

# Grocery 3.0

3 practical tips to make social media serve your store



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There is a simple way to make social media sell. It's based on a store's approach to marketing itself. And that means it's easy to understand. It is also easy to apply. In fact, it's so practical that any store can immediately gain benefits. Regardless of target market, products or service focus or size. It is the key to selling more with tools like Facebook, Twitter, podcasts, YouTube, LinkedIn and blogs.

This guide booklet will give you that key. It will empower you to make social media marketing produce more transactions and increased loyalty – starting tomorrow. Whether you're a one-man or woman band or directing a group of marketers. In pages ahead, you'll discover a step-by-step way to improve strategies and bypass pitfalls – make social media sell off-the-hook!

And remember, **you are not alone** in this. I'll show you how to make the most of your limited time. Just think about it for a moment. Won't it feel great to know that everything you're doing with social media will result in more sales and increased loyalty? Now let's get going!

Here are 3 practical tips to help unlock the true potential of social media in your store. These are:

- 1) **Get back to basics: Decide what NOT to do first.**  
Focus on solving customers' problems first, not technology. Where to start? Follow needs of customers, not gurus or “best practices.”
- 2) **Think like a designer.**  
Make each social marketing tactic “scratch customers' itches.” Mix in time-tested, direct response promotions that create opportunities to connect those itches (problems, urges) to products.
- 3) **Translate: Be forever relevant.**  
Use social media to help capture insights on customers' pain points. Then put them to work. Be relevant 24/7. Invent ways to keep prompting more questions that your products/services answer – stay relevant over time.

# # 1

## get back to basics

Is understanding how to “do social media” worthwhile – without having a practical way to *design it to pay you*? Because that's what this booklet is about. Giving you a fast, practical tool to make social media marketing produce what you want.

Learning how to use tech tools like Facebook and Twitter comes later. These skills are essential to have. And many fine books are written on the subject. But social media marketing challenges us to **design conversations** in ways that **solve customers' problems**. First. And that means “hitting pause” and getting back to basics.

“It's problematic that many businesses focus on existing and emerging technology, and not on social behavior,” says Paul Adams, Facebook's global brand experience manager. “Thinking about platform integration first, like Twitter or Facebook, or technologies first, like what could be enabled by 'mobile location' or 'real-time updates,' is the wrong place to start.”



Social media can be a more powerful servant to your store. It *will* be. But good news: It requires getting back to your roots first. Because the answer to selling more with social tools is founded in starting conversations that are worth having.

You see, stores experiencing more success with social media are using it in ways that provide qualitative experiences for customers – not just discounts. For instance, they're solving customers problems and prompting more questions – driving customers into stores for more answers.

### The secret sauce

How are they doing it? Pioneering stores like Whole Foods and European Goliath, Tesco (profiled deeper in *Off The Hook Marketing* [www.makesocialsell.com](http://www.makesocialsell.com)) are following customers, not trends. They're letting shoppers provide the “when, where, why and how” that powers their decision-making. It's easy. Because when using social media, customers are “signaling” what's relevant and most needed. Stores simply translate those needs and respond by scratching customers' itches. And earning more transactions. But wait. Hasn't this always been the case?

Today's most successful, social-savvy stores are giving customers ways to navigate themselves toward answers they need. Yes, in new ways with new tools. But consider what your stores are *probably already doing*. Like custom media publications. In-store, health-related educational programs and screenings. Dietician-guided nutritional tours. All these investments are designed to create a constant stream of behavior.

Stores have *always* used these techniques to help customers guide themselves toward destinations they (customers) choose.

Your store has always provided valuable knowledge to customers. And it's all designed to solve problems for customers in ways that drive them into the store.

### Ask a different question

So if you think in context of “getting back to basics” the question changes.

No longer should you be asking: “What should we be doing with social media in stores?” NOW the question changes to: “**How can social media make what we already do better?**”



### Take action

How can you commit your business, today, to helping customers make vital life-stage decisions or getting important things done? Consider how (and why) Harris Teeter literally pays its customers to ask health and wellness questions. The store gives customers incentive to “signal” where they need guidance in their lives – right on the store's Facebook page.



(source: <http://bit.ly/fEyMGx>)

Think about how this store's gestures are increasing its ability to earn “quality time” with customers in social spaces. And how this is creating opportunities for Harris-Teeter employees to participate in meaningful, relevant and very *purposeful* conversations – **opening doors for questions that products and services have answers for.**

Take action. Brainstorm similar gestures that help solve customers' problems and make products more relevant to them. Start in areas of strength, like health & wellness. Use social media tools like Facebook to solve customers problems and lead them toward answers.

Ask yourself, “What are our customers *doing* in social spaces right now?” And that includes your store! Ask, “What are customers demonstrating a clear, identifiable need for? What questions do they ask that we can answer... in the form of a blog story, or Facebook response?”

Consider prioritizing those questions asked most often. Then find ways to take action on them using a health blog or Facebook effort, for instance. Choose your technology or “social space” based on observable customer behavior within it. Stack the deck in your favor for success!

# #2

## think like a designer

*“Social behavior in humans is as old as our species, so the emergence of an Internet based on social behavior is simply our rudimentary technology catching up with offline life. Thinking about 'social design' should be embedded in everything we do, and not thought of in isolation.”*

Paul Adams  
Global brand experience manager, Facebook

Again, forget about technology for a moment. Focus on how your store can start making every social media encounter produce behavior. And how you can mold it. Let's learn how to start guiding customers toward destinations they choose – ultimately arriving at your products and services. And I promise: The success formula will come into clear focus. And you'll be able to apply what I teach you tomorrow. Because we'll start by discovering *existing* customer behavior and nurturing it along.

### **Scratch customers' itches to create sales**

Let's start with a quick example. J&O Fabrics is a 50-year-old, family-operated fabric and craft retailer that's always focused in-store marketing on holidays, seasons and events. Naturally, J&O communicates promotions online to spur ecommerce sales at [www.jandofabrics.com](http://www.jandofabrics.com). But results were mediocre. But that's when Ryan Safady noticed how customers were *already behaving* on Facebook. His customers simply cannot stop sharing their craft-related photos on the social network during holidays. And this presented an opportunity to align J&O Fabrics' themed promotions with what customers were already doing. To *design* a social media interaction.

In other words, Safady figured exploiting *existing behavior patterns* of customers makes a lot of sense. Practically speaking. Setting aside questions like “do we focus on Facebook, Twitter, blogging or videos?” made Safady's decision an easy one. In effect, this approach eliminates a lot of other ideas that *might* make sense. Based on *observable behavior* this option made solid sense. J&O's customers were itching to share-share-share their homemade creations. And it made sense for J&O to scratch it by designing a way for that to happen – in a way that connected to products. The results were explosive.

In the prior section, Harris Teeter observed behavior and took similar action. Customers are already “out there” looking for answers to vital health and wellness issues. And they're often itching to share those tips with others in their network. Harris Teeter is simply scratching that itch in ways that encourage customers to share *valuable, treatment-related* (not focused) health knowledge. The grocer is *designing* a process to solve customers' problems and increase demand.

### **Connect promotions with behavior**

After realizing his customers' behavior could play to his advantage, J&O's Safady decided to invent a practical way to prompt photo-sharing behavior among customers – in ways that occasionally connect to products. Not because it was a cool idea but because it was what he observed customers already doing, craving.

So the company runs an annual “Most Amazing Hand-Crafted Halloween Costume” contest. Here, Facebook fans and blog readers are prompted to register for a promotion by “liking” the business. This enters them in the contest. The most creative customer wins a \$50 American Express gift card. And each entrant grabs a 10% off coupon. Like Harris Teeter, J&O provides incentive.

Uploading of contestants' photos and voting is accomplished within Facebook. This part is key as it focuses on *how customers are already using* Facebook – to show off their creations to friends and family within Facebook. As a result of the photo uploading, others join the contest, “like” J&O. And many are purchasing fabric from the company. They're re-creating costumes based on photos discovered in Facebook.

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Safady's strategy is as brilliant as it is simple. He aligns traditional promotions in ways that exploit what he observes people *already doing* on Facebook. He's adding value to customers' *natural behavior* and reaping the benefits – designing social media to sell off-the-hook.



#### **Take action**

Does your store run promotions based on “life moments” of customers (anniversaries, graduation, newly wed, expectant motherhood, housewarming, etc.) when executing marketing campaigns? Or how about seasons or holidays? Are customers demonstrating in-store or online “social” behaviors within these contexts? How can you tap into those behaviors – start using social media to add value for customers and increase purchase activity for your store?

For instance, say your customers use materials (your products/services) to create “finished works,” products or improvements. Can you leverage their behavior, post-purchase, to your (and your customers') advantage? Try to think beyond contests that involve voting. Get creative.

# #3

## translate: be forever relevant

When you *design* it to, social media can produce a continuous flow of customer insights – *useful clues* to base your store's “social activities” on. Customers are providing ideas and guidance all the time. Sometimes picking up their “signals” just means paying attention! Let's wrap-up by learning how social media can help you quickly, easily capture insights on customers' pain points. This way, you'll always be able to put that knowledge to work – prompt them to lead themselves into stores for answers.

And let's be clear. To translate customers' needs you don't need to be a billion dollar consumer packaged goods company. Nor invest six-figures in a “social media command center.” You can be a chain of stores like Harris Teeter or a small business like PetRelocation.com and Virginia-based River Pools and Spas using free blog software and [www.search.twitter.com](http://www.search.twitter.com).

As you know, customers ask questions all day long in your stores. That counts too. In fact, that's the best place to start.



Once again, a return to your roots is advisable. Because if you're looking to discover those “conversations worth having,” the easiest place to start is *in your store*. Because your store's culture already focuses on solving problems for customers. If it doesn't... well... chances are you won't use social media to solve customers' problems either!

You see... “the media” doesn't dictate how social a store is or isn't. It simply enhances your ability to be a social business – *IF* in fact your store is. If not, it illustrates the extent to which it is not.

### **Start at home**

For instance, AnchorBank is a Wisconsin-based bank using an integrated approach to translating what customers need. The bank took its in-branch practice of “listening and responding” to customers and extended it onto the Web. As a result, the bank is dramatically increasing customer share-of-wallet. Or, in grocery store terms, increasing the breadth and frequency of customer transactions. By looking first into its own branches, AnchorBank discovered a way to build customer loyalty and sell higher-margin products to people who need them. Then it expanded the practice into social media via its Financial Answer Center. <http://financialinformationcenter.anchorbank.com/>

Think about your own financial life. Often times we need help making complex decisions. Whether it's a problem or an opportunity. It could be making a decision on college savings plans, retirement savings tools, starting up a small business or bracing for a divorce or getting married. We have questions that need answers. The good news is banks like AnchorBank have free expertise to guide people through important decisions. The bad news is most people don't turn to banks for such advice. Banks aren't relevant to us!

So AnchorBank is *educating* customers using knowledge – advice delivered via the Web and in retail branches. AnchorBank is listening in both spheres. And responding in ways that prompt customers to take action – to do what they're quite inclined to do. That is, get involved in the process of, eventually, buying a higher-margin banking product that they truly need! All because the bank helps them get more informed on whatever-it-is that's *most relevant at that moment*.

### Compete on service, not price

What if customers constantly “signaled” to you what the most relevant, important problems were – that you can help them solve? A store-based and online *educational* approach offers such advantage. For instance, is your store competing by trying to sell at better prices and fatter profit margins? That’s a tough assignment. But what if there’s a way to grow long-term sales by translating customers’ evolving needs more effectively?



Imagine educating customers. I’m sure you can envision something like that. But what if you could literally, for instance, certify customers as “more qualified” to do whatever they do better – in ways that create demand for products and services? Or make them better at whatever they need to get done? If some of your customers are commercial, envision helping them improve the outcomes your products produce – for their customers.

Whomever you’re selling to, if you were to provide buyers more “educational value” might they discover new reasons to do business with you? Would they buy more often? Could being an actual teacher – offering creative, cost-effective solutions – *differentiate* you from customers’ other choices? (like your competitors)

For instance, consider your pharmacy. Imagine teaching customers how to improve wellness. That shouldn’t be difficult. You’re probably already guiding customers in this realm. But what if you added in-store and online health education programming – live events, pamphlets, an online answer center (Facebook and/or your Web site) and/or video clips. From dieticians to alternative wellness remedies, your curriculum can teach needy customers everything from how to shop for newly diagnosed celiac patients to overcoming “picky eating syndrome.”

Of course, don’t limit yourself to health. And consider how powerful it would be to define what your customers should learn, at what pace and why. Imagine how close you would get to shoppers. How intimately *involved you would become with customers’ evolving needs*. And think about it in on-going terms. Might customers benefit from continuous, digital “informational interactions?”

### Take action

Could an educational approach to translating customers' needs also convince them to *trust* you more? And if they did, would they buy more, more often? Might educating customers increase the likelihood of their needing more products/services?

Ask yourself, “Where do most of our customers leave money on-the-table at our store? Might there be one or two simple things they could do differently... that would multiply their success in achieving their goal... or solving their problem?”



After all, if you helped “make that happen” for customers (through education), would it create more demand for your products or services?

Also consider asking yourself, “If we were to teach customers something honestly new, would it give us the opportunity to generate more sales? How could we start doing this tomorrow with a small-scale pilot program designed with these outcomes in mind?”

Consider how an educational approach can give deeper knowledge of customers' values, goals and problems. And how that can “automate” the process of designing social media to create results. Think about how educating customers can help unburden you – making it quick and easy to capture insights on customers' pain points as they evolve. Because now you're not tweeting X times per day... you're always answering customers questions. And that leads to *more questions* from customers that your products answer.

Now go get 'em!

And don't forget to check out other success stories, tips and tricks at [www.makesocialsell.com/blog](http://www.makesocialsell.com/blog)