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## Heyday for hashtags has passed for marketers

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By [Brielle Jaekel](#)

When it comes to social media marketing, brands still frequently focus on curated hashtags to support a campaign and engage users even though there is little impact – and even sometimes, a negative one – on performance.

Brands leveraging social media to connect with consumers should focus more on creating highly captivating imagery and compelling content that resonates with consumers rather than spending efforts on a hashtag. While using hashtags at appropriate times can benefit marketers, it is far more important to entice users to engage with your brand through efforts they are more likely to spark their interest.

“In terms of marketing currency, the high-water mark for hashtags was 2013 when Facebook added native support for the feature to their platform,” said Ben Hovaness, director of social at [Resolution Media](#). “We saw that hashtags had no, or a negative effect on media performance, and so their use diminished over time.

“On Twitter, correctly used hashtags continue to have a positive effect on performance, but should not be overused,” he said. “On emerging platforms such as Pinterest, hashtags are not preferred.”

## **Social strategy**

Marketers need to pay attention to which platform they are creating content for, as different channels are accessed vastly different. Consumer behavior on Twitter is remarkably different than performance on Facebook, and brands must be wary of this when foraging into these areas.

It is important to be cognizant of these differences, because developing inappropriate content for the wrong platform can create an image of trying too hard and be noticeably out of place. Twitter and Instagram are the platforms, which make sense to leverage hashtags but sponsored hashtags and still go to waste.

Consumers enjoy engaging with organic hashtags, free from marketing content and will overlook those solely pertaining to a brand. Marketers should be keen to use these organic hashtags to create a more authentic bond with social media users.

"I think hashtags are starting to lose their effectiveness when it comes to brands deploying them for the sake of it," said Doug Platts, vice president of search strategy at [iCrossing](#). "That strategy should be a part of your social media efforts but do not get distracted about what is our hashtag associated with our brand or our campaign, just because that can go awry and go wrong.

"It can also distract you from what you are trying to do," he said.

## **Positives and negatives**

Similarly, marketers flooded social media on the first day of fall with engagement-driven posts, but their efforts mostly fell flat due to a lack of originality ([see more](#)).

Numerous marketers serving content focusing on aesthetically pleasing images and offbeat subjects are seeing more engagement than those that do not. Brands should also leverage the pull of their most popular products, similar to Amazon's social media strategy.

While Amazon takes top honors as a social media leader in its industry, the title is more attributable to the inherently shareable nature of its products and posts rather than a segmented mobile strategy, according to a report from Brandwatch ([see more](#)).

“Marketers should continue to focus their efforts on delivering compelling content to the right audience at the right time, and avoid focusing all their attention on features like

hashtags,” Mr. Hovaness said. “Social media platforms are an incredibly powerful and far-reaching tool to help marketers achieve their business objectives.”

## **Final Take**

*Brielle Jaekel is editorial assistant at Mobile Marketer*

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