

Engagement Secret Sauce: Learn From Social Networks to Attract and Keep Audiences for Yourself

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Social networks have become an uphill battle for marketers. They're [literally addictive](#) to consumers, who now [spend 40+ minutes](#) on social media every day.

But for marketers, who now face a sea of competing content and little to no unpaid reach, social networks are simply no longer the most effective way to reach those consumers.

So a growing number of marketers are beginning to rethink social networks, and many are driving traffic to their own websites and mobile apps instead.

Bringing your audience home has huge advantages. Consumers who want to stay in touch with your brand are [nearly three times more likely](#) to visit your website than to engage with you on Facebook. And the more time a consumer spends on your properties—whether shopping, discovering, or researching products—translates into a longer, stronger relationship between that consumer and your brand, according to a [study from Kantar Media](#).

So how do you make your own properties as captivating as a social network? Here are four ways they do it, and how you can, too...

1. Content fuels everything

The top reason consumers visit social networks is to find great content, especially stuff that's either entertaining or informative, a [study by Millward Brown and Tumblr found](#). And, from brands, consumers want news, product offers, and entertainment, a [study from Ogilvy found](#).

So make your website a consumer destination for content—not just about your brand but about anything relevant to your audience. You don't have to write it all yourself. Supplement your original content with curated content from experts and customers.

2. If it's not real time, then it's stale

Part of what makes social networks so addicting is the constant flow of fresh content. We can't predict what will be in our feeds the next time we log in, so we're constantly tempted to log in

and see what's new.

If your website and mobile app always look the same, your audience has no reason to come back.

People are talking about your brand in real time already, and if your fans see your site as a real-time destination, they'll come straight to you for the latest updates. So integrate real-time content across your website, marketing, and advertising campaigns.

Your entire homepage doesn't need to showcase every tweet and Vine video about your brand, but you should have at least some content that updates in real time.

3. Don't just give them something to look at, give them something to *do*

Strangely, one of the most basic elements of social networks remains one of the most prominent features that sets them apart: engagement. When you're browsing Facebook or Pinterest, you don't just look at content—you actually interact with it by sharing, liking, commenting, favoriting, etc.

Social networks don't have a patent on that technology. You can invest in engagement apps on your own properties. Things like polls, reviews, comments, and chats allow visitors to engage with your site the same way they would a social network. And social apps like media walls and trending widgets pull UGC (user-generated content) from social networks and give fans a way to interact with it directly from your site.

In fact, 88% of companies that implemented real-time, social applications onto their sites increased user engagement as a result, a [Livefyre study found](#).

4. Foster connections between people

What is the one word that the mission statements for Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, and even Tinder have in common? "Connect." They connect people who have things in common.

So, although it's important to give people ways to connect with your brand (they want that, too), you can make their online experience even more meaningful if you also provide a way for them to *connect with each other*.

When Sony PlayStation* announced the PS4, for example, it drove all of its ad traffic to a social hub, [GreatnessAwaits.com](#).

But Greatness Awaits wasn't just a newsroom for all the latest updates on the new console and games; it was designed to be the go-to community for gamers to share in each other's excitement. They could chat with each other about the upcoming release; upload in-game screenshots and videos; see real-time Twitter, Vine, Instagram, and Facebook posts from other fans; and even see what games were trending globally on different social networks.

PS4 outsold its nearest competitor by a 2:1 margin, and Greatness Awaits became so popular with fans that PlayStation continues to use it as a social fan destination.

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Social media is now officially a decade old. The industry is maturing, and marketing strategies need to evolve with it.

Social media marketing no longer lives exclusively on social media. It needs to exist everywhere a consumer is interacting with your brand, whether on your website, in store, or in your advertising campaigns.

In 2015, it's important to start thinking holistically about your social engagement strategy. Social networks were just the beginning.

**Sony Playstation is a Livefyre customer.*