

### **Where's the Face on Your Brand's Facebook Page?**

With everyone jumping on the social media bandwagon, Facebook contests are the hottest thing since Facebook itself and the average consumer gets exposed to plenty of contests and giveaways when they log on to check out their friend updates. Major brands have been quick to embrace Facebook as another potential facet to engage with their consumers.

Yet a majority of these brand pages remain faceless, where the account administrators who update the brand information remain in the background, unseen by the fans who frequent these pages. With the lack of a human face, there is an inability to fully connect with consumers as there is perception of a huge corporation or brand talking to everybody at the same time and this is never as effective as having one-on-one conversations. By not enabling these conversations, brand owners are not fully realizing the potential and depth of connection afforded by social media tools.

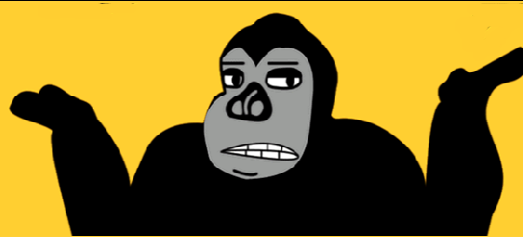
In order for Brands to maximize their interactions and relationship with their fans in the social media sphere, there is a need to have real people, with real passion and interest in the brand engaging existing fans online. While the brand must be infallible and relatively careful in what is officially communicated, having real people speaking up for the brand and interacting with the community at large lends a sense of realism, while at the same time, shifts the liability of the statements made by the ambassadors to be attributable as the ambassadors' honest, personal opinion instead of being the official word or statement made by the brand. With this increased flexibility, there arises greater opportunities for the brand to create connections and intimacy with consumers on levels that would have been previously impossible to achieve.



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After all, which fan wouldn't like to feel like they are friends with someone who works in the brand they love or have the chance of being that person? Wouldn't that just be cool? From a consumer's point of view, that's cool.

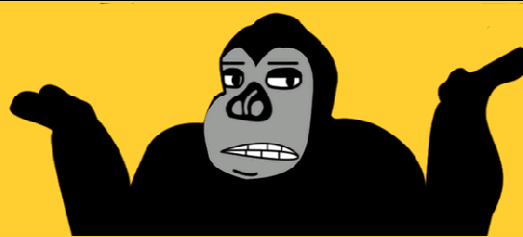
The other benefits of having a human face to your brand page or a few appointed ambassadors is that it opens up various opportunities for the brand to acquire on the ground sentiments and conduct various crowd sourcing of ideas and feedback through these appointed Ambassadors. It changes the perception and approach where people would be more willing to be engaged in a conversation with a person they deem to be a friend rather than a big brand whom they are speaking to where they often do so in view of possible rewards or benefits in contributing.

### **Build Relationships Not Digits**

In order to achieve that ability to hold frank, honest conversations with valuable feedback and to fully utilize social media to crowdsource on a regular basis without having to constantly incentivize your fans (which could be costly in the long run if you are to give away a camera or a netbook every week), there is a need to build relationships with your consumers and fundamentally change how the value of social media networks is being perceived.

One of the greatest mistaken belief that is driving brands and companies when they utilize social media, is their methods of measuring the worth of their social media investment by simply looking at the crude, raw number of total "fans" or "followers" that your facebook page or twitter page is turning in.





Granted we can all see where that came from, an era where financial measurements are everything and tightening marketing budgets make our jobs as brand managers and marketing managers more difficult given the need to justify the money being invested, one cannot help but succumb to the notion of “the more the merrier”

Instead of blindly gunning for the huge numbers (numbers are good of course), the focus should at the point of achieving critical mass (a number that each and every marketing and branding manager will have to estimate on their own) be shifted towards creating a real relationship with the more active members in your communities and creating real, meaningful conversations which will hopefully get them talking and sharing about your brand, event or competition.

To conclude, if this sounds like hard work, it probably is. Social media can no longer exist simply as a part time job or a part time responsibility. If you intend for your brand to enjoy social media longevity and would be keen to lend a face to your organization, it would be wise to appoint one if not a group of raving fans to engage other fans of yours in the social media space. More importantly, give them something to talk about, talk with them and get them talking to each other.



About the Author: Hongjun has a keen eye for details and provides valuable insights into the mindsets of the socially connected young consumers of our generation. His primary focus is on creating experiential marketing campaigns and concepts based on these insights.

