

# How to run a successful social media campaign





It seems like every brand is running a social media campaign lately, even B2B brands not known for having a warm, fuzzy consumer-friendly image.

Compared to advertising in print and TV, social media is a relatively low-cost way to expand your audience, create brand awareness, promote products or events and grow customer engagement. It enables brands to target audiences based on likes, online behavior and job titles. It allows brands to be creative and innovative to engage, even entertain, their audience of customers and prospects.

The beauty of running a marketing campaign in social media is that a brand can assess its effectiveness at macro and micro levels from start to finish. Social media campaigns, however, can be tricky for the inexperienced, and the learning cost can be measured not only in both dollars but also unintended consequences to a brand's reputation. So how do you ensure that your next social media campaign stands out among the masses and produces positive results needed to justify the budget?

Using examples from some recent campaigns notable for their success, we have outlined steps for creating your own successful social media campaign. We will address:

- Goal setting
- Defining a budget
- Target audience
- Platform selection
- Content creation
- Budget estimations
- Campaign integration
- Interacting with audience
- Measuring your results

But before you begin any of these steps it is crucial to know one thing: *if it doesn't spread, it's dead.*

Sharing is the cornerstone of a social media campaign. Your social media campaign must persuade viewers to engage with the content; you want them sharing and interacting to give it life beyond your initial ad spend. Bring on the retweets, reposts and likes! As you go through each one of these steps, keep thinking about the importance of creating engaging, shareable content.





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### **Goal setting**

Don't jump right into a campaign without creating a plan. Knowing exactly what you want to do, how you want to do it and what you hope to accomplish will save you a lot of time in the long run. Start by clearly stating what the goal of your campaign is. Do you want to increase brand awareness, announce a product launch or drive qualified sales leads? If you are able to clearly state the goal of the campaign the next steps will be much easier.

Some common goals of social media campaigns include:

- Growing general brand awareness and customer engagement (e.g. Coke's successful 2016 summer "Share a Coke" campaign targeting millennials)
- Attracting prospects to try and buy products
- Supporting new product launch
- Advancing cause-related education like fighting childhood obesity

Don't forget to quantify your goals as objectives. If you want to increase brand awareness then state that your objective is to gain 1,000 new followers on Twitter and have 4,000 people engage with your content. If you are promoting a musical event then state that you want your event page to receive 15,000 likes, and more importantly, to drive ticket sales. If you are trying to generate leads then decide beforehand how many new customers you want to acquire and the average value of those customer acquisitions. The exact numbers will vary with your campaign, social platforms and overall ad spend. The objectives you set during planning will allow you to measure the campaign's effectiveness at its completion, which we will address later in the white paper.



## Define a Budget

Some campaigns enjoy a degree of success with comparatively little effort, while others involve lots of moving parts—outside agencies, million dollar ad buys, media outreach, etc. At the planning stage comes an equally important decision: figuring out your budget. Your CFO may insist on committing to a fixed amount in the budgeting process months before a campaign is actually executed. The problem with that approach is that it is difficult to know precisely how much money your campaign will cost until you get into the nuts and bolts of campaign planning.

Social media campaigns are highly variable, both from a budgetary and resource perspective. Some key questions impacting budget include:

- How much and what kind of creative will you require (video, GIFs, copywriting, web design, etc.)?
- Will you outsource creative and campaign execution?
- What markets will you target for your social media ad buys, and how much will it take to reach enough views to receive the desired results in shares, likes, website traffic, etc.?
- Will the campaign be accompanied by traditional advertising?

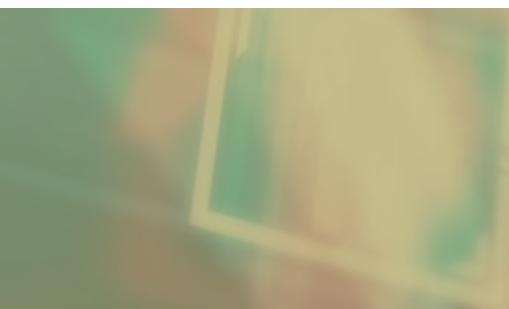


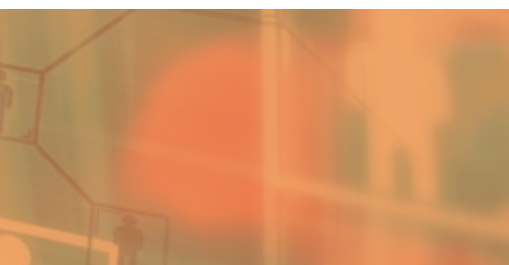
A budget should be aspirational and informed with the best possible estimates on cost of work required to complete the social media campaign. It is not cast in stone as tools and social networks are constantly evolving. And since many social networks are now actually thinly veiled ad platforms the actual cost of advertising is subject to changes based on the “market” value each social platform assigns to its ads. If you are not exactly sure how a campaign will shake out and you have a fairly formal budgeting process in place at your company then it’s not a bad idea to bake in a 10% buffer to account for some (inevitable) cost overruns.



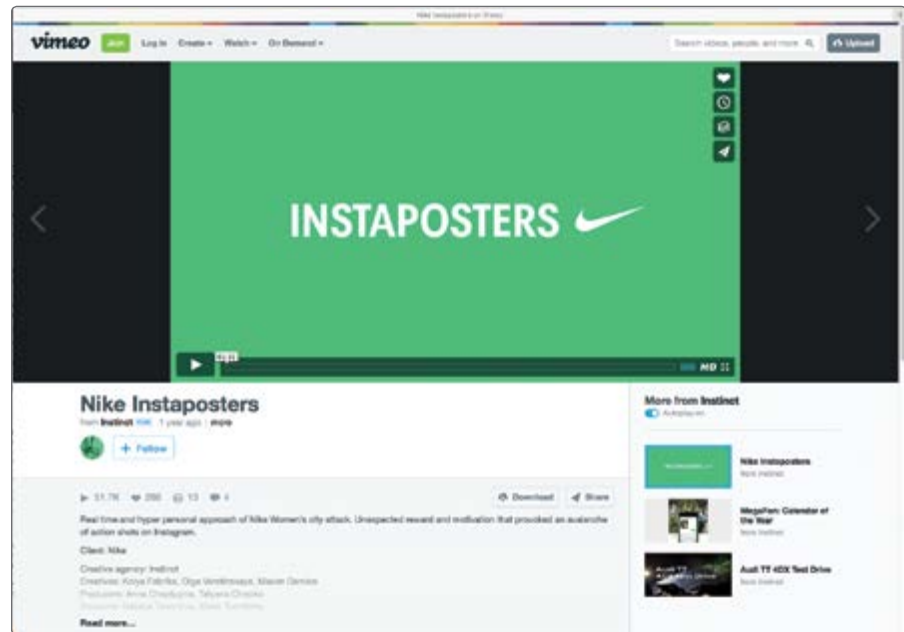
## Target Audience

Once you establish your goals and objectives, it’s time zero in on your target audience. What demographic do you seek to grow? Who are your best customers today? Are you marketing to your tried and true customers, or are you trying to rope in a new crowd? Knowing your target audience will help you create the most relevant content, especially when it comes to choosing a theme, style and tone for the campaign.





Nike excelled at targeting a specific audience with their #InstaPosters campaign in Moscow. Nike encouraged active women to post Instagram pictures of themselves doing something athletic and use the hashtag #betterforit. They chose some of these pictures to be adapted into street art and posted them on buildings around the city. By knowing their target audience, they were able to create a campaign that was tailored specifically to appeal to athletic women. Tapping into women's passion for exercise and a chance at #instafame, the campaign was a huge success with over 25,000 women posting their pictures:



### Nike Instaposters Video

### **Know your Platform**

It seems like there is a new social media platform popping up every day, which can seem a little overwhelming. No need to worry! In order to reach the largest number of people in your target audience, find out what their preferred social media platform is by doing some research. You can pay for a marketing research company or do your own 'organic' research. Bottom-line: it's a waste of time and money if you create an entire campaign and run it on a platform that attracts people who will not relate to and engage with your content. Business Insider Intelligence published a helpful report back in June 2015 detailing the shifting preferences and demographics of different social media platforms. The key points include:

- Pinterest users are overwhelmingly women
- Instagram is the most important social network for teens

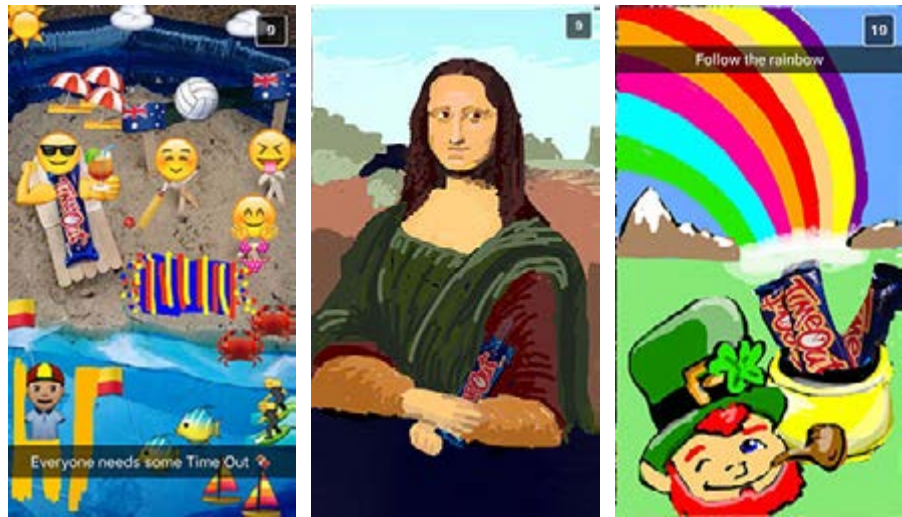


*Did you know that younger viewers react more strongly to video and GIFs compared to older viewers? Or that Facebook has far more older users than any other social platform with 43% of users 45 years of age or older?*

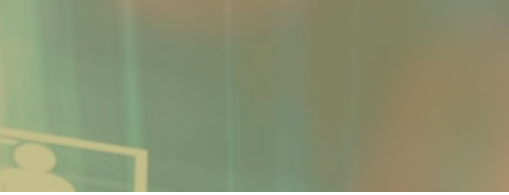
- Snapchat, Vine and Tumblr reach the youngest audience
- 45% of Snapchat's adult users are still very young (18-24)
- LinkedIn attracts highly educated, high income adults
- Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Pinterest (which are among the oldest social networks) are "aging," meaning they appeal to an increasingly older crowd

On the other hand, try not to be close minded when it comes to picking a platform. Just because you are most familiar with Facebook and LinkedIn doesn't mean that your campaign will be most successful there. Look into newer social media platforms that might have more to offer, like Periscope.

Picking your platform will help determine what kind of content you will create. Or not creating. For example, Cadbury launched a social media campaign on Snapchat to engage a young audience. They encouraged people to make creative snapchats featuring a *Time Out* chocolate bar and send it to them for a chance to win \$10,000. It was a crowdsourced ad campaign of the highest order since Snapchat viewers made some pretty creative and fun pics featuring *Time Out* bars in some very creative settings. The top three winning snaps were pretty awesome!



**snaps from the Cadbury Time Out campaign**



## Create content



Here is where the fun begins. Content creation is where you can let your imagination run wild—as long as you keep your audience and platform in mind. Keep in mind, however, that content creation can mean a wide variety of different things based on what type of social media campaign you're running. It could mean composing tweets, creating images, making videos or GIFs, live streaming, etc.

Each platform will, to some extent, dictate what kind of content you will be posting. For instance, you'll post videos on Vine but on a platforms like Twitter you can compose everything from text-only tweets to ones with pictures, GIFS and videos. If you pick a platform like Facebook that allows you to post different types of content then make sure you mix it up to increase viewer engagement. Did you know that younger viewers react more strongly to video and GIFs compared to older viewers? Or that Facebook has far more older users than any other social platform with 43% of users 45 years of age or older?



No matter what kind of content you are creating, be sure that you establish the right tone. Think of what type of message will appeal to your target audience and what the purpose of the social media platform is. For instance, a humorous campaign will appeal to a younger crowd on Vine or SnapChat but it would be completely inappropriate for an older, educated audience on LinkedIn discussing cybersecurity technology. Whether your tone ends up sentimental because you are selling retirement products to Gen-Xers or motivational because you are promoting a fitness technology to Millennials, it should remain consistent with your brand values throughout the campaign.

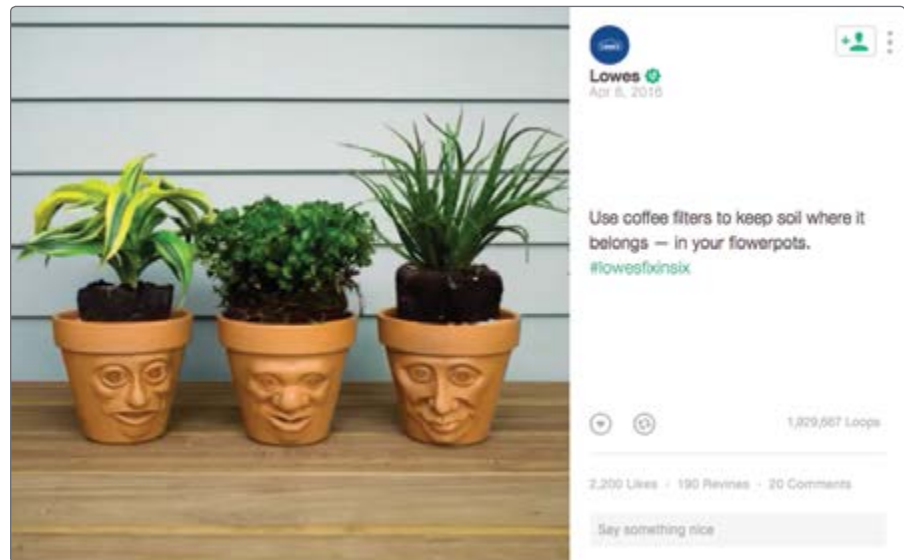
Along with your content, you should create a hashtag, which is the cornerstone of a successful campaign utilizing platforms like Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Make sure your hashtag is not too long. #NoOneLikesReadingALongHashtag. Try to incorporate the name of your brand in the hashtag so readers can immediately connect the campaign to your brand. And finally, make your hashtag clever! This is where you can use some word play, rhyming or alliteration.



Lowe's excelled at creating entertaining content and a catchy hashtag with their #Lowe'sFixInSix campaign. The home improvement retail chain wanted to reach younger homeowners and future ones so it posted clever home improvement videos on Vine using its hashtag. The retail chain giant netted thousands of shares among older Millennials and younger Gen Xers. The videos were funny and charming—and definitely not how you conventionally think of home improvement. Plus,



their hashtag addressed the brand, rhymed and was easy to remember.



Lowe's Vine

### **Integrate across different platforms**

After you launch your campaign, you want it to continue to spread and grow and take on a life of its own. Often campaigns may get a sudden burst of attention in the form of mentions, reposts, and likes as a result of the initial ad buy, but then people quickly forget about it.

Synchronizing a campaign launch across platforms is one way to make sure your campaign continues to receive attention. Just because you have chosen a primary platform doesn't mean you are strictly limited to that platform. If your budget permits, broadcast your content across several complementary platforms using a mix of organic and paid posts to increase your campaign's reach, clicks-throughs and shares. For instance, a campaign for a cyber security appliance targeting IT executives should naturally run on LinkedIn but it can also incorporate Twitter and Reddit to reach industry influencers. By diversifying your social media platforms, you will reach more people and potentially appeal to an audience you didn't even expect.

The *Straight Outta Somewhere* campaign used ingenious marketing to reach an astounding 1.2 billion people across Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. Before the release of the movie *Straight Outta Compton*, marketers teamed up with Beats by Dre, the wildly popular headphone technology company started by Dr. Dre (also an original founder of the rap group N.W.A.) to promote the movie by creating a meme generation. People could upload their photo behind an overlay which read *Straight*





Outta \_\_\_\_\_, and users filled in the blank. They were encouraged to share these images on different social media platforms. It went viral and was the top trending item on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. *Straight Outta Somewhere* received a tremendous amount of press attention and many celebrities and athletes participated. *Straight Outta Somewhere* exemplifies the viral effects integration can have on a campaign.



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Channel and platform integration is also a way you can get creative with a social media campaign. Sure, you can integrate across multiple social media platforms, but you can also use more traditional forms of media alongside social media. Take, for example, Royal Caribbean, which ran an innovative campaign that integrated their content across social media platforms as well as digital billboards. They ran a live stream on Periscope of people enjoying ‘adventures’ at Royal Caribbean cruise destinations then chose pieces of the live stream to play on digital billboards in New York City. They wanted to destroy the notion that cruises are boring, booze-and-buffet bonanzas that don’t offer opportunity for real adventure. They kept the ‘adventure’ theme of the message consistent across different media by showcasing the content in a fresh, unexpected way. Royal Caribbean also studied its key demographics and realized it had a significant concentration of prospects in NYC with enough discretionary income and motivation—escape the winter!—to make the digital billboard ad buy worthwhile.

Moral of the story? When it comes to integrating different channels, look for crossover promotional opportunities where you least expect them.



### **Interact**

As previously stated, the underlying principle for a successful social media campaign is engagement. Remember the ‘If it doesn’t spread, it’s dead’ cliché? If you are not interacting with your audience throughout the campaign then you will miss your single greatest opportunity to make a lasting impression on behalf of your brand. If someone asks a question on Twitter, answer it! Retweet people who are participating in your campaign. Like their comments on Facebook. Thank them for taking time to weigh in on or share your post. Doing so shows you value their ideas and participation.

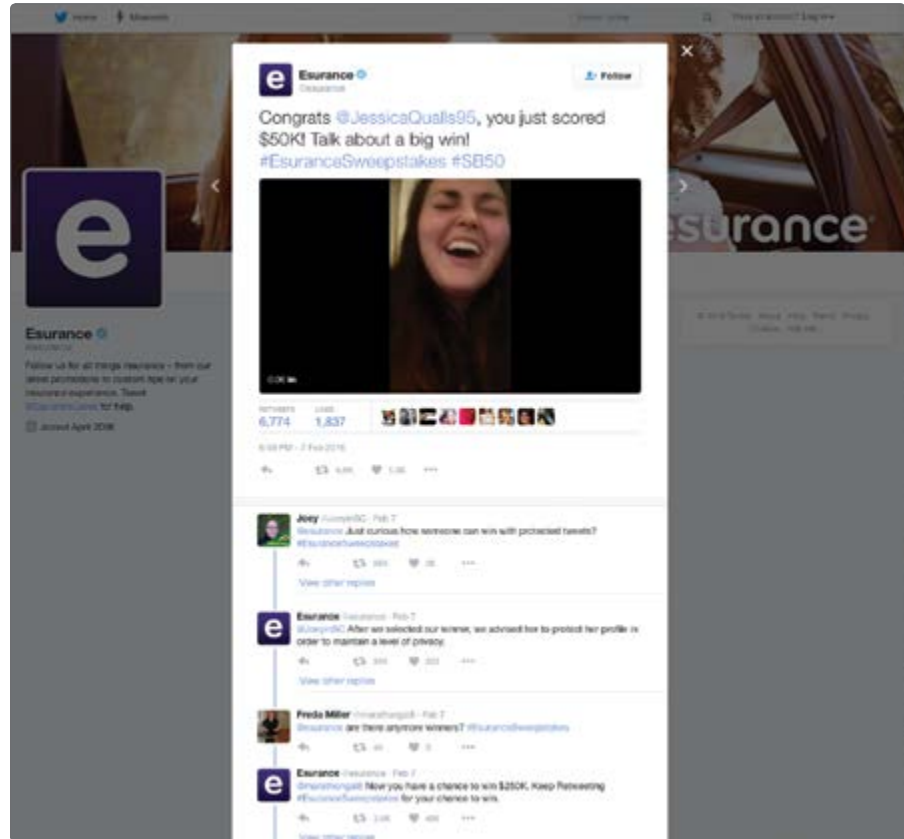
One of the beautiful things about social media campaigns is that you can shoot out a message to millions of people one minute and the next minute interact with a person one-on-one. When your brand is known for interacting with people on a more personable level, it encourages more people to engage with your brand.

Esurance did a fantastic job encouraging people to interact with it on Twitter in its #EsuranceSweepstakes campaign. Like Royal Caribbean, the insurance company mashed up old and new media by running TV commercials before and after the Super Bowl to announce it would be giving away cash prizes totaling \$1 million to a few people who retweeted the campaign





tweets. Over 2.5 million people mentioned the hashtag and there were 1.5 billion campaign ad impressions. On top of just encouraging shares, Esurance also posted videos of the winners being told they had won. Showing the brand directly interacting with people made the campaign more personal and further encouraged people to participate.



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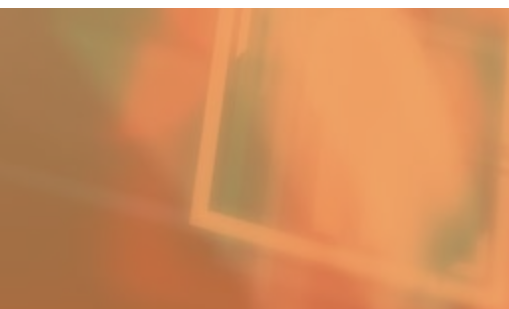
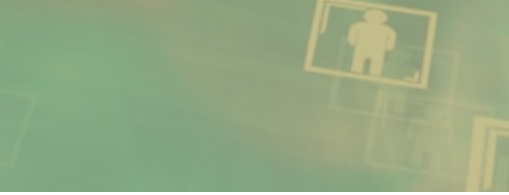
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### Measure your results

Social media campaigns can reveal valuable information about your audience and what they respond well to. It's the information you gather from a post-project analysis that will inform your social media marketing decisions in the future. Campaign analytics will tell you where you succeeded and how you came up short. That means it's absolutely essential to employ the correct tool (or tools) to measure your campaign results and then compare them back to your campaign goals set up during the planning process.

There are several ways to measure the success of a social media campaign. If you did a good job defining your objectives then you will already have made a pick of the metrics





that are important to you. Let's start with reach, which is not to be confused with impressions. Reach simply means the number of unique people who saw your content. For example, a Facebook newsfeed post can be displayed several times if multiple people are sharing it. If one person saw a post three times it would equal three impressions but one reach. The last and arguably most important metric for most brand awareness campaigns is engagements. This means the number of people who interacted with your content: clicks, retweets, shares, wall posts, etc.

Clearly you want all metrics to be high but it is usually more valuable for your brand to have high engagement rates; the more your followers share the wider your campaign's reach. After all, just because someone saw your content doesn't mean it registered in a meaningful way. A share, however, means it impacted somebody enough to share with their own social network. For many B2B brands, the final and most valuable measurement of a campaign's success is the number of leads generated, which can be measured in a variety of ways: newsletter subscriptions, demo request, free service request, converted sale, etc. Clearly that is the end-game of a B2B brand but social media is not always suited to drive such outcomes. Facebook has made great strides in tying ad spend to conversions through its Pixel technology but it's not always the best fit for more esoteric B2B industries.

Most social platforms offer some analysis of these metrics, but it can be a lot easier to use a social analytics tool to keep track of everything from one convenient location. Analyze the data and find what type of content your audience interacted with more. Did they engage more with videos, images or text posts? Was funny content more effective than fact-based content at driving more wall posts or retweets? Did sentimental content result in more shares or a bunch of frown emoticons? Were there times of the day or week when engagement spiked? This information can aid you in developing social media presence that appeals to your audience outside of campaigns as much as during them.



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Manzer Communications is a global communications agency serving the integrated digital marketing and PR needs of enterprises in the U.S., Europe and Asia.

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