

Written by Jacqueline Lawson
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If you run an ecommerce business, chances are your customers – regardless of their age, gender or economic status – are active on social networks and social media sharing sites.

Just consider the statistics from social media monitoring site Pingdom:

- Males and females almost equally use social sites (47% vs. 53%)
- 61% of Facebook users are middle aged or older, with the average age being 37
- 18- to 24-year-olds don't dominate any particular social networking site; they're spread out all over

Leverage these four social media marketing tips for ecommerce to either get started with more social digital marketing or take your current social strategy to the next level:

Go Where Your Customers Are

Very few things in life promise endless options – digital and social media marketing being one exception. From Facebook to Twitter to LinkedIn to YouTube, there's no limit to the number of social networking channels available for your business to leverage. Key to successful social media marketing for ecommerce is choosing the right channels to reach customers.

Find out where your customers are congregating by:

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- Asking them. Sounds overly simplistic, but sending a formal survey to customers or more informally polling them on your website can provide a wealth of knowledge.
- Monitoring social sites. Use a free tool like Social Mention or Trackur. For something far more robust use tools like Radian6 to discover how and where customers are talking about your brand, your competitors or target keywords.
- Leveraging the stats. Some sites like Facebook are transparent when it comes to user statistics. Or leverage research conducted by third-party firms like eMarketer.
- Revivew backlinks, job postings, news announcements and keyword rankings of competitors on a regular basis to get a glimpse into their online marketing health.

Monitor What Your Competitors Are Doing

Whether your ecommerce business is new to social media marketing, or just need to take your efforts up a notch, competitive intelligence can be very useful. Spend some time by conducting a competitive audit of your top five competitors on the social web. Include:

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- The social sites in which they are active
- The type of content they publish on the social web
- The number of followers/fans/views they have on each site
- How they promote specific products, programs or events via social media

For even more inspiration and insight into what works well on the social web, look to ecommerce sites in other industries or even successful B2B social media examples.

Promote Exclusive Offers Through Social Media

In order for your ecommerce business to gain a following on whatever social channel you choose, entice customers with something they can't get anywhere else.

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For example, promote a contest via social media. Last fall, TopRank® Online Marketing leveraged this tactic for one of its ecommerce clients. TopRank used the client's blog and Facebook fan page to promote a Halloween contest to name the best costume. This initiative not only drove additional traffic to the client's website, but also helped increase the number of Facebook fans.

Alternately, offer an exclusive item to social media followers or fans, such as free shipping or a weekly coupon. You can also offer "breaking news" that does not appear anywhere else, like pre-product release announcements or an inside look at your company's inter-workings.

Don't Just Push Products and Promotions

The primary goal of your ecommerce site may be to sell products, but your social media marketing strategy should encompass a wider range of tactics that simply promoting offerings. With too much product pushing and not enough engagement, you're unlikely to experience optimal success.

Incorporate some of these ideas into your ecommerce social media marketing strategy:

☐☐☐ Holidays Approaching - eCommerce Site - Check, Check, Check, Check!

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- Share messages or news stories from external sources
- Create a blog on your website and feed blog content to your social accounts
- Ask questions, participate in discussions or poll your customers via social media
- Post pictures from company events or videos from your CEO's speaking engagements