
Socialize
the Enterprise

John Bell

The Red Papers:

Ogilvy

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Time for a comprehensive social media strategy

Introduction

After a year of experimentation in social media, the CMO of a global Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG) company realized that, once again, his team's latest effort was not working. He was frustrated. This time, he thought, they had cracked it. From the outset, the team looked to existing agency partners and new social media gurus to help them tack the social media programs to their product campaigns. The media companies offered paid placements in social networks. The advertising creatives designed a clever Facebook application, and the public relations team suggested reaching out to some bloggers to spread word of mouth. The brand team felt they had the tactics to transform their traditional marketing campaign into a social media campaign. But, with no real way to measure the impact of blog posts, Tweets or the limited use of the Facebook application, it just seemed like a lot of work to generate modest word of mouth online. Where was the ROI in that? When the three-month campaign came to a close, the CMO was disappointed. He wanted something bigger, something that reminded him of mass media.

The FMCG's social media experiments had left behind a trash heap of expired initiatives, ignored sites and unattended accounts. All the work and all the money they had poured into social media had not produced much to brag about. In retrospect, their efforts seemed tentative, unconnected and perfunctory. That, the CMO decided, just wouldn't do. Heading home on the Friday evening after his latest social buzz-kill, the CMO didn't know what to do next. Part of him wanted to junk the whole social media world entirely. The results didn't justify the effort and expense.

After dinner that night, the CMO logged into Facebook, caught up with his friends and then started to head over to the Twitter feeds he was following, just like he did every night. He paused, his finger hovering over the mouse button, and realized that if social media was this much a part of his life, then he couldn't ignore the impact it had on his customers. Moreover, he had read the data; he knew that consumers' trust and habits were shifting toward the social landscape. His younger colleagues on the brand teams were unrelenting boosters of social media, and, to be honest, he was an awfully big consumer of it too. Every time he opened

Intro the trades, he read about how his competitors were knocking the cover off the ball with social media. He needed some of those positive headlines. Then the CMO factored in his own boss. The CEO was no fool. He had lasered in on social media as a big opportunity – one they were not yet making the most of – and the whole C-suite was buzzing about it. Nope. This was not something that could be abandoned.

But they couldn't keep going the way they were. Sure, most of their social media stabs seemed exciting when they launched, but as far as he could tell, they had not made the slightest business impact. Some of them, he thought ruefully, were outright failures. When they bombed, his brand teams just retreated into buying more media. As he reviewed the past year and a half of frustration, the CMO realized that in many cases, he and his team had simply ported traditional marketing over to a social platform. His marketing group was filled with smart people; he couldn't have been the only one to see these problems. Yet teams from all over the vast enterprise were repeating the same mistakes. Obviously, there was no mechanism in place to accrue knowledge and then share best practices throughout the organization.

If they were going to continue – and they were – they had to do better than just checking off the social media box on the corporate to-do list. Budget time wasn't far off, and he knew he'd see plenty of line items for social media spending. How, he wondered, could he wrap that up into a budget he could stand behind? He did not have enough data to know what social efforts were going to work, what they would cost and what kind of revenue impact they could return. He needed a new approach – a way to adjust his organization to capitalize on social media while helping his brand managers bank some appreciable, measurable success, all without stomping on their entrepreneurial drive.

While this tale is apocryphal, the arc of the story will sound familiar to any brand executive. Tactical experimentation in social media blows up for brands, leading to a spiral of disappointing campaigns and unrequited love.

Brand marketers feel like jilted dates at the high school dance, convinced that social media doesn't work, that their brand is immune or, worse, that their customers just don't want to talk about them. Hundreds of brands all across the globe have tested the waters of social media over the past few years, lurching forward with disjointed social media feints that often end in failure. Peter Kim's Master List, an online wiki filled with a few thousand examples of brands launching blogs, Twitter handles, communities and more, is a monument to the futility of most of those disjointed, tactical efforts.

Social media is not just a new channel or a few extra degrees in the 360° approach to marketing and communications. Social media represents a fundamental consumer behavioral shift requiring marketers to change how they market, how they are organized and how they measure success. To succeed via social media and to achieve real business impact, brands and organizations must adopt a comprehensive strategic approach to integrating this new discipline.

Were our well-intentioned CMO to have approached social media with a strategic eye, he would never have tried pinning it to the back of a traditional campaign. Instead, he and his brand team would have put "social" at the heart of the entire marketing and communications effort. Pundits have been evangelizing the power of social media for close to a decade. Consumers get it. The rate of marketplace adoption of social media and word of mouth around the globe is faster than anyone could have predicted.

Companies, by contrast, have lagged behind their customers, but they are learning that embracing this platform is not optional. Whether you are a global FMCG, an automobile manufacturer, financial services company or a B2B technology leader, no one can afford to hesitate. At the same time, tactical, unconnected experiments will not vault the brand forward. Integrating social media into the marketing and communications functions implies a deep transformation not just of marketing but customer service, product development, and even the way the enterprise benchmarks success.

Intro

This strategic approach begins with learning to generate authentic, positive word of mouth via social media. Follow up with a focus on long-term gains rather than just short-term campaigns. Defining how to add scale leads to integration across the other marketing disciplines while common measurement models give the team the data to understand what is working and what is not, turning every tactical experiment into a strategic move forward.

The main qualities of an enterprise-level social media strategy – more direct and open relationships with customers, faster marketplace response and increased efficiency around marketing, customer service and product development – have proven themselves invaluable to early adopter brands like Dell, Zappos, Ford, Starbucks and more. But the pace has quickened, and creating a social media brand strategy is a little like designing, building and driving a car simultaneously.



Ultimately, what social media enables is a new form of word of mouth

High octane global growth of word of mouth

Both social media and the new, empowered consumer are here to stay regardless of whatever platform is popular today. Social media behaviors and platforms have enjoyed remarkable growth around the world, most notably in Brazil which has seen the fastest rate of Twitter adoption. While Facebook's U.S. user base grows older – from twenty-six in 2008 to thirty-three in 2009 – Twitter's grows younger. Eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds account for thirty-seven percent of its users, up from nineteen percent just a year ago. As it spreads from the early adopters to a much broader base, social media behaviors and platforms are emerging in markets around the globe. This is a worldwide trend.

Ultimately, what social media enables is a new form of word of mouth. Whether I blog about my love for the new Ford Taurus, become a fan of the Lance Armstrong Foundation on Facebook, Tweet a link to Amex tickets for the Rolling Stones concert or pass a video of Nick Cave reading from Bunny Munro to a friend, it's all word of mouth.

Word of mouth trumps most other forms of communication in its influence on purchase decisions and opinions. Three years ago, we began to see the erosion of trust in traditional marketing in favor of a digitally enabled type of word of mouth. This expanded form went beyond family and friends to a new group: strangers with expertise or strangers with experience. These are people who, like ourselves, express themselves online via blogs, forums, Twitter, Facebook and regional social media platforms. They include other dads who have some experience raising a fifteen-year-old son and can teach me a thing or two, as well as self-made style mavens who know more than any magazine on the racks. When it began, we thought this trend was reserved for mature media markets where consumers had grown skeptical of advertising claims. It would take years for young media markets like China to follow suit.

We were wrong. The Chinese consumer's participation in social media has exploded. In 2006, there were an equal number of blog readers and writers – about fifty-eight percent of the online population – whereas today the number rockets to ninety percent for readers and eighty-one percent for writers.

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Participation in Online Conversations in China is Growing Fast:
Growth of Social Media Use Amongst Online Population
Global Web Index, Trendstream Limited 2009

<i>% participating</i>	2006	2007	2008	2009
Blog readers	58	85	89	90
Blog writers	58	62	71	81
Create social network profile		49	63	70
Manage social network profile			64	72
Visit a friend's social network page			75	82
Video watchers	56	79	56	89

For the Chinese online consumer, online word of mouth trumps traditional media in influencing brand perception and purchase decisions. As Thomas Crampton, who heads up Ogilvy's 360° Digital Influence team across Asia, explains, "China's levels of engagement in social media outstrip those of many nations. Distrust of the state sponsored media makes social media based word of mouth campaigns that much more effective. A McKinsey study found that when asked what would lead someone to buy a new moisturizer, sixty-six percent of all Chinese said recommendations from friends and family was vital."

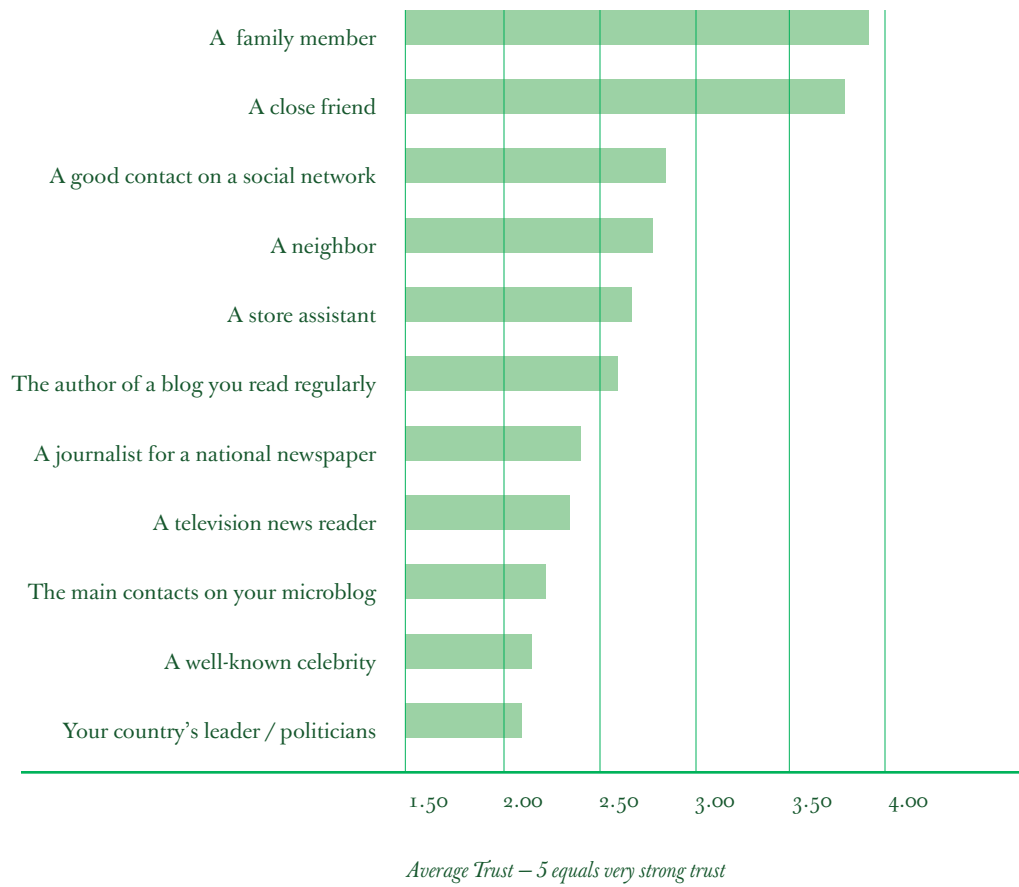
Online Word of Mouth Influences Brand Perception and Purchase Decisions in China
Millward Brown ACSR, May 2009

<i>% agree</i>	Newspapers / Magazines	TV	Online comment by people I know from the Internet	Online comment by people I don't know	Online Search
It will influence my perception on the brand.	33	33	32	43	21
It has the information I want to know.	25	25	25	36	25
It is the channel I use often.	24	25	24	40	33
It is valuable.	24	22	28	37	22
I will recommend it to others.	21	19	25	29	15
It is convincing.	17	17	24	31	15
It is believable.	16	14	23	26	13
It will influence my final purchase decision.	15	17	23	31	18

In Europe, we see a similar trend. When asked who consumers trusted for the most accurate opinion on a product they were considering, “a good contact on a social network” came directly after “a close friend” and a family member at the top of the list, well before a journalist or TV news reader.

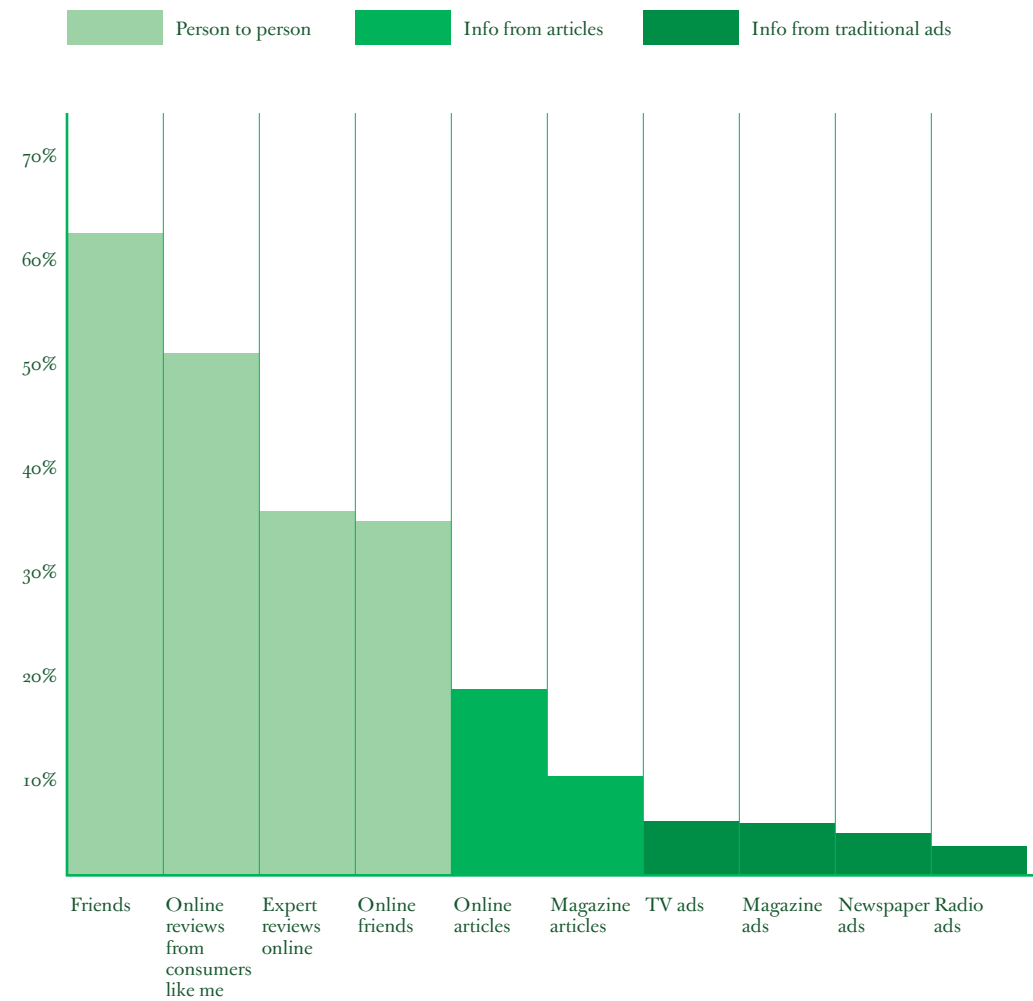
High octane global growth of word of mouth

Europeans Trust Contacts on Social Networks More Than Traditional
Global Web Index, Trendstream Limited 2009



U.S. Moms – that most-coveted gatekeeper of many purchases – clearly values the online opinions of her peers well above the advertisements she may see in traditional media.

U.S. Moms Value Online Peer Communications Well Above Traditional Advertising or Media: Information Ranked by Percent of Moms Indicating it was Very Valuable
2009 Women and Social Media Study, BlogHer, iVillage and Compass Partners



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The growing importance of the opinion of peers – both those we know and those with whom we identify – is a global phenomenon. Brands who have a lot at stake in emerging markets for growth can no longer shrug off peer reviews as a “Western thing.” Consumers in China may favor forums and portals over blogs and Twitter, but the impact of word of mouth online is growing unmistakably. While the state media control may be one explanation, national marketing crises around tainted milk, lead in paint and other products, as well as a general mistrust from outlandish marketing claims has likely accelerated the skepticism.

As marketers, our job now shifts from top-down message dissemination to peer group influencing. We must strive to help customers, enthusiasts, fans and other “strangers with expertise” share their thoughts about our products and the topics and ideas that bring us together with them. Rather than trying to control the conversation, we want people to search in Google and find the endorsements of our advocates – third parties who say our products are as good as we say they are. Social media and word of mouth marketing has become a big part of our business. Marketers and investors are banking on the growing power of social media. As key hurdles from measurement to organizational to integration are overcome, this use and investment will skyrocket. A recent study sponsored by the Word of Mouth Marketing Association tracks marketers’ spend on word of mouth and social media marketing. It found that we spent almost two billion dollars last year alone, a number that will increase by fifty percent come 2013. A tremendous return on investment will accrue to those who spend strategically.

*The growing importance of the opinion of peers
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Change within the enterprise

Strategic use of social media takes effort and change at all levels of the organization. That takes time. Five to ten months will pass before a rigorous approach to social media shows big results. The company should begin by educating teams and adopting best-practice guardrails. Actual marketplace programs with results that everyone can evaluate and appreciate ought to follow soon after. Even the most aggressive marketer who wants a program in-market in thirty days needs to know that time – just like money – must be invested for a new approach to take hold. There is a lot of marketing muscle-memory to retrain.

Our FMCG will face three big changes within the enterprise. They will need some silo-smashing collaboration across the whole organization. This goes way beyond 360° marketing and communications teams. Customer service, or at least corporate public relations, should get dragged into the mix. The product development team must get involved post-haste as advanced social media strategies lead to co-creation or collaboration with customers. That can impact the actual product or service for sale. The company needs to jettison campaign thinking. All of us have to engage with our customers in a sustained, ongoing effort that will likely transcend not just the life of the paid media buy but also the sparkly goodness of the latest big idea. Lastly, no marketing team can adopt any practice on faith for too long. To make a sound budget for ongoing social media activity, marketers must have a dependable measurement model buttressing their high-performance strategic approach.

Collaborating across silos

When American Express wanted to shake up their approach to marketing at their customers with social media engagement, their first stop was customer service. Before Amex could earn the right to use social media to engage customers, they had to offer a social customer care solution. Had they not launched twitter.com/askamex to listen and respond to Cardmember questions and concerns, any other social media marketing effort would have died under the weight of customer service traffic. They needed to collaborate with customer service to deliver a marketing solution.

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When Dell launched IdeaStorm to solicit customer thoughts on product innovations, their first stop was product development. They needed to make sure that the product teams were ready to not just listen to suggestions but take action on them. By inviting customers to make suggestions and have some of them be incorporated in products, they turned these customers into invested advocates. Marketing could not have accomplished this without breaking down operational barriers with product development teams.

Social media will drag the whole enterprise into play. Resisting this pressure is futile. Finding ways to work together easily across business functions will improve the value of social media to the business, increasing collaboration and market responsiveness. Businesses can start by establishing a federation of people from across all disciplines who want or need to apply social media to their discipline. Call it a working group, call it a committee, call it whatever is acceptable and meaningful, but make sure these people come together to establish best practice principles for using social media and that they share openly the lessons they've learned. It's no big mystery that the best application of social media inside the enterprise starts with some basic social activity.

Beyond the campaign

Brands across the Unilever, P&G, Campbell's, Pepsi and Coca Cola portfolios have actively engaged in social media experiments over the past few years. Many learned that they need to push against built-in pressures for short-term thinking and planning. How can you motivate a brand manager who has an average life expectancy on a particular brand of eighteen months to think about developing a two-, three-, five- or even ten-year relationship with customers?

Short-term campaigns often leave a disparate collection of Facebook or YouTube pages out on the social web – many of them abandoned once the campaign was over. These may have served some short-term goal (or not), but they create confusion and negative feelings amongst consumers who expect to see brands living up to their side of the social network contract. Generally, brand exploration in social media is a good thing. It builds confidence and expertise within the organization. But without a strategic framework, it can lead to less than best-practice use of social media. Companies must curtail the English-garden growth of social network beachheads in favor of strategically guided experiments. It's a business truism, but it's worth repeating: the consumer must come first – even before our ninety-day needs for launching product variation X. Brands must apply some order to this chaos without squelching the entrepreneurial drive that got them doing something in social media in the first place.

Responsible budgeting

“What do we budget next year?” Think about this routine question. If the most effective use of social media is a sustained effort beyond any one campaign, involving more than the marketing and communications teams, then the current method of measuring success – campaign metrics – is insufficient. These measurements cannot assess the impact of an ongoing social media effort and do nothing to calculate return on investment. Without those two key pieces of data, how can you have an informed view of what to budget next year? An evolutionary approach won’t get you there. Unlike media-driven campaigns where a marketer can dial up or remix the spend to get different (hopefully better) results, a social media program requires new metrics to move budgeting beyond guesswork.

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Measurement of social media is changing how we measure business

Brands cannot wait for the social media equivalent of the Gross Rating Point (GRP) to land in their laps. It is finally possible to measure the performance of social media programs, and the newest performance models will likely change how we all measure the impact of our marketing and communications and customer service efforts in the future. No, we don’t have new standards in place yet. Any marketer who holds out until that is delivered to them on a silver platter will find herself off the back of the pack. Many major marketers today are exploring two new performance metrics for social media while figuring out how to integrate them into their brand dashboards: the Net Promoter Score (NPS) and value metrics for social key performance indicators.

The NPS is a proprietary model for benchmarking the health of a business based upon some version of the simple question, “would you recommend us?” There are billions of brand mentions every day online and offline which can be classified, given some context, as positive, neutral or negative, but brand marketers want to activate and increase positive word of mouth about their product. The NPS measures that positive word of mouth. Brands that engage with social media will need to adopt some form of an NPS metric being as it indicates actual consumer sentiment. Rather than rely on inchoate “brand mentions,” measures like the NPS assess a behavior, and a highly desired behavior at that. What good are gross impressions compared to knowing who is recommending your product and how to reach them?

What’s next? How about the value of a Facebook friend? The value of a word-of-mouth mention? Or the value of my social graph? Each of these metrics – which seem intuitively valuable – will find some form of simple and plausible measurement within the next two years. If you add to that the compound effect of owned, earned and paid media, then marketers will have a new way to assign value to their market-facing activities.

Creating your social media strategy

As our apocryphal CMO learned the hard (and expensive) way, experimentation in social media is not enough. It leads to a self-defeating series of disappointments as brands try to hit the jackpot of a runaway campaign or replicate the seductive power of a viral video. Only a company-wide strategic approach that puts social media at the center of brand strategy, accrues useful learning and applies meaningful new measurement tools will produce the kind of results marketers need and consumers want. A strategic social media approach will force change, to be sure, but it will also reorient the enterprise to face the most significant change in the selling environment that any of us will see in our lifetimes. Strategic focuses show brand teams the way to meet their short-term campaign needs while building an enduring connection with consumers. CMOs will get a program that directly and measurably affects sales targets and brand equity. CEOs will see that the organization is embracing change. And customers will see a brand that is committed to them for the long haul, not just selling that new flavor or formula.

Brands must do three things to develop a comprehensive strategic approach to social media. Start by defining the social brand – just how can (and should) you participate in social media in a way that is authentic? Not every company should put their 1,666 blogging employees in an aggregator like Microsoft. Not every brand should enlist women to tell men how they can score like Axe does via Facebook.

Beyond defining their social nature, brands must look inside and break down the silo walls that shelter one department from another, preparing team members for collaboration and learning. An enterprise change framework can speed adoption of best practices and organizational frameworks, and establishing an engagement playbook will ensure that brands get the biggest impact from their marketing and communications.

Defining the social brand

You spent millions defining your brand, and millions more communicating that to the world. You built complex marketing and communications programs that speak consistently across channels. You may have even aligned your call centers to that brand positioning. The 360° approach to brand stewardship is standard operating procedure these days.

But what about the social identity of a brand? Is social just a few more clicks around the 360° wheel? Is it just another way to describe the big idea? Brands must choose the role they want to play in social media and what they will do there, not simply what they want to say. Defining the social brand means deciding how you will behave in the social web, what voice you will use and how deeply you will participate with your customers.

Creating your social media strategy

There is more than one way to be social. Does every brand need to jump into a daily two-way conversation with people to demonstrate that they get it and to serve their customers? What makes it okay for Starbucks to invite customers to co-create via My Starbucks Idea may not work for McDonald's. Ford's Fiesta Movement may be right for them but not for Louis Vuitton. Brands have long been described as personalities. Now that metaphor means more than ever. Brands must think and choose wisely about what is a natural personality to portray.



Brands can choose to:

Humanize themselves through their people and their stories

Demonstrate openness by inviting customer opinion, whether it be favorable or unfavorable

Be of use to their customers in some new way

Delight customers via innovative entertainment

Steward customer communities for feedback and to trigger word of mouth

Extend customer care via social tools that are more immediate and answer questions publicly

Deliver relevant content via the social web to the places their customers are already congregating

*Creating your
social media
strategy*

Each of these is a legitimate way to act socially. Each can be an extension of the authentic brand personality. Some brands are enablers trying to help their customers achieve something. Some brands deliver fun. Some feel more exclusive. How should your brand behave in social media? Like the relentless helper, Zappos, known for their friendly, even quirky, customer service? Or are you more like Campbell's Soup, providing a virtual kitchen for women to share their recipes and experience with other women?

Ford's enduring brand position has always been the democratization of technology. After all, they pioneered mass production, making the automobile available to many. The 2010 Ford Taurus embodies that same spirit by placing technology once limited to the luxury brands into a car for the masses. As Ford dives deeper into social media, their democratic heritage guides their choices. They embrace the voice and experience of their customer by aggregating blog and Twitter mentions, images and videos from owners and prospective owners, projecting the mood of a town hall rather than a corporate lobby.

Axe has little interest in democracy. Instead, it wants to give you a leg up. Axe is that wingman who will help you score with the ladies. That comes across in their advertising as well as the apps that fill their Facebook page. Axe has chosen to be the enabler who, with a twinkle in his eye and a smile on his face, has decided that your fun is his mission.

These brands rooted their social brand in their larger brand position. While this connection makes sense, brands may also find that they have permission to behave a little differently in social media. Very often a brand's social self can be more informal or even friendly, even if that is not key to the core brand personality. If you operate within a regulated industry like pharmaceuticals, financial or alcohol, you will need to address the requirements of those regulations as that may affect how your social brand manifests itself. An alcoholic beverage company, for example, might need to embrace a social voice and message around the responsible use of the product, thereby earning the right to engage in deeper discussions. Hold a workshop with your brand and social media enthusiasts. Peter Friedman from the social media community company LiveWorld likes to call this the "socialization of the brand." Ask yourself some simple questions:

If you met your brand at a party, how would you describe it?

What voice should your brand speak in?

From within your company, who would be a good archetype for that voice?

Is your brand more likely to engage in conversation or help others do the same?

If you could invite your customers over, what would you do together?

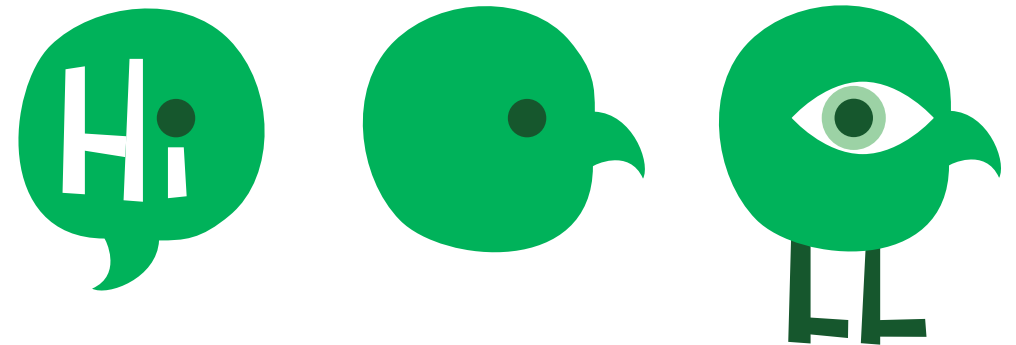
What social causes do you care about?

Some of these questions seem hokey. Give yourself and your team a little room to explore and the freedom to be corny. Suspend your disbelief and check the hierarchy at the door so that you and your team uncover the natural position for your brand. There is no one path to socializing your brand, and your discussions may show you that you are not ready to jump into direct conversations with your customers via social media, preferring instead to help them share amongst themselves. Perhaps it is not your brand's job to entertain your customers but rather to be useful to them in a new way (like an iPhone app, for instance).

Once you have a definition for your brand's social self, your strategic choices will become clearer.

Building your enterprise change playbook

Social media is not just for marketers or communications experts. Many brands are finding that social media can inform or even change basic business processes across the enterprise, from customer service to product development. That's a lot to take on at once, and a strategic approach will start you in a few distinct places like training and organization. This will introduce change at a level that impacts the business immediately. You don't have to set out to transform your enterprise to gain advantages from social media, but once you have enjoyed the rewards, you'll look back and find yourself transformed.



You don't have to set out to transform your enterprise to gain advantages from social media, but once you have enjoyed the rewards, you'll look back and find yourself transformed.

Social Enterprise Change Playbook – For large organizations to reap the full benefits of social media in their business, they need three efforts:

Training

A training program to build capacity from within the organization. Social media cannot be completely outsourced, and team members across disciplines from marketing to customer care to legal need training. An accreditation program ensures true expertise, and a path of continuous learning keeps teams sharp on the next new thing.

Organization

Organizational modeling tells us how to structure the organization – including jobs and responsibilities – as well as how to productively engage outside partners such as agencies.

Action

Each discipline needs its own social media action program that tells them how they can apply “social” to their market-facing activity.

Customer service

Internal communications

Marketing and communications engagement

Creating your social media strategy

Training: Social media cannot be outsourced – at least, not completely. Nor can it be learned through books. This is one discipline that requires hands-on experience and nonstop training. Ogilvy, for example, has developed a complete training program delivered both live and online. Our belt system allows marketing and communications staff to work their way up to black belt abilities in our social media dojo. Intel has adopted a different approach, using an accreditation program for their staff. By taking digital university-level courses, staff can acquire knowledge and status within the organization. To transform your current staff you will need to develop a training program that fits your staff. Some organizations such as the Word of Mouth Marketing Association offer basic training which is a critical starting point, and social media training is being introduced into marketing and communications programs at major universities. Nevertheless, brand organizations should expect to develop their own higher-level training that is mapped to what their marketers really need.

Whatever approach your organization adopts, active, ongoing education is mandatory in a social media-focused organization. This world changes quickly, and the change is driven by your consumers. Being behind the curve shows them disrespect.

This world changes quickly, and the change is driven by your consumer. Being behind the curve shows them disrespect.

Organization: Social media doesn't belong to marketing, public relations or customer relations. It doesn't sit neatly within any of the existing discipline silos, and creating a new, distinct organization runs contrary to the integrated nature of social media. Instead, brands are creating centers of excellence, pulling people from all disciplines to form an internal federation. Its mission: to define and socialize best practices, while sharing and integrating this knowledge throughout the organization. Intel, American Express and others have adopted this model, sidestepping the question of "who owns social media?" and creating a more responsive culture. The work coming from your social media center of excellence will accelerate the integration of the communications and marketing teams and will spread from there. Even if your organization has competitive marketing and communications silos today, they will all be one unit sitting shoulder-to-shoulder in the future.

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Once you've committed to building a center of excellence, you need to figure out whom to invite. It's key to have most disciplines attending – marketing, communications, customer care and product development. It's just as important to identify the enthusiasts for social media and invite as many of them as makes sense. These folks may not be the most senior, but their natural interest and aptitude will propel the group forward. They can be productive word-of-mouth ambassadors for social media within the organization. Embrace them.

Who will do the actual work within the brand, and how will you determine what must be done internally, with consultants or via your agency partners? How can you determine which key positions to hire before the actual revenue impact of those positions is revealed? In answer to those questions, most companies grossly underestimate or overestimate what they need to have an effective social media program, especially in the beginning. Many settle for hiring that one social media person and then wonder why their business is not magically transformed. Still others assume that industry leaders like Dell have a legion of social media-specific people and unless you get that legion, no progress can be made.

The truth is somewhere in between. Managing customer care in the social web is resource-intensive. If you are trying to manage the conversation

calendar¹ of your Facebook page and content publishing elsewhere in your social web, you may find that you can centralize all of that with a single, very busy person. But that is only one key platform. Just the live coverage on Twitter alone can require two or three team members. The organizational task is to identify the least number of resources you need internally, augmenting those folks with your agency partners. Time will tell where and when you need to staff up.

If you chose well, your agency has a lot of experience bringing social media to bear for different brands. They can help you develop your social brand position and assist with changing how you work. They can also serve as a useful filter for the fire hose of new technologies and solutions springing up in the marketplace every day.

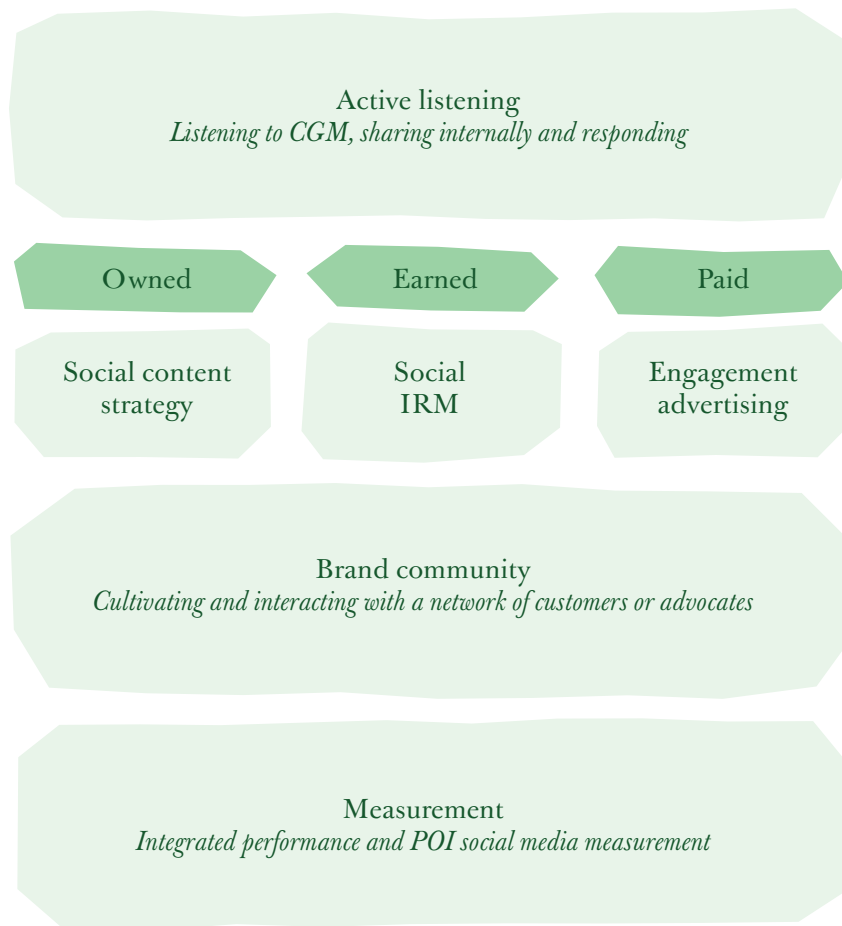


¹ "Conversation calendar" is a term used by Facebook sales reps to describe the daily and weekly rhythm of updates to your brand Facebook pages to keep your followers engaged.

Action: the social media engagement framework

A changed enterprise is not enough. You need a model to plan your social media marketing and communications efforts more strategically. We live in a campaign-focused world. Our brand teams are trained to think of discrete marketing assaults in the marketplace, and, while we want to move to include a more long-term view, we do still need a planning framework for campaigns that deliver the most impactful results today and tomorrow.

Social Media Engagement Framework:



Creating your social media strategy

Active Listening: Whether you are listening to gain insight or to rapidly respond to customers or stakeholders, every brand must keep its ears pricked. Brands have begun putting in listening solutions that deliver short, relevant reports on a daily or weekly basis, but nobody has come up with an excellent system. Some have limited their sift to Twitter and a major forum (such as TripAdvisor). Others have tried the radio antenna approach, listening to the whole universe of comment. One way or another, brands need to implement a good system for listening that is flexible enough to adapt to growing sophistication as it becomes available. Listening programs deliver value in at least five ways: marketing insight for campaign planning, rapid response opportunities, measurement benchmarking, media planning insight and influencer discovering. This is too rich a resource to pass over.

Active listening doesn't end with your ears. Now that companies have valuable information, they need to know what to do with the information. Do you have a commenting policy that will empower your communications staff to story correct? Will the insights from consumers make their way to the CMO and influence future marketing and product efforts? Every brand should have some listening solution and discipline. This is a fundamental step that every social media expert agrees on.

Active listening doesn't end with your ears.

Owned, Earned and Paid Media: A brand has the choice of how it will use its own Web presence and content. While this owned media offers the ultimate in control, it lacks the benefits of two-way dialogue with consumers. From your web site to your Twitter account, owned media can be used more conversationally than the press releases, white papers and videos you may have pumped out a few years ago. Today, owned media should be shareable and findable. Embed your owned media with web standards for distributing and bookmarking (e.g. Share This), and create all content with search results in mind. Search remains embarrassingly underutilized for most brands. While conventional search engine optimization experts abound, search intent modeling – a process advanced by our SEO experts Global Strategies International – turns search into a powerful social tool. Search intent modeling allows us to listen to what consumers are talking about in relation to our brands while paying attention to how they are searching. Using the language that our customers are using is the key to creating highly relevant owned media that rises to the top in all types of search.

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The new earned media is word of mouth. When we engage a new set of influencers in a way that causes them to pass something along, comment on or participate in some way, we have earned word of mouth – the highest value currency in the marketing world. When we pay attention to social media participants and understand what they value, we may gain more than their attention; we may obtain their advocacy. There are billions of brand mentions every day via word of mouth, but that's not the same as social attention. Often, people are willing to say relevant, honest things about your brand if you just ask them nicely. To succeed in earned media, brands need to know how to earn that attention.

Social Influencer Relationship Management (Social IRM) is the process of managing social relationships well and encouraging people to be vocal about a product, service, brand or topic. Unlike Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Social IRM does not try to measure the value of specific social behaviors. Yes, it's nice to know how many emails it takes for someone to click through, but that is not the goal of Social IRM. Social IRM is personal, high-touch customer interaction that presumes you value advocacy as much as you do customer revenue. In the near future, Social IRM will connect influencer and customer databases to each other, managing them for maximum advocacy and revenue.

To add scale to our efforts we need to use paid advertising in a new way. We can grow online word of mouth via the careful use of advertising. A hallmark of large word-of-mouth activity is dispersion or the degree to which a lot of people are talking rather than a vocal core group. Advertising used well can drive more people into the conversation and get them talking. Imagine advertising units that feature blog posts, Tweets or other social content getting delivered through efficient ad channels. Now the advertising progresses beyond traditional display as it helps create a brand network for a relevant conversation. With new uses for paid advertising, we have added scale and not let our social media program plod along unsupported.

Putting social at the center of a program drove millions of people to be heard at the 2009 United Nations Climate Change Conference. Ogilvy's Hopenhagen campaign, launched just three months before the start of the conference, aimed to galvanize a mass outpouring of public sentiment, a global and peaceful uprising demanding a serious effort to confront climate change. By aligning earned, owned and paid media, we delivered a strategic plan for social media far bigger than any one tactic. We hosted a worldwide social media movement that became a beacon for the climate change conversation. We built a social brand that mattered, earning the focused attention of six million people, and we did it in 90 days. Hopenhagen showed the world the power of social media.

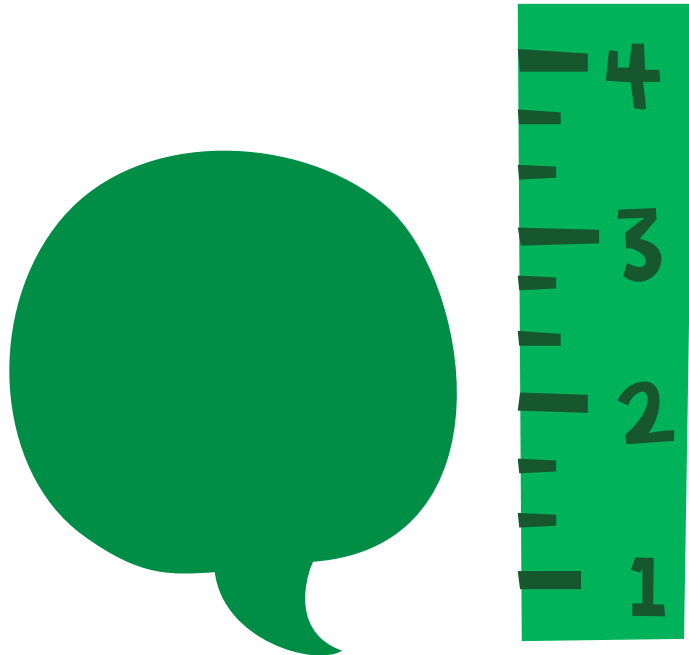
Brand Communities: Every brand can support some type of community. Every town has its own character as does every internet community. Victoria's Secret Pink, for example, has over two million fans on Facebook who may find themselves interacting with each other and not just the brand.

Every brand should know what its communities are or where the potential for community lies. If Campbell's Soup can foster community – and they can – then many brands have the potential. You may find, as Maker's Mark did, that loyalists will take pride in their community and membership in ambassador programs. As you engage influencers to share word of mouth, foster a place for vocal loyalists as well as a deeper relationship among them and your brand. Brand communities serve as a new form of CRM – one that is built and managed across the social web.

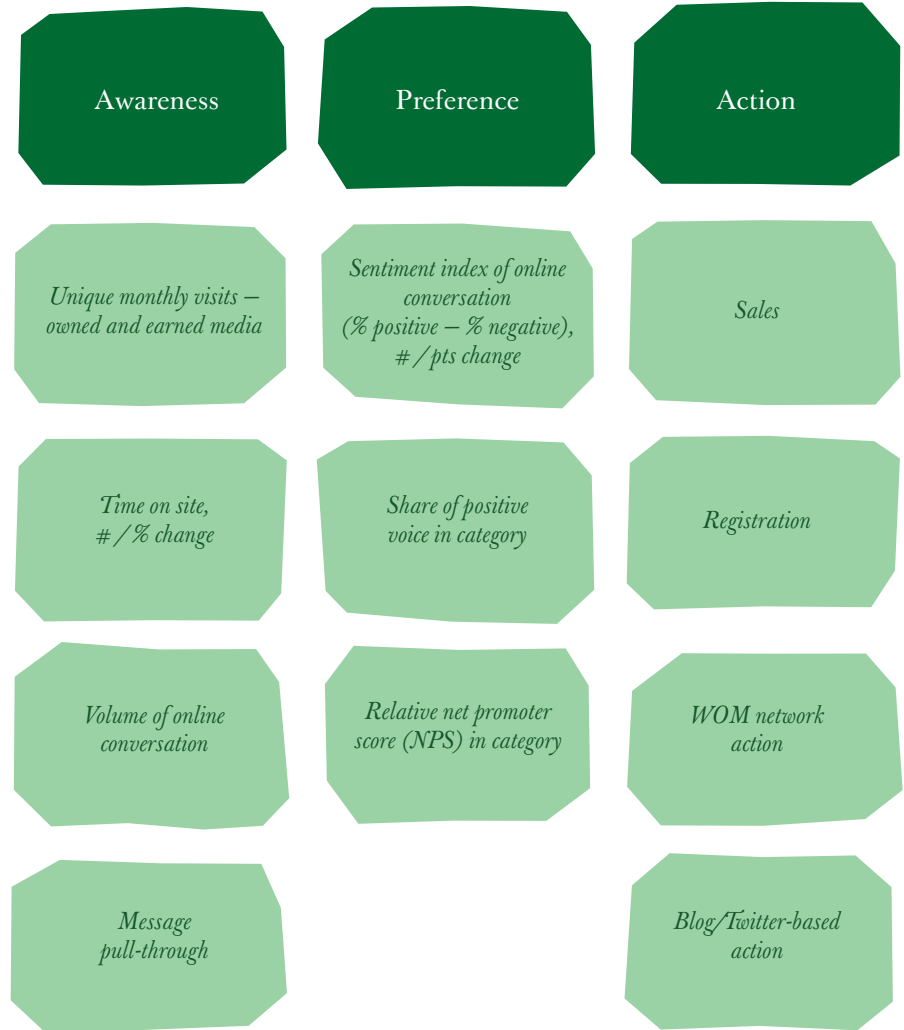
Measurement: Going all in with strategic social media does not preclude learning through experimentation and iteration. Anyone who portrays social media as a highly predictable universe with power laws like the average click-through rate on a display ad is just delusional. Brands will succeed by trying lots of things. You need a reliable measurement model to know if you are winning or losing on any given day.

Every brand can decide which key performance indicators they will follow today while we all wait for Facebook to get around to floating a value for a fan. Our approach, Conversation Impact™, is a simple model for brand marketers to report reach, brand preference and action based upon readily trackable metrics. There are other tools emerging, but no matter which you choose, be sure it measures conversion metrics like click-throughs, email signups and fan acquisition as well as the volume of your positive word of mouth online. Whether you use Conversation Impact™ or some other model, use it consistently. Doing so allows your center of excellence to try different tactics knowing they will be able to gauge what is effective.

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Conversation Impact™: Measure Engagement > Action



Social media strategy now

Simon Clift, former CMO of Unilever, said of that company's progress in social media, "We may be ahead of our competitors, but we're most definitely behind consumers." While many marketers are just trying to catch up to consumers, we must take action to meet our customers where they have already told us they want to go. Social media is not a fad. It is an enduring change, and it represents a new discipline for marketers to learn. Taking it seriously demands some crucial decisions. Enterprises must choose how to train best practices, organize themselves to adapt quickly and measure performance and ROI. Some marketers will continue to experiment tactically with no means for understanding real results, but the experimentation and evangelist-led tactics that got us this far will not be enough to reap the true benefits of a social world. Marketers who apply a strategic approach across the enterprise will not only create the most effective social media-based programs possible today, they will be setting up their organization to meet consumers where they want to go next.

The ultimate promise of the social brand comes when a person openly speculates about a product or a service to buy and their peers lean forward to tell them enthusiastically about their experience. As brands change their approach to connecting with their customers, they will find that all of their communications and marketing efforts will be more effective. Instead of outspending their rivals and buying customers for their products, brands will earn people's attention, their advocacy and, ultimately, their business.

We may be ahead of our competitors, but we're most definitely behind consumers.

Key takeaways

- Social media represents a fundamental consumer behavioral shift that is here to stay
- Success comes from creating an enterprise-level social media strategy
- Brands will enjoy direct and open relationships with customers, faster marketplace response and increased marketing, customer service and product development efficiency
- Social media is a new form of word of mouth which is growing remarkably quickly throughout the world
- Enterprises must embrace internal change while setting up a new engagement strategy
 - *Reorganizing for social media*
 - Collaborate across silos
 - Think beyond the campaign
 - Rethink budgeting with new social media metrics
 - *Creating a social media engagement strategy*
 - Define the social brand
 - Build an enterprise change playbook
 - Training
 - Organization
 - Apply the social media engagement framework
 - Active listening
 - Owned, earned and paid media
 - Brand communities
 - Measurement
- Set up the organization to progress in step with consumers, meeting them where they want to go next rather than playing catch-up

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About the author

John Bell

John's job is to take the latest in digital innovations and apply it to our business and our clients' business. Call it applied innovation.

He heads up the global 360° Digital Influence team – Ogilvy's global digital practice designed to manage brands in an era when anyone can be an influencer and we are all influenced in new ways. It connects our brand-building PR expertise with a word-of-mouth marketing discipline. This team of Digital Influence strategists integrates the power of social media – social networks, blogs and Web 2.0 applications – with digital marketing to produce measureable results. John has developed strategy and executed award-winning programs for clients including Ford, Lenovo, Unilever, Intel and American Express.

The first wave of innovation was Interactive Television (iTV) in 1990. John headed up the Visual Design Studio at Downtown Digital – a joint venture between Viacom and AT&T to create the most futuristic vision of interactive television anyone could imagine. He created programming for kids and gamers, and fully interactive applications for Paramount Studios and Entertainment Tonight. This model of set-top-box-delivered interactivity remains a vision for all iTV innovation.

John created the first interactive advertisement for American Express during that iTV trial. He went on to form Media Circus Interactive Advertising in New York during the 1990s, designing award-winning CD-ROMs including the first interactive advertisement on Launch, then a CD-ROM zine, for Sony. John also created the first I-Spy CD-ROM for Scholastic, extending the brand into the electronic space and pushing the limits of what an interactive experience could be. At the same time, the Internet was exploding. He designed and built complicated transaction sites for Gateway Computers and wild experiments like MTV's Web service that connected "stringers" all across the country reporting on the music scene in their community. (Sound a bit like blogging? It should, and the year was 1995.) Discovery Channel was one of the first media properties to really experiment with the web. John was brought in to transform a single web site into a network of 14 web properties known as Discovery.com.

They had live, online expeditions from the field. Reporters posted real-time stories, audio and video from Australia where they were in search of giant spiders, and from the bottom of the ocean where they explored the Titanic wreckage for the first time. John designed and built online experiences for TLC, Animal Planet, Discovery Kids, Discovery Health and Travel Channel, not to mention a host of digital TV network and global sites.

His experience creating an online adventure service for kids with Discovery Kids inspired him to join a startup called HiFusion committed to building a unique school-to-home internet service for the K-12 community. But it was 2000 – a pivotal year for internet-based business. HiFusion sold the company to Sylvan Ventures and moved on to the next adventure. For John, that next adventure was Ogilvy.

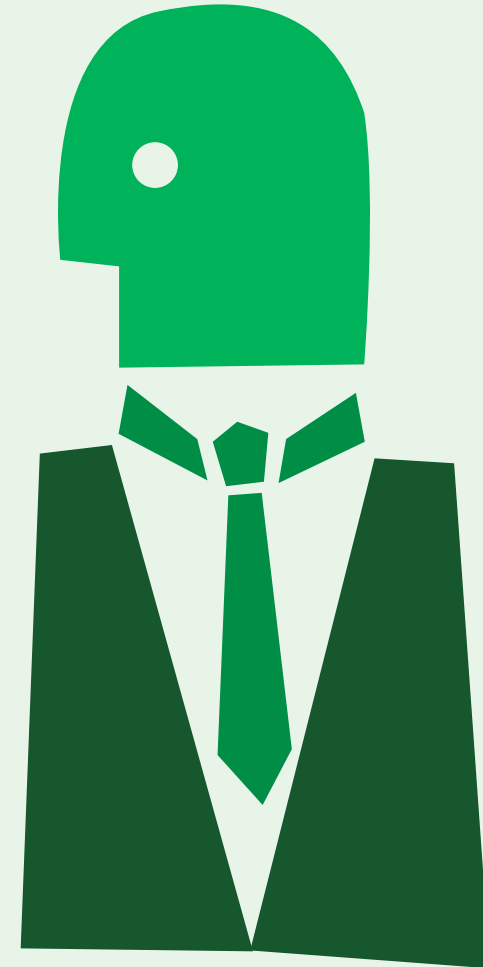
John graduated from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Arts in European history and spent a lot of time at the Annenberg School of Communications.

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John serves on the board as past president of the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) and is a professor at Johns Hopkins University where he teaches graduate courses in Digital Influence.

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485 Brand Design, Ogilvy Chicago

February 2010

Issue 2

The Red Papers are published by

Ogilvy & Mather

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Ogilvy & Mather

Edition 1:

5350

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