

Turn on the Power of Social Media to Grow Your Business:



An Interview with Social Media Expert Dave Nelsen





If you think social media is just for Facebook friends and manufacturers of sugary-carbonated beverages, you'd better think again. According to veteran marketer, author, CEO and Stanford University graduate Dave Nelsen, adopting a social media strategy for your organization is vital to its continuing success. Even if you're not marketing soda, cell phone accessories or low-frills airline tickets, Nelsen believes that your organization can benefit from the use of social media as a powerful tool to reach customers and boost sales.

When You Socialize You Capitalize

How exactly does social media marketing fit with your business goals and strategies? Nelsen believes that by "socializing" you "capitalize" on opportunities to increase brand recognition, customer loyalty and revenue generation. "Fifty percent of all Internet traffic starts with a keyword search. By consistently updating your on-line presence, your top sales prospects will be directed to your content." If your organization has yet to adopt a social media strategy, silence is no longer an option. Your customers are online right at this very moment and they may be "talking" about your company. Not only do you need to be paying attention to what they're saying, but actively direct or at least shape the conversation.

What is Social Media?

Wikipedia, the on-line reference encyclopedia created by the public, defines social media as "the means to interactions among people in which they create, share, exchange and contribute content among themselves in virtual communities and networks." The ability

to create and co-create content that is pervasive and instantly available to mass audiences through social media has given rise to revolutionary changes in the way organizations communicate with their customers, their top prospects and their employees.

"Google started to favor new content over older content in late 2011," Nelsen explains. "If you have a blog, which is a fairly low-tech form of social media and you're consistently blogging about things that relate to your target audience, Google is indexing it. Companies with a blog, on average, generate 55 percent more Internet traffic. This traffic is not at all random; it's based on business users keying in terms that directly relate to their business needs. They find your blog, read your content and perceive you as an industry expert and market leader." Social media enables effortless communication. People can share their interests, concerns and ideas from virtually any location at any time of the day or night. Posting and accessing information is easy. It's free. And, it's instantaneously accessible from a computer or mobile device.

The Rules of Engagement

With Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and so many other sites to choose from, which sites make sense for your distributorship and what content should you post? Nelsen suggests that the first place to begin is by asking yourself the question, "What content is valuable to my target audience?" He cautions that if you can't answer this question "Do not even pass 'go.'" He also cautions that popular sites like Facebook and Twitter may not be your best messaging platforms.

» *continued on page 57*

ILSCO SURECRIMP

ONE PART. THREE SOLUTIONS. LESS STOCK.

**NEBS
Level 3
Certified**

ILSCO® SURECRIMP® copper compression connectors accept both building wire and flex wire and meet NEBS Level 3 requirements.

No other connector accepts more conductors and tools

- Accepts fine stranded, flexible cable, DLO and building wire
- Approved for installation with ILSCO and other popular tools & dies

Versatile configurations for any task

- Meets NEBS Level 3 requirements per Telcordia Labs
- Choice of straight tang or bent tang of 45 or 90 degrees
- Standard width or narrow tang for tight spacing
- Blank tangs for easy custom mounting
- Single bolt hole or double bolt hole to ensure reliability of connection
- Standard length barrel or long barrel for added crimping surface
- UL 467 Listed for grounding and bonding
- May be used for high voltage applications up to 35KV



Follow us on:    

ILSCO

4730 Madison Road, Cincinnati, Ohio 45227
Ph (800) 776-9775 • sales@ilsco.com • www.ilsco.com

ILSCO of Canada Company • 1050 Lakeshore Rd. East, Mississauga, Ontario, L5E 1E4 • Ph (905) 274-2341

UTILCO

"People are not on Facebook to do business. At best, they might click 'Like' on your Facebook page but you shouldn't make the mistake of thinking that because they're two great sites for consumer brands, they're well suited for your distributorship." There are, however, several sites and tools you can start out with to "socialize" with your key audiences. A discussion of Nelsen's top three recommendations follows:

Blogs

To blog or not to blog? For many companies that remains the quintessential question. Nelsen states, "If your blog can serve as a value-add to your customers, if it's done well and provides educational content and useful information it will give you a 'media halo' and a platform through which you can connect with your audience." Unlike a website, a blog is not a static medium. "Not only are you giving your audience the information they need to know, but they can comment on it. This creates a dialogue between you and your prospective buyers. They can ask questions that you and other members of your industry can answer." A blog can help create momentum and community engagement around your products and your company.

YouTube

While it's no surprise that Google "owns" the search-engine market with about two-thirds of worldwide market share, it might surprise you that the world's second-largest search engine is YouTube, not Bing or Yahoo. Nelsen is a strong advocate for the use of video formats to deliver content to your audience. "Videos that demonstrate how products work, or how to install and maintain them can be incredibly powerful, providing a true value-add for your audience."

Creating video content is neither complex nor expensive. "You don't need a professional video crew. A modern Android or iPhone provides high-definition video that delivers wonderfully authentic content. By simply posting



that content to YouTube with the right description and keywords, your target audience will be able to easily connect with that content and get the answers and information they're searching for."

In addition to product demonstrations, customer testimonials delivered in video format are extremely effective for nurturing repeat business and new prospects. "Research shows that people trust what we say eight percent of the time, whereas they trust what their peers say 78 percent of the time. Our prospects are much more likely to believe something our customers say about us in a video than a claim we make ourselves. Third-party credibility is incredibly valuable." With the emotional element of being able to see facial expressions and engage with a human voice, a picture can well be worth many thousands of words. Video content tends to have far greater memorability than the same content presented in print. Nelsen cites a compelling statistic: "We remember two-thirds of what we see versus 10 percent of what we read."

» continued on page 58

LinkedIn

Boasting a community of over 200 million users across 200 countries, LinkedIn is the world's largest professional networking site. Nelsen likens it to Google for finding people. Companies are using LinkedIn not just to recruit star employees, but to find and connect with customers and prospects based on titles, geographies, shared connections and membership in any number of industry-related groups.

"You can construct queries to find prospects and LinkedIn will show you all the people you can connect with," said Nelsen. Its real value however, is its efficacy in diminishing the degrees of separation between people. Based on the principle that people are detached by six degrees of separation, LinkedIn provides business professionals the opportunity to exponentially grow their network of contacts by linking in with their first degree contacts (people they directly know) and requesting introductions to the first degree contacts of their contacts' first degree contacts (their second degree contacts) and so on. As such, it's an extraordinarily powerful resource that businesses can use to cut through the clutter and connect on a personal level. Nelsen believes, "It's the single most important tool for B2B marketers."

How Social Media is Leveling the Playing Field

Social media is making it very hard for companies to avoid publicity—both good and bad. For organizations with product issues, inferior levels of support and service and those with non-employee friendly policies and cultures, social media is leveling the playing field. The

free flow of information and the ability of ordinary consumers to easily broadcast their "epinions" of products and services means organizations have to work harder than ever to keep their images untarnished.

"Social media is an accelerator. It can be an accelerator to success or to failure depending on how your company is perceived in the marketplace," he said. Nelsen suggests that organizations that impose glass ceilings, suffer from low employee morale and those with product and service issues address and resolve these issues promptly. A site such as Glassdoor.com gives prospective employees an "inside look" at a company, not just to read posts for job vacancies, but to get a read on the organization's top management, its corporate culture, salaries and policies. In today's prolifically social world, companies must strive for excellence. "With the free flowing nature of information, you have to do better than you did in the past," explained Nelsen.

About Dave Nelsen

An award-winning entrepreneur and founder and CEO of Dialog Consulting Group, LLC, Dave Nelsen helps B2B marketers discover new ways to get in front of their top audiences' targets. With his early roots in the telecom industry, he established his career around the implicit meaning of "reaching out and touching someone."

In 2005, he launched the groundbreaking Internet radio talk show site, Talkshoe.com to enable people to connect in live, on-line communities around topics of interest through webcasts that are later downloadable as podcasts. A celebrated speaker on the subject of social media, Nelsen was named by Vistage International, the world's leading CEO peer advisory organization, as its 2011 Speaker of the Year.

You can see him at next month's Showcase 2013 where he'll be discussing the many ways your distributorship can benefit from the use of proven social media tools and techniques.

