

Q&A: How to Drive Measurable ROI from Social Media NOW

Courtney Velasquez, Social Fabric Community Director, interviewed John Andrews, Collective Bias (CB) Founder/CEO, and Ted Rubin and Dave Henry of the CB Board of Advisors to understand how brands and retailers can measure social media ROI, engage in shopper listening and receive shopper feedback.

1. How can brands drive measurable ROI from social media now?

John: This is such an important question! ROI is usually addressed from a longer-term perspective, and with the immediacy of social media interactions (and exponential growth and adoption), we really do need to see measurable ROI in the shorter term.

Ted: Social media is so popular and effective as a marketing tool because it focuses on the customer experience instead of just throwing an advertisement at them and hoping the impression will stick. The key, then, to driving measurable ROI is in customers' shopping experience. JUST by listening to what shoppers want, you can improve their shopping experience (e.g. in-stock position, proper assortment, promotion placement, etc.) and grow your sales by a measurable effect immediately. Be a [socially-focused organization](#).

2. Shopper listening: what is it and how should brands do it?

John: Shopper listening is exactly what it sounds like, AND so much more. It is listening to what shoppers want, but it is not just a passive gathering of information...it is an interactive, two-way feedback loop with shoppers (and potential shoppers).

Ted: Effective shopper feedback includes an ongoing cycle of asking questions, listening to the answers, asking clarifying follow-up questions as necessary, and then TAKING ACTION based on the answers.

Listen carefully to shoppers' answers regarding the following questions:

- What are their likes, and equally importantly, their dislikes?
- What are their expectations of your brand and products?
- What experience are they hoping to have because of your product?
- What would delight them enough that they would want to tell their friends?

Apply those answers by making changes to in-stock product placement, or creating new promotions tailored to shopper preferences, or even removing certain products from the shelves to make space for a different assortment that your shoppers are asking for.

3. Who benefits from shopper feedback?

Dave: Just about everyone! Shoppers definitely benefit because they get the products and customer experience they want. Brands benefit because when shoppers get what they want, they not only purchase for themselves, but tell others to purchase also. And don't forget your retail partners – they also benefit by becoming known as the retail shop that stocks the products (your products) that shoppers actually WANT. The retail location itself then becomes part of the positive customer shopping experience, influencing repeat sales and adding fuel to positive Word of Mouth.

4. Do shoppers really pay attention to brands via the social media channel?

Ted: Absolutely. Consumers now have “the channel of me” – their opinions now create the reality of the brand, and they are watching to see which brands are truly paying attention to them. Shoppers want to know more than just which brands are offering worthwhile promotions; they also want to know which brands are open to being influenced by shopper opinions and behaviors. Those are the brands they will purchase from.

So yes, shoppers definitely are paying attention, and brands need to show that same amount of attention back to the shoppers. How? By listening!! (see #2).

Dave: The truly fantastic thing about the power of social feedback (the full definition of that term), is that the interactions your brand has with shoppers and potential shoppers now can influence their purchase decisions IMMEDIATELY. Show them you are genuinely paying attention and you can quickly become the recipient of their buying power.

5. How much time should brands invest in “shopper feedback”?

Ted: As much as you can. I can’t stress enough the importance of this [LISTENING](#). It benefits all parties in the marketing channel at a comparatively very low cost, and the ROI shows up quickly.

When your brand is committed to shopper feedback, you give yourself the information needed to be able to:

- Give your shoppers exactly what they want
- Hone your product offerings to those that shoppers WILL buy
- Turn on a dime to innovate quickly and in a way that will keep your shoppers happily along for the ride
- Be welcomed into the consumers’ “channel of me.”

6. Is there any long-term benefit to shopper feedback?

John, Ted, Dave: Yes!

When brands truly listen – and respond – to shoppers, those shoppers become loyal customers and then go even further to become advocates for your products and ultimately your brand. Base your product innovations on shopper listening and show them you are supportive of influencers and shoppers will become YOUR shoppers... advocates who can’t wait to tell their friends about their experience with your product and brand, simply because you delighted them.

In other words, the long-term benefit is the building of powerful relationships, and the ROI there is relationship commerce, or [ROR \(Return on Relationship\)](#). Listening allows for action and action can be measured.

Social media can be measured easily, quickly and efficiently, but many focus on the wrong measurements. Impressions and Share of Voice are important data points but what do they really do to move your product at retail? It’s very wise to move some allocated dollars in media into social media, and at the same time, move research dollars to measure.

Shopper media not only generates content, awareness and impressions but integrates your shopper’s voice into your retail planning and execution. Imagine launching a new campaign, and 24 hours later have REAL feedback from the field as to what customers are seeing and

saying! DATA leads to INSIGHTS that lead to ACTION that demands MEASUREMENT. The most effective ROI is one that makes the shopping experience better.

Remember, the success and impact of our product is not about how much we love it, but about how much our customers love it. What they love, they purchase – you can't get much better measure of ROI than that!

About John Andrews

[John Andrews](#), Collective Bias Founder/CEO, has over 14 years experience with leading brands like Sara Lee, Eastman Kodak Digital, Newell Rubbermaid, and of course Walmart, where he is perhaps best known for the creation of its award winning social media platform Elevenmoms, an industry-leading online customer advocate program.

About Dave Henry

[Dave Henry](#), Collective Bias Board of Advisors, has over 40 years of marketing and advertising experience. He most recently served as Senior Vice President of Marketing at Winn-Dixie, where he spearheaded the successful launch of its customer reward card and played a key role in the Getting Better All the Time marketing campaign. Since entering “semi-retirement”, he serves on a number of Advisory Boards both for business and non-profit organizations.

About Ted Rubin

[Ted Rubin](#), Collective Bias Board of Advisors, has a deep online background beginning in 1997 with Seth Godin, as [CMO of e.l.f. Cosmetics](#), & recently as [Chief Social Marketing Officer, OpenSky](#). Rubin became known for his active use of social media to build relationships and brand advocacy. During his time at e.l.f. he coined the term Return on Relationship (ROR) and doubled its customer base while increasing sales with a limited budget.

About Collective Bias

Collective Bias, LLC, facilitates the creation of real shopper media by connecting groups of social media influencers to the brands and retailers they use in their daily lives. Our Social Fabric® community drives conversations on a wide variety of social media platforms in order to build consumer engagement and brand loyalty that ultimately lead to sales conversion.