

How brands successfully engage consumers using social and instant messaging

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Consumers now have a wealth of **social** platforms to communicate on and can be selective about who they reach with their messages.

Insights drawn from [TNS's Connected Life survey](#) of 60,000 internet users across 50 markets revealed instant messaging (IM) is the new **social** frontier. 55% of global internet users now use IM every day, a 12% uplift in the last year alone.

While newer **social** and IM platforms attract a smaller **audience** overall, they are often highly active. 40% of Vine users and 44% of Snapchat users say they watch **branded** content on these platforms every week.

We used the data to uncover the unwritten rules consumers have for the **brands** that engage with them. There are five principles, each of which can be illustrated with a **brand** case study.

1.

Humanise: be "one of us"

Consumers expect to be communicated to in their language and on their terms. A good example of this comes from [Argos](#), which matches its tone to the consumer's when responding to queries on [Twitter](#), resulting in organic promotion of posts and strong online engagement:

Brands need to ensure that their tone of voice is consistent with the community they are engaging with, whilst ensuring the messages are consistent across the platforms they use.

This both engages the **audience** and conveys a **brand's** integrity to them.

2.

Be responsive

It might seem obvious, but communication is public and two way, turning all experiences both bad and good into PR concerns.

KLM is a brilliant example of a **brand** which has excelled at this, turning good experiences into a rich source of advocacy.

The airline **brand** uses [Facebook](#) and **Twitter** as the primary customer care channel for its customers, and focuses on turning irate passengers into happy **brand** ambassadors. They have a number of approaches to achieve this:

- They use **social** login and **social** payment, so that customers can link their **social** profiles to their booking.
- Instead of calling customers for payment confirmation, **KLM** sends a hyperlink directly to a secure payment environment through **Twitter** or **Facebook**.
- They also manage customers' expectations on when they will receive a response to their Tweet by updating the image on **KLM's Twitter** page every five minutes.

Read more at <http://www.brandrepublic.com/article/1370336/brands-successfully-engage-consumers-using-social-instant-messaging#bmLJeJH1V6v0qSSg.99>

3.

Be relevant: offer something people really want

Brands need to deliver [content](#) that is in demand. One way to achieve this is to focus on moments - delivering content that fits a time and context.

[Starbucks](#)' recent breakfast promotion campaign, which ran via **WeChat** in China, is a great example. They used the platform to trigger a morning alarm that rewarded customers with a half price breakfast if they arrived at the store within the hour.

This is a brilliant example of using IM to create positive word of mouth **marketing** and build up customer loyalty by giving consumers something tangible.

4.

Show restraint

With so many **brands** competing for attention, consumers will only stop for quality, not quantity. One **brand** that has succeeded at this is **Taco Bell**, which often shares stories on **social** or IM platforms using a series of photos and short videos, delivering messaging through a longer,

better developed story arc, rather than broadcasting large numbers of disconnected posts onto consumers' newsfeeds.

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Consumers appreciate the extra effort and creativity, while putting the storytelling at the centre also makes the product placement feel less forced.

Lots of content can feel invasive for consumers who will then start to associate a **brand** with their spam folder, so making sure that content is relevant and not overwhelming is important.

5.

Be targeted

With IM being a more targeted and tailored platform, **brands** need to make sure they are being equally selective in speaking to the needs of each specific **audience**.

Audi excelled at this when they launched the second-screen collaboration on **Twitter** and **Snapchat** with **Pretty Little Liars**, a popular TV show for their key target market of 18- to 34-year-old females.

The **Pretty Little Liars Snapchat** campaign prioritised programmatic content that fans eagerly awaited each week, including exclusive clues and star access.

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On **Twitter**, **Audi** only promoted the campaign to fans of the show, so the youthful messaging did not alienate their traditional consumer base of auto enthusiasts.

Audi's campaign out-performed 98% of all previous **Twitter** campaigns with 487 million **Twitter** impressions and 125,000 Snapchat followers.

Users who engaged with the campaign were 13% more likely to have a favourable view of the **Audi brand**.

The savviest consumers recognise and appreciate strong **brand** campaigns. They're very familiar with the concept of a value exchange and actively seek this out. **Brands** that are truly consumer-centric, and understand their customer's reasons for engaging and sharing are those that will succeed; all marketers need to emulate these.

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