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The Future of Marketing

Personalized marketing fits like a glove with what we do: we build relationships and we expand our networks.

by **Rodney Brandt**

752 words | 3 pages

Are you on Facebook? Do you have a LinkedIn profile? A YouTube channel? Do you tweet on Twitter? Chances are you use at least one of these regularly. The use of social media is growing rapidly; Facebook is so hot right now it has a near vertical growth curve.

The corporate world has certainly taken notice; companies are swarming to social media. What they have figured out is that they can enlist people - regular folks like you and me - as their sales force. They know that compared to mass advertising, “social marketing” (one person suggesting a product to another) has a much greater impact on us.

When it comes to making purchases, we tend to take our cues from people we know and trust, and our friends and family are the ones we trust most. If you notice your sister’s Tweet about a great pair of shoes she just bought, do you think that might influence your decision the next time you buy shoes? You bet! If your friend likes a musician’s Facebook fan page, don’t you suppose you might check it out, too? Companies are now directing their marketing efforts at getting access to your network and mine, our Facebook friends and Twitter followers. Clearly, smart companies understand the power of social marketing.

What does any of this have to do with *network* marketing? Well, for starters look at the similarities between network marketing and the social media. Both are networks. Both are based on personal relationships. And, given the onset of marketing within social media, both are ways to sell goods and services. The difference is that while your Facebook friends are not getting paid to recommend a product, you as a network marketer are!

Some marketing experts are predicting that social media *is* the future of advertising. Aside from a Super Bowl here and there, mass marketing will take a back seat to advertising that is personal, that is based on our lifestyle, our preferences and which groups we belong to. I can see that happening. Business will be personal again, *mano a mano*, like it was hundreds of years ago.

This is good news for network marketers. At a minimum, it mainstreams the idea of person-to-person marketing, which is the essence of our business. Personalized marketing fits like a glove with what we do: we build relationships and we expand our networks. Perhaps we will see companies making a natural progression from social marketing to network marketing as they see the value of what we do.

We know that companies using the network marketing business model benefit in many ways:

1) They get a person-to-person distribution method that complements what they are doing with social media and is in fact, more direct;
2) Network marketers can explain the unique features and benefits of a product in great detail, which is usually not possible through mainstream advertising;
3) Network marketers provide customer service after the sale, increasing customer loyalty;
4) Network marketers use the products themselves, further solidifying the company's market share;
5) Companies experience these additional benefits yet their marketing costs are no higher than if their products were retailed in stores;

6) It is very cost-efficient. Companies that choose traditional sales channels have to hire a sales staff and pay them wages, acquire a storefront and pay for expensive advertising campaigns all *before* the first product is sold. With network marketing, companies only pay out *after* the sale.

As social marketing becomes more and more prevalent, I believe this will open more doors for network marketers. So, let's be ready. Let's be sure we're honing our people skills and leadership skills so we're prepared when those opportunities come.

Rodney Brandt has a rich background in marketing and public relations, including experience in small business, non-profits, ministry, college athletics and child welfare. He is CEO of Covenant Marketing Services, a full-service marketing firm. Additionally, he has been a network marketer since 2001.

Rod and his wife, Lori, live in Maumee, Ohio. They are the parents of two children, Amanda and Cameron. Rod's interests include personal development, missions and ministry.

Rod recently began using his full first name after years of being referred to as Ron, Rob, Red, Brad and Mr. Lori Brandt.

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