



Learning to Leverage the Love

In an increasingly digital-centric marketing world, successful brand communication strategies are moving from just creating awareness to building advocacy for the brand.

» At the risk of sounding like Tom Cruise bouncing on Oprah's couch, I have a confession to make: I love Advil. I have for almost 25 years. Now a lot of that has to do with having worked on the brand in my "formative marketing years." But I am not alone in my passionate response. People have loved Advil from the very start.

I remember an Advil team meeting in the late '80s, talking about a magazine article where women waxed on poetically about their love of the brand. We knew there had to be something we could do to leverage that love, but just didn't really know what to do. So we just went back to talking about our upcoming advertising copy rotation plans.

Fast-forward 20 years: there's plenty marketers can do to leverage the love using social media marketing. The first step is to listen and learn. Take the OTC analgesic category, for example. According to Patrick Furey of Consumersphere, a social media tracking and solutions company, while Tylenol has twice the number of comments as Advil, Advil edges out Tylenol in terms of conversation sentiment, with 42% of the Advil mentions being positive compared with just 34% for Tylenol.

A further dive into the blogosphere reveals how right Advil's current campaign, "Say Yes to Advil" is. The campaign highlights how Advil can be used for any type of pain. An analysis of the conversations in the

blogosphere supports this strategy, as there is almost a 10-point differential in the discussion about Advil for general pain as there is for Tylenol.

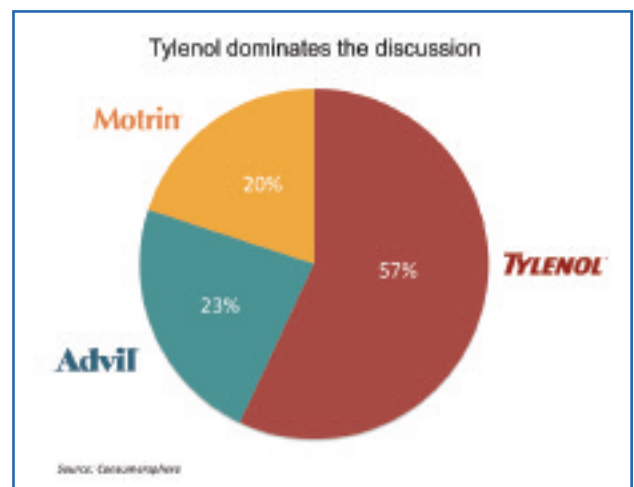
GETTING THE COMMUNITY INVOLVED

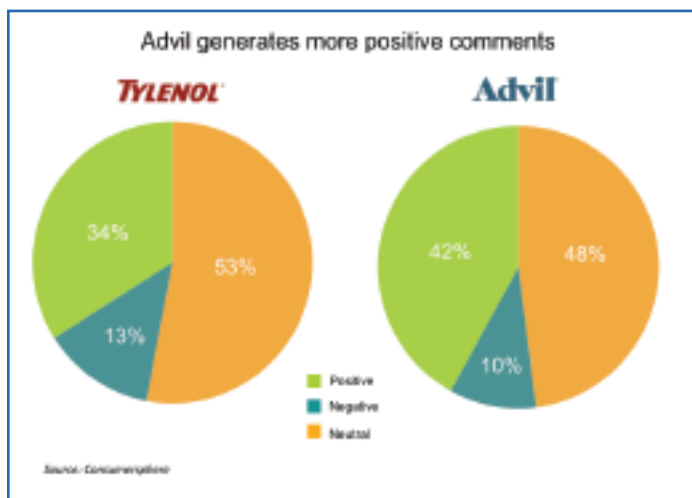
Once a brand is aware of what its digital footprint is like, the next step is to try to influence it in a genuine, helpful way. What are the key communities where the brand is mentioned? Who are key consumer opinion leaders (COLs)? Then it is time for some agenda mapping. What is the community's agenda and how can your brand contribute to it in a meaningful way? The next step is to create a mutually beneficial shared agenda. Lastly, once the brand has proven it can be a valuable contributor to the community, how can the community help forward the brand's agenda?

The Groundswell-winning Mattel case study is an excellent example of the benefits of investing in the community. Having taken the time to build a community of 500 moms, Mattel was able to draw upon this highly engaged group during a product recall for advice and updates that helped shape their response. Not only was

Mattel able to weather the storm, it came out stronger at the end with sales in the important fourth quarter up 6%. (Source: http://www.forrester.com/Groundswell/listening/mattel_playground.html)

What if you have a good footprint, but it is dwarfed by that of a competitor (the Advil/Tylenol situation being a case in point)? One strategy is to employ some "bricks & clicks" thinking. Can you create an offline experience that compels people to talk about your brand online? To facilitate the transfer, what sort of infrastructure do you provide to enable the flow of good feelings from offline to online? This could be as simple as a Web site link or as involved as a training session about blogging. Strategically creating a presence using the new social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube and Twitter is another way to increase a brand's digital footprint.





2008, in part due to the increased communication options the digital sphere offers.

Cultivating these brand advocates isn't just a matter of winning an online popularity contest, it's about the bottom line. Fred Reichheld in his book, "The Ultimate

outpace their competitors in terms of both sales and profitability.

Brand communication strategies need to evolve from creating awareness to building advocacy. Or put another way, we have to start building and leveraging the love. Not in a chest-beating (or couch jumping way), but in a way that builds economic and social value for both the brand and the consumer. <<

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FINDING BRAND ADVOCATES

Your digital footprint matters because consumers are increasingly turning to their peers for advice about products and services. According to the consulting firm Satmetrix, branded referral rates grew +8% and +14 %, respectively, in 2007 and

Question," provides compelling proof of the linkage between a company's financial fortunes and the number of brand advocates it has. Companies with higher net promoter scores (simply the percentage of brand promoters minus detractors),

CONTRIBUTORS

A closer look at the authors behind the feature articles of *OTC Perspectives*



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