

Use Social Media to Grow Your Business



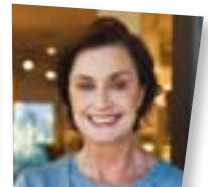
Constant Contact®

Social Media Marketing

Learn from these two businesses how you can combine social media and email marketing

A lot has been written about combining email marketing and social media to stay top of mind with current customers, while at the same time spreading your message to prospective ones. While this may sound simple in concept, getting started can be overwhelming when time and resources are tight. How do you fill a newsletter with content and keep Facebook fans and Twitter followers sated without pulling your hair out? And how do you covert all those social media connections into newsletter subscribers?

In this guide, we'll share examples of two businesses that have found success by combining email and social media. They've found success and have grown their mailing lists without having to generate a ton of content on their own.





#1 Become a Resource for Your Customers

Red Oak Properties Uses Content to Woo Renters

Our first example is Red Oak Properties, an apartment rental company in Manchester, N.H. Red Oak uses content in a unique way to keep connected with current tenants and attract new renters. It may seem odd that an apartment rental company would use any content beyond its latest listings, but Red Oak excels at providing its audience with content it can use.

Red Oak uses email marketing to reach current renters, sharing community happenings, school start dates, trick or treat times, and other useful information. Co-owner Gerry Dupont says she knows her renters are busy, so she wants to provide them with all the information they need to make their lives as easy as possible.

Social media sites and Red Oak's website are the main vehicles for connecting with prospective renters. Through the business' Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/RedOakLife>) and Twitter presence (<http://twitter.com/theredoaklife>), Gerry and her staff preach the "Red Oak Life," which features community happenings such as farmers' markets, festivals, fairs, and arts and sporting events with the idea of showing prospective renters the idyllic New Hampshire lifestyle

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they could have if they choose to live in the area. The hope is that these people will also choose to rent from Red Oak.

Naturally, Red Oak peppers its Facebook and Twitter posts with apartment specials and other offerings, but the majority of the posts contain information any area resident could use. ([Check out this video](#) of Gerry discussing Red Oak's social media efforts.)

The takeaway

Red Oak's content strategy for both email and social media demonstrates two things: One is that you can use great content to position yourself as a resource. Then current and prospective customers will come to you, instead of going to multiple places, to get their information.

The other is that you don't have to create this useful content from scratch. The company is turning area happenings and public information into content it knows its customers and prospects can use. It takes a little time and some research, but Red Oak is not reinventing the wheel every time a newsletter goes out or a new item is posted to Facebook.

You, too, can repackage existing information into useful nuggets to fuel your email and social media engine and share them with your customer base. Share industry-related articles, local happenings, or other news that your customers and prospects might

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find interesting and help demonstrate your area of expertise.

A couple ways to gather information without having to do a lot of manual labor:

- > Set up a Twitter search based on keywords related to your product, service, or industry. You can do this through the [Twitter website](#) or use tools such as [NutshellMail](#) or [HootSuite](#). With NutshellMail, you get your search results emailed to you — along with all your social media updates — on a schedule of your choosing. With HootSuite, you'll see a real-time listing of your search results updated as new tweets come in. If you're tracking a popular keyword, the real-time updates could be a little overwhelming.
- > Use [Google Alerts](#) to get email updates with the latest articles and blog posts related to a specific phrase or keywords such as your industry (i.e. "email marketing") or locale (i.e. "Waltham, Mass.")

When an interesting article pops up in your inbox or Twitter search results, share a link to it on Facebook and Twitter, and include a short synopsis and link in your newsletters. Voila! Content for your subscribers and social media followers and you didn't have to come up with it on your own.

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#2 Link Your Social Media and Email Marketing List Building Efforts

Dingo Rawhide Bones Boosts “Likes” and Subscribers

One company that has excelled at building its email list and social media following simultaneously is Dingo Rawhide Bones, a Cincinnati-based pet food manufacturer that’s passionate about making dog food and treats that are healthy and fun.

During the summer of 2010, the company wanted to increase the number of people that “Like” its Page on Facebook (<http://www.facebook.com/dingobones>). To do so, it offered customers a \$20 coupon if people both Liked the Dingo Facebook Page and joined the company’s mailing list. Dingo installed Constant Contact’s [Join My Mailing List](#) application on its Facebook Page, making it easy for fans to sign up for the company’s email list without having to leave the Facebook experience.

The company took things a step further by making the deal contingent on its Facebook Page getting 5,000 Likes. This caveat is similar to those employed by group discount sites such as Groupon or TeamBuy.ca, which makes daily deals contingent on a minimum number of buyers. By adding the 5,000 Likes goal, Dingo encouraged coupon seekers to tell their friends and share the deal with their own social



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connections in order to help achieve the minimum. Once the 5,000 number was reached, the coupon would be emailed to customers (hence part of the need to provide an email address).

The results: Dingo's Facebook Page went from a mere 330 Likes to well over 5,000 in just three days. More importantly, Dingo's monthly sales increased 22%, with roughly half of that number attributed to new customers. "Previously, we were experiencing 12% monthly growth," says Mike Halloran, online marketing manager for Dingo. "About 45% of our volume was trials from new customers and 85% of those who tried our products said they would buy from us again."

The takeaway

Dingo is not just driving people to its Facebook Page for the one coupon. The company regularly engages its fans and customers through the site. For instance, in October 2010, it held a contest that prompted fans to post pictures to the page that show their pets in Halloween costumes. And Dingo occasionally offers other coupons and deals along the way, a tactic that keeps fans checking in regularly.

Plus, by getting customers to post photos of their pets and share stories on its Facebook page, Dingo is having content generated for them that keeps other customers coming back for more. Like Red Oak, Dingo does not have to create a bunch of content from scratch to keep its social media presence active.

TIPS

Take Your Email Even Further with Social Media

If you're just getting started with social media or are not quite taking full advantage of it yet, you can use your newsletter content and subscriber list to help power your social media marketing efforts. Here are a few ways to maximize your email and social media marketing:

Share your newsletters on Facebook and Twitter:

When sending a newsletter to your audience through Constant Contact, also post it to Facebook and Twitter. This will get your newsletter content in front of both your subscribers and all your social media connections.

Include a Social Share Bar with all your outgoing email newsletters:

Adding a [social share bar](#) to the top of your email newsletters makes it easy for recipients to share your message with their own social media connections. This can help spread your content and messaging beyond the original distribution list.

(Note: Obviously you only want to share content that's meant for wider public consumption. Organizations sending out member-only communications probably shouldn't add share features to the newsletters.)

Tell your subscribers you use social media:

If you have a large subscriber list but find that not many are connecting with you on Facebook, Twitter, or LinkedIn, send a dedicated email inviting your subscribers to connect with your business or



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organization on social media. We have [a number of templates ready to go](#) for such notices.

Track your social shares: With [Social Stats](#), you can track how many subscribers shared your email with their social media connections and see how many people clicked to view your message via social media. It's a great tool to for seeing how far your message is reaching beyond your original distribution list and can be used to see which social networks are most popular with subscribers.

While there a vast number of channels available to connect with customers and members, you don't need to come up with content from scratch for each of them. Re-using existing content and linking to third party content can be a great way to feed the content beasts that are email and social media marketing. And remember to tell your subscribers they can also connect with you through social media and tell your social media connections to join your mailing list. Those that do both are truly passionate fans.

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