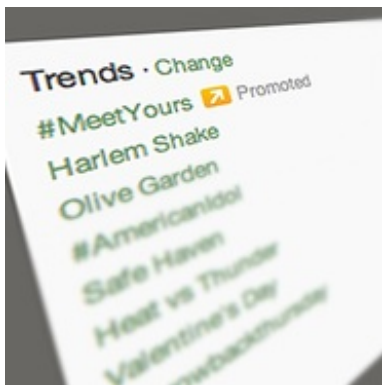


MOBILE

## Why brands should roll out promoted hashtags with organic twists

April 6, 2015



*Promoted trends can create fans through organic moments*

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By [Alex Samuely](#)

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**Luxury Daily**

As large and small brands alike fight for domination of social media applications such as Twitter, marketers should focus on dispersing new content via promoted hashtags that feature organic messages and authentic consumer reactions to keep buzz trending and entice more users to join the conversation.

Fast food chain Burger King recently saw significant social media frenzy surrounding the promoted hashtag for its announcement of the return of the beloved Chicken Fries product, #ChickenFriesAreBack. However, although the hashtag was paid for and promoted on Twitter, the success stemmed from users' joyful responses that permeated the feed, suggesting that other brands should follow this model of leveraging a promoted hashtag while focusing on the organic and authentic feedback from consumers.

“When it comes to spreading the word about products or services, leveraging a mix of both brand-created and organically-developed hashtags are ideal,” said Elaine Feeney, president and CEO of [Wayin](#), Denver, CO. “Regardless of how these originate, both require an engagement strategy integrated across paid, owned and earned media.

‘Hashtags are an excellent way to create and track a conversation,’ she said. ‘The key concept for a hashtag is to surface a relevant topic and encourage broader audience interest and participation.’

‘The challenge with using hashtags is that they often are not part of an overarching marketing strategy or campaign leaving marketers unable to drive the business results desired.’

### Maximizing impact

Brands must also be respectful of trending hashtags that are not directly related to their products or services. While it may be tempting to jump on the bandwagon of a trending item or piece of news, marketers should ensure that users will find it relevant instead of intrusive.

‘Generally users want to maximize their impact/reach, and being able to follow an existing hashtag that a brand started and put some effort behind is the best way to go for that social media user,’ said Dennis O’Malley, CEO and co-founder of [ReadyPulse](#), San Carlos, CA. ‘Same for a brand, the last thing they should do is ‘hijack’ an organic trending hashtag.’

‘It’s always important to know what other hashtags are being used along with others’ hashtags - too bad there isn’t a “hashtag buddy” app in Twitter to view that.’

However, if a brand is not able to purchase a promoted hashtag, one solution for ramping up awareness may be leveraging a live event and compiling a clever post or video to share with social media users. Creating organic mobile moments is imperative, and can see widespread success if done correctly.



*JCPenney was able to cleverly promote items on a different trending hashtag*

When the Internet went into a full-fledged frenzy regarding the color of a dress that went viral several weeks ago, retailers such as Amazon and JCPenney immediately joined the conversation on #TheDress trending hashtag by making jokes about their own blue and gold-colored garments for sale ([see story](#)).

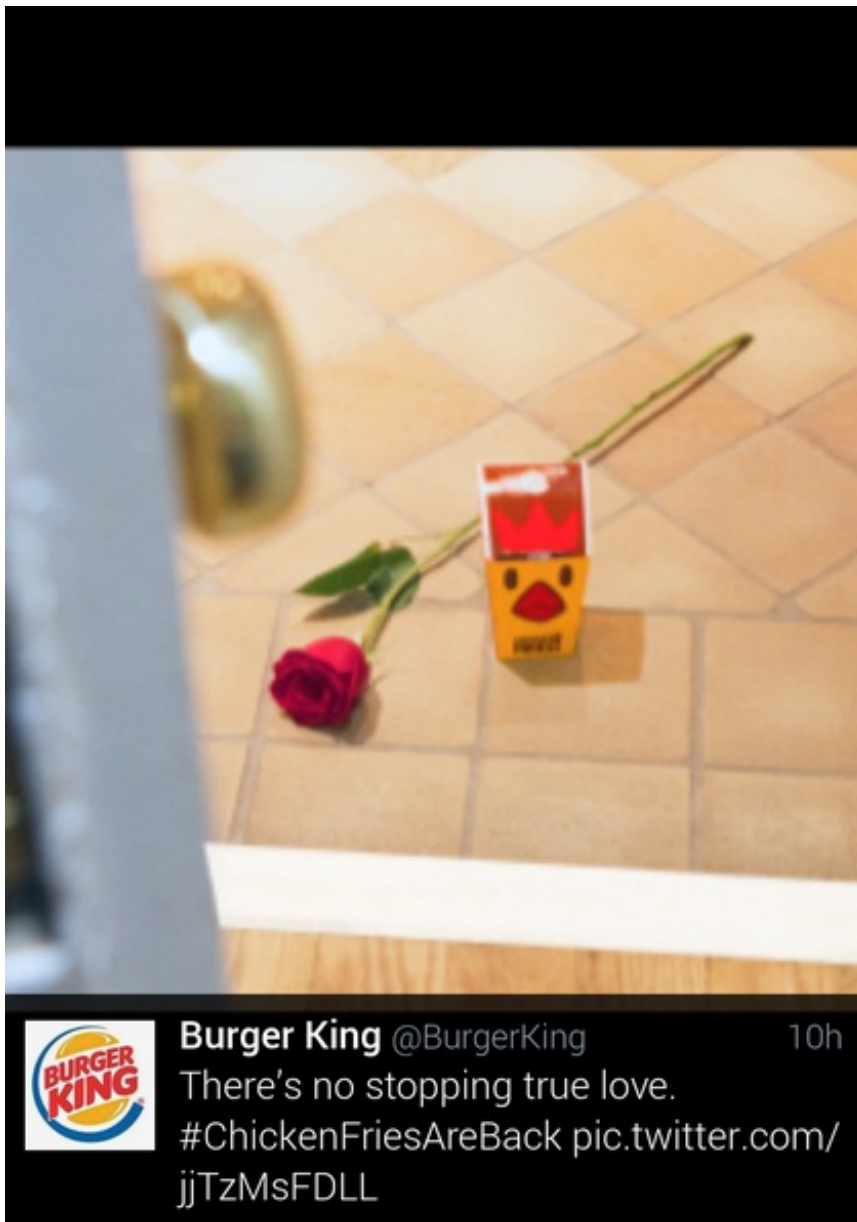
“A content creator wants to stand out and generally not be part of a larger crowd that may not be focused on quality content,” Mr. O’Malley said. “Smaller brands have a great opportunity to find great content creators - seed Twitter or Instagram hashtags through them, then join the conversation.

“The best small brands in marketing are making their content shoppable and displaying the content across marketing channels.”

### Social tactics

For brands that do intend to engage in promoted hashtags, incorporating calls to action must be a top priority. In the case of Burger King, consumers posted their personal reactions to the return of Chicken Fries, from dramatic selfies to adoring photos of the food item ([see story](#)).

These photos were then reposted by the brand and helped turn the promoted hashtag into an organic one, filled with engaging mobile moments.



**Burger King** @BurgerKing

10h

There's no stopping true love.

#ChickenFriesAreBack [pic.twitter.com/jjTzMsFDLL](https://pic.twitter.com/jjTzMsFDLL)

*Joking posts such as these resonated emotionally with mobile users*

“To get the most out of social media marketing, brand marketers should integrate social tactics such as hashtag use with proven marketing strategies that drive results, including social calls to action or other conversion-driving activities that encourage consumers to interact with your brand in a meaningful way,” Ms. Feeney said. “For example, retailers might ask customers who have recently purchased a product to send a picture or comment (using certain hashtags).”

“Then, the retailer can feature the best UGC on their Web site or on an in-store display. Some retailers take it a bit further to show the top submissions on their Web site or in-store display and request the public to vote on the best and offer a prize to the winners,” she said.

“That really serves the ultimate business goal by building stronger brand awareness, driving people to your own site and creating a fan wheel effect of turning your loyal customers into personal marketers for your product.”

Final Take

*Alex Samuely is an editorial assistant on Mobile Marketer, New York*

Embedded Video: <https://www.youtube.com/embed/pMYqLpwIDgg>

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