

Marketing Minute ~ Pinterest Could Change Social Marketing

Pinterest is a vision board-styled social photo sharing website especially popular among women. The website and app allow users to create and manage theme-based image collections. The site's mission statement is to "connect everyone in the world through the 'things' they find interesting."

Launched in 2010, the site grew from 1.6 million visitors in September 2011 to a whopping 11.1 million visitors in February 2012. Women are engaging on the social site with much more veracity than men, currently making up about 82% of active users. As a general rule, women engage 30% more of their time on most social sites, including on Facebook and Twitter, than men. According to Nielsen, mobile social network usage is 55% female.



What does all of this mean for businesses using Pinterest as a marketing tool? After all, women account for 85% of all consumer purchases, everything from auto to health care.

Social consumption sites like Pinterest are particularly good marketing avenues for consumer products. It can be difficult to determine just how significant the draw of a product-centric environment for social media is on other sites such as Facebook and Twitter. With sites like Pinterest, companies have a rich view into just such an environment.

Businesses use two primary marketing tactics to target women on Pinterest. The first, and perhaps most straightforward, is to use the platform to exhibit items or services that traditionally appeal to women. Those businesses with appealing photos of their products for women can have success reaching that market.

Companies can also use Pinterest to selectively market their products, such as focusing on nutrition and the latest weight loss trends and recipes, all that would appeal to women. Another tactic for successful marketing on Pinterest and other social consumption sites involves creating an environment that fosters positive associations with a company, rather than selling products and services. This has the added benefit of falling in line with "pinning etiquette" which maintains that shameless self-promotion is frowned upon. For instance, rather than have links that connect back to your site, it would work better to reveal your own likes and interests to the community. You can grow your personal brand by creating a communal environment and make potential clients/customers feel welcome and comfortable. This new wave of social sites is all about creating an experience and building a community rather than performing direct marketing. This also includes secondary endorsements when you are willing to reciprocate by sharing other user's pins.

Women, who tend to be much faster at adopting new social media, set the trend. Marketers then review site user demographics and tailor their approaches accordingly. These sites, though not inherently female, become a haven for women on the Internet, with products, content and images tailored specifically for them.

Next issue, we'll share some strategies for launching a brand presence on Pinterest.

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