

FTM Brand Connection.®

NetMarketing. The perfect vehicle for Listening, Learning and Engaging.©

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The internet continues to explode with information. New updates are added every minute. And more likely, your customers are part of these updates. Not only are they researching data, they are uploading their frustrations and needs. You need to pay attention to what they are saying as it may have an impact on your brand - good or bad.

Prior to NetMarketing (aka, social media), your customers relied on face to face exchanges to learn and share their opinion. Now they easily influence an entire industry with a single click. It's important to turn their comments into a trusted resource for opinions and recommendations. Your job is to listen, learn and engage these conversations.




People seek like-minded communities to share their thoughts. Your objective is to find the community whereby your customer hangs out. Even if you have to cultivate a community it's worth it. Consumers are more comfortable talking with other consumers in their industry about products and services. The information they exchange may be used to craft your brand marketing strategy. Knowing whether they are either happy or unhappy with you or your competition's products or services, is definitely beneficial information.

First step is to find a productive community.

Most industries have professional forums. Here you find people seeking to engage their peers with a number of conversations. Here's an example: "Hi All, I am having a doubt regarding second Moment of Area. I know how to determine the basic formula like the example below." This question is found under Physics Forums.com, Mechanical Engineering section. Here, an engineer is seeking help from his peers. If your product or service connects with this subject, you may want to observe the conversation. If the opportunity presents itself to offer advice or a suggestion do so. However, do not try to sell yourself. This is not the time or place. An opportunity as this is better served for building relationships.

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Other communities are found in industry publications and websites. For the medical device industry Medical Product Manufacturing News (www.mpmn-digital.com) offers an invaluable portal to medical device



contract manufacturers, distributors, researchers and more. Parenting magazine (www.parenting.com) features blogs for mothers to ask questions, express concerns, and share information with other mothers-to-be or those with children. The Family Handyman (www.familyhandyman.com) provides a blog listing of home improvement tips. These sites are just the tip of the iceberg when seeking consumer opinions, ideas, irritations, and recommendations. It is sites as these that offer an opportunity to listen, learn and engage your potential customers.

Additional tools available for listening, learning and engaging include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google Alert, Google Trends, Google Insights, Google Reader, Google Blog Search and Google News Search to name a few.

Once we find a community, we listen, learn and engage.

Listening: John Wanamaker famously said “I know half my ad budget is wasted, I just don’t know which half.” Instead of telling your story - listen to what customers say about your brand and make new stories. For many, the tendency is to focus on selling their product or service. They forget to listen to what their customers are telling them. Sometimes what your customers are talking about may provide you with important insight regarding the quality of your products or services. Look to these comments as suggestions for enhancing your products’ features, possibly making them even more attractive to an even larger market. If you find a common need expressed by several people, act on it.

Learning: Your customers will also tell you WHAT they need and WHY they need it. By listening to your customers, you may discover additional opportunities to improve your product or service and thereby gather more clients. What people are saying is important. Identifying why, is even more so. Sentiment analysis or opinion mining offers a fair measurement when seeking positive or negative trends toward yours and the competitor brand. Whatever tactic or method you use, it’s worth the investment in time and budget to have a working knowledge of your customer’s relevant needs.

Engaging: Once you find a productive community, you next engage. Do NOT try to sell. You’re objective is to build relationships. Become a partner. Share information. Provide answers. Solve problems. Become a thought leader. Establishing an online community can become an excellent online advisory panel.

Everyone is trying to get connected with their friends, colleagues and like-minded people through different social networking websites. Just like individual needs, **NetMarketing** is serving business purposes as well. It helps in effective promotion of products and services offered by a company.

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