CONNECTING

ONLINE AND IN-STORE
MARKETING STRATEGIES
FOR MULTI-UNIT BUSINESSES

LOCATION3

CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

It's no secret that it's difficult to connect digital marketing budgets directly to store traffic.

There isn't a magic formula or single piece of analytics tracking code that illustrates the entire picture. This reality makes it hard for multi-unit business leaders to balance what they know they should be doing in digital across hundreds (or thousands) of locations with their dedication to healthy profit margins. Shareholders generally aren't interested in how many "Likes" your company's Facebook page has, but ignoring online engagement is no longer an option for companies who want to meet aggressive goals and rise above the competition. The good news is you can very accurately track aspects of integrated campaigns and when added together these data points can provide accurate reporting on how marketing spend online and off impacts your bottom line. Let's take a look at some ways you can pull it all together and start seeing the big picture more clearly.

Defining Your Target Audience

As a multi-unit business you already have a defined target audience. However, if the goal is to drive additional sales through more efficient online and offline marketing you may want to reassess the current approach and revisit the ways in which you've previously defined your audience. Using the tools and techniques below you may discover that the target has shifted since the previous assessment, or that you're right on track. Either way you'll be well positioned to begin connecting online and offline strategies more efficiently.

Meet Katie

Creating customer personas is an excellent way to guide and gut check your strategies. Building two to three common personas based on research and consumer feedback can give you valuable insight into your customer's path to purchase, ultimately allowing you to optimize campaigns, increase brand awareness and boost in-store traffic. Google Analytics, Adobe SiteCatalyst, Webtrends, Coremetrics and many more online tools can provide this insight into your current consumer's behavior and new target audiences. Social feedback including Facebook Audience Insights and community forums can also be valuable tools for gathering information about consumer behavior.
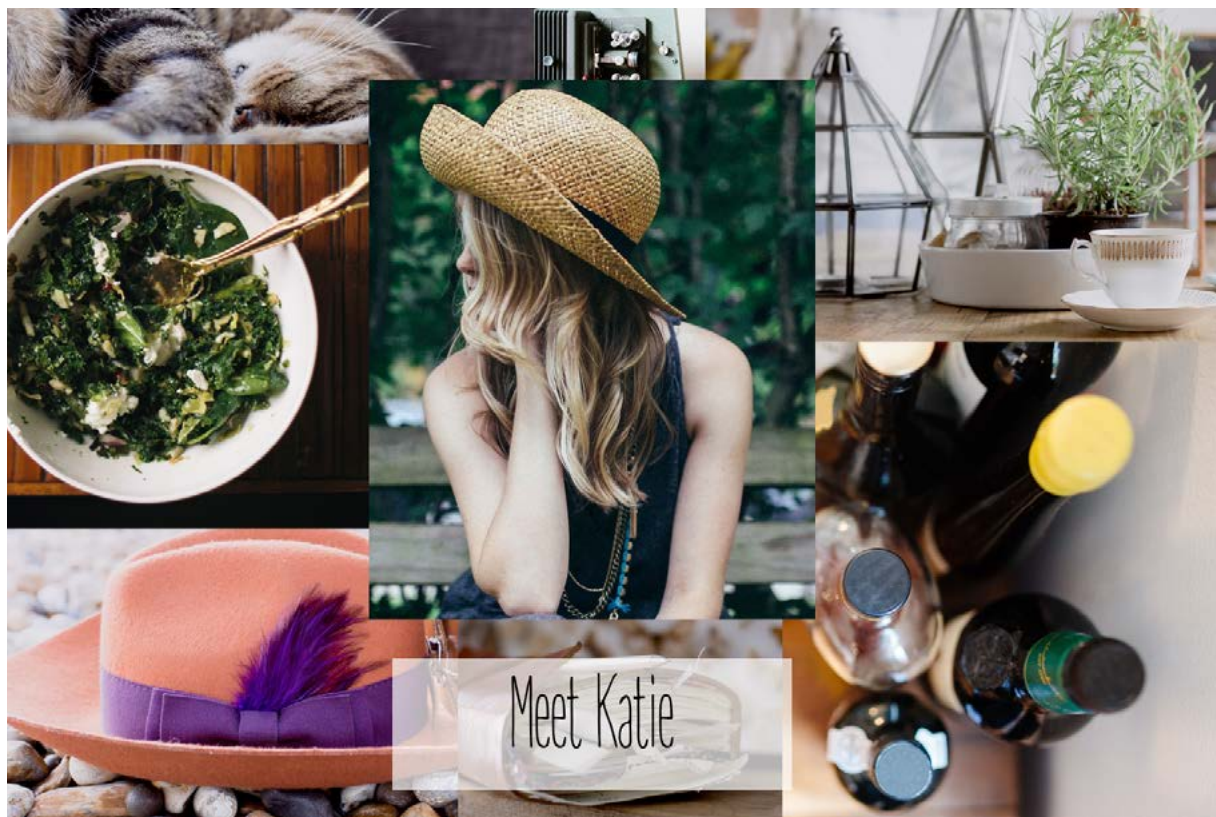
With Google Analytics and Adobe SiteCatalyst you can determine user behavior on your site, campaign performance and some demographic information such as age and interests. At the brand level, social monitoring tools such as MomentFeed, Radian6, Sysomos Heartbeat and Brandwatch allow you to gather data on customer interests, what products and services they own and (just as importantly) what they don't like in terms of customer service and brand outreach. Facebook Audience Insights allows brands to dig into demographic data to learn more about current customers and target new customers based on profiles that are similar to existing fans. Scanning forums related to your industry can be time consuming but these online conversations are packed with valuable narratives that can clarify and define your audience's needs, motivations and pain points.[1]

> *With data from these tools, consumer feedback and anecdotal knowledge of your customer base collected from location managers you can create personas that guide strategies and allow you to determine exactly how you want to define the success of your integrated marketing program.*

Defining Your Objectives

The science of attribution has come a long way in helping businesses and marketers track consumer behavior across digital channels and into store locations. But before jumping into a sea of Big Data, it's important to identify which data points are significant to you and understand that the more granular the objective, the easier it is to employ accurate measurement techniques.

In a perfect world you would be able to follow a consumer from their first visit to your website, see that they downloaded a coupon, clicked store directions, made an in-store purchase and then were served a retargeting display ad with an incentive offer to return to the store or submit a review. However, the reality is attribution model limitations and privacy laws make determining every step of an individual consumer's path very difficult.

What is achievable today is to track components of these interactions and infer overall consumer patterns based on these data points. Google AdWords offers an Estimated Conversions tool that attempts to do this by looking at conversion history and estimating the number of cross-device conversions, cross-browser conversions, calls and store visits that are lost from single-channel tracking.

It's also possible to track individual campaigns and channels very closely. For example, say you want to determine the return on investment for a mobile search ad campaign. Mobile coupons have unique tracking numbers and as they are redeemed at the register transactions are compiled in a data management platform. The overall redemption rate gives a concrete data point for the success of the campaign.

With clearly defined target audiences and success parameters you are in an excellent position to start answering these three commonly asked questions:

- How do I know if my investment in digital is bringing people in the door?

- How can I leverage our community outreach efforts to increase our online visibility?

- How can I use online and offline strategies to make a one-time consumer a brand advocate?
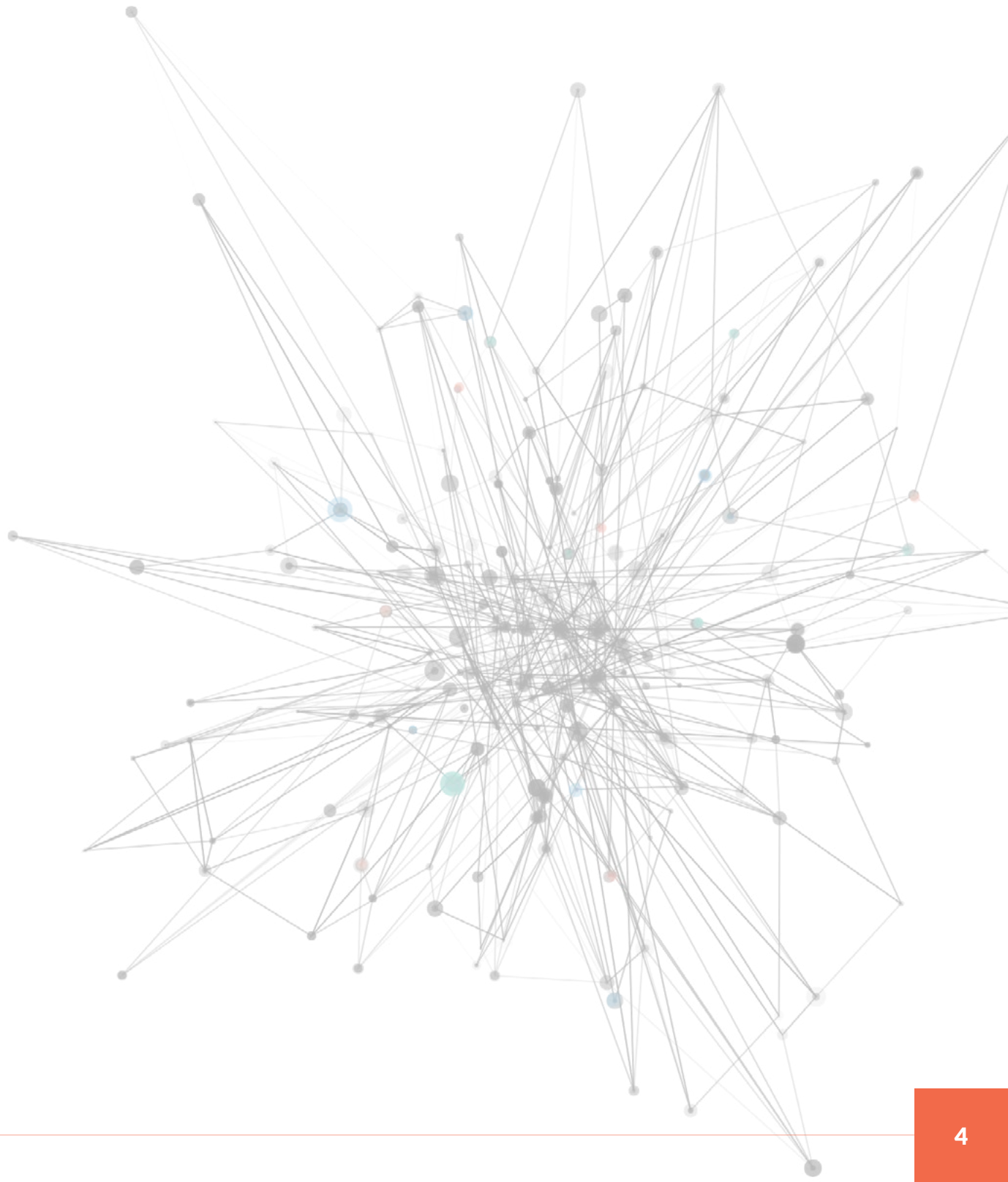
HOW DO I KNOW IF MY INVESTMENT IN DIGITAL IS BRINGING PEOPLE IN THE DOOR?

Any business that invests in marketing is dedicated to understanding their return on investment.

Multi-unit businesses without an e-commerce platform are rightfully concerned about measuring how efforts like social media engagement, paid search campaigns or a new mobile website contribute to the ultimate goal of bringing more people in the door and improving sales. The following tactics for tracking social media, mobile and email efforts can provide correlations between money spent on digital campaigns and your bottom line.
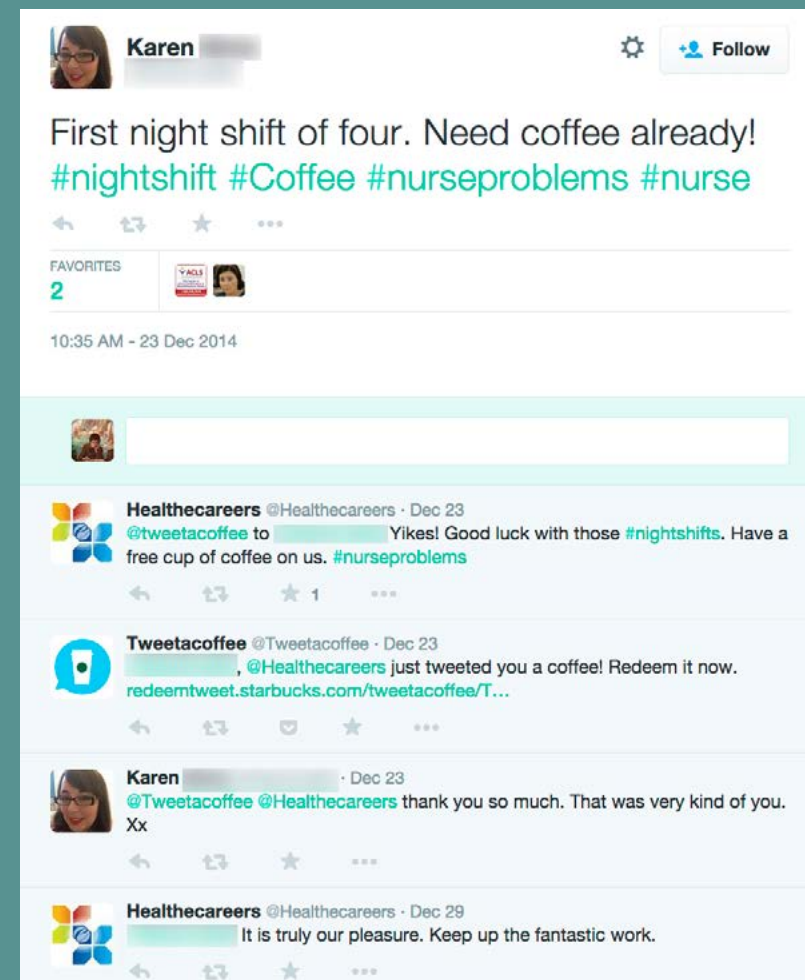
Social Media

Social promotions and loyalty club signups are two ways to effectively tie digital marketing spend with in-store transactions.

A brand can post a promotion on their Facebook page as a Facebook Offer or a simple status update instructing fans to download a coupon for 15% off. With proper analytics tracking and unique discount codes it's possible to see how many people clicked the link, downloaded the coupon and redeemed it at a store location. Facebook analytics will also show how much organic reach the post generated.

> *Starbucks partnered with Twitter to create a very successful (and highly trackable) social promotion in 2013. Customers could link their Starbucks account to their Twitter account and "Tweet a Coffee" to a friend.*

That friend could redeem a coffee from their phone at any participating Starbucks in the U.S. In the first month of the campaign more than $180,000 was spent on 37,000 gift cards. 27,000 people bought gift cards for friends and 34% bought more than one, according to research from Keyhole.[2] Starbucks was able to easily tie together the social investment and concrete statistics on return.

Brands can also encourage loyalty club signups over social media channels. If a customer clicks on a link in a tweet or a Facebook post to a loyalty club signup form it's possible to assign a unique customer identification number that indicates they came from an online channel. Then the POS system can track all purchases made with a loyalty card acquired through social channels.

Location3 Media currently partners with HEALTHeCAREERS Network to help medical and healthcare workers connect with their next best job. As part of the social media outreach program our team members actively sought out nurses and other medical workers on Twitter and used the "Tweet a Coffee" campaign to help them through long night shifts to increase brand awareness and foster goodwill with potential job seekers.

In the near future social channels could become e-commerce platforms in and of themselves. Twitter recently rolled out "Buy" buttons that allow consumers to purchase directly from a tweet.[3] It's only being tested with a small number of users and merchants, and the success of this program will determine if it will be fully rolled out to the public in the future. Facebook is also wrapping up the regulatory requirements to become a payment and remittance processor. This means the option for a "Buy" button on your Facebook brand page could be coming soon.[4] Even multi-unit businesses without a shipping fulfillment model can utilize this sales tactic by directing customers to the nearest location for in-store pickups (and possible upgrades).

These are all effective ways to directly measure results from social media. However, it's important for brands to keep in mind that unlike paid search, social media is about building long-term relationships and encouraging brand advocates to share their positive experience with others. While we can track individual initiatives there will always be multiple touch points on social that can lift your overall brand visibility and loyalty, but may not attribute directly to sales.

Mobile

Mobile paid search campaigns are one of the most straightforward ways to connect the online and offline worlds. Coupons offered only from mobile advertising can be tracked from POS systems when redeemed to easily connect the dots between an online campaign and an in store purchase. Click-to-call functionality on mobile ads also offers reliable data points from the call tracking center. Call tracking from organic search is an important parameter to measure the impact of local search engine optimization efforts. Tracking the number of clicks on the "Driving Directions" link of the mobile site can provide another data point.
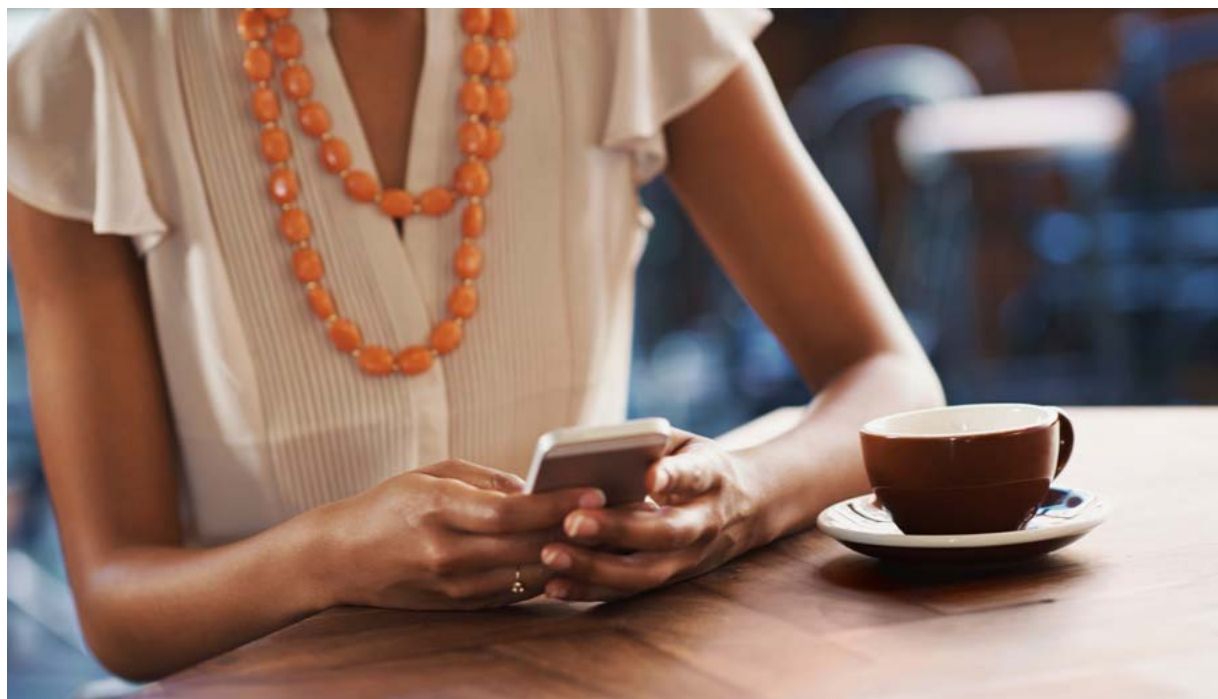
Additionally, keyword recognition technologies in call tracking as well as graphical representations of phone conversations are available through vendors like Marchex. These technologies can flag spoken phrases as buying indicators (such as "credit card information") and can also help you to understand the consumer's intent and the quality of the calls by highlighting buying patterns from vocal cues.

The growth of geo-fencing technology provides a unique opportunity for brands to bring customers in the door again and again through mobile channels. A geo-fence is a virtual perimeter for a geographic area. Consumers can opt-in to mobile platforms and receive push notifications when they enter specified geo-fences. This means that a first-time customer can visit a multi-location pet store in a shopping center and be given an incentive to sign up for push notifications. The next time they drive into the center to visit any store they can receive a trackable mobile coupon, or a reminder asking if they're low on dog food. A 2013 PayPal Media Network study found the convenience and gas stations that used geo-fenced mobile ad campaigns boosted click through rates 68%.[5]

If you're willing to be more aggressive in your tactical approach you can include "geo-conquesting" in your campaign. This is a targeting technique that specifically marks a radius around your competitors' stores and delivers ads to customers in and around the location. Delivering a Burger King ad and offer to a customer inside a nearby McDonalds location is certainly one way to actively target an engaged audience.

> *Beacons are taking local technology to an even more granular level. Apple released a Bluetooth low-energy wireless technology called iBeacon. These small transmitters can be placed around a retail location and send push messages to any iOS device in range, assuming the device has the retailer's app.*

For example, a Nike aficionado may download a NikeTown app and as she walks around the store iBeacons on a range of products could send her offers, product details and rich content such as video messages from sponsored athletes. Companies like Estimote are taking the concept full circle with beacons that provide store owners metrics on which items are interacted with the most by shoppers, which can give them insight into optimizing store layouts and promotions.

Email

Email campaigns also offer reliable data tying together online investment with in-store purchases. The same tactic used with mobile coupons works on this channel as well. By sending your email list a coupon with an exclusive code you can easily track purchases made from email promotions. Analytics tracking can also determine the number of newsletter and loyalty club signups from email campaigns.

Sending an email to your list of already-engaged customers is also an excellent way to promote store events. Allow customers to register or RSVP from the email and through social media to efficiently build a guest list and also provide insight into how many of your attendees heard about the event through digital channels.

All of these digital strategies provide concrete data that can tie your online marketing budget to store traffic. But a simple in-store customer survey at the point of purchase can also provide insight into online campaign's performance. Offer 5-10% off if customers will fill out a brief survey on how they heard about the location. "Online" or "mobile search" answers can be tallied to understand what percent of your customers start their path to purchase on digital channels.
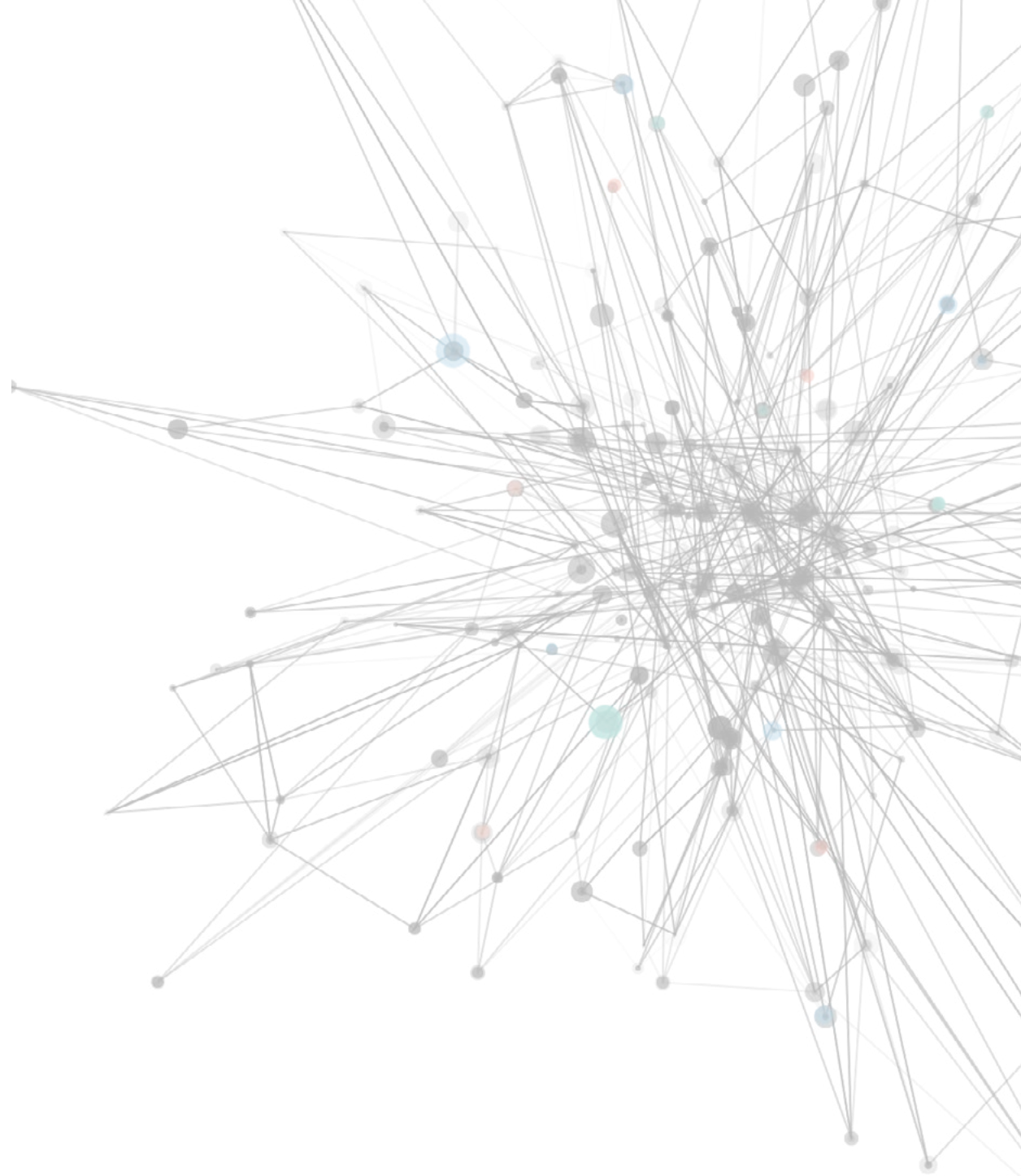
HOW CAN I LEVERAGE OUR COMMUNITY OUTREACH EFFORTS TO INCREASE OUR ONLINE VISIBILITY?

There is untapped power and potential for better search engine ranking in what your locations are already doing within their communities.

Whether the Akron location is the lead sponsor for the local youth soccer league or the Scranton location is an active member of the Rotary Club, these community relationships can be utilized to improve your online visibility. Activate this connection with search engine optimization, social media networking and mobile and email integration with events.

Search Engine Optimization

The number of external backlinks to your location pages is an important ranking factor in search engine algorithms. Links to your organization from another legitimate site indicates to the crawlers that your website is valuable.

> *Participating in community events is an excellent way to organically increase the number of backlinks to individual location pages, thereby increasing page ranking when people search for your products or services.*

Consider partnering with other non-competitive businesses to share some online visibility. If a grocery chain and a local sports store both sponsor the same 5K for Breast Cancer they can agree to include links to each other's websites, blogs or promotions for the event. Participating in community events can also provide rich content for either the corporate or local store blog. In a perfect digital world each store location has its own active and engaging blog to consistently generate fresh content for the location page and boost SEO ranking. However, most multi-unit businesses only dedicate resources to a corporate blog on the main site. Local store participation in community events such as charity runs, youth sport clubs and volunteer activities make appealing content for a corporate blog (especially with plenty of pictures and videos).

Fastsigns-Glendale, WI
September 20, 2013 ·

Helping Kohls get set up for Susan G Komen event this weekend!

Social Media

Attempt to bring whatever offline relationships you have into the digital world through social media. For example, if a local store owner is involved with the Chamber of Commerce they should follow that Chamber on social channels, connect with individual members on LinkedIn and actively comment on Chamber blog posts. Interacting with any and all local partners on social media bridges the gap between offline and online worlds and provides opportunities to build your digital presence on the foundation of existing relationships.

Consider negotiating a certain amount of social media amplification as part of local event sponsorships. Request that the non-profit mention your company a minimum number of times across all active social channels leading up to the event in addition to some follow-up posts. Be sure to then engage with these posts from your company's own profiles.

All of these strategies should be in addition to a thorough local listings management strategy that ensures your listings are accurate and optimized across all the applicable publishers.

Photo Credit: NISMO USA

When Nissan unveiled their incredible concept car to commemorate the 15th anniversary of Sony PlayStation's Gran Turismo video game, they didn't want the spectacle to only reach the people in the room. The automobile giant worked with digital partners in the weeks leading up to the reveal at the Goodwood Festival of Speed to build awareness on social media. The primary goal was to connect with young males, so a crossover strategy with social media and video gaming was ideal.

In the weeks leading up to the event Nissan's partners created posters, videos and other rich content teasing the release of the concept car at Goodwood. Nissan partnered with Sony and Gran Turismo to share the campaign on their social channels as well, reaching a broader portion of the target audience. Teasers eventually led up to a live Reddit interview with Nissan's chief designer and Gran Turismo founder, Kazunori Yamauchi. More than 1,000 questions were submitted by video game and car enthusiasts during the interview and by the end of the campaign the shared assets had garnered 75,000 Likes on Facebook and 27,000 on Instagram.

The actual reveal at Goodwood was a success on its own, but it was the social engagement prior to the event that made the concept car such a worthwhile investment for the brand. By using rich content on social channels and partnering with other brands Nissan was able to reach a totally new segment of their target audience.[6]

While your brand may not have a Nissan-level marketing budget the concept remains the same when implemented at all levels, even down to the individual store. It's not about the budget. It's about an idea that reaches the right people for your product, brand or event.

HOW CAN I USE ONLINE & OFFLINE STRATEGIES TO MAKE A ONE-TIME CONSUMER A BRAND ADVOCATE?

Building relationships based on value and relevance means long–term dedication and advocacy for your brand.

With nearly all consumers using online media when researching products or services in their local area (97%, according to BIA/Kelsey), these relationships need to be cultivated in store and online.[7] Advances in retargeting and analytics have made this easier and more effective than ever before for marketers.

Paid Search

Paid search retargeting campaigns are a highly effective strategy for encouraging return store visits from what may otherwise be one-time customers. For companies without an e-commerce platform there needs to be some sort of data point to connect an in-store customer to a customer relationship management (CRM) system. Some sophisticated database integrations can take offline customer information (such as direct mail data) and implement it for online targeting. Another tactic is to provide an incentive at point of purchase for in-store customers to complete an online survey. Once they register for the survey their IP address can be targeted for future display ads. The most effective ads for bringing people back to the brick and mortar location include a coupon or offer:

Online Coupons

Once a data pool of current customers is established, display experts can develop "lookalike" audiences. These are audiences that share the same digital behavior, social media demographics or media consumption habits as your current customer base. Marketing dollars spent on these audiences are much more likely to develop relationships with new customers than untargeted advertising such as television ads. The same strategy can be employed effectively on Facebook and Twitter as well.

Search Engine Optimization

It is hard to overemphasize the importance of customer reviews for multi-unit locations. A survey by [Dimensional Research](#) showed 90% of respondents who recalled reading online reviews said a positive review influenced buying decisions.[8] The other reason reviews matter is that a local listing with 40 reviews is likely to rank higher on a search results page than a nearby competitor with zero reviews.

Encourage customer reviews by asking anyone who has positive feedback for sales associates or customer service to submit a review. Negative reviews aren't the end of the world either. Consider them an opportunity to engage a customer and change their mind about your organization. Other potential customers will see your thoughtful response and appreciate the respect and attention your customer service team has given to an unsatisfied patron.
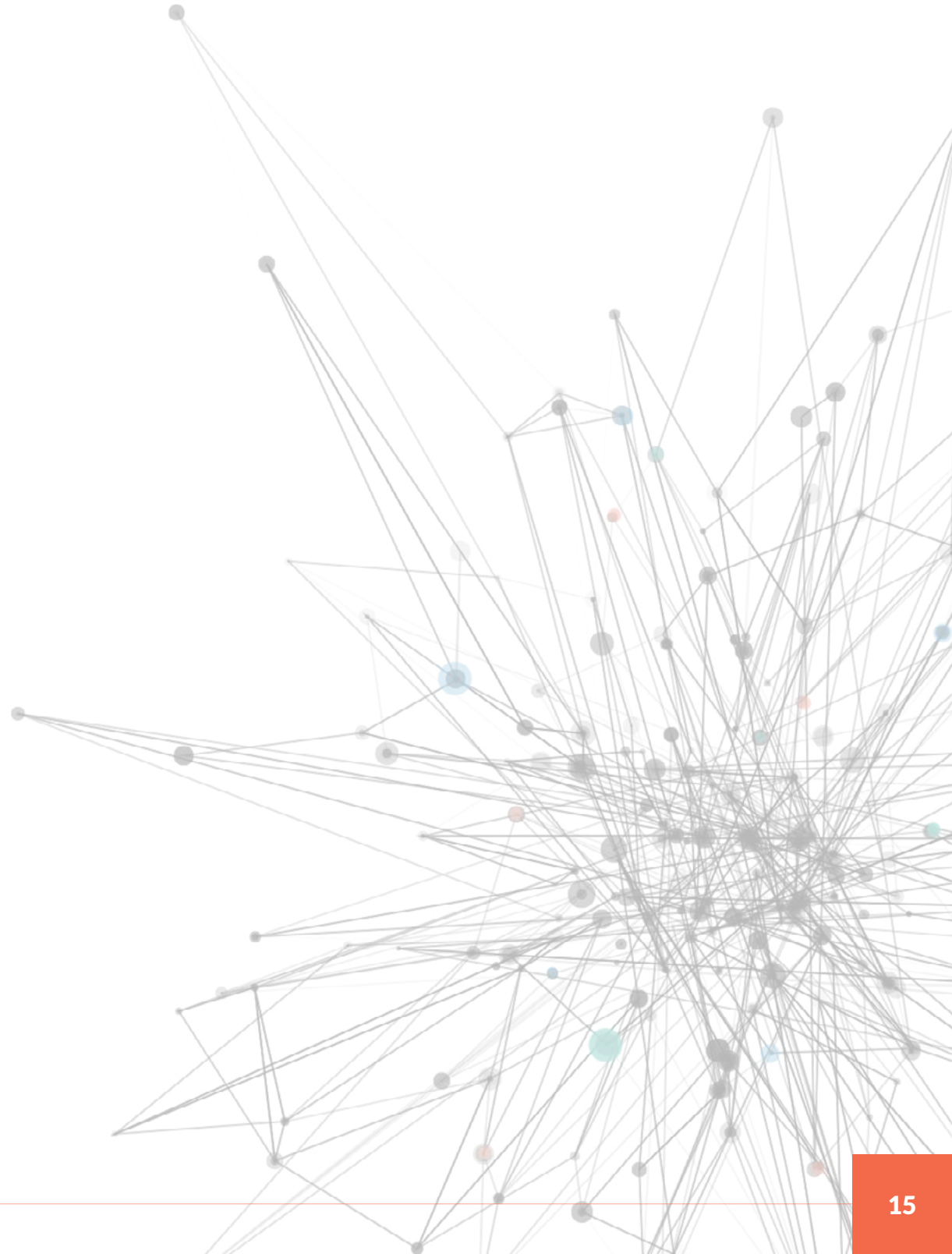
Social Media

Relationship building is where social media excels as a digital channel. You will never turn every one-time customer into a brand advocate, but by engaging with interested consumers, starting and contributing to conversations about your brand and following up with customer concerns, you can build the relationships that build brands.

The first step is to track and listen to conversations about your brand online. This opens up plenty of opportunities to see who's already talking about your company and encourage their interest. Retweet and share fans' posts and pictures involving your brand and address their concerns. Take a look at Betabrand's social assets to see an example of a company doing it right.

Betabrand

You can also take insights from social channels and use them to optimize store layouts and promotions. A product getting a lot of attention on Pinterest could be moved from a non-descript location in the store to the front window with a printed poster highlighting all the related Pins.

Store events are also a great excuse to spark online conversation and customer engagement. Have a fun photo station at the event and encourage people to upload their pictures to Facebook and list the store as the post location. Or incorporate an Instagram contest: the best uploaded and hashtagged photo of the event wins free merchandise.
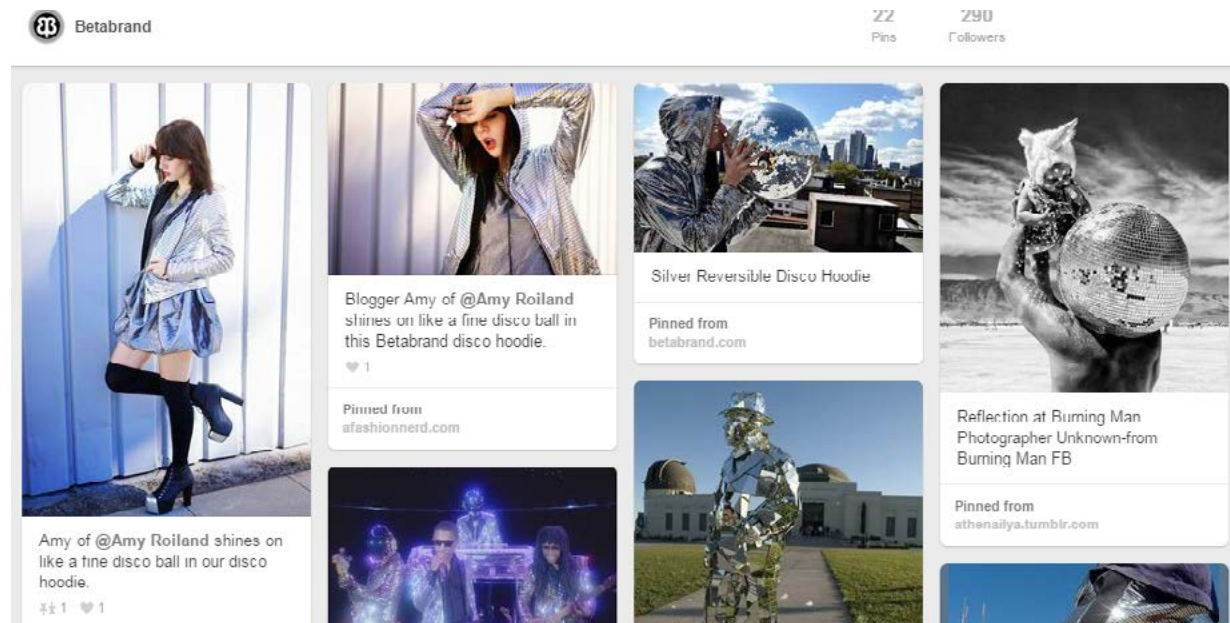
Retargeting ad campaigns on Facebook are also an effective strategy. A marketing partner can take your customer email list, upload to the Facebook interface, develop an existing user audience and target ads to them. This has varying results depending on the vertical. Business-to-business companies will generate smaller matched audiences as most people use their personal email rather than work emails to register with Facebook. However business-to-consumer companies with a customer base that is highly engaged with Facebook (Playstation, Lululemon, Whole Foods, etc.) can use this to continually develop relationships with existing customers. The same lookalike audience strategy used for display campaigns can also be employed effectively on Facebook.

Finally, show that you are listening. If multiple customers comment about loving a particular breakfast special, write back to say, "We heard you and the 'Moons Over Miami Benedict' will be available on the regular menu next month!"

SURGE Movement

Even major brands understand the importance of being flexible based on consumer input on social media. Coca-Cola recently brought back Surge (a citrus soda) because customers were clamoring for it on a Facebook group called "SURGE Movement". After the debacle of New Coke in the 80's the brand embraced social media as a channel to understand and respond to consumer demand. Providing feedback on praise and requests lets customers know their voice is heard and it encourages them to broaden the conversation (and relationship) with your brand.[9]

Email

Email marketing can also help turn a one-time customer into a brand advocate on and offline, when done properly. The issue with email is the "noise" factor: according to 2013 research by ReturnPath subscribers receive 416 commercial messages a month on average.[10] That's a lot of competition to get your message read. However, a well-executed email campaign with enticing subject lines and timely execution can be a powerful tool to build brand advocacy. Brick and mortar locations can capture emails at the point of purchase and manage them in a CRM. Segmented messaging can encourage first-time customers to return with coupons.

Return customers who engage with the brand on social media can receive customized messages to encourage behavior they're already exhibiting. For example, customers who are actively Pinning images from catalogue emails can be re-Pinned by the brand and sent more image-focused emails. Customers who demonstrate the highest levels of engagement can be sent experience surveys and review requests as there is a higher likelihood of them providing this valuable feedback.

Web Analytics

The home improvement giant Lowes provides an interesting example of how web analytics can help encourage repeat business by connecting on and offline channels. The "MyLowes" card is a loyalty card that customer service associates encourage customers to scan with each purchase. Shoppers can then log in to their MyLowes account and see everything they've purchased at the store over the span of the loyalty program. This is obviously a great shopper benefit, as you can store and track items like specific paint colors, landscape bricks or tile, making it much easier to purchase the exact same product again for an addition or repair.

But the real value is that Lowe's marketing team has access to a wealth of information about these consumers for retargeting campaigns. Once a consumer logs in to MyLowes from their home computer the IP address can be matched with on and offline purchases. These consumers can then be grouped into personas (Contractor, Renovator, Lawn Evangelist, etc.) and sent highly-targeted messages based on indications from in-store purchase history. Someone who buys a high-end lawn mower is much more likely to be interested in Lowe's fall special on leaf blowers and hedge trimmers than the general population. Consumers can also opt-in for email reminders to purchase ongoing maintenance items such as furnace filters.

This is the kind of engagement that takes a one-time customer of convenience and turns them into a lifelong brand advocate.

SUMMARY

Piecing together the path to purchase for your consumers and assigning appropriate credit to each channel is not an easy task.

However, by employing the strategies above it's possible to very accurately track and report on how online and offline strategies intersect to provide overall increases in segmented goals such as better search engine ranking, increased foot traffic and return customer engagement. With integrated strategies and the right data, the possibilities are endless for your multi-unit business.

Interested in more details? Please feel free to contact us directly, or follow us on Twitter, connect with us on LinkedIn, add us on Google+ or Like us on Facebook.

RESOURCES:

1. "Using Social Media to Build Audience Personas," Angie Pascale, ClickZ

2. "Starbucks' Tweet-a-Coffee Campaign Generated $180,000 in Sales, HUGE Long-term Benefit," Keyhole Blog

3. "Twitter Makes 'Buy Button' Test Official," Jeff Bercovici, Forbes

4. "Facebook's 'Buy' Button Will Change How Brands Sell Online," Chris Bennett, Entrepreneur

5. "PayPal Media Network Approved: Why Your Mobile Ad Campaign Needs Geo-Fencing," Gillis Bernard, BostInno

6. "Nissan's 'Gran Turismo' Campaign Bridges Virtual and Real Worlds," Mitra Sorrells, BizBash

7. "Nearly All Consumers (97%) Now Use Online Media to Shop Locally, According to BIA/Kelsey and ConStat," BIA/Kelsey Press Release

8. "Survey: 90% of Customers Say Buying Decisions Are Influenced By Online Reviews," Amy Gesenhues, Marketing Land

9. "Coca-Cola Brings Back Surge Due to Social Media Demand," MDG Blog

10. "The Inbox is a Battlefield," Return Path

THOUGHT LEADERS:

Alex Porter, President

As President of Location3 Media Alex Porter forges seamless relationships with prospective clients and oversees the day-to-day operations of the entire company. He is a founding board member of the Interactive Marketing Association of Colorado (IMACO). He frequently presents at national marketing conferences including IFA, DMA, PhocusWright and PubCon and is often published in industry journals. Prior to joining Location3 in 2003, he was an Associate at Cooks Associate, a boutique executive recruiting firm in Boulder, CO.

Nick Neels, Account Director

Account Director Nick Neels leads the Local Listing Management SEO division, overseeing the management of nearly 100,000 multi-unit and franchise businesses. In addition to providing guidance for a variety of Fortune 500 clients, he continuously optimizes the development roadmap for the Local Listing Management service offering. Nick is also a Professor of Digital Marketing at the Daniels College of Business at the University of Denver and a yearly contributor to Moz's Local Search Ranking Factors. His passion for digital marketing led him to be a founding board member for IMACO.

Lucia Novara, Content Strategist

Lucia Novara produces cross-channel content strategies to help brands raise awareness and exceed business objectives. Prior to her five years with Location3, Lucia led public education and fundraising initiatives for a national non-profit and worked as a freelance journalist. Her past whitepapers, "The Future of Search" and "A Convergence of Channels", won BMA Gold Key Awards and AMA Silver Peak Awards.

Joshua Allen, Marketing Manager

Joshua Allen is responsible for the development of Location3's brand strategy, marketing concepts, communication initiatives and promotional opportunities while also collaborating with executive management to drive revenue growth among new and existing clients. Prior to Location3, Joshua spent five years developing integrated digital marketing strategies for Entercom Communications, Triton Digital and Wayfair.com.

ABOUT
LOCATION3 MEDIA

Creative Thinkers,
Data Geeks &
Digital Enthusiasts –
Location3 is a digital marketing
agency that delivers
enterprise-level strategy
with local market activation.

Founded in 1999 and located in the heart of Denver, Location3 has a staff of 70 full-time employees who service global, national and local brands. More than half of Location3's client base has worked with the agency for at least three years, as Location3 improves the findability and performance of every client they partner with.

CONNECTING ONLINE AND IN-STORE MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR MULTI-UNIT BUSINESSES

1515 Arapahoe St.
Tower 2 - Suite 400
Denver, CO 80202

Office: 720-881-8510

info@location3.com

www.location3.com

LOCATION3