

# Marketing products on social media



By [Mike Saunders](#)

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Historically, product-orientated businesses have struggled in social media circles. A focus on product promotion and sales have meant that these social presences have, historically, been very bland and boring. I mean, let's be honest and acknowledge that a product page on a social network isn't a top destination for people to go when looking for inspirational content.

So, what can product orientated businesses do to build a more engaging and successful social media presence, without losing their mandate for sales and foot traffic to their retail outlets?

Firstly, I suggest that you take a read of my last article, "[Be Brave: Differentiate with Digital](#)", to come to grips with the importance of understanding your brand better. Every product has a brand persona that it portrays, whether it's trying to or not. Doing the work to understand the brand will help you understand the best way to portray your brand on social media channels.

Once your brand is clearly understood you should have a clear picture of the persona and differentiation you wish to display to the social media world. This will go a long way in informing your content strategy but there are a few more elements we suggest looking at to make the most of your social presence.

## Focus on your customer's needs

Too often products focus on functional benefits, like the features and prices of their products. Yet, we have never seen a successful sales strategy driven across social media that only promotes features and price. Instead, we should look at the advice Bain and Company present us in HBR (Bloch, 2016). They outline 30 values that people desire in brands and products. They separate these 30 values into four value groups of functional, emotional, life-changing and social impact.

A useful exercise when designing your content plans and strategy for products is to ask yourself which values in the pyramid you are satisfying for the customer. In essence, switching the focus from your product to the customer. By doing this you can design your content to place your product value into the customer's world.

## The Elements of Value Pyramid

Products and services deliver fundamental elements of value that address four kinds of needs: functional, emotional, life changing, and social impact. In general, the more elements provided, the greater customers' loyalty and the higher the company's sustained revenue growth.

### SOCIAL IMPACT



Self-transcendence

### LIFE CHANGING



Provides hope



Self-actualization



Motivation



Heirloom



Affiliation/  
belonging

### EMOTIONAL



Reduces anxiety



Rewards me



Nostalgia



Design/  
aesthetics



Badge value



Wellness



Therapeutic value



Fun/  
entertainment



Attractiveness



Provides access

### FUNCTIONAL



Saves time



Simplifies



Makes money



Reduces risk



Organizes



Integrates



Connects



Reduces effort



Avoids hassles



Reduces cost



Quality



Variety



Sensory appeal



Informs

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FROM "THE ELEMENTS OF VALUE," SEPTEMBER 2016

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In essence, focusing your content around showing customers the values you fulfil helps them understand the benefit of the product for themselves. This makes the content resonate with the personal circumstance and value system of the customer.

## Play the long game

Social media marketing is about building a community and that means building trust between you and the people in that community. Building trust is not a quick win. It's a long term strategy to build customers of lifetime value instead of short-term gain.

Brands that adopt short-term gain strategies tend to attract people looking for short-term gain. Take discount giant, Groupon, who can almost guarantee that people will claim your specials and drive traffic to your stores to claim their specials. However, when speaking with businesses who have used Groupon recently they expressed disappointment because they hoped that discounting prices would drive new people to their product, leading to new continual business in the future. The sad truth is that most customers claiming the vouchers are more interested in the discount than the service or product. Leading them to chase the next deal, instead of building your loyal customer base.

I have very rarely seen businesses win by playing the short game on social media. You should always look to build longer

relationships with your community. The long-term social media strategies that have proven to work in driving sales are developing content that grows the community, partnering with influencers that report and trust in your brand, and focusing on what's important to your buyers. If this is the base of your content strategy, you should build enough trust with your community for them to take your sales drivers seriously. Instead of being overlooked as another hard-selling product, you should come across as a trusted source with a valuable deal or product.

## ABOUT MIKE SAUNDERS

Mike Saunders, CEO of Digitlab, is a renowned Digital Business and CRM Consulting expert acclaimed for his unique ability to blend technological expertise with insightful business strategy. His leadership in digital consulting, combined with his roles as an international keynote speaker and author, has solidified his reputation as a visionary in the digital realm.

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