

The Thin Line Between Liking A Brand And Liking Its Social Marketing

Contributed by eMarketer
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Liking a brand is not necessarily an invitation to market

Several studies have shown that while social brand followers are interested in deals, they have other reasons to connect. Many also want to stay up on the latest news or show their friends which products they support.

ExactTarget's "Subscribers, Fans and Followers" report found Facebook users who "like" brands are even more place importance on showing off their brand choices to friends than brand followers on Twitter or subscribers to opt-in marketing emails.

While the desire for discounts and promotions edged out showing company support even among Facebook users, nearly two in five did say they wanted simply to indicate how much they liked a brand by liking it.

According to ExactTarget, a major reason for this desire is the nature of Facebook itself. A Facebook profile, which lists brands that a fan is connected to alongside other interests such as music, movies and books, is a venue for self-expression.

The company found it was very important for some users to show brands almost as a part of their own personality.

Consumers who "like" a brand as a means to their own self-expression are by definition brand advocates, and the earned media potential for marketers among these enthusiasts is high.

But marketers must remember that a desire for marketing messages—even those that include a good coupon or exclusive offer—is not why everyone is connecting.

The reasons for using Facebook still fall largely, for members of all ages, in the "personal communication" bucket.

So marketers that want to push out messages to their fans must remember that hearing from them too much will seem to create clutter in the news feed, obstructing fans' main use of Facebook.

The "Subscribers, Fans and Followers" report suggests Facebook campaigns should instead try to aid personal communication, for example, by helping like-minded consumers interact.

Enthusiasts who identify with a brand enough to consider it part of their self-expression can be connected with others like themselves, multiplying opportunities for brand advocacy rather than getting in the way of what Facebook users like best—communication.

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