

Local Food Connection: 2011 Conference

WORKSHOP: Social Marketing - *Creating Customer Loyalty*

Workshop Description: *Social media marketing is not just an option anymore, but it is a necessity for business growth and success. Have you started a Facebook site and want to understand next step 'best practices', or are you planning to start a blog soon and not sure how it should look? Or do you want to know how to create a Twitter handle? Learn firsthand from two successful marketing companies involved in the local food movement. Also, a restaurant owner shares his experience with social marketing, and two small farmers talk about the challenges and successes they have had with their sites, Twitter, and blogs. See what's been done; hear how challenges are overcome and learn the strategies that have successfully created the attention needed for increased customer loyalty.*

Speakers: Dana Turell, Vice President, CAWOOD Communications; Mark Beauchamp, Owner, Café Yumm; Evan Gregoire, Owner, Boondockers Farm; Derek Brandow, Owner, Our Family Farm.

Moderator: Kelli Matthews, Managing Director, Verve Northwest

Notes:

Derek – Our Family Farm

- 1) Free Blog through Wordpress.com
- 2) Facebook
- 3) Twitter
(about 100-160 followers)

Evan – Boondockers Farm

We produce Ancona ducks, heirloom seeds

- 1) Free Blog
 - 2) Facebook
 - 3) Twitter
- focus your marketing
 - be consistent - this in turn attracts readers, loyalty, which will bring in money
 - all about hits, and getting people to come back to your site

Mark – Café Yumm!

- Build relationship with core people, also attract others who may be interested in a certain aspect of your business
- Twitter, Facebook, website (about 1700 followers)
- Employs a content management system
- Outsource social marketing to consultant
- Tracking software

- People like opportunities to express themselves and interact with others (ex. How do you make your Yumm bowls at home? How do you use Yumm sauce)

Dana – CAWOOD Communications

- Primary source of social media = website, updated daily
- Market of Choice grocery stores (MOC) also has blogs – shared efforts among staff from different departments
- Calendar of information with menus, specials, store events
- Hootsweet – promotes collaboration on MOC accounts, can track statistics
- All about brand loyalty and customer engagement
- Customer service online – people ask questions: want to know about recipes, brands, etc.

Q: How do you define success?

- Success = specials being sold, customers at events
- Farms getting calls from people to inquire about products or order

Lessons Learned

- Mark – Café Yumm changed packaging a while back; got a large and immediate negative response from customers on all media; eventually changed back to original packaging
- Mark – Be careful about mixing your personality with that of your business (maybe make conscious decision to separate into 2 accounts)
- Dana – be prepared to answer questions from your customers quickly (anticipate what they might ask)
- Dana – would like to be able to convey more authentic, in-store information with real-time component, photos, etc.
- Evan – be passionate about your media, blogging, take advantage while free
- Kelli – make sure to connect messages back to mission, vision, values
- Dana – be careful about what content you are spending your time on; people really like stories
- Mark – don't make promises that you might not be able to keep (esp. in relation to dates that things will be accomplished)

Q&A Discussion

Question about a target audience or demographic...

- Kelli – in general there is more gelling around 'communities of interest' than specific ages/demographics
- Mark – Café Yumm does try to target a certain demographic (female 25-50), but acknowledges that there is a broader range of clients
- Dana – similarly at MOC, often things aimed at 40-something Moms in charge of household products/decisions, but wants to expand to other groups too

What to do with negative feedback?

- Consensus is to post anyway (unless it's profane). Don't delete because leaving it up there provides 'realism' and is an opportunity to address concerns/issues. Also, other customers may step up and object to negative posts, showing their loyalty to your store/brand/farm.
- Develop a comment policy before you have to deal with a problem.
- Social marketing is an iterative process of learning...