promote keywords or hashtags within tweets to drive awareness of an idea, theme or account. Aligning keywords with the brand message will ensure connection with the message.

Promoted Accounts. Twitter allows for accounts to be promoted on the “Logged in” Twitter home page. The promoted accounts will align with the content that the user has posted or has within his/her profile. Build the best following base by aligning content with brand messaging.

#### Traditional

Use all paid and offline activities to increase awareness of the social platforms through traditional efforts. Examples could include tags on TV spots, print collateral, callouts on digital banners, in-store signage, etc.

### Owned Media

As a brand, we own a lot of assets — website, micro sites, emails, other social platforms, etc. Through strategic placement and use of these assets, we can deliver a high level of community activation through owned media. Below are strategic examples of how to deliver results to community activation.

**On site.** Promote the social platforms on all websites with relevant and prominent calls to action on the page. For Facebook, a brand can use the “Like Box” plug-in to allow the visitor to “Like” the brand’s Facebook Fan page directly from the brand sites.

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**Email database.** As with all websites, all email newsletters can have a callout and a link to the social platforms. When launching a new social platform, sending an email specifically announcing the launch will provide a great response and community growth.

**Email signatures.** Promoting all social platforms within company email signatures is a passive approach to drive awareness and acquisition to the social communities.

**Cross-promote.** When possible, cross-promoting the various social platforms on the other platforms in the community could be very beneficial. Promoting the content that is provided on the other social platforms could enhance this cross engagement and acquisition.

**Incent community.** Engaging and incenting the community that we acquire during activation or content activities can enhance reach and social credibility. Creating contests or sweepstakes that ask community members to upload content, share content or reach a certain number of fans has proven to be highly successful during acquisition campaigns.

#### Earned Media

Use the power of influential voices and social credibility to drive awareness, traffic and activation to a brand's social community. Below are some activities a brand can perform to build a strong earned media acquisition strategy and ongoing stream of activation.

**Influencer outreach.** Use the power of influential voices by reaching out and building relationships with key influencers across channels. Develop a strategy to incent the influencers to discuss the brand efforts and drive traffic to the social platforms.

**Content.** Content is a strong driver for enhancing engagement and sharing, which in turn increases message reach, traffic to social sites and acquisition of new community members. The social credibility that the content interactions create builds stronger relationships with influential people in the community.

**Enhance sharing.** Engaging content is the first step to sharing. The second is to simply ask for it. With a strong relationship with our community members, we have enough trust to ask them to share content if they like it, which leads to reach, social credibility and community acquisition.

**Third-party content creation.** While building relationships with key influencers (both on and off of our social platforms) we can ask them to produce content for our social communities. This strategy will continue to enhance social credibility and increased reach through the influencer's community and network.

**Third-party content distribution.** Vice versa. Influencers are continuously looking for valuable content for their network. With relationships built with key influencers, we can ask what type of content they are looking to create for their community and provide that content for them to distribute through their network. Delivering messages in this way will enhance our social credibility and will drive traffic and acquisition to our social communities.

#### Conclusion

Building a strong community is a strategic combination of advertising, relationship building and adding value every day for the social media strategy. Brands should ensure their digital and physical footprint is connected and cross-promoted to allow the most effective sharing of content and passing of information —all of which continues the acquisition of a community and adds value for its members.

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### About Paul Miser:

#### Professionally

Paul Miser is a social interaction junkie; ever-chasing the perfect fit for the social communication strategies into the integrated marketing concept. Through his start with database marketing, social branding strategies, and business intelligence, Miser believes that thinking of marketing as an ecosystem that, if designed right, will create complete brand integration into the lifestyle of it's consumer. Understanding technographic behavior and social interactions allows Miser to create strong social communication strings and paths to fulfill the consumer lifestyle integration...

Miser has over 10 years of marketing experience including emerging social media strategies, branding, strategic planning, 1:1 marketing, and business development with clients ranging from startups to Fortune 500 companies. Miser also holds a MBA from NWMSU and has an unparalleled passionate flair for innovation and forward thinking in the realm of social interactions.

#### Personally

After stints around the country, Miser has landed in NYC where you can find him competing in Triathlons, keeping up with his Chocolate Lab, speaking on emerging media, jamming with friends, enjoying a beer or three and daydreaming about far off tropical locations.

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