



Socializing With Your Customers

marketing business customers

Summary: Seventy percent of Americans use social media today. How to optimize your bank's social media presence.

Some of us feel a little more stressed around tax time. United Way Worldwide survey found that almost 75% of millennials feel stress around this time. This is commonly due to worries about making a mistake (48%) or not getting a full refund (23%). Another stressor (if they found out about it) could be that many are not claiming the number of tax credits they have earned. Could social media connections help them feel better about filing next year? Who knows, but social media is definitely important in many ways.

Although we have touched on social media a few times before, it is an increasingly important way to reach out to both customers and prospects. So, we want to continue to keep you updated.

[According to Pew Research](#), almost 70% of Americans use social media today vs. 50% in 2011. Interestingly, as overall usage numbers have increased in the past few years, so has usage by older adults. This group has yet to catch up to their younger counterparts, but 64% of 50-64Y olds use at least one social media site and 37% of 65+ do so.

Knowing this, community banks may not be able to resist the opportunity. After all, utilizing this low-cost, far-reaching channel for marketing, communication and even customer service is fantastic. As customer demand for better and more accessible experiences grow, all banks need to consider developing and building out a social presence even if you already have one. The key is to be careful about how you pick and choose the way you use social media to reach customers and prospects.

To have the greatest positive impact, here are some ideas:

Draw customers in with a narrative. Perhaps the main reason people are drawn to sites like Facebook, Twitter and Instagram is to see what is happening in the lives of their friends, far-flung family and colleagues. Community banks can deepen customer relationships by artfully working your way into social feeds (and their lives). One way to do this is by spinning interesting tales of what is new with the bank, projects in the community or new products or services you offer. As with all things social media, the idea is to inject a strong personal connection that tells the story in words and pictures to build or strengthen customer ties with your bank.

Spread the word about community outreach and activities. Community banks are intrinsically tied to the communities they serve and [75% of bankers believe social media is important to their banks](#). In addition to sharing tales of what you have already done to better the community and customer lives, utilize social media sites as an inexpensive, persuasive, pervasive, and effective means of sharing what you plan to do. Deepen and build customer relationships by talking about the volunteer trash pickup project your bank is doing at the local park or the free outdoor concert you are sponsoring that weekend.

Engage users in contests or promotions. You have to follow the rules closely here to avoid trouble, but done right there could also be opportunity. After all, who doesn't want the opportunity to win something? Social

media affords banks a terrific outlet. Deepen and build relationships here by getting customers and prospects to post their best vacation, favorite community landmark, or even pet photos to possibly win something. The key is not so much to wow customers with a big prize, but to add fun to online social interaction with your bank.

You may already have some or all of these activities integrated into your social media presence. If you do, consider revisiting them to see how things are working. Done well, socializing with customers online can keep more of them engaged and bring in new ones too.

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