

— SOCIAL MARKETING — ADVANTAGE



GUIDE 5:

BECOME THE EXPERT BY
PROVIDING VALUE

Become the Expert by Providing Value

One of the key objectives of any social media marketing campaign should be to become a top influencer and a top thought leader. To do *that* you need to become an authority: to be viewed in your niche as someone who is an expert on the given subject and who can help others to achieve their goals, improve their skills or find accurate and entertaining information as they need it.

Once you reach this point, you will control the hearts and minds of your audience and as that audience grows, you'll be able to generate huge amounts of income just by suggesting products and services or working with other brands.

But how do you get to this point? The answer is incredibly simple, but also highly complex...

You deliver *value*.

Why Value = Influence

When you visit any web page, blog or site, you do not do so out of charity. You don't do it as a favor to the owner of that blog. Rather, the reason that you visit a webpage or website, is so that you can gain something from the page.

More of that not, what you're looking to gain from visiting is information or entertainment. We watch fail videos on YouTube because we want to be entertained, and we read fitness blogs because we want information that can help us to get into better shape.

And it's only if we find this information or entertainment to be high quality, that we'll then think about returning to that page or site in future. As such, the website is providing *value*.

And it's through this value, that you eventually come to trust the brand. Now, when that same creator recommends a certain product, or a certain service, you will be much more likely to trust them.

Simply: you have received a certain amount of value from that brand in the past and therefore, when the company recommends something else, you believe that this will also be able to offer a similar level of value. If you get that much value for *free* from the website, you can only *imagine* the kind of amazing value you'd get if you paid for the ebook, the course, or whatever else is being promoted on the site!

That's why it's simple. The reason it's complex is that knowing how to create this kind of value is something that eludes an awful lot of business owners, brands and more.

How to Offer Value on Social Media

What also eludes an awful lot of content creators, is the notion that they need to provide value through their social media as well.

Many businesses are still stuck in old ways of thinking and specifically, they are still infatuated with the idea that marketing is something you do *at* someone. That is to say that they are creating adverts or messages that they show to as many people as they can to raise brand awareness and to increase their chances of buying from them.

But the world has changed thanks to the web. This kind of traditionally marketing was useful in a time when users were limited about the

information and entertainment they could get. Once upon a time, the only way we could learn about a topic or be entertained for an evening was to watch a program on TV or to read a magazine. When adverts would punctuate those pages or be placed in between our scheduled programs, we had no option but to view them. Thus, the marketing message would end up sinking in and we'd learn about certain brands more than others.

What was how things worked back then. Today though, thanks to the internet, we have more agency than ever before when it comes to how we get our information and entertainment. We're not *forced* to view any message that we don't want to.

And smart marketing has evolved to respond to this. Now the marketing has to offer something *in return*. Hence content marketing, hence video marketing and hence social media.

The outdated way of using social media then, is to post lots of promotional messages and images. Say a company sold an EPOS system to businesses, it might simply post messages like 'check out the latest features for our EPOS solution' or 'businesses can increase turnover and customer satisfaction by using our EPOS system'.

(An EPOS system is an 'electronic point of sale' – software to run a till. Not very interesting!)

Outdated yes, but this is still what you see a *lot* of businesses doing, a *lot* of the time.

Now ask yourself: who is this for? What purpose does this serve from the user's perspective? The people following you on social media will either:

- a) Already have your EPOS system and thus gain nothing from being told how great it is
- b) Not have your EPOS system, already have heard of it, and have no real interest in using it

So, in other words, your messages serve *zero* purpose. Those messages won't be seen by people unless they already follow you *unless* someone shares them. And why would anyone share them?

The Better Alternative

So, what might a better strategy be for the same business?

Well, let's say that you create a Facebook page and a Twitter account aimed specifically at small businesses. Through this page, you then share lots of useful tips and information, all explaining how they can optimize their business, improve customer satisfaction, get around budget limitations etc. You build an active community so that small business owners can discuss the topic of business and you share lengthy posts that provide *true* insight into the operations of successful small businesses.

Then, every now and then, you also share a more marketing oriented post. People will now want to keep reading your social media account and maybe even share your posts because they're offering *genuine* value. Now they're a captive audience and when you come to promote what you're selling, you'll have them (hopefully) eating out of your hands.

Or how about a Pinterest board where you share ideas for home decors? On this page, you could post all sorts of unique hacks and tricks that can make a room look more beautiful. Homeowners and those that

just have an interest in interior design might sign up and start following you.

And again, every now and then, you could post an idea that includes your own products – thereby subtly marketing to that audience in exchange for providing all those good ideas. There's a give and take here and it's a much more demographic and powerful way of marketing.

Want to know if you're doing this right? Then ask yourself this: if you shut down your social media account tomorrow, would anyone care? If they'd genuinely be sad and feel like a useful service is now missing from their lives, then congratulations, you're providing value! If no one would notice and many people would in fact benefit from having a less spammy feed... well then you're approaching your marketing the wrong way and you need a serious rethink!

Want a little rule to remember how you should approach this? We'll be talking about this more in future posts but for now remember the '1 in 7 rule'. This is a rule that simply states that one in every seven of your posts should be explicitly marketing whatever your product or service is. The other six should all be offering value in other ways – though still on-topic.

But What is Value?

But let's take a break for a moment and get slightly philosophical. What is value anyway?

This is an important topic to consider. So far, you already know that your social media accounts need to be as valuable as possible. We're no longer going to be using every single post to shout about how great our products are!

So now you're trying to add value instead and only occasionally marketing. Bit step up! But trying and doing are two different things. This will only be effective if you are actually *successful* in providing that value as you intend.

So, what is value?

A simple way to look at this, is to state that 'value' comes from improving people's lives. You have provided value if that person's life is now in some way better than it was before – even if that's just for a fleeting moment (as might be the case if you make something funny).

The longer-lasting the effect is, and the more people you can affect, the more value you're providing.

But this is again where a lot of people go wrong: their content isn't really offering any actual value. It's just masquerading as value!

I have my sights set squarely on those 'nothing' posts and titles. These are the articles and the blog posts that do nothing other than provide tired, derivative advice. The same goes for social media posts.

Here's an example:

"How to Get Six Pack Abs!"

This article then offers tips on different sit up variations, states that you should go for long runs and recommends eating fewer calories.

Maybe it's even worse than that and it actually offers *inaccurate* advice (in this case, that might be to suggest that you can 'target' fat loss to lose it only from your abdomen).

Either way, you now have an article that's either tired and offering the same thing as 100 articles or that is inaccurate. Either way, this hasn't made someone's life better – it's made it worse. You've just *wasted their time* telling them things they already know.

The same goes for 'Top 5 SEO Mistakes'. Come on, you're better than that! We've all *read* that article already.

So, what you need to offer instead is something else. Something *imaginative*. Something that is really interesting and unique.

I watched a video from Athlean X recently that told me that many people do sit ups incorrectly because they bend *at the waist*. This means that they're actually using their hip flexors more than their abs. In order for the abs to really be targeted, you need to *roll* your mid section and actually fold *at the stomach* in the area you're trying focus on.

The video was called something like 'This one tip can improve your ab workouts 10-fold'.

That sounds like a clickbait article. It's interesting, it's unique and it promises to improve your life *so you click it*. But when you watch it, it actually *does* tell you something completely unique and useful. That is fantastic because the next time I see a post from Athlean-X, I'm far more likely to actually click on it. And not only that, but if I learn that Athlean-X has a new product out, then I'll consider buying it because I've seen that the channel is *capable* of offering value.

In the marketing niche, I recently read an article comparing sales funnels to landing pages that work on their own. The idea behind the article was to see which was the most useful and whether a complex funnel was really necessary.

That's *much* more interesting than just another post on 'Top SEO Tips'.

So, what's the difference here? The difference is uniqueness. The writers/presenters have spotted a topic that hasn't been covered before, they've come up with a unique angle, or they've researched a lesser known tip. Either way, they can then provide something that someone else doesn't know and THAT is what creates value.

And THAT is what makes you want to buy from them again and to keep engaging with their channel.

And the best way to do that? That's to really care about your brand. Really know and love the niche that you're in and if you hire writers – make sure that they fully understand the niche too.

Don't just create generic content without giving it your full attention and then expect to sell. You won't.

Write about something your passionate about, in a unique and interesting voice and *then* you'll become an influencer.