

# Social Media & Direct Mail

Join the Conversation and Gain More Leads

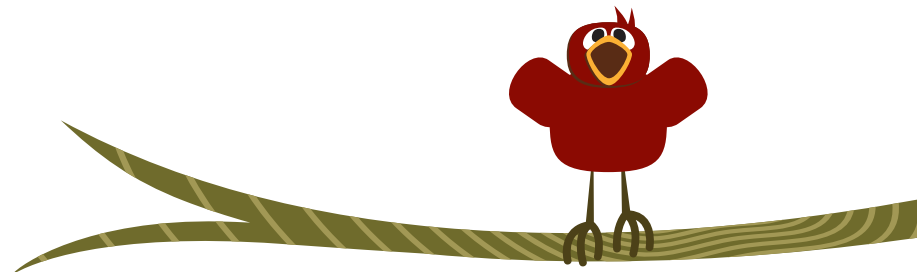




## ■ Table of Contents

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- 5 Why Being Social Matters
- 6 Merging Traditional Direct Marketing Channels with New Media
- 8 Real-World Case Study:  
Best Buy's Twelpforce
- 10 Infusing the Spark of Social into  
Traditional Direct Marketing Elements
- 11 Learn More





## Why is social media relevant for marketers? Consider these statistics:

Recommendations by personal acquaintances and opinions posted by consumers online are the most trusted forms of advertising globally...90% of online consumers worldwide trust recommendations from people they know, while 70% trust consumer opinions posted online.

*-Nielsen Global Online Consumer Survey Press Release, July 2009*

More than 80% of American adults use social media tools.

*-The Broad Reach of Social Technologies, Forrester, August 2009*

Just over 60% of shoppers making purchases based on recommendations via social networking sites relied mainly on user reviews.

*-Razorfish, October 2008*

Yelp features a collection of 4 million user-generated reviews on its site; 34% of which are restaurant reviews, 23% shopping, 8% beauty and fitness, 7% home and local services, 3% travel and hotel reviews, etc.

*-Yelp snapshot, October 2008*

Approximately 82.5 million consumers created content online in 2008 while nearly 116 million consumers reviewed user-generated content online.

*-eMarketer, February 2009*

74% of surveyed consumers choose companies and brands based on peer reviews online regarding customer service experiences.

*-Society for New Communications Research, May 2008*

Ninety-one percent of millionaires say they always or often look at reviews before buying luxury goods; 68% of ultra-affluent shoppers use consumer reviews.

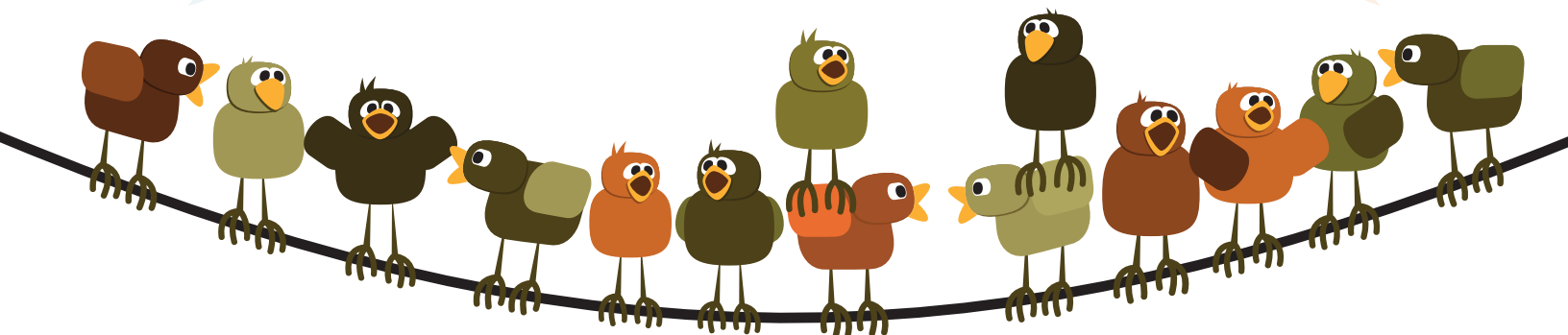
*-Unity Marketing/Google study, reported in AdAge, October 2008*

More than 2 billion pieces of content (web links, news stories, blog posts, notes, photos, etc.) are shared on Facebook each week.

*-Facebook statistics, September 2009*

More than 10 million Facebook users become fans of Pages each day.

*-Facebook statistics, September 2009*





## ■ Why Being Social Matters

### The New Rules of Marketing

■ *74% of surveyed consumers choose companies and brands based on peer reviews online.*

■ *70% of online consumers worldwide trust consumer opinions posted on the web.*



Today, consumers demand to be treated as individuals. They want engagement, community and a voice. They crave genuine, reciprocal relationships and value businesses that actively participate in dialogue. As a result, savvy marketers are applying new techniques and technologies to traditional direct marketing channels, such as direct mail and email, in order to better engage with existing customers, attract new prospects and motivate open communication and participation.

The marketing landscape has fundamentally changed. It is no longer a media-controlled landscape; rather, it belongs to consumers. Companies have lost the power to dictate how the public sees their brand. Clever advertising campaigns, mass-media marketing and carefully worded press releases alone are no longer effective in shaping brand perception. It's the consumer voice that defines it through user reviews, recommendations, online conversations with peers, content creation and collaboration.

Social media tools and social networking sites are new conduits for word-of-mouth marketing—disseminating product reviews and narratives of customers' experiences to more people, farther and faster than ever before.

Consumers online are talking about brands and their peers are listening. Based on these conversations, they can be a brand's worst nightmare or best friend. And, although companies can't control what's being said in the marketplace, they still have the power to influence how consumers see their brand. By listening to customers and participating in the brand conversation online and offline, marketers have the opportunity to turn brand detractors into brand evangelists, increase brand awareness, boost sales and generate new leads faster.

According to an April 2008 survey of the 1 to 1 Xchange panel, 84% of marketers agree that building customer trust will become marketing's primary objective. Social media platforms are just another tool to help marketers listen, engage and build trust with consumers. It is a way for businesses to be present and available to answer questions, troubleshoot issues, collect feedback, research market trends and foster an honest dialogue between brand and consumer. By participating in an equal and reciprocal relationship, brands have the power to establish trust with consumers and influence their purchase-decision-making process and perception of brand.

Additionally, open relationships with consumers give brands the ability to be human—mistakes are forgiven. A great example of this is noted in a July 16, 2009 AdAge article titled, "How Twitter Can Help or Hurt an Airline." It describes situations where using social media, or failure to use it, shaped consumers' view of airline carriers.

In an example featuring Southwest Air, the chief "Twitterer" was able to successfully manage buzz relating to a plane's emergency landing caused by a one foot by one foot hole in the fuselage. They were able to divert a conversation fueled by panic and turn it into a positive customer relations opportunity.



*"It was important for us to set the tone as soon as we saw those conversations begin online," said Christi Day, leader of the airline's social media communications that day. "We were able to distribute factual information to our customers before they saw it on the 10 p.m. news, which is extremely powerful."*

Another wonderful example comes from Virgin America's use of social media platforms as a customer-relationship-management tool. As Virgin America's director of corporate communications, Abby Lunardini, highlights in the article:

*"We've had guests tweet about missing food service, and we sent a message to the plane's crew to assist [them]... We got a tweet from someone en route to Boston who said he had been ignored on the flight and had some other service issues," Lunardini continues. "Our team met him at the gate in Boston and asked if we could assist with anything or help him further."*

Ignored, these situations could have turned into a PR nightmare. However, by actively listening to the consumer and stepping into the conversation whole-heartedly, these companies were able to positively manage customer expectations and reaction. Long-term, exercises like these can turn consumers into brand loyalists and brand evangelists.

## ■ Merging Traditional Direct Marketing Channels with New Media

- Nearly 33% of consumers go online to respond to direct mail.
- Multi-channel shoppers spend more per year by an average of 32% as compared to single-channel shoppers.



As more marketers are entering the online and social media space, it's becoming increasingly important for businesses to use traditional direct marketing channels to support online efforts. Using traditional direct media gives marketers a greater ability to reach local prospects that are not already participating in the brand conversation online. It also gives marketers an opportunity to bypass the cluttered digital space and target specific prospects.

With direct mail, for example, marketers are able to pinpoint local target audiences better, due to the sophistication of demographic mailing lists and tools that offer precise geo-location of a business' perfect prospects. They can then direct those targeted prospects online to join the brand conversation.

One such available tool, QuantumDigital's MapMail®, combines demographic data—like age, income, house deed information, marital status and more—with a Google Maps™ interface, allowing marketers to control exactly to whom and where they send marketing messages. The more precise marketers can be with targeting an audience, the more relevant they can be with their marketing message. Relevancy, having the right conversation with the right target audience, is a key ingredient in successful social media marketing and traditional direct marketing alike.



■ A highly targeted and personalized approach saves marketers time, money and resources while increasing probability of responses and ROI.

■ Tools like MapMail® can target prospects matching a specific demographic profile within a selected mailing area.



**MAPMAIL**

Draw a freeform map.  Map a mailing radius around a central location.

City, Zip, or Address:  Max quantity:  **LOCATE**

930 of 1,842 possible addresses selected for mailing. ([manage addresses](#))

Demographic filter selected: Home Owners Only ([edit](#))

Refresh Addresses | Clear Map | Map Legend

Map Sat Hyb

930 addresses represented by 169 markers.

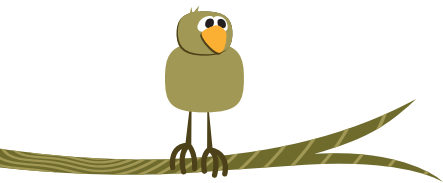
Aside from helping marketers target prospects that are likely to engage in the brand conversation, effectively synchronizing online and offline marketing efforts have been proven to offer more revenue-building benefits. According to a Shop.org study, multi-channel shoppers make purchases 12% more frequently than those shopping via a single channel. They also spend more per year by an average of 32 percent. Add another channel to the mix (tri-channel: brick and mortar retail locations, direct mail catalog and online) and marketers experience shoppers that are more loyal than similar customers that only shop through retail locations. Connecting with consumers through multiple channels gives them the power to choose when and how to do business. For the marketer, it offers wider brand exposure and increased opportunity to capture sales.





## Real-World Case Study: Best Buy's Twelpforce

Cross-channel marketing, different than multi-channel marketing, is where a business uses one channel to promote its brand on another channel (i.e., using direct mail to drive traffic online). A great example of a tightly integrated cross-channel marketing campaign today can be seen with Best Buy. The consumer electronics retailer recently launched a number of television commercials promoting awareness of its Twelpforce, a collection of “tech pros” on Twitter that can troubleshoot technology issues and answer questions relating to consumer electronics. The Twelpforce is also promoted through Best Buy’s website and point-of-sale signage. The content seen on Twelpforce’s Twitter feed is helpful information in general and does not contain overt sales messages.



A question that some marketers might ask is: why would any brand spend marketing dollars to promote another channel rather than directly promoting a product or service? The short answer is that cross-channel marketing offers a faster, more effective way to attract new prospects, direct them through the sales funnel, measure engagement and collect consumer data.

Let’s examine this cross-channel strategy. Through Best Buy’s traditional channels—newspaper inserts and retail locations—there is one opportunity to convert prospects into customers. If a prospect receives an insert or walks into a retail location, the metric that Best Buy needs in order to determine if that marketing effort was successful is a sale. Without a sale, Best Buy has no data on the prospect and they have missed their chance to further nurture that prospect in order to promote a sale.

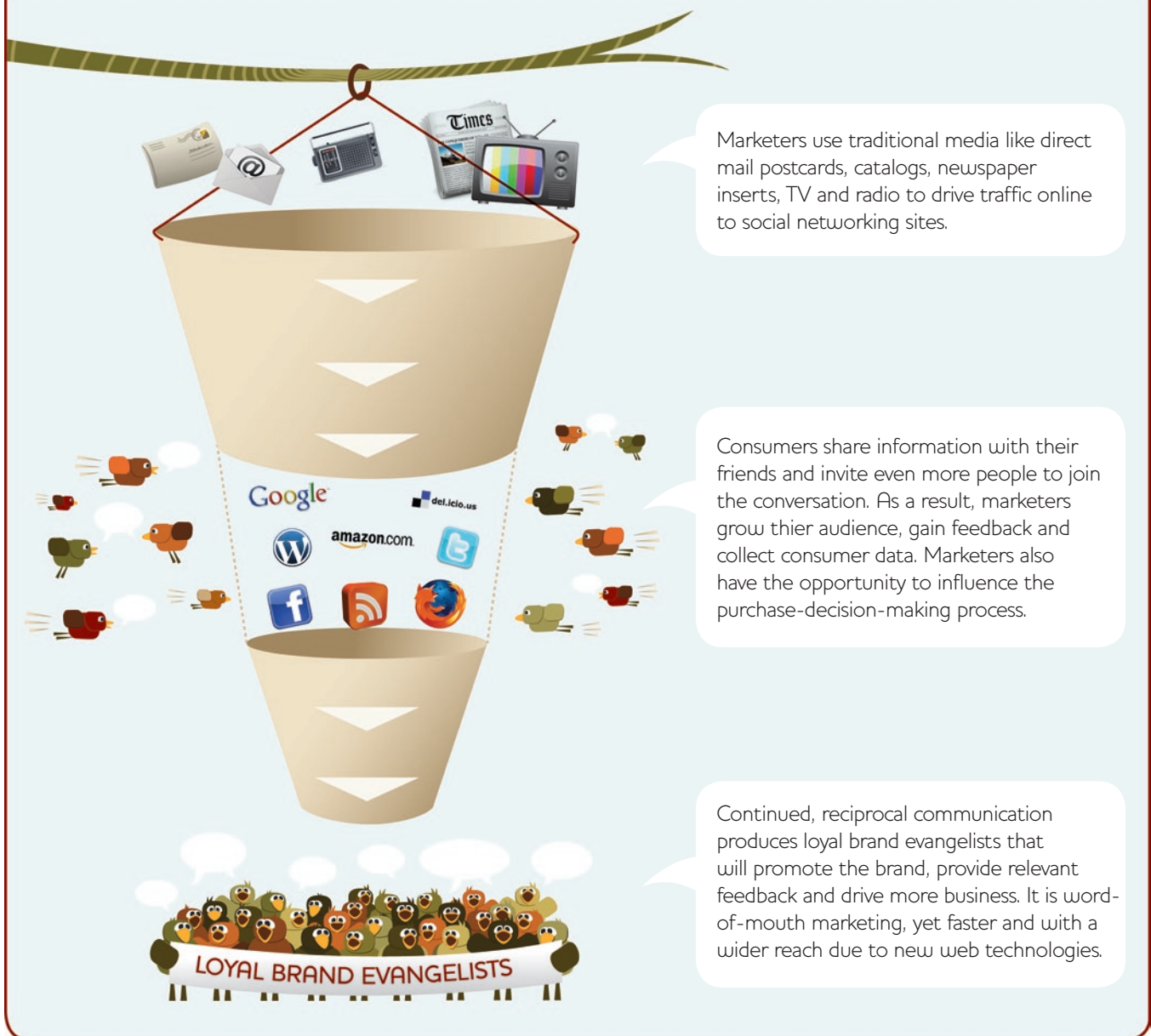
By driving prospects online to their web property, to their Twitter or Facebook account, Best Buy is able to begin a dialogue with potential customers. Those prospects share their brand conversation with other peers online, some of which may join the





conversation. Meanwhile, Best Buy is able to collect consumer feedback and data, provide knowledgeable advice and funnel prospects through the purchase decision-making process. Consumer data collected via their web properties may be used to tailor future marketing campaigns and promotions. Additionally, they position themselves as a thought-leader in the consumer electronics industry and build trust with their audience.

## The Role of Social Media in Cross-Channel Marketing Campaigns

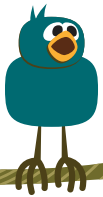


As of this article, Best Buy has attracted 12,762 Twitter followers and 841,504 fans of their Facebook Page—now members of a targeted and captive audience.



## ■ Infusing the Spark of Social into Traditional Direct Marketing Elements

Technology, like variable-data printing, allows marketers to produce highly relevant, personalized content on demand so that each communication between marketer and prospect is truly unique.



Database marketing along with today's technologies allow businesses to translate the same qualities that make social media so appealing to direct mail, print collateral and email. Following are some highlights of social media and tactics for merging traditional direct marketing with new media.



### RELEVANT, TWO-WAY CONVERSATION

A great characteristic of social media is that it encourages the consumer to use their voice and provide feedback. It also allows people to engage in relevant, two-way conversations. One way marketers can do this is by using PURLs. A PURL (personalized URL) is a dynamically generated web address that contains information unique to each individual, like a name or offer. PURLs lead responders from one source, like a direct mail piece or printed catalog, to a personalized landing page tailored specifically for that individual. According to the DMA, close to 33% of consumers go online to respond to direct mail. This response rate is increased by 20 to 30% when personalized URL addresses and landing pages are used. And when prospects go online to participate in activities (surveys, downloading content, etc.) on their personalized landing pages, marketers are able to collect the data and generate personalized follow-up marketing messages.

### HIGHLY PERSONALIZED CONTENT

People participating in conversations via social networking sites usually have something in common with each other. They often have similar interests, hobbies, professional designations, problems they're trying to solve, needs and wants. Therefore, the content shared via those channels is tailored to the individual—it's personal. Highly personalized direct marketing efforts—direct mail, printed collateral and email—have been proven time and time again to improve response rates, boost sales and motivate an action on the part of the consumer. A 2007 InfoTrends/CAP Ventures personalization study found that highly personalized color direct mail generated a 6.5% response rate—much improved from the 2% response rate non-personalized direct mail is said to generate.



Variable data technology is making it easier, more effective and cheaper than ever to include personalized data on direct mail pieces, printed collateral, in email messages and on landing pages. Each element within a direct marketing campaign may be personalized with information such as an individual's name, recent purchase activity, special promotional offers, variable messages and images. And, as the consumer engages with a company via their web properties or through social networking sites, marketers can fine tune creative, copy and timing of pieces based on purchasing patterns or consumer preference—making the experience unique and relevant for each customer and/or prospect.

### OPPORTUNITY FOR PARTICIPATION

As in the case of Best Buy, many businesses are implementing cross-channel marketing techniques to drive traffic online and promote participation. They are using direct mail and printed collateral to notify prospects of their presence online by including website URLs and links to social media profiles on each piece. Businesses are also using direct mail to invite prospects to subscribe to email newsletters, to read their blog, join them on social networking platforms and to shop e-commerce sites.

Here are more ways businesses can use direct mail to drive traffic online and motivate prospects to participate in the brand conversation:

- Ensure website address and links to social media accounts are printed on each direct mailer and on printed sales collateral.
- Include a coupon or promotional offer on direct mail pieces that can only be redeemed by going online.
- Launch a direct mail campaign to announce a webinar, online social event or contest.
- Ask direct mail recipients to sign up for e-newsletters or to subscribe to your RSS feed.
- Use direct mail to say “hello” to existing customers. Let them know that they can leave comments and provide customer feedback on the company website or other social media platforms.

By implementing a few of the tactics noted above, marketers are able to better engage with existing customers, attract new prospects, measure engagement and collect consumer data. While consumers experience a richer, more relevant experience, businesses being social through direct mail increase the potential to boost revenue and capture larger market share.

## Learn More


QuantumDigital is your complete online service provider for direct mail, on-demand printing and eMarketing. To learn more about how our products and services can help you retain and grow business, contact us:


- 866-914-5314  
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