Adobe combines winning social media strategy with Adobe Marketing Cloud to prove ROI for pivotal launch

The rapid rise in social media’s popularity and its potential to engage audiences like never before are presenting marketers with new opportunities as well as challenges. Social marketers struggle with how best to manage the complexity of sophisticated campaigns and measure business returns. And while marketers at every level want to see increases in engagement and positive sentiment, they also need to deliver business value and bottom-line results in order to justify continued social media investment.

As a technology marketing leader, Adobe already had a global team and robust social media strategies in place to engage customers worldwide. More recently, however, Adobe further integrated its social media strategies with its best-in-class digital marketing software to measure the impact of its social media efforts. With the launch of Adobe Creative Suite 6 and Adobe Creative Cloud in spring 2012, the company took the opportunity to further showcase the combined value of its social media programs and Adobe Marketing Cloud.

For the pivotal launch, Adobe had a team of 45 social marketing leads working across numerous regions and time zones to devise, implement, and manage high-impact strategies. Aligning closely with the experienced team, Adobe built a comprehensive, business-driven framework on Adobe Marketing Cloud, including Adobe Social, AdLens™, Test&Target™, and SiteCatalyst®—bringing the process and technology pieces together for invaluable insights, outstanding execution, and maximum returns.

"We wanted to engage customers and drive solid business results through social media, so we had to clearly understand the impact of all our strategies," says Maria Poveromo, senior director of analyst relations, public relations, and social media at Adobe. "We not only set out to generate as much buzz as possible, but we also wanted to continually adapt our strategies along the way and see the returns." In the end, the results were impressive.

Devising a social marketing campaign for a high-profile launch

The comprehensive social media campaign included many elements, including ongoing delivery of targeted content, a scavenger hunt contest and Creative Cloud membership sweepstakes, A/B testing of creative, and paid media including Facebook Sponsored Stories. Combining all of these social elements, and measuring their cumulative impact rather than any element in isolation, allowed the Adobe team to conclusively demonstrate social’s ability to generate meaningful returns on investment (ROI).

The Adobe team followed a rigorous approach to measure, deploy, and optimize the campaign’s multiple elements, including:

- Setting up the campaign to accurately measure, analyze, and report on cross-channel impact
- Adopting an integrated content strategy featuring status updates and interactive applications; paired with social advertising
- Using A/B testing to optimize user interactions directly on social sites
- Initiating listening to identify and reward influential users
- Evaluating the entire cross-channel campaign to measure the impact holistically and help ensure the overall campaign spend was allocated efficiently.
Demonstrating social media’s bottom-line value

The Adobe social media team achieved and measured a tenfold return on investment within the first two months after the CS6 launch. Social media referral drove more than three million direct visits to Adobe.com, and generated more revenue for the new products during the initial launch period than paid search.

By looking beyond the last click and effectively measuring attribution, the Adobe team saw that visitors to the site who touched social channels along their digital journey accounted for nearly 13% of total Adobe Creative Cloud subscriptions. And social’s impact wasn’t just limited to conversion; the total cart value of those touched by social channels was also greater.

“We determined that our social media fans and followers spend twice as much per visit to our site,” says Poveromo. “Today, we are growing our social communities and investing in creating content that genuinely engages and serves our user base.”

Maximizing returns by integrating ads, content, applications, optimization, and measurement

Each campaign element had value, but by combining them, the value was significantly multiplied. For instance, during sweepstakes—a resounding success that drove 32 million impressions and 14,509 Likes—the combination of Adobe AdLens with the interactive elements of Adobe Social allowed the team to significantly reduce the campaign’s cost-per-like (CPL) by targeting ads to different user profiles and further enhance the campaign’s ROI. The CPL at the start of the advertising effort was $1.21, but after optimizing the experience for two weeks it dropped to $0.87, a 28% reduction over the course of the campaign.

Adobe Test&Target further boosted the program’s return by optimizing the conversion rate after the ad or content click, and this optimization was able to be deployed within the on-channel experience. Adobe identified multiple variables to isolate on the application’s splash screen, with A/B testing conducted on an initial set of users. This effort led to the creation of an optimized experience, which was ultimately delivered to all visitors for the remainder of the promotion.

Integrating listening and tracking of earned media also allowed Adobe to maximize the effect of word of mouth. Adobe pinpointed contributors around the globe whose online blogs and discussion boards were driving greater revenue for the company. Early on, for instance, social marketers at Adobe identified a blogger in Japan who, despite a modest following, drove thousands of people to Adobe.com, where many readers pre-ordered products.

“We can now go beyond the intuitive understanding that influencers are important, to actually seeing the bottom-line impact they are having on our business,” says Poveromo.
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Senior director of analyst relations, public relations, and social media, Adobe Systems Incorporated

Cross-channel measurement also allowed Adobe to accurately attribute social’s impact and allocate funds accordingly. As the overall campaign progressed, Adobe digital marketers compared the leads generated and conversions from search-engine marketing with the results from social media, giving the company clear insight into the impact of spend across multiple mediums. In the future, this information can be used to help allocate spending to the areas yielding the highest returns.

Says Poveromo, “By using data to inform our social media strategies, we are on our way to making social media a data-driven practice at Adobe—one that can demonstrate social media’s holistic impact on the business both in terms of revenue and brand reputation. We see this as key to creating an organization that can truly engage customers everywhere in more meaningful ways.”

Adobe Marketing Cloud products used by Adobe Social Media Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product name</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Social</td>
<td>Combines the ability to monitor conversations anywhere they happen online with the ability to publish content and create branded social applications; comprised of two Adobe products, formerly called Adobe SocialAnalytics and Context Optional</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adobe AdLens</td>
<td>Delivers unified performance advertising management platform that optimizes across search, display, and social media, including Facebook</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adobe SiteCatalyst</td>
<td>Provides actionable, real-time data across all online platforms</td>
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<tr>
<td>Adobe Discover</td>
<td>Offers a comprehensive, multidimensional view of customers to enable digital marketers to make timely and insightful business decisions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adobe Test&amp;Target</td>
<td>Enables analysts to continually improve content relevance through the design and execution of dynamic A/B and multivariate tests and content targeting</td>
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