



VIGNETTE®  
*Bringing content to **life***

# Making Social Media a Capability – Not a Campaign

Can you replicate social media success?

WHITE PAPER

It seems like everywhere you turn, someone is talking about social media. But how many are actually acting on what they discuss? According to a recent study only 12% of companies think they are successful in their social media efforts. Why such a low number? One possible reason is that 40% of the survey respondents admitted that they don't have a social media strategy in place. Is the problem a lack of strategy or simply the newness of the tools? If your organization is struggling with social media, you are not alone. All the social media success stories started through experimentation. And luckily, we can all learn from these original experimenters and apply their lessons to the creation of our own strategies.

## Getting Started – It's More Than Just Launching A Page

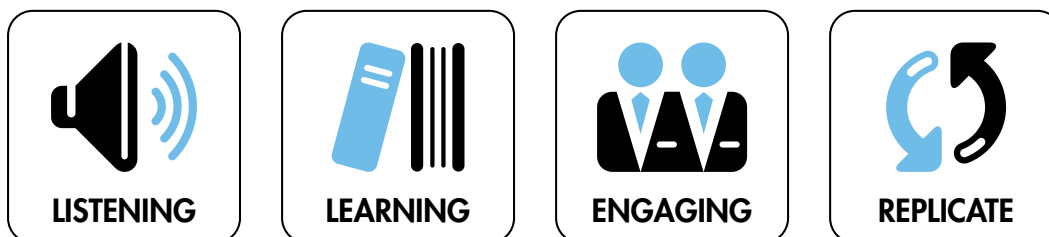
The velocity in which social media has been adopted and the subsequent creation of user-generated content has left many companies scratching their heads when it comes to developing strategies to engage with customers on their own turf. The question is no longer should I participate in social media? Companies now want to know how. This requires more than simply setting up outposts on sites like Twitter, Facebook or whatever is next. These are only tactics to achieve a set of goals. To be successful, companies need to shift their mindset and stop looking only at social media statistics such as number of Twitter followers, fans on Facebook or how many times something was retweeted. These metrics can be good indicators of how useful someone finds your content or the affinity towards the brand, but social media metrics by themselves are meaningless. They only become meaningful once you can show which activities led to achieving business goals such as lead generation, brand awareness or direct sales.

## Remember: Only Success That Can Be Repeated Is Really Success

Because social media is such a new concept for businesses, many companies are entering into it in an uncoordinated manner. This makes it hard to replicate success, which means predicting the future value is almost impossible. At the same time, the elastic nature of social media demands on-the-fly experimentation and prototyping.

So how do you ensure repeatability in your efforts? Careful documentation. Be sure to capture the metrics you were tracking, who was involved and how you would do it differently. These stories can be used as a social media playbook to enable others to repeat and refine as the organization matures.

Taking a snapshot of how well you listen, learn, engage and replicate social media success can provide a baseline for creating a sustainable social media program. Below are some steps to think about when developing a social media strategy.



*Steps to creating a sustainable social media program*



## Listening: Listening To The Conversation Is As Important As Participating

Make note: listening is not simply following a customer on Twitter, and reciprocating does not make you more customer-centric. Finding solutions to a customer's problem and letting them know you care does.

**Who** is listening and **How** they are reciprocating is essential in building a social media strategy.

The real time nature of the medium means that all groups within an organization who are 'listening' must be able to act as a system, almost like a school of fish. To achieve business goals, this requires several groups in the organization such as R&D, Marketing, PR, Sales and Support to act in a synchronized manner. While social media has the opportunity to create a better customer experience, it also has the opportunity to create an even more fragmented one. In order to be nimble, several ears must be on the ground and be ready to act on certain indicators.

Each group will listen for different things. A marketer may want to know what share of the conversation is about their brand; a product manager might want a source for new ideas on what to include in future products; a communications person would want to understand tone and sentiment. The point is that everyone should be listening and will be listening for different things.

**Listening across the Web** – For a large brand with tens of thousands of customers, listening to conversations across social networks can be more than a full time job. Take a company like JetBlue, for example, who is following 119,000 people. A phenomenal number of man-hours are required for them to monitor each and every tweet hoping something relevant pops up for them to act on. It is hard to separate the actionable content from the noise and this is where monitoring solutions like Radian6 come in.

These special tools allow you to focus your monitoring of social networking and user-generated content sites with search phrases. When a specific phrase is detected, it triggers an alert for follow-up. In the case of a travel company, you might want to know when someone has tweeted "On my way to New York for a conference." Receiving this alert would allow you to personalize their trip in real time and follow up with them afterwards to make sure everything went well. The possibilities here are endless.

**Officially "following" someone on Twitter does not imply you are listening** – This passive reciprocation is merely a gesture that you *may* be listening. True listening means you are proactively reaching out to those who make mention of your company or product, as well as reactively responding to complaints or questions. When deciding who to follow, it is important to go back to the purpose of the medium and what business goals it supports. The other important consideration is the amount of time you can dedicate to taking action on the requests that will come from Twitter.

**Hosted conversations** – The other side to listening is to actively host conversations and encourage customers to engage in a dialogue on your Web site or a sponsored community. There is a wide gambit of features for enabling conversations. One way to co-innovate with your customers is "crowd sourcing," where users can submit ideas for your business to the whole community.

The screenshot shows the Stelter Innovation Community interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with 'Home | Sitemap | Help | Login' and a search bar for 'Search Insights'. Below the navigation bar, there's a 'Browse Community' dropdown and a list of categories: seeds, insight, ideas, innovation, and join now. The main content area features a large image of a wind turbine in a field. Below the image, there are two buttons: 'Submit' and 'Vote'. The 'Submit' button is labeled 'Submit a new idea' and the 'Vote' button is labeled 'Vote for the best idea'. The page also includes a sidebar with 'Categories' (Marketing, Training, Donations, Life-Stage Planning, Events, Healthcare, Non-Profit, Social Services) and 'View by Status' (Reviewed, Under-Review, In-progress, Launched). The main content area displays a list of ideas, including 'Create a lessons learned template' and 'Virtual seminars led by field teams', each with a 'Vote' button and a 'Submit' button. The page also includes a sidebar with 'Most Viewed Ideas' (Create a lessons learned template, Virtual seminars led by field teams).

Stelter Innovation Community

This allows you to gain insight directly from customers who suggest ways to improve their experience with your business. Other customers can then 'vote' on their favorite ideas and before you know it, your customers have recommended your Product Development Pipeline.

Vignette is working on a social media project that includes crowd sourcing with Stelter, a planned giving marketing communications service provider. Stelter wants to generate new ideas on how to increase donations for nonprofits across the United States, as well as brainstorm strategies for marketing to new organizations and new markets.



## Learning: Turn Insights Into Action

Acting on what you hear is a real challenge. In many cases, it requires several people to track down an answer, make a comment or add to the idea pipeline.

**Automating responses** – To streamline cross-functional collaboration, Radian6 allows you to create workflows around most content types across the social Web. For example, you could choose to be notified if a customer posts a tweet that says “service down.” This tweet could then be routed to a customer support person to follow up on. The customer service example is an obvious one. The real value is derived when you have formalized how you take the insights from these conversations and respond in a timely fashion. A great example of this happened when the Vignette team was having issues with Disqus, a tool for moderating comments on blogs. We posted a tweet saying that an error was appearing, and within an hour or so they replied with “@dirkmshaw We pushed a fix for that issue a couple minutes ago and all should be well. => @giannii”. They are not only listening, they also have their organization and products aligned to make corrections based on what they are hearing.

**Discovering and meeting new needs** – social media is allowing us to learn in new ways. In the past, Marketers relied on third-party surveys or loosely-related data to understand what was valuable to their customers and to predict their future needs. Now, there are many capabilities you can provide on your own branded site for learning about customer preferences. For example, simply allowing customers and prospects to rate and comment on content allows you to understand what information really benefits and influences them. These insights can uncover un-met needs by your customers and provide you with a new market opportunity that you didn't even know existed. Corporate Web sites that do not evolve and provide interaction capabilities will miss the opportunity to connect and gain new insights.



## Engaging: Participation strategy should be informed by what you learned from listening

The number of tools and places that exist for companies to engage with customers can be overwhelming. Unfortunately, many companies simply skip the listening part and jump right into the conversation. By doing so, you may end up spending time in places where your customers are not – which leads to a lack of results and could discourage the future use of social media tools.

**STELTER**  
Getting to the heart of the matter

Home | Sitemap | Help | Login

Browse Community Search Insights Find insights and inspiration GO

seeds insight ideas innovation join now

Home » seeds

**seeds**  
Regular updates from the people who live gift giving

**Bestow Blog**

**Categories**

- Marketing
- Training
- Donations
- Life-Stage Planning
- Events
- Healthcare
- Non-Profit
- Social Services

**Follow us on twitter**

**What to look for in a donation program**  
Tags: newsroom pr socia\_media social  
Last modified 3/23/09 at 2:36 PM by admin.

The Wall Street Journal continues to report on the collapse of the National Heritage Foundation and its effect on its gift annuity donors. The message is donors and their advisers should scrutinize the financial strength of issuing organizations just as they would any other investment.

"It sounds good on paper: You make a donation to a worthy cause and, in return, receive regular lifetime payments. But so-called charitable gift annuities don't always deliver what they promise -- a risk that could intensify if the recession persists.

For the past several years, Matthew Allen has counted on receiving nearly \$12,000 a month through a charitable gift annuity he set up with the National Heritage Foundation. That arrangement was upended in January, when the Falls Church, Va., charity filed for bankruptcy protection" .....

8 view(s) | 3 edit(s) 0 comment(s)

★ ★ ★ ☆ ☆

**Part 2: Readership and Response**  
Tags: newsroom pr socia\_media social  
Last modified 3/23/09 at 2:36 PM by admin.

WASHINGTON -- As part of the Administration's effort to develop a budget that invests in our nation's future, the U.S. Treasury Department today released the General Explanations of the Administration's Fiscal Year 2010 Revenue Proposals (Greenbook) to provide details of plans to cut taxes for small businesses and middle class families and close unfair corporate tax loopholes. The plan includes \$736 billion in tax cuts for working families over the next ten years and provides almost \$100 billion in tax cuts for businesses, providing support to the entrepreneurs who will help drive an economic recovery.

Corporate blog for sharing insights from customer ideas

Once you have identified the places you plan on engaging with customers, it is important to define the role of each outpost and how it supports business goals. You must also assign who will be responsible for ensuring timely responses are made. To give you an idea of the role Twitter plays at Vignette, here are a couple of questions from a recent social media survey:

**Question:** Should we create multiple accounts for different divisions? How should we name them? How should the content be different?

**Answer:** Currently we use @vignettecorp as a tool to share relevant links about digital marketing, social media and Web content management. We are working on bringing other divisions online (support, services) and they will have their own Twitter accounts. These accounts will provide different content, as their goals are unique.

**Question:** Is it okay to just tweet out news on our main corporate account? Or should we be conversational?

**Answer:** @vignettecorp tweets news, content from around the Web and engages in conversation as much as possible. To encourage conversation and 'humanize' the dialogue, we have been clear as to the identity of the individual doing the tweeting.

**Communication with freedom** – The beauty of participating in social media is that it does not have to go through the corporate watering down process. Guidelines are set to encourage employees to share their opinion on a topic without interference from Legal, Marketing or Communications. Having the mindset that every blog post or comment has to be reviewed as if it were official communication dilutes the voice and tone of the person contributing.

This requires a cultural shift. People who are used to “controlling” messaging and communications feel uncomfortable setting employees free, but it is the world we live in. Embrace employees who have the courage and desire to contribute on behalf of your company. Don't throw up obstacles, remove them.

**How do you handle edgy posts by your employees? With facts** – Here's the big fear: Someone will post something edgy and not in support of your brand. In most cases, their facts may not be 100% correct. You will have to decide whether you want comment with the facts and risk contradicting a fellow employee in the blogs-sphere. This is fine as long you are gathering insight as to what is important to customers and prospects.

**Juggling multiple points of interaction and multiple content sources** – The challenge with having several new points of interaction with customers is to create a cohesive experience across each one. This makes the role of your “experience planners” even more essential. Engaging social experiences are ones that integrate owned media like your public Web site with *earned* media such as positive reviews about a product or service. Earned media resides in dozens of formats ranging from tweets, comments, status updates and reviews. With emerging standards like Facebook, Connect and OpenId, it is possible to aggregate and make these interactions available in many contexts.

This is not to say you completely turn your site over to user-generated content. Rather, think about the placement of earned media to support learning, buying or seeking help. This is how corporate Web sites should evolve but there are challenges. Each time you want to re-purpose earned media content into a new experience like a display ad, micro site or e-mail, a small development effort will be required.

Most companies already have invested in a content management system for the creating and publishing of corporate content. These tools usually have the ability to consume content from third party sources via RSS and XML. If you are tagging favorite tweets or bookmarking earned media, why not hook this feed to your CMS?

Turning earned media into a managed asset allows you to re-use and re-brand this content in many ways. The inclusion of user-generated content into your corporate Web site harnesses the activities taking place all over the Web and creates a much more dynamic site for your visitors.



## Replicate: Start Small, Get It Right And Replicate

Many companies like Apple, GE and Nike are successful because they know how to replicate achievements and refine things along the way.

The same holds true with social media and the challenge is to effectively translate successes in one department into Best Practices for the entire organization.

At Vignette, our initial hypothesis was that social media could allow us to build brand awareness in new markets and serve our customers better. After proving this hypothesis, we refined our goals and now plan to replicate success into our Services Organization. The biggest challenge is that the groups we are trying to bring up to speed are not as far along in their understanding of social media. To help guide and educate teams, we have launched an internal blog and hold bi-weekly calls on various topics.

**Make information available to everyone** – If you are one of the people experimenting with social media in your organization, a good practice is to document successes and failures and create a place for others to learn. Sharing success stories is a great way to get other groups excited and willing to dedicate time and money to social media.

In a recent post, Jeremiah Owyang, the social media analyst at Forrester, referenced Vignette's use of internal blogs as a tool to educate cross-functional teams on social media (in "How Brands Balance Their Diet With social media Supplements".) The idea is that we are planting seeds to grow a culture that is passionate about using social media to solve customer's problems.

**Create internal awareness to drive adoption** – Show your people how social media can apply to business. Post insights learned from monitoring social media, 'how-to' videos on tools and recorded presentations on a variety of topics. At Vignette, we launched an ongoing series called "social media 101" to keep our teams educated on what is happening. This series includes external references, screen captures for various tools and presentations on measuring social media metrics.

## And Finally, What Technology Will Help You Reach and Repeat Success

While you are in the experimentation phases, you will likely be using several tools to accomplish different parts of your strategy. As you mature your social media program, however, you will want to integrate each of these pieces into a single platform. How do you ensure that you will be able to do this quickly and efficiently? This is where Vignette comes in: Our social media suite is a set of capabilities that will grow with you as you evolve your Web experience.

You can learn more about our blogging, earned media and community products by following us on Twitter (@vignettecorp), joining us on Facebook (Vignette Corporation) or by visiting our Web site at [www.vignette.com/us/solutions/social-media](http://www.vignette.com/us/solutions/social-media).