

The Importance of Leveraging Social Media in E-Commerce



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AZOX
Integrated E-Commerce

There is no denying that social media has cemented itself in today's society and changed the way many of us communicate. Not only has it affected the way we interact at an individual level, but it has also started to impact the way companies do business. Whether it's Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube or a company blog, many of these social networking sites are playing a significant role in the way companies are changing their marketing approach towards doing business online.

“72% of retailers say they will increase their spending on social networks this year over last year.”

- Forrester Research
May 2011

Despite this explosion in social networking among businesses, there are still many who wonder how exactly social media directly affects a business's online commerce. In a report published in April 2011 between Forrester and GSI Commerce, they determined that less than 2 percent of all online orders during that period were the result of shoppers using a social network. Based on these results, online retailers may begin to question why they should include social media at all in their marketing efforts. Whether one agrees or disagrees with the report, it is important to understand that social media goes beyond just capturing a new sale. Ask just about any reliable social media guru and they will say the areas where social media has the greatest impact is through brand building/awareness, customer loyalty/service, and gaining market insight of customers. By properly using social media to focus in these areas, businesses will be better equipped to engage with their customers, keep them happy and ultimately increase the traffic to their e-commerce store.

Even if this report has some truth behind it, it is also important to realize that social media is in its infancy and companies are just now developing best practices to effectively utilize it. Just because social media may seem to have a smaller effect on online sales, it doesn't mean this will always be the case. With recent developments such as Google + and the announcement for its business profile support, it is becoming more and more evident that social is starting to affect search as well. For example, recommendations and Facebook "likes" of friends in a person's network will be seen whenever they do a Google or Bing search, giving even more reason for shoppers to click on a particular link. Businesses must adapt and realize that social media and e-commerce play a significant role in connecting with customers and growing an online business.



[The Official Site of The Los Angeles Angels of Anaheim | angels ...](#)
Headlines, statistics, photograph galleries and general team information.
[losangeles.angels.mlb.com](#)



 John Smith likes MLB

network who like that web page

As experts in providing eCommerce solutions, this article will give examples of how our online retail customers have properly managed social media and share some best practices in how companies should approach e-commerce and social networking going forward. As we mentioned earlier, the three areas where businesses currently can experience the greatest impact from social media efforts is through brand building/awareness, customer loyalty/service, and gaining market insight of customers. We will review each area and present ways in which our retail customers have used social media in conjunction with their e-commerce environments to improve communication with their customers, reach new audiences and ultimately boost their e-commerce traffic.

Engaging with the Community

An example of a company that is great at engaging with its online community is Dr.Hauschka, a trusted natural skin care brand, for over 40 years.



Dr.Hauschka features a growing Facebook and Twitter following, with over 2,700 Likes from Facebook and over 1,000 followers on Twitter. Dr.Hauschka engages with their followers in a variety of ways that helps increase traffic to their e-commerce site including providing, valuable skin cleansing tips, product updates and commenting and interacting with people who use their products including celebrities, as well as providing discounts to loyal followers.

Offering Discounts

As illustrated in the picture below, Dr.Hauschka will offer discounts from time-to-time on certain products on their [Facebook page](#). This is a simple and effective way to boost more sales through an e-commerce sales channel, and also provide a way to track and measure social media campaign effectiveness. Rewarding loyal followers and customers goes a long way in keeping customers happy and can also help attract new customers.



Dr.Hauschka Skin Care

Transform red, irritated skin to a calm, even complexion! During today's Lunchtime Special, save 25% on our Soothing Mask. With its oils of shea butter, macadamia nut and coconut, this mask will calm your sensitive skin and balance skin functions. From 12-4EDT (US only) <http://bit.ly/9mYjvA>



Soothing Mask, 1.0 oz Face Care Dr.Hauschka Skin Care: Natural Skin Care with Organic Ingredients; H
store.drhauschka.com

, Natural Skin Care, Face Care, Masks, Holistic Home Remedies, Natural Skin Care

Share · 6 hours ago

5 People like this.

Interacting with Customers

Utilizing both Twitter and Facebook, Dr.Hauschka is able to provide a platform to connect with consumers who use their product, even celebrities like Lea Michele, who is featured on the hit television series Glee, uses Dr.Hauschka products as referenced in this tweet.



msleamichele Lea Michele by DrHauschka_USA

So obsessed right now with Dr. Hauschka's body products! You can get them at wholefoods! Theyre amazing!

29 Jul

Consumers also commonly post their reactions of the products they use. This one-to-one interaction provides great insight about your products.



Hi there Dr. Hauschka. I love the samples we received from you in our July boxes. My mom and I love the eco-emi box and we split up a lot of the samples we get, so we split up your products as well. The blackhorn wash was probably my favorite, it worked wonders and I'm thinking of getting the full size real soon. I really hope you keep working with Eco Emi so I can sample even more of your products. You are fantastic!!

August 19 at 5:22pm



Dr.Hauschka Skin Care Thanks for such a glowing comment, Gaby! We're glad you and your mom discovered us.

August 19 at 4:39pm · 1 person



:D
August 19 at 5:22pm

Cross-Promoting Products

Another way users can cross-promote their products on their e-commerce website is by allowing their products to be shared across social media networks by integrating social sharing integration like ones developed by [AddThis](#). This allows consumers to share products with people they are connected with in their social network.

As seen here on Dr.Hauschka's website, each of their products are shareable on various social networks. This will allow users to share your products and content easier while driving viral traffic to your website.

Dr.Hauschka
Skin Care

Home Find Products For Your Skin Natural Skin Care & Remedies Signature Treatments About Dr.Hauschka Skin Care Events & News

Holistic Home Remedies
Natural Skin Care

LIVE HELP
Offline now
Leave us a message
Send
Live Chat by LivePerson

Cleansing Cream
For all skin conditions

Sweet almond meal combines with extracts of anthyllis, calendula, chamomile and St. John'swort to remove dirt and impurities without stripping the skin of moisture. Skin is strengthened while gentle exfoliation reveals skin's vitality.

- Sweet almond meal gently exfoliates and absorbs excess oil and impurities
- Anthyllis and calendula extracts calm and clarify the complexion
- St. John'swort and chamomile extracts soothe the skin
- Unique "Press & Roll" application method stimulates the skin's ability to cleanse itself and lifts away dead, dull skin
- Used twice a day, Cleansing Cream lasts approximately 3 weeks

Free shipping on all orders \$50 and up

Cleansing Cream
\$26.95
In Stock
Add to bag

Ingredient Spotlight:

Share | Facebook | Twitter | Email | Print | Reddit | StumbleUpon | Favorites | Gmail | Blogger | LinkedIn | Tumblr | More... (330)

This box lets you share products across several social media networks.

Surveys

Using surveys on Facebook can also provide a great way to gain feedback and insights from consumers. Surveying is a great way to solicit targeted input from customers and prospects, as well as help capture data about trends in the marketplace.



Dr.Hauschka Skin Care asked: Have you been using a bronzing product to add color to your skin this summer?

Yes, a tinted moisturizer.
 Yes, a bronzing powder.
 Yes, a bronzing liquid.
 Nope, none for me.

34 people

August 26 at 11:37am · 51 likes · 1 share

Here Dr.Hauschka asks if any of their followers have been using bronzing product to add color to their skin.

Publishing Videos on YouTube

Many organizations have found that incorporating videos into their marketing efforts can also prove to be beneficial in increasing traffic to the site and generating more interest in a product. Dr.Hauschka produces videos that educate its followers on skin care tips using videos published on YouTube. This video has over 11,000 views and many users have found the information helpful by the likes and comments that are left.

Dr.Hauschka Bedtime Cleansing Routine time

DrHauschkaKosmetik 18 videos | Subscribe

11,232 views

Uploaded by DrHauschkaKosmetik on Dec 8, 2009

17 likes, 2 dislikes

Using Blogging to Build Awareness and Thought Leadership



A good example of an organization that uses blogging well to build awareness of its brand and products is Pedersen Worldwide brands, Del Sol and Cariloha. Del Sol is the largest provider of apparel that changes color in the sun, while Cariloha offers unique island-inspired apparel designed from bamboo.



Blogging is a great way to develop thought leadership in a particular industry or market and help drive relevant content to improve search engine optimization rankings. Blogs allow companies to act as experts in a given space that they do business in and provide visitors with content that interests them. For example, our clients, Del Sol and Cariloha, both of which use Azox to help run their retail e-commerce sites, use blogging exceptionally well. They provide in depth posts that many visitors enjoy and comment on. Whether it is posting fan mail letters, updating visitors on their latest product offerings, posting photos of their stores in tropical locations through out the Caribbean and elsewhere, blogging allows Del Sol and Cariloha to build better awareness of their products beyond just a website, and increase traffic back to their stores.

Right: This post is from Cariloha's company blog and features one of their new bamboo shirts. Visit their company blog [here](#).

Another important feature that is common among blogs is the use of social media sharing buttons. These add-ons allow blog readers to share posts that they found interesting with followers and friends in their social networks like Facebook, Twitter, and Google +. This a great way to gain more exposure from blogging and is something that both Cariloha and Del Sol use.

There are many different social sharing tools that are publicly available for free. The amount of coding involved is typically very minimal. Twitter has an official [share button](#), Facebook has an official [like button](#), and [AddThis](#) is a common tool to share content across most major social networks.

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SEP

Cariloha Bamboo Shirts - Damask & Tribal

Today, we swing our attention to two of Cariloha's ultra-soft bamboo shirts and one-of-a-kind shirt designs: Damask (for women) and Tribal (for men).

They're both stylish and new and made of bamboo. These shirt designs are only available in Cariloha stores. Soon to be online.

Cariloha Damask

As if cut out of a royal palace dining hall, this ornately woven damask-patterned design beacons soft, languid afternoons to float your way. **Design Feature:** Has a unique damask weave pattern, featuring flowers, feathers and other designs. It's an older style often found on quilts and doilies and is based on these shapes and patterns.



Cariloha Tribal

Like a cool breeze to a warm summer day, this tribal design effectively complements the outdoor nature of bamboo. It cuts into your day with this tribal-pierced design.

Design Feature: This design prints on the high left side of the shirt. It's inspired by a stylized tribal look that you see in trendier, fashion-forward markets today. The Cariloha name is a one-of-kind font.

What do you like or dislike about these shirts?
What's your favorite Cariloha shirt design?



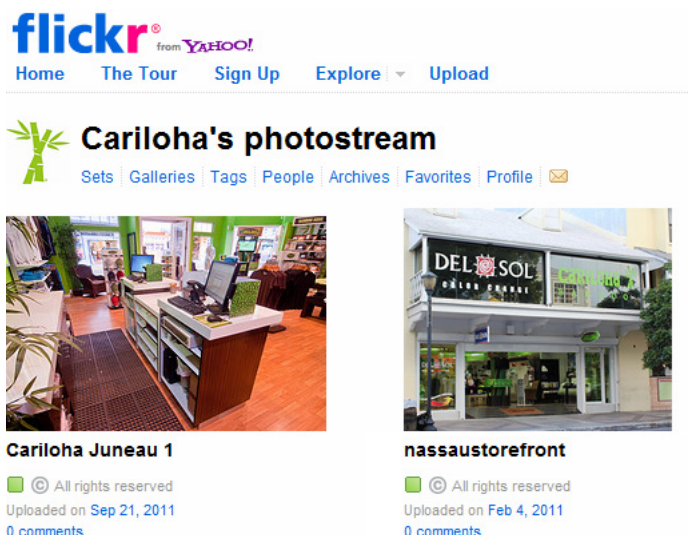
COMMENTS
3 Comments

CATEGORIES
Cariloha Products

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Using Flickr and Photos to Increase Traffic

Publishing photos, especially through heavily indexed sites like Flickr, will allow your images to rank higher in search engines, allowing more people to find you. It's important not to use Flickr as just a dumping ground for product images, but instead to give a more personal look of what an organization does. For example, Cariloha operates its own Flickr account and uses photos of its colorful retail stores to reinforce their company's image. Flickr allows the ability to tag keywords and provide meta data so people searching can find your images easier. Using Flickr is a good way to increase your brand and company awareness online.



Putting it All Together

By properly leveraging social media in conjunction with their website, companies can positively impact their brand building and awareness, keep customers loyal, and also gain valuable market insight. Companies like Dr. Hauschka, Del Sol and Cariloha serve as prime examples of companies that are able to effectively use social media to their advantage and engage with their customers to help drive traffic to their online stores and build their brand. As social media becomes more and more prevalent, integrating social media with e-commerce operations will be a great opportunity for online retailers to improve online traffic in new ways.

ABOUT AZOX

As a Microsoft Gold Certified Partner and Strategic ISV, Azox is a recognized leader in e-commerce solutions for Microsoft Dynamics market. Azox develops and delivers fully integrated e-commerce solutions, online payment solutions, and distribution modules to businesses of all sizes and all kinds around the world. Dedicated to developing and marketing software for Microsoft Dynamics, Azox produces world class solutions in these key areas:

- *E-Commerce Solutions*
- *E-Payment Solutions*
- *Online Bill Pay*



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