

**Are you publishing  
using social media?  
Just stop.**

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**We think it's time for a new approach.**

**DDB<sup>o</sup>**

# Our advice is to STOP.

**While many marketing organizations have embraced social media as an additional outbound marketing channel, they aren't quite seeing the results they were hoping for. We think it's time for a new approach.**

Has your organization ventured into social media marketing? Have you set up a Twitter account? A Facebook fan page for your offering? Or have you posted some YouTube videos?

Are you brainstorming ways to add new fans? Tweeting "exclusive offers"? Shifting your staff around in order to support these new efforts?

And do your social media efforts feel like an "add-on" — yet another time-intensive activity on your already overwhelming marketing task list?

Our advice is to STOP. Stop and rethink your approach to social media with a new perspective. Rather than focusing on being on more sites, adding fans or getting comments, instead zero in on ideas for engagement, influence and activation — and that all-important lever, trust.



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## The realities of marketing and social media

The global economy, although showing signs of improvement, continues to challenge marketing teams. Staffs have been cut, and then cut again. Program budgets have been slashed repeatedly, and clients tell us they pride themselves on finding superhuman ways to squeeze results out of a fraction of their past allocations. Marketing directors work long hours, trying to juggle PR efforts, direct-mail campaigns, trade shows, websites and email blasts. BlackBerrys are checked as soon as the alarm clock sounds; days are packed with back-to-back meetings, and evenings and weekends evaporate as marketers use the time to actually do the work they can't get to during the workday.

Because of this unrelenting focus on cost-cutting, social media has attracted the interest of the marketing profession with its promise of inexpensive reach and widespread customer advocacy. Social marketing conferences have been attracting large audiences over the past few years, and case studies demonstrate social media's tremendous promise. Yet many marketers report mixed results from their social media efforts: A company video didn't go "viral," a corporate blog got few if any comments, or a fan page is only drawing marginal interest, for example.

*The reason for this is the approach.*

**Social media has attracted the interest of the marketing profession with its promise of inexpensive reach and widespread customer advocacy.**

We see at least three obstacles to effective social media efforts.

### **1. Marketers continue to think of social in terms of outbound marcom.**

Despite several years of pundits crying out that it's "about the conversation," many of us continue to approach social media as another publishing platform or communications channel — primarily because we were trained at (and compensated for) well-crafted monologue. Thinking beyond outbound messaging requires a lot more effort and a new perspective.

**2. Social media is seen as an add-on.** Strategic planning is often limited to outbound channels and clients ask for a separate "social media strategy." Yet that's a bit like a cell phone strategy, isn't it? It's a focus on the tool rather than the business goals. Are you considering ways to make social media marketing reinforce traditional efforts, and vice versa? Have you hired a nonmarketer as your social media lead? Social media, like any other engagement channel, should be approached in terms of traditional business goals like increasing leads, growing awareness, improving conversion, changing perception or amplifying loyalty — and it should be woven into traditional efforts, rather than bolted on.

### **3. Social program measurement is difficult to elucidate, let alone achieve.**

What's the value of a "like"? A retweet? A blog comment? We're dealing with a very new field here, but many marketers continue to use social media marketing as an experimental, unmeasurable toe-dip rather than as an essential part of the ROI equation.

By creating strategies with both paid and earned media in mind, marketers can start a conversation around an offering and amplify that conversation online. Through blended strategies, marketers can also leverage social media for its strengths: maximizing the existing trust between peers; presenting tangible proof points to prospects; demonstrating value; and providing content that is found rather than foisted. In this way, traditional programs generate awareness and dialogue, and social programs keep them going post-campaign.

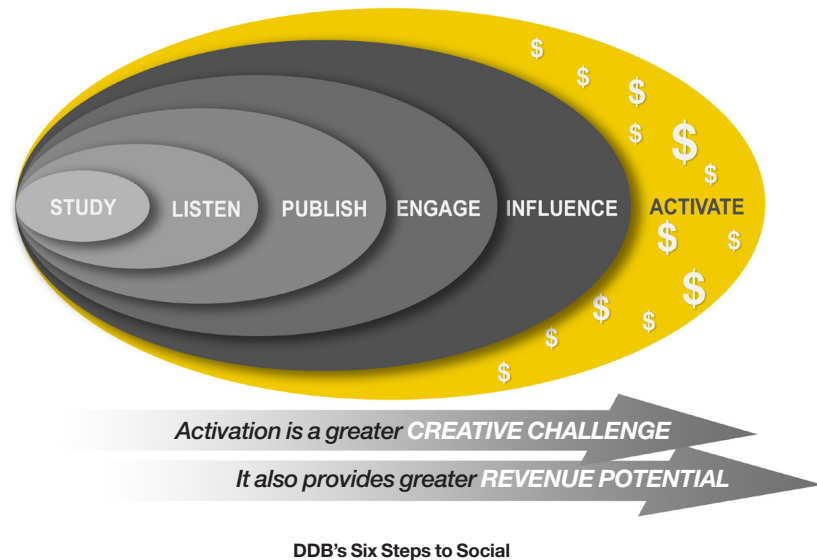
**What's the value  
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## DDB's Six Steps to Social: thinking beyond marcom

Nothing makes marketers more crazy than wasting hard-won budgets — or precious time. Unfortunately, many have approached social media efforts from either experimental or shotgun perspectives, and simply added on social media efforts to their existing workloads. Generally, these approaches result in stressed-out marketing teams, interns managing social efforts, or a lack of interest or engagement by visitors in social venues.

At DDB, we advocate a more strategic approach we call “Six Steps to Social.” By pursuing social marketing through this approach, your social programs will be more integrated, more interesting, and more impactful to the business’s bottom line.

Here’s how it works.



### STEP 1

#### The first step to rethinking social: study and plan

Study is an activity that we don’t give as much time to as we used to. With management breathing down our collective necks for results, we often go to market very quickly with our social media efforts and figure we’ll experiment on the fly. Yet without the crucial steps of: 1) understanding the strengths and weaknesses of various social tools; 2) determining what our competition is doing in the social space; 3) anticipating what customers want to hear from us; or 4) working out the details of our brand value messaging, differentiation, persona and attributes, we’re not going to be entirely effective in our social media efforts. And why waste time — or money — being less effective?

How are other organizations in your category handling employee social media governance? How are they handling customer service requests that originate in social channels? What should the internal response be when a vendor inadvertently leaks a new product announcement, or when employees tweet confidential updates from a company meeting?

There’s a lot of noise out there, what with thousands of self-described (and often unemployed) social media gurus, ninjas, Jedi and sensei endlessly retweeting one another. Which pundits are truly worth your precious time — and which will merely add to the confusion?

An investment of time and energy in study and preparation can guarantee much higher efficacy in your social spend and your team’s online efforts, and ultimately, in your own career growth.

## DDB's Six Steps to Social: thinking beyond marcom

### STEP 2 Listen

According to an August 2009 survey by MarketingProfs, 80 percent of respondents said social media measurement was either “important” or “somewhat important” to their businesses. Yet 70 percent said their companies were not doing enough to track their social initiatives. This was underscored in a November 2009 report by eConsultancy, which showed that 46 percent of companies surveyed had not employed any monitoring tools to listen to online conversation around their brands.

This listening gap shows a definite opportunity for organizations to implement a listening platform and learn how to cull actionable insights from the metrics captured. Once a company has both a strong social strategy and insights into conversation around its brand, the marketing team will be able to efficiently publish social media content, knowing that it's on strategy and provides information that the market wants to hear.

Numerous free tools exist that enable marketing teams to keep an ear open. Google Alerts and SocialMention will notify you of online mentions, while old standbys BlogPulse and Technorati focus on blogs. Twendz will not only monitor Twitter for your brand; it will also provide basic sentiment monitoring. TweetReach and SamePoint provide idea measure of reach.

Paid listening tools, of course, provide a much deeper look at online conversation. First, they process much deeper data samples. Many have worked out deals with Google, Twitter and Facebook for larger data collection. They'll also mine rich media sites like Flickr and YouTube for mentions, and more expensive platforms will also monitor across multiple languages — helpful if your target market is international. Paid tools will track not only mentions but also topics, sentiments and even motives. They will also flag noteworthy issues and generate insights for time-starved marketers. And importantly, these tools will identify your loudest brand advocates — and denigrators.

Many DDB and Tribal DDB offices have settled on Visible Technologies and ScoutLabs as two platforms of choice. And, full disclosure, we currently provide listening services using these tools to several of our clients.

### STEP 3 Publish

Now that we've done our integrated planning and listened to both our markets and our competitors, we can publish socialized content efficiently, effectively and confidently.

Company updates, blog post alerts and a new investor podcast? Sure, those can be published via social media channels. But how do they leverage the consumer's ability to publish? How do they build trust?

Rather than publishing anything and everything to the social space, we recommend high-value, very targeted content that:

- Spreads existing trust in your offering
- Provides proof points
- Amplifies existing conversation
- Tells a compelling story
- Conveys personality
- Educates customers
- Provides compelling hooks to longer-form content

**One essential best practice in content creation is to respect time starvation.** Not long ago, we employed writers to create several pages of copy for each product page on a website. These days, few if any customers have time to delve into extensive product prose. By making social content concise, time-starved visitors can consume it quickly and move on to their next activity.

**Another publishing best practice is to tag content** so that it can be easily found in a search. Even small “nuggets” of content can be highly valuable when they are exactly what the online customer is searching for. For content to have maximum value and impact, content tagging and placement are crucial.

## DDB's Six Steps to Social: thinking beyond marcom

### STEP 4 Engage

Now that we're publishing, how do we get our audiences to engage with the content?

Many major brands publish content throughout the social web, but much of it adds to overall noise levels. To break through this clutter and create enough value to merit engagement, content must be creative and compelling.

**This is where agencies have a strong advantage.** With their bench strength in creative art and copy, agencies can conceptualize, design and produce content that is more likely to trigger engagement, influence and activation. Humor, interactivity, usability and emotional intelligence are all skill sets you'll find in a large creative agency.

**Important: Companies must plan for market engagement.** When customers tweet about your offering or post comments to your blog, they expect to hear back from you – promptly. Do you have the labor and processes in place to respond? Organizations should carefully craft engagement “guardrails” and educate their customer-facing employees on these guidelines so that everyone can react uniformly (and legally) to online interactions.

### STEP 5 Influence

Now that visitors are engaging with your content, how can we influence them to spread the word?

Through social sites, consumers have built “trust networks” — connections with peers with whom they have some level of trust. Often this peer-to-peer trust is stronger than their trust in marketers or the marketing product. As an example, the 2010 Edelman Trust Barometer, a global study of organizational trust, found that trust in information from friends and peers (37 percent) was higher than trust in information from corporate or product advertising (17 percent).

By leveraging the trust already inherent in peer interaction, successful influencing efforts can generate more impact than campaigns that ignore peer recommendations.

Influence, in the form of sharing, fanning, liking and forwarding, can be a huge driver of commerce. This was demonstrated on April 20, 2010, when Virgin America launched one of the inaugural Twitter advertising programs, Promoted Tweets. Using this new platform, Twitter displayed a special Free Companion Ticket tweet from Virgin America when users entered related keywords into Twitter's search function. Readers were encouraged to forward the link to friends. By leveraging this influence between peers on Twitter, Virgin America experienced the fifth-highest sales day in its history.

In this step, content and conversations are crafted specifically to generate influence in the form of retweets, forwards, likes and sharing.

### STEP 6 Activate

And finally, now that we've garnered influence, how can we get our targets to actually do something? Become brand advocates? Co-create product names? Join loyalty programs? Hold meetups? The pinnacle of our social media marketing efforts should be to activate our audiences and motivate them to share their love for our offering on our behalf.

Activation is also where marketing goals — and customer purchase — are most likely achieved. Then we will have successfully garnered a customer's time, attention and trust, and leveraged their ability to publish and advocate on our behalf.

**Activation is also the greatest creative challenge.** We can generate awareness and influence preference using traditional channels, but we also want to motivate customers to purchase and advocate. The skills of a strong creative team will activate your audience to walk away from the computer and go do something for your brand.

## Seeing activation in action: our blended traditional+social campaign for Unilever



Unilever's Knorr food products division recently released a new lower-sodium version of its Sidekicks packaged meal accompaniment product; but we knew that simply trumpeting the 25 percent sodium reduction wouldn't be enough to reverse declining market share, given the increased competition and a perceived high salt content. So we took this very rational product news and transformed it into the emotional, empathetic story of a dejected salt shaker named Salty, who was no longer needed at the dinner table and decided to leave to start a new life.



We started the conversation with an award-winning commercial showing Salty leaving home in the rain. Next, our downtrodden friend was featured in print, direct, online and at retail. Besides our broadcast spot, DDB Canada created three film-quality spots for deployment on YouTube, featuring various aspects of Salty's now-desperate life. By doing so, we were able to extend the conversation over a much longer time period than the standard broadcast run. These spots were also seeded in the blogosphere to generate buzz and leverage influence, and they garnered press in publications like *Communication Arts*, *Financial Post*, *Strategy* and *Marketing Magazine*.

DDB's social media team took Salty and his buddy Pep into the community and posted photos of the pair taken in unusual places on Salty-focused Twitter and Facebook pages. On these pages, we engaged consumers in conversation in character as Salty, and encouraged them to compete by submitting user-generated content in the form of videos and photos. We were even able to motivate some consumers to submit content as labor-intensive as pasta art. Think about that: *pasta art created by consumers for a brand icon*.



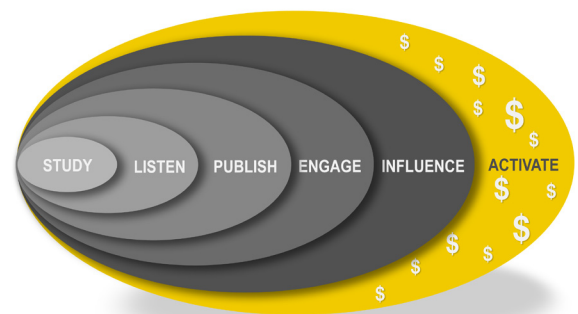
Within the first month of the campaign, Salty made 6,000 friends on Facebook. During this time, our web videos also generated over 375,000 extra impressions at a media cost of zero dollars. In total, unit sales increased a staggering 24 percent from the year before, and our social conversations drove the highest website traffic ever to the Sidekicks consumer site. Most importantly, the product rose to take over the #1 spot in the category.

Would we have had the same results from merely running a commercial? Or an isolated social media campaign? Or if we hadn't leveraged the consumer's ability to publish?

## Thinking beyond publishing, across both traditional and digital media, generates results

Time and money are short. Consumers are distracted, distrustful and able to find anything they desire. Often they work to conserve time and attention, avoid marketing, and turn to search technologies and peer recommendations for company, product and purchase guidance.

Given this power shift, our efforts must be relevant, brief, trustworthy and shared, or they become noise. A smart, integrated and creative approach to the social space will get you to your revenue targets faster and more efficiently. And that will ensure your marketing efforts are worth their salt.



**DDB Worldwide Communications Group Inc. ([www.ddb.com](http://www.ddb.com)) ranks among the top five consolidated advertising and marketing services global networks, according to Advertising Age. Consistently ranked as one of the most awarded networks in the world by Creativity magazine, the International Advertising Festival at Cannes and The Gunn Report, among others, DDB was named Global Network of the Year 2009 by Campaign magazine and Tribal DDB 2009 Digital Agency of the Year by Media. At the 2010 International Advertising Festival in Cannes, DDB captured both the Cyber Grand Prix and Film Craft Grand Prix.**

**With more than 200 offices in over 90 countries, the DDB Group has always believed that creativity is the most powerful force in business through which we develop ideas that people want to play with, participate in and pass on, ideas that connect people with people as well as with brands. We call this Social Creativity which creates ShareValue, the transformative combination of influence within social communities and tangible business results.**

DDB Worldwide is part of Omnicom Group Inc. (OMC).

The logo for DDB, consisting of the letters 'DDB' in a bold, dark blue sans-serif font. A small yellow circle is positioned above the final 'B'.