

RESEARCH

Brand loyalty required for sponsored social content to go viral: report

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Dove played to consumers emotional side with its latest viral video

By [Brielle Jaekel](#)

Marketers should focus on brand loyalty when creating content for social media, as consumers are more likely to share content from a brand they are dedicated to, according to a new report from Acquity Group.

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In the 2015 Next Generation of Commerce report by the marketing consulting group, research showed that consumers' habits on social media rely on brand sentiment in order for branded content to go viral. Facebook is also gaining traction in becoming a trusted source compared to traditional publishers for current events and branded content.

"This report highlights the intrinsic link between content and commerce in the social space for all parties," said Mark Brennan, head of mobile at [OMD's Manning Gottlieb](#), London. "The report highlights audiences appetite for frictionless experiences, between the moment of inspiration from content on social, to being able to have a product or service immediately.

"Brands need to understand where social fits in that journey, speed of customer service, ease of distribution and publishers need to understand how content on social triggers

behavior, demand versus on their own properties," he said.

Viral brands

Creating branded content that goes viral is highly beneficial to brands, as it not only greatly increases awareness but it can also solidify a positive brand sentiment. However, this is a challenge for marketers seeing that Acquity Group's research showed that in order for social media users to share posts from brands, they have to already be loyal to the brand.

Out of the consumers polled, 63 percent of them admitted that the brand or organization behind content on social media affects whether or not they will repost the video, picture or link. Brands that have created a negative experience for a customer will be significantly less likely to be shared, as 45 percent of consumers claimed to not share videos from brands they have had a bad experience with.

While brands that have negative sentiment will be less shared, brands that have created positive images are more likely to be reposted, with 48 percent of consumers saying they will share a video from a brand they trust. However, it is important that these brands do not go overboard with sponsored content on social media, as 60 percent of consumers say they see an overload of sponsored ads.

Consumer behavior

These brands also have to work much harder to engage these consumers to compete with friends and family on social networks. Millennials that view videos on friends' and family's feeds made up 67 percent of those surveyed, compared to those that view content from brands' pages at a mere 21 percent.

The report also found that consumer trust for Facebook is rising, as 32 percent of millennials ranked the social media site as their most trusted source.

Consumers on all platforms are also more interested in a sponsored video or post rather than traditional advertising due to the annoyance caused by continual commercials. Online streaming is taking this place, with 59 percent of consumers saying they would rather watch content through a sponsorship on a streaming service.

"Publishers need to think about their distribution strategies in a socially driven landscape," Mr. Brennan said. "Publishers such as BuzzFeed have built their content in whatever environment site, social, video, mobile, desktop, etc. their audience see fit.

"As social media's influence grows over millennials choices and purchase decisions, they can use this to their advantage rather than being a threat," he said.

Final take

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