

Brand Campaigns Drive Most Social Media Following

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Three-quarters of Facebook fans have signed up with pages after invitations or ads from brands

Research on social media users who follow brands has shown marketers the importance of offering deals and discounts on Facebook fan pages as well as the nature of brand following as a form of self-expression, through which advocates can show support for a company they love.

But what triggers Facebook users to “like” a brand is typically some form of outreach.

Most commonly, that outreach comes from the brand itself. Three-quarters of Facebook users worldwide who had “liked” a brand told DDB Worldwide and Opinionway Research in September 2010 that they had been spurred to do so by an invitation or advertising from the brand they followed.

More than half had also followed a brand based on an invitation from a friend. Many of those invitations are likely a secondary form of brand outreach as well, as marketers encourage current followers to become brand advocates on their behalf.

Only about half of all Facebook brand fans ended up following brands after their own research, making action by marketers critical in building up a following on social sites even though most users already know and like the brands they become fans of.

The effort brands must put into amassing fans doesn’t stop there, of course. While the top reason former fans gave for unsubscribing from Facebook pages was waning interest in the brand, complaints about the information offered on fan pages were also a major factor.

Posting too often or posting uninteresting information, taken together, turned off nearly half of respondents.

“Unsubscribers, at 36%, are something to watch out for. And though the majority of fans now unsubscribe by deleting a brand from their friends list, brands, when trying to measure the value of their community, are going to need to be more mindful of those who just hide the brand's message in their newsfeed,” said Catherine Lautier, director of business intelligence at DDB, in a statement.

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