

LGK MCC, INC.
FLORIDA/DISTRICT OF
COLUMBIA

MAXIMIZE YOUR MOMENTUM

Strategic Insight

To Find Out
What Makes Your
Customer Tick,

JUST CLICK

A group of people's hands are shown holding a tablet. The tablet screen displays a social media dashboard with various icons like 'LIKE', 'TWEET', and 'MEDIA'. There are also articles on the screen, one titled 'Has social media taken over your life?' and another 'Social Media as Business Tool'. The background shows people wearing jeans and a yellow sweater.

WHAT MAKES YOUR CUSTOMER TICK, JUST CLICK

BY NANCY L. HOHNS

These are extraordinarily uncertain times. Businesses of every kind and size are doing all that they can to figure out how to stay relevant and afloat. So what advice can we provide that will help you navigate through the whitewaters of the present-day unpredictable marketplace? The secret to survival is as profoundly powerful as it is profoundly simple: Stay close to your customer.

Staying close to your customer, while always important, is even more so during times of economic uncertainty. In order to provide them with the best possible products and services, you need to be acutely aware of what is on your customer's mind. What are they thinking? What are they doing? What needs do they have today? What needs might they have tomorrow?

Your customer is your single most valuable asset, without whom you would have no business. Since it costs between five and ten times more to find a new customer than to retain an existing

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one, now is the time to focus on optimizing your customer's experience, strengthening your relationship with your customer, and delivering on every brand promise you make.

Satisfying the customer—gaining your customer's trust and kindling your customer's loyalty—not only makes good business sense in the most difficult of selling environments, but it also paves the way for increased growth and profit the minute the economic tides change.

In this age of technological connectivity, the most

effective and expedient way of staying in contact with your customer is social media.

Web communications offer several options (blogs, vlogs, e-mail, Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Youtube, e-newsletters, wikis, forums, message boards, discussion boards, surveys, podcasts, videos, etc.) to let your customers know that you value them, that you will be transparent about your usage of any information they provide, and that you are here to stay! Some tips for communicating:

1. Keep it Relevant, Make it Personal: Focus your communications on information content that is timely and useful. Provide your customers with information that will keep them informed and involved: alerts about special events, updates on new products or services, and "insider" knowledge that will be meaningful to them. Not sure what they want to know about? Just ask them, and don't forget to get their permission to be in touch.



Not sure how frequently they would like to hear from you, or where they would like to receive their messages? Internet? Cell phone? Other mobile devices? Ask them that as well. Direct personal engagement requires a dialogue, not a monologue, so be sure that when you are talking, your customer is willing to listen.

2. Take the Good with the Bad: Just as in any conversation, you must be willing to hear the good along with the bad. Being open to criticism and dissent affords you the invaluable benefit of learning what is working for your business or your product and what is not. Take your customers' feedback to heart. Acknowledge their comments. Answer questions. Solve a problem. Find out how you can help. Responding with gratitude, honesty and passion are attributes of a virtuous company. Customers would rather patronize a company with which they have a good relationship than one that is not responsive to their needs.

LET YOUR CUSTOMERS KNOW THAT YOU VALUE THEM, AND THAT YOU ARE HERE TO STAY!

3. Show Them That You Care: Offer your valued customers something extra-special—additional information, a loyalty-based discount, a trial-size of a new product, an opportunity to attend a special online or in-person event—anything that lets them know that you value their input and you value their business.

4. Nowhere to Run, Nowhere to Hide: There is nothing private about social media. Every word, every picture, every thought and every action are out there, 24/7, for the whole world to see. There is no way to control who will view your postings, or what they will do with the information once they receive it. All the more reason to give careful thought to what you want to communicate, and then commit to communicate with honesty and informed intent.

Successful use of social media affords you an inexpensive, timely method to stay close to your

customer during every step of the sales process. Done right, it opens up new avenues for communication with customers. Use it to your best advantage. Make customer communicating and customer listening two of your top business priorities.

When you thoughtfully engage customers using Web 2.0 technology, you are creating a partnership with your customers that will strengthen your relationship and help you survive and prevail, no matter what. During uncertain economic times, the winds of culture and technology shift and change as well. Although we can only imagine what lies ahead for the advancement of social media and its applications to business, one thing is certain: staying close to your customers through effective digital communication, on their terms, in their language, with a message that's relevant and true, is a crucial factor for achieving and sustaining business success.

We tapped into a fantastic trends report from Hootsuite, a social media management platform with more than 15 million users in over 175 countries (Full Disclosure: LGK is one of the 15 million).

Below you'll find a few highlights from Hootsuite's Social Media 2018 report and we encourage you to visit Hootsuite online to access the report in its entirety. You won't regret it! (<https://hootsuite.com/resources>)

THE EVOLUTION OF SOCIAL ROI

While organizations have traditionally used social media to increase top-of-funnel engagement, many are exploring and discovering the value of social in other phases of the customer journey. But this evolution requires new metrics—and alignment of social media strategies with your organization's most urgent business challenges.

MOBILE FUELS SOCIAL TV GROWTH

Mobile usage, shorter attention spans, and the thrill of novelty have accelerated the consumption of video content. Social networks will encourage brands to become broadcasters as mobile video and social-TV style programming take the spotlight.

THE DECLINE OF TRUST AND RISE OF PEER INFLUENCE

We're moving away from trusting institutions, vanity metrics, and mega-influencer celebrities - and moving towards smaller and actual spheres of influence where customer advocates, genuine customer communities, and engaged employees matter more than ever.

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE


Artificial intelligence (AI) is a shift that will redefine the future, providing machine-generated insights, analytics, and online search results.

THE PROMISE (AND REALITY) OF SOCIAL DATA


Organizations will need to recalculate the effort and resources they'll need to invest to turn social data into a true source of customer insights that can be used across the enterprise.

TRENDS & STATS


ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA



In a study of 178,421 global internet users aged 16-64, GlobalWebIndex found that 28 percent of users turned to social networks during their online product research.



One in every three minutes online is spent on social networking.



50% of all global internet users are posting reviews online each month as peer-to-peer influence and advocacy increases.



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Nancy L. Hohns is LGK's in-house strategist, a marketing communications leader and idea architect with more than 25 years national experience in marketing, brand strategy, advertising, public relations and special events. She has a proven track record of producing game-changing work in agency, corporate, public and nonprofit environments; a demonstrated ability to solve problems, generate workable solutions, formulate breakthrough concepts and connect to multiple stakeholders through multiple channels; and an earned reputation for attaining powerful results in the consumer, retail, food, service, trade marketing and energy efficiency industries. Nancy currently serves on the Global Advisory Council of the World Brand Congress.



LGK Marketing Communications Collective, Inc. (LGK) is a marketing communications practice based in Boynton Beach, FL and Washington, DC. Founded in 2009, the practice is composed of independent consultants who facilitate marketing tactics for small to medium-sized businesses and organizations throughout the United States. LGK is registered with the federal government as a minority and women-owned contractor, with the Small Business Administration as a women-owned small business (WOSB) and designated by the state of Florida as an African-American and women-owned business.

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