

DIGITAL PREVIEW



**HOW SMALL BUSINESS WINS
IN A SOCIALLY CONNECTED WORLD**

Gail F. Goodman

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CHAPTER 1

THE ENGAGEMENT MARKETING CYCLE

A couple traveled to the Boston area to attend a wedding, and their host—who lived in the area—booked them a room at a gorgeous bed and breakfast. The B&B’s website featured fabulous photography of its stunning location, so the bride felt good about choosing this particular B&B. She requested a room on the first floor and informed the person handling the reservation that the husband had trouble climbing stairs due to a physical disability.

When the couple arrived, they learned that no first floor rooms were available; instead, they had been given a room two flights up at the back of the B&B. You know how this works. You don’t like to make a fuss, so you say, “Okay, we’ll deal with it.” The room, although difficult to access, was lovely. After attending the wedding, however, the couple returned to their room to find a freshly made bed . . . and a pile of wet towels on the floor. When the couple reported the mess to the front desk receptionist, they got a blank stare and a shoulder shrug.

This is the negative TripAdvisor.com review that I—and thousands of others like me—read about the B&B “[that] didn’t care enough to give us a first floor room even though one was specifically requested due to physical disability.” I found this review while looking for a place for friends to stay while visiting my

town. Do you think I booked a room at this B&B? No! And I'm willing to bet that many other viewers followed suit.

Compare this to a grateful bride's positive review of an inn in Connecticut. The couple's wedding reception had to be rescheduled at the last minute due to a hurricane. The inn owners helped plan the reception right down "to the last detail" and even hosted the entire bridal party. The bride praised the staff, the food, and the grounds and raved, "We'll definitely be back! Thank you!!" **Think about how many bookings the inn may receive from other brides seeking exceptional service and a worry-free wedding day—all thanks to one glowing review.**



When we ask business owners, "What is the single most effective source for generating new customers?" the most common answer is, "My customers telling others about me."

EVERYONE HAS A CIRCLE OF INFLUENCE

Whether we join to build professional relationships (e.g., industry associations) or for more personal reasons (e.g., parenting groups, lifestyles, similar hobbies or interests, alumni associations, and so on), we all belong to various networks. These groups include our close and extended family, personal friends, acquaintances, colleagues, neighbors, and coworkers, to name just a few. Usually, our networks are filled with people like us—whether we belong to a group of new mothers or a group of serial entrepreneurs. **Our networks, which can be forged online or offline, form our circle of influence; we influence them and they influence us.**



When we get together with our peers within these groups, we share information and updates about our personal and professional lives. Think about the last time you caught up with a friend or family member. You probably discussed what your kids and spouse are up to or where you went on your last vacation.

Similarly, when you last attended an industry association meeting, you most likely shared resources, anecdotes, news, and business challenges with other small business owners or marketers in your industry. If one of your peers asked, “Say, do you know of a marketing consultant? We need help with developing an online marketing strategy,” you may have said, “Actually I do. You’ll want to call Jane Smith. She does great work—five stars.”

This word-of-mouth referral is the golden moment for a business or consultant, but several factors make it difficult to encourage or track: (1) You can’t influence how your business is portrayed in the conversation; (2) You have no idea when someone refers a friend to you unless that friend calls to inquire about your services and you happen to ask how he or she found you; and (3) You can’t reward your clients for referring you if you don’t even know who made the referral.

Social media completely changes this scenario.

In the days before social media and the Internet, you, the business owner, could not listen in on your customers’ conversations about your company. **Nor could you easily encourage people to spread the good word about your business unless you used loyalty marketing or a “tell a friend” campaign, both of which are expensive to conduct and maintain.**

With today’s social media tools at your disposal, you can encourage your clients to tell your story for you through Engagement Marketing. Engagement Marketing is built on a simple yet powerful idea: When you connect with your customers online, you stop speaking *to* your customers and start talking *with* them, and wonderful things begin to happen. Those golden word-of-mouth moments that once happened in the backyard, at parties, and at networking events suddenly begin happening right in front of your eyes on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and review sites. Through Engagement Marketing, word-of-mouth referrals become socially amplified: your customers’ friends, families, and networks all see these referrals and beat a path to your door.



Tweet

YOUR NEW BUSINESS ENGINE: NEW CUSTOMERS AND MORE REPEAT BUSINESS

Engagement Marketing helps drive more leads, more repeat sales—and more referrals. Engagement Marketing stimulates conversations and inspires participation. As you engage with your customers (and their friends), you’ll achieve surprisingly targeted social visibility; your customers’ networks are filled with great prospects for you. Remember, we’re all part of networks filled with people like us, so we all tend to have friends and colleagues with similar needs. **When a friend of a friend finds your business through a trusted connection, it comes with the explicit or implied endorsement that this person stands behind your business.** This endorsement gives you greater reach and adds to your credibility—or “social proof”—as prospects that find you through other channels can easily see your positive engagement with returning customers.



Tweet

Your customers’ testimonials carry more credibility than any marketing message you could ever deliver yourself. This is because we value the feedback of others more than a vendor’s claims. If we actually know the person who is giving positive (or negative!) feedback, the review’s credibility skyrockets. In fact, **90 percent of consumers trust recommendations from people they know¹ while only 14 percent trust advertising.²**



Tweet



Tweet

¹Nielsen Wire blog, July 7, 2009, <http://blog.nielsen.com/nielsenwire/consumer/global-advertising-consumers-trust-real-friends-and-virtual-strangers-the-most>.

²Socialnomics, May 5, 2010, www.socialnomics.net/2010/05/05/social-media-revolution-2-refresh.

THE ENGAGEMENT MARKETING CYCLE: THREE SIMPLE STEPS TO SUCCESS

The Engagement Marketing Cycle begins once you've attracted a prospective customer or client to your business, as represented by the door in Figure 1.1. This first point of contact can happen at your physical location, website, Facebook Page, trade show booth, charity event—anywhere you make a connection with someone and the conversation turns to business.

The Engagement Marketing Cycle, as seen in Figure 1.2, is comprised of three simple steps: Experience, Entice, and Engage. Although relatively simple, these three steps, when done right, are quite powerful. What follows is a brief description of the cycle. You'll find more in-depth information on each step, plus practical tips, in the following chapters.

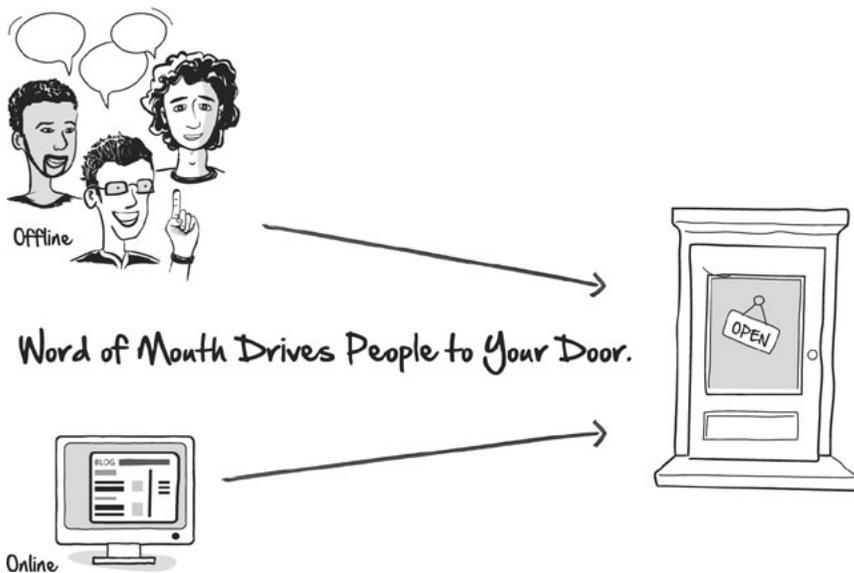


Figure 1.1 Word of mouth drives people to your door

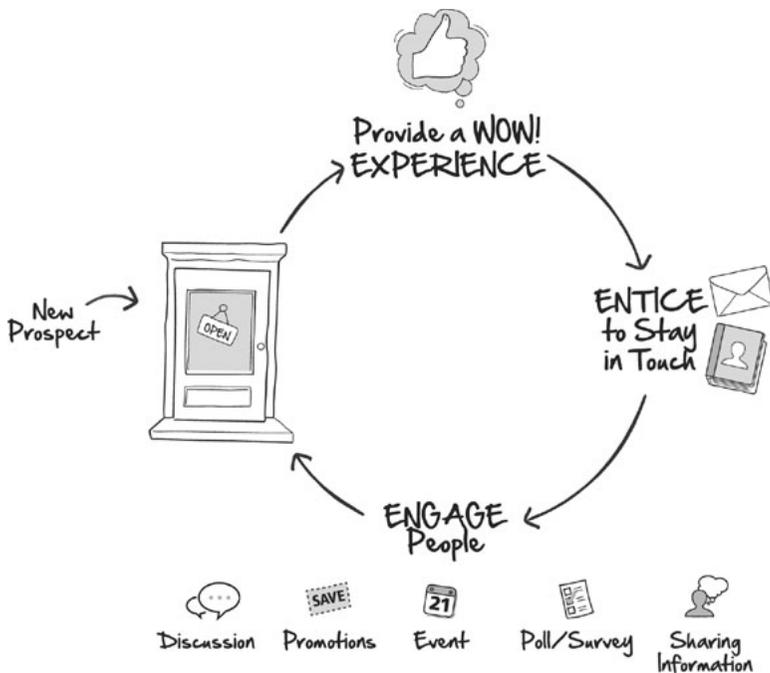


Figure 1.2 The Engagement Marketing Cycle

Step 1: Provide a WOW! Experience

The good news is that as a small business, you have an advantage that larger or national companies do not: you can create personal connections with your customers by providing extraordinary *experiences*—every single day. These experiences include everything from remembering your customers’ names and preferences to providing them with exceptional service they just do not get anywhere else. [Creating a great customer experience from the moment a prospective or existing customer enters your business is crucial to revving up your Engagement Marketing engine.](#) As Figure 1.3 shows, your goal at this step in the cycle is to deliver a positive, memorable customer experience that stays alive in your customers’ memories long after they have exited your business.



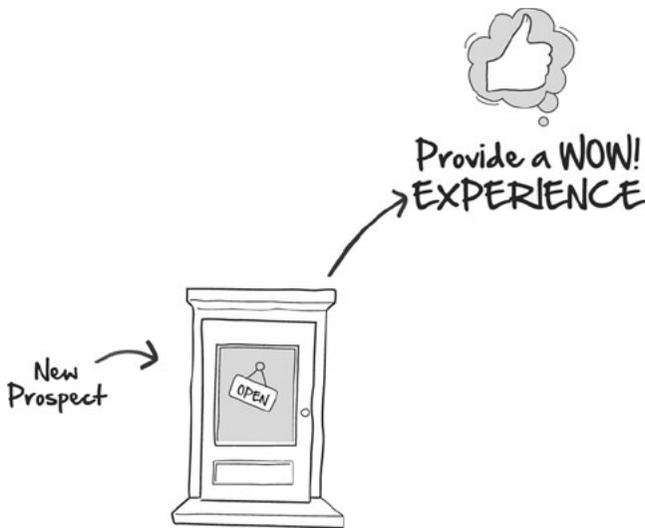


Figure 1.3 Step 1: Provide a WOW! experience

I don't have to tell you that the bar is set pretty low in many businesses when it comes to creating great customer experiences. According to the 2011 Global Customer Service Barometer Research Report prepared by American Express, only 24 percent of survey respondents said that businesses "will go the extra mile."³ Almost half of the respondents, or 42 percent, said the businesses are helpful but don't "do anything extra to keep [my] business," while 22 percent said that companies "take [my] business for granted."

Clearly, businesses can step it up with regard to providing exceptional service. As a small business owner, you have an advantage: you can easily assess your customer experience and implement necessary changes faster than large businesses can, and the rewards—new and repeat business—appear fairly quickly. Great customer experiences fuel the Engagement Marketing Cycle; without them, you won't get the cycle started. In Chapter 2, we'll explore ways to create great customer experiences.

³<http://about.americanexpress.com/news/pr/2010/barometer.aspx>.

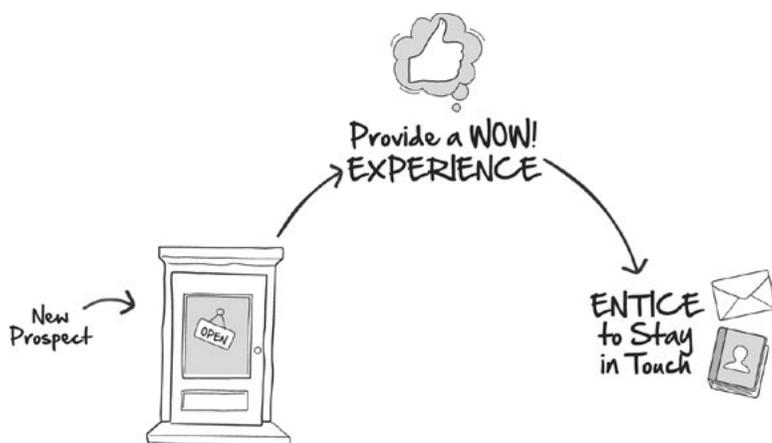


Figure 1.4 Step 2: Entice to stay in touch

Step 2: Entice to Stay in Touch

When you create a great customer experience, you make it easier for customers to be receptive to doing business with you again, to remaining in touch with you, and to sharing their experiences with their networks. But you can't keep that great experience alive, if you have no way to stay in touch! You need to make a connection while the experience is fresh in their minds. To this end, you must persuade the customer to agree or “opt in” to staying connected. For this second step in the Engagement Marketing Cycle to work as shown in Figure 1.4, you must learn how to connect with your customers through a variety of media including social networks, e-mail, mobile (SMS or texting), events and, yes, even direct mail. **Once you decide how you want to connect, you have to entice your customers to make the connection** (often called opt in). Creating opportunities and methods for enticing new customers to connect with you is limited only by your imagination and creativity. E-mail marketing and social media platforms (such as your blog, Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, and Twitter) tied specifically to your business are the two most frequently used methods for maintaining connections.



In Chapter 3 you'll learn how to comfortably ask people to connect with your business and entice them to opt in. The key take-away is this: consider how you can entice people to connect with you during or immediately after they've done business with you.

Step 3: Engage People

Now that you've delivered a great customer *experience* and have *enticed* customers to stay in touch, it's time to bring these relationships to life by *engaging* people, as seen in Figure 1.5. "Engagement" means sharing content that inspires your fans, followers, e-mail subscribers, blog readers, and other online contacts to interact with you. [Creating opportunities for engagement brings customers back to your business](#)—by leaving a comment, "Liking" or "1+-ing" your post or website, sharing your content on Facebook,

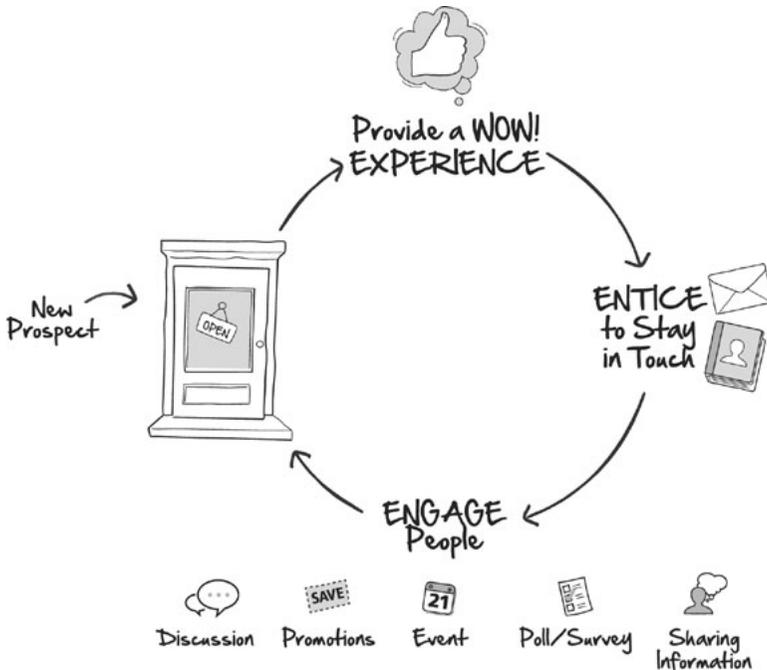


Figure 1.5 Step 3: Engage People

Twitter, Google+, or LinkedIn, visiting your business to make a purchase, or calling/e-mailing you to discuss a new project.

Engaging with people is not a one-way street. If all your audience does is listen to you, then you're not fully engaging them. The goal is to drive participation, whether online or off, and social media is particularly well suited to encouraging online engagement. Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, YouTube, and a company blog provide you with the ability to create a destination for viewer interaction and establish a shared interest community. [E-mail marketing is a great way to pull people back to your social networks.](#) When your audience participates, especially on social networks, it creates buzz around you and your business: When your customers "Like," comment, or share stories, their participation becomes visible to their networks (your new prospects!).

Chapter 4 outlines the basic types of content that engage people and explains how you can use content to drive active participation.

That closes the loop on the Engagement Marketing Cycle. Developing this cycle until it's a well-oiled machine will keep your customers and clients connected to your business, increasing your repeat sales. Engagement Marketing, however, has an even bigger benefit: Engagement leads to endorsement—that golden word-of-mouth moment that drives new customers to your business.

ENGAGEMENT DRIVES SOCIAL VISIBILITY, ATTRACTING NEW PROSPECTS TO YOUR DOOR

We opened the chapter with examples of negative and positive reviews on TripAdvisor.com. Customers shared their experiences with a subpar bed and breakfast and an excellent inn—reviews that



Tweet



Tweet

are visible to everyone who logs on to the site. But reviews are just one way that customers share their experiences. When you engage your customers through social media in a way that drives participation, you create *socially visible* actions. On social networks, your customer interactions are visible to other customers and prospects. When someone “Likes” or follows your business, comments on your posts, or shares your content with their networks, those actions are visible. When people tweet about your upcoming event or share that they are at your establishment, those actions are socially visible. When you engage in a way that drives participation, you create socially visible actions. In Chapter 6, we will explain in further detail how customer participation becomes visible across each of the social networks.

As shown in Figure 1.6 **socially visible engagement puts your business or organization in front of a new audience: the social networks of your existing customers**. Not only are they seeing and hearing about your business, they are hearing about it from a trusted source, giving you an implicit thumbs-up.

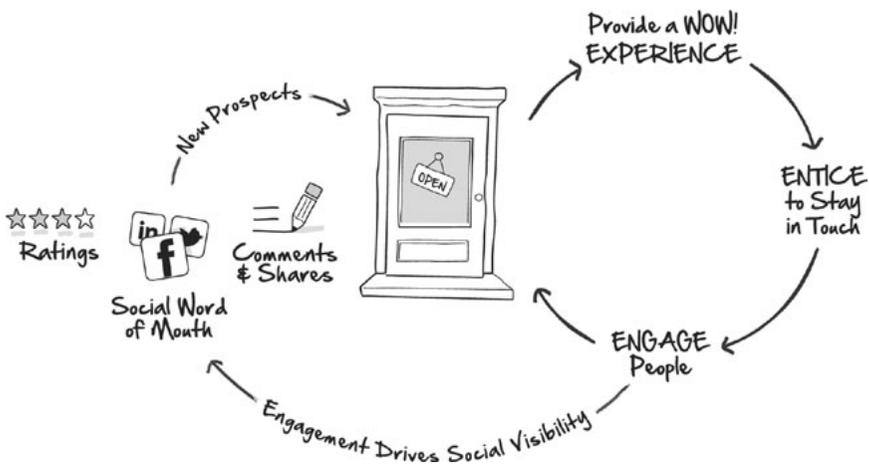


Figure 1.6 The Engagement Marketing Cycle with social visibility

ENGAGEMENT MARKETING BOOSTS YOUR OTHER MARKETING, TOO

Socially visible engagement can have a big impact on your other sales and marketing efforts. A person who gets your direct mail letter or reads your ad and then looks you up online can see the engagement of your fans on Facebook, the comments on your blog, the mentions on Twitter and LinkedIn, and can know immediately that you're a business that listens to its customers. This positive engagement—or social proof, which we discuss in later chapters—encourages people to connect with you, especially if someone they know (i.e., friends and family) are engaging with you, too. As we'll discuss, social proof helps build trust and is much more powerful than any marketing message you can put out.

Engagement Marketing helps you close new business by giving your prospects confidence.



ENGAGEMENT MARKETING BUILDS MOMENTUM OVER TIME

When you follow the three-step Engagement Marketing Cycle, magic starts to happen and takes many forms. Our highly connected digital world makes it easier than ever for people to share their experiences with their networks (and strangers!); social media tools allow for these experiences to be spread far and wide. You'll begin to see existing customers coming back more often, and over time, you'll begin to meet their friends. This interaction starts slowly and builds gradually.

As engagement begins to build, you'll see explicit references to your business popping up in blogs and in social media posts as well as on review sites. New customers will find you as a result of an inquiry that someone posted online, which resulted in a

recommendation for your business. Someone will post on Twitter or Facebook, or in a discussion group (“Does anybody know of a great housepainter in San Leandro, California?”) and your engaged customers will hop in and recommend you. This discussion stream has the potential to be seen by all of the conversation’s participants as well as their entire networks. **When you consider that the average Facebook user has 120 friends⁴ you quickly realize how many people can be reached with just one posting.**



This is the magic of a well-functioning Engagement Marketing Cycle; it drives both new prospects and repeat sales. Once the Engagement Marketing cycle is fully functioning, your customers become part of your marketing team. The cycle now becomes a new customer acquisition engine while also strengthening the sources you already use.

Are you ready to build your engine? Let’s get started with the first step in the cycle: Providing a WOW! experience.

⁴Facebook, 2009, www.facebook.com/note.php?note_id=55257228858.

CHAPTER 7

ENGAGEMENT MARKETING IN ACTION

Real-World Examples

As a small business owner, you may already be doing pieces of Engagement Marketing and wondering how to tie everything together. Or you may be wondering how to get the cycle started—or even if what you’re reading really works. In this chapter, we show you the money!

In the first example, you’ll meet Bob Tullio of Gourmet Coffee Service, a small business in Southern California. Tullio had to think creatively in order to compete with national corporations that were gobbling up local coffee service businesses. Tullio’s engagement strategy, which centered around an e-newsletter and a Facebook Page, didn’t cost a lot of money or take much time—but it sure did net some fantastic results, including engaged clients, new business, and increased revenue.

Maas Nursery, a family-owned business in Houston, Texas, had to compete against the national big box chains. Cristina Maas Batz realized that she and her parents needed to step up their marketing efforts. The nursery used Engagement Marketing to create a community in which their customers would feel involved. [Maas’s engagement engine included an e-newsletter, on-site classes,](#)



a [Facebook Page](#), and a [Twitter account](#). Within two years, sales were up—a huge accomplishment in a down economy—and people who had never heard of the nursery were beating a path to its door.

Nonprofits often have to reach various audiences, such as benefactors, potential members, and people who might attend the organization's events or fund-raisers. So their marketing has to do double duty while operating within a tight budget. Vicky Jaffe and her team at The Currier Museum of Art, located in Manchester, New Hampshire, used Engagement Marketing to fulfill its prime objective: to reach its audiences and get them engaged with the museum. The Currier's e-mail and social media programs keep people connected with the museum, keep them informed of news and events, and ultimately bring them back.

GOURMET COFFEE SERVICE ENGAGES CUSTOMERS, INCREASES MONTH-TO-MONTH REVENUES

Easy-to-implement tactics help Gourmet Coffee realize \$100,000 in additional revenue in 11 months.

Founded in 1995 by Bob Tullio, VP of Business Development; his brother Pete Tullio, CFO; Jon Fishman, President; and Larry Deagon, VP of Operations, Gourmet Coffee Service delivers office refreshment products and services to companies in the entertainment, legal, and finance industries. The company, which competes against national corporations, such as Aramark, Canteen Corporation, and First Choice, has grown from the ground up and now employs over 50 people, including drivers and four customer service representatives.

“Our biggest challenge is client retention and revenue generation,” says Bob Tullio. “We have over 2,000 clients in the Los Angeles, Orange County, and Inland Empire areas. It’s a huge territory—making it costly to maintain connectivity with decision makers. Our industry has seen lots of consolidation with the national coffee service companies gobbling up the smaller local ones. We knew remaining in touch with our customers had to go beyond the connection they had with our drivers.”

DELIVER THE WOW! SPOIL YOUR CUSTOMERS

Tullio and his team begin the Engagement Marketing Cycle by delivering a WOW! experience. Every four weeks, a driver arrives at a customer’s workplace to restock the pantry using Gourmet Coffee’s exclusive inventory control system and to clean and maintain the coffee brewer provided by the company. The driver even cleans the pantry!

“Our slogan is, ‘We’re going to spoil you,’ and we do,” says Tullio. “We really want to make our customers feel special. Exceptional service is one way to do that.” Each Gourmet Coffee customer is assigned a dedicated client services representative. Each rep is responsible for being proactive by dealing with any special client needs, resolving pricing and product issues, and introducing new products and services. Reps visit each customer on a regular basis and manage quality assessment service surveys relating to driver route performance.

In fact, the company’s mantra, “We’re Going to Spoil You,” extends far beyond the client services department. Each of Gourmet Coffee’s team members understands that his or her job plays an important part in providing the highest level of service.

“Everyone here understands what, ‘We’re going to spoil you’ means and works to provide it. That means that we look at the entire customer experience, from finding ways to keep costs down for customers to sending out easy-to-read invoices. Our goal is to make sure customers are so happy, they never want to leave.” Now that’s a WOW! experience!

ENTICE CUSTOMERS TO KEEP IN TOUCH

To further build connections with customers, Tullio turned to e-mail marketing. When the company was smaller, Gourmet Coffee was able to keep in touch with clients (and grow revenue) by sending free sample packets out with the drivers each month. Packets included new products, such as teas or coffees—and it was these samples that helped increase revenues each month as clients would often add the new products to their monthly list of Gourmet Coffee purchases. “As we grew, it became too costly and time consuming,” says Tullio. Thanks to e-mail marketing, the free samples now arrive in customers’ inboxes in the form of a Free Stuff e-newsletter that Tullio sends out once every six weeks.

The e-newsletter typically features two or three hot new products, such as wellness teas, biscotti, or eco-friendly cups and napkins. Customers choose what they want to sample and e-mail their requests back to the company. Reps handle the sample orders and ensure that customers get their “goody bags” when their driver next visits.

Gourmet Coffee also uses the newsletter to promote their other products and services, such as water filtration systems, single-cup brewing systems, vending machines, and more, which you can see

GOURMET COFFEE SERVICE
Quality Pride

**It's Hot Outside...
Cool Solutions for you
from
Gourmet Coffee Service**

[Click here for your to request more information](#)

Gourmet Coffee Service is Your Best Solution for Beverage & Snack Delivery

Many Gourmet Coffee Service clients make the most of their beverage amenity program by using our convenient glass door coolers. Free to our high usage beverage delivery clients, these coolers keep beverages ice cold while saving valuable kitchen and refrigerator space.

[Ask us about a free cooler option today!](#)

We also carry a wide variety of snacks to make your job easy and your employees happy. Order from us and our driver will deliver and put the items away for you, rotating for freshness. Let us do the work for you!

[Ask us about snack delivery to your office!](#)

"An Upgraded Approach to Vending"

If great vending options are what you prefer, through World Wide Vending we can offer you competitive pricing and a wide selection of

WORLD WIDE VENDING

Like us on Facebook

We're giving away one prize per week to our fans for one year!

Week# 1 Prize

Bose® SoundDock® Series II Digital Music System

[Our Website](#)
[Our Blog](#)
[Over 3500 Products](#)

Enjoy a Spa Day on Us!

7 Awarded So Far

Figure 7.1 Gourmet Coffee’s e-mail newsletter

in Figure 7.1. The company also has a “refer a friend” link in their e-newsletter. [Customers who click on the link and refer a friend \(typically via e-mail\) to Gourmet Coffee receive a gift certificate.](#) Tullio says the newsletter has been a great way to get Gourmet Coffee’s product samples into customers’ workplaces. “But we also use it to build connection,” he adds. “Each newsletter includes a photo of one of our client service reps in order to give it that personal touch.”



Tullio works with an employee to create “internal” content. “You have to walk a fine line between content that benefits your customers and content that’s self-serving,” he says. One issue, which tied into the company blog, featured an article on Gourmet Coffee’s commitment to serving its community. The company provides all of the coffee—*gratis*—to Ronald McDonald House in Orange County as well as to two local youth organizations. “This lets our customers know we’re involved in the community and also introduces these organizations to a wider audience,” he says. “Again, it builds connection while promoting us as a company that provides more than just K-cups.”

FACEBOOK PAGE GETS PEOPLE ENGAGED

Once he had his e-mail marketing program humming, Tullio turned his attention to Facebook. Tullio set up a Page ([facebook.com/Gourmet-Coffee-Service](https://www.facebook.com/Gourmet-Coffee-Service)) and drew over 300 fans within three months. Tullio and his partners committed to giving away \$10,000 in prizes the first year by entering people who Liked the page in a weekly drawing. And we’re talking some hefty prizes, too! An Apple TV, a giant smoker, and tool kits were just a few of the giveaways. For maximum traction, Tullio promoted the campaign via his newsletter as well (Figure 7.2).

“What really set off the Facebook Page growth and customer engagement,” says Tullio, “was the driver contest.” Gourmet Coffee encouraged customers to post comments about why they love their drivers. The top four drivers received a nice dinner at a local steakhouse. “We went from 150 to 350 fans in just three weeks with that contest,” he says.

It takes Tullio a couple of hours a week to manage the Facebook Page. “I get a lot of industry newsletters with quirky stories,” he



GOURMET COFFEE SERVICE
Quality Pride

**It's Hot Outside...
Cool Solutions for you
from
Gourmet Coffee Service**

[Click here for your to request more information](#)

Gourmet Coffee Service is Your Best Solution Beverage & Snack Delivery

Many Gourmet Coffee Service customers have joined our program by using our vending machines. Our vending machines keep beverages cool and fresh, and they save valuable kitchen space.

Ask us about our vending machines today!

We also carry a wide variety of snacks to make your employees happy. Order from us and our driver will deliver items away for you, rotating for freshness. Let us do the same for you.

[Ask us about snack delivery to your office!](#)

"An Upgraded Approach to Vending"

If great vending options are what you prefer, through World Wide Vending we can offer you competitive pricing and a wide selection of

WORLD WIDE VENDING

We're giving away one prize per week to our fans for one year!

Week# 1 Prize

Bose® SoundDock® Series II Digital Music System

7 Awarded So Far

Figure 7.2 Gourmet Coffee promotes its Facebook contest in its e-mail newsletter

says, “so I just drop in the links and add a sentence or two of commentary. People love them.”

One story from the *Chicago Tribune* reported that Starbucks would begin selling beer and wine at seven new stores opening in the Chicago area. Tullio’s comment? “We were just in Chicago, so we get it. Someone will be in the first Starbucks bar fight ever. We’ll be looking for that report.”



Figure 7.3 Gourmet Coffee announces the weekly contest winner via video on Facebook

Tullio announced the weekly drawing winners through videos posted on the Facebook Page. In Figure 7.3, Pete, an employee, announces the weekly winner. Posting videos helped increase the fans' engagement activity, which made the Page even more relevant to its fans and helped ensure that Gourmet Coffee's content showed up in people's Facebook News Feeds.

ENGAGEMENT DRIVES NEW AND REPEAT BUSINESS

In just 11 months after implementing its Engagement Marketing engine, Gourmet Coffee realized more than \$100,000 in additional

The Holiday Collection
from
Gourmet Coffee Service

[Click Here to Order Yours!](#)

Happy Holidays

Like us on Facebook

We're giving away over \$10,000 in weekly prizes to our fans

GOURMET COFFEE SERVICE
HOLIDAY COLLECTION

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas....

Enjoy a delicious holiday blend roasted to perfection. Let Gavina bring out that holiday spirit in your office.

PUMPKIN SPICE
EGGNOG
CANDY CANE CREAM *NEW*

24/2.5oz Ground \$39.95 per case

Gavina is a proud supporter of the Toys for Tots Foundation. For each unit of Holiday Collection coffee purchased, a portion of the proceeds will be donated to Toys for Tots on your behalf. Help send a message of hope to needy children this holiday season (and enjoy a great cup of coffee yourself)

7 Awarded This Year

Enjoy a Spa Day On Us!

Refer a Friend

and when they become a client, you get to relax.

[Click Here](#)

Bob's Latest Blog
"Coffee & Wine...
You like what you like."

While Supplies Last! Order Yours Today!

Figure 7.4 Gourmet Coffee's holiday coffee promotion

revenues. The refer-a-friend program netted dozens of referrals, with seven of them turning into accounts—which translated into an additional \$5,000 per month.

“What happens,” says Tullio, “is that we’ll get over 100 sample requests each time we send out a newsletter. Between 30 and 40 percent of the samples are retained as ongoing products. So we can potentially generate \$1,000 in new sales each month, and this is carried over month to month to month. For the December 2011 holiday season, we ran a special edition coffee promotion. We got a huge response: over 300 orders, a 100 percent increase over last year!” (Figure 7.4)



Figure 7.5 Gourmet Coffee's Engagement Marketing campaign components

When asked to share advice for other small business owners, Tullio replied, **“Take it one step at a time. Set your objectives and then be patient. You have to let progress occur at its own pace.** This approach to marketing—connecting with customers—does work. Stick with it and watch it grow.”

As you learned from Bob Tullio, providing a WOW! experience makes it easy to keep in touch with your customers and clients. If your WOW! extends throughout your company, it will spill naturally into your Engagement Marketing. Sample goody bags, clean coffee pantries, and dedicated client service reps—why wouldn't Gourmet Coffee's clients want to keep in touch with the company and refer them to others? (See Figure 7.5.)

Similarly, Maas Nursery needed to find a way to connect with its customers, especially during a time when everyone was looking to save money and thus headed for the bargains offered at big box retailers. Instead of competing head-to-head on price, Cristina Maas Batz began building a community and invited people back to the nursery for hands-on gardening classes.



Tweet

MAAS NURSERY CREATES A COMMUNITY AND GROWS ITS BUSINESS

Despite fierce competition, Maas increases revenue by 30 percent.

Competition with big box stores is Maas Nursery's main challenge. "We are more expensive than the big retailers," says Cristina Maas Batz, Marketing Director. "We get it. It's a tough economy and people want to save money wherever possible."

It was this challenge that spurred Batz to consider starting an e-newsletter in 2009. "Growing up, I didn't have much of an interest in the business," she says. "I went off to college for my degree and eventually got married. But then I became pregnant and quit my job. I had been thinking for awhile that I wanted to get in on the marketing side of things. Due to consolidation and competition with national chains, it's really tough for family-owned businesses to stay in business. It was very clear to me that we needed to step it up. [We need to use technology to create a community where customers would feel like they were a part of our business.](#)"



MAAS WOWS CUSTOMERS WITH GARDENING EXPERTISE AND SELECTION

Maas Nursery is one of the few family-owned nurseries in the greater Houston area. Owned and managed by husband-and-wife team Jim and Carol Maas, and founded in 1951 by Jim's father, the garden center sits on 10 acres and carries everything from unique plants to unusual artifacts, antiques, and patio furniture. Many items are one-of-a-kind or are imported from Mexico.

The nursery is known for carrying plants and shrubbery that you won't find at the big box stores. In fact, their slogan is, "If you can't find it here, it probably doesn't exist!" Because Maas

hires experts in their respective niches such as shrubbery annuals, or perennials, customers can bring photographs of their yards and get expert advice about what to plant and where. The company also provides landscaping and design consultation services. “We have a 365-day planting season,” says Batz, “and people spend a lot of time and money on their yards. Often, they don’t get the results they want. We help them reduce their costs and make their yards look much better.”

MONTHLY E-NEWSLETTER PACKED WITH TIPS, COUPONS, AND OTHER GOODNESS

Batz’s goal was to create an e-newsletter that educated people about gardening and plants as well as create a community that would draw others in. “I wanted the newsletter to be informative and a good resource for customers,” she says.

The first issue, sent out in July 2009, was all this and more. Packed with helpful articles, the newsletter included top picks of the month, information on the different types of avocado trees the nursery had in stock, and a “buy one, get 20 percent off” coupon for customers who purchased a Cajun Hibiscus. Batz also included an article on the benefits of Maas Nursery’s approach to landscaping, information on how to care for plants during the really hot summer months, and a recipe for zucchini brownies. (“If you grow vegetables, you know you always have way too many zucchinis,” says Batz.) Maas Nursery employees helped write the articles; Batz gathered all the information and created the newsletter.

“That first issue was a little rough and a little ugly,” laughs Batz, “but once I learned how to put things together, the look and feel improved. It also helped that I moved to Houston so that I could be



Figure 7.6 The July 2011 Maas Nursery e-newsletter

more hands-on with the marketing. Up until this point, I had been working remotely.” Batz has been very consistent and produces the newsletter each month (Figure 7.6). Each issue is packed full of gardening and landscaping tips from Maas Nursery topic experts, an article written in Spanish for Maas’s Spanish-speaking customers, and notices about upcoming classes. Each archived issue can be found on the Maas Nursery website (Figure 7.7).



Figure 7.7 The Maas Nursery e-newsletter archive lets customers and prospects view the nursery's events and learn about plant/lawn care

EVENTS DRAW PEOPLE BACK TO THE NURSERY

To get people excited about gardening again and to reinforce a sense of community, Maas Nursery began offering classes on topics such as fall and winter gardening, container planting, and cacti and succulents. "We started doing events in the Fall of 2009," says Batz. "We'd promote the event through the newsletter and then people would e-mail us back to register. We've now automated that process using event marketing software." Each event is relevant to the season and features a 45-minute lecture and hands-on practice. A big pot, soil, and the plantings are included in the \$40 fee. "These events are a lot of work for us, and we give away \$60 to \$80 worth of stuff to each attendee. But we've had incredible turnout," says Batz. "We get lots of repeat customers, plus people come in who have never been to our nursery. Sales are always up

by at least a third on class days.” The nursery also hosts lectures and tours for gardening clubs.

It takes Batz approximately 15 hours a month to coordinate the newsletter and put it out. That time includes meetings, coming up with ideas, following up with people for their articles, and uploading the content. “We want as much employee involvement as possible,” says Batz. “That way, the newsletter becomes personable, a local thing. People see an employee’s photo and say, ‘That’s Kim, she talks about vegetables.’” An additional 10–15 hours per month are spent on class preparation. “That’s start to finish,” says Batz. “I do everything—from creating the event page and handling registrations to making sure we have enough materials.”

ENGAGING CUSTOMERS THROUGH SOCIAL MEDIA

At the same time that she developed the e-newsletter, Batz began playing with Facebook. “Facebook is a great forum because more people interact on it,” she says. For the Business Page, Batz focuses on seasonal planting tips, event notices, and weather alerts. “We’re in a severe drought right now, the worst we’ve had in a hundred years. So we give people weather alerts as well as drought survival tips.” A video of Jim Maas’s appearance on a local TV station to talk about the drought netted numerous comments and a Facebook share. Batz often uploads photos of items from the nursery, too, and uses Facebook’s Events feature to announce upcoming events (Figure 7.8).

“We’ve come to know the customers on Facebook, and then they show up at the nursery,” says Batz. “It’s been really good.” A few months after she had Facebook up and running, Batz turned to Twitter (@maasnursery; Figure 7.9). Facebook, however, remains the nursery’s destination of choice.

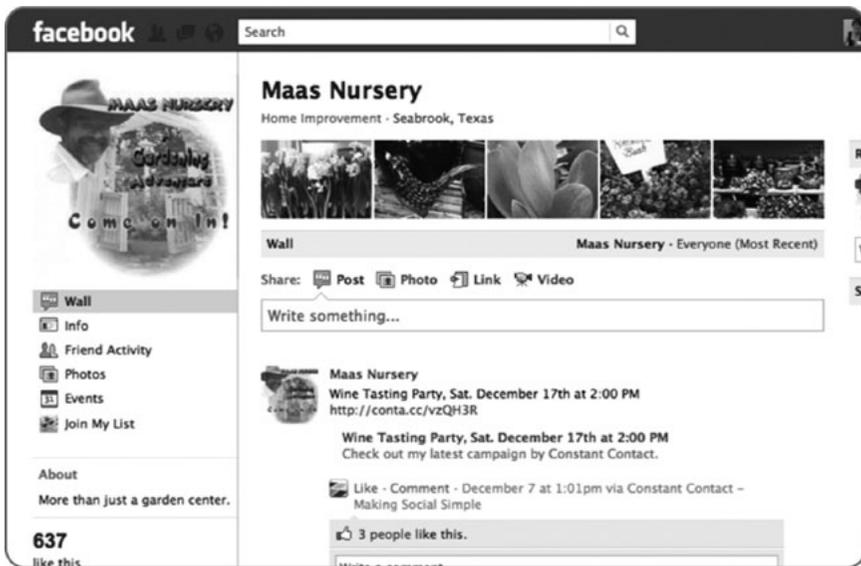


Figure 7.8 An event notice on Maas Nursery's Facebook Page



Figure 7.9 Maas Nursery's Twitter Feed



Figure 7.10 Maas Nursery's Engagement Marketing campaign components

SALES UP IN A DOWN ECONOMY; NEW PEOPLE VISIT

Engaging with customers through the e-newsletter, events, and Facebook (Figure 7.10) has paid real dividends, with sales up by 30 percent in 2011. “And this is in a down economy!” says Batz. “The e-newsletter, the events, and Facebook have been as effective as TV and radio, for much less cost and investment. People remember our name and tell others about us. Now we have new people coming to the nursery who didn’t know we existed.”

Her advice to other small business owners? “Use technology to expand your business. If I can do this, anyone can. I literally created newsletters and put the events together with my baby on my lap. Use your creativity and find ways to draw customers back to your business. Get your employees involved. Ask for their ideas. Have them write articles. The more your customers can relate to your business, the more they’ll remember you—and come back when they need something.”



If you're a nonprofit, community group, or association, you may be wondering how Engagement Marketing can benefit your organization. Actually, Engagement Marketing and nonprofits go together like bread and butter, a combination that the Currier Museum of Art has used to its advantage.

MUSEUM ENGAGES THE COMMUNITY, INCREASES ATTENDANCE TO PROGRAMS

Creativity and focus help Currier Museum of Art achieve a 27 percent increase in exhibition visitors

“People today have different ways of consuming information,” says Vicky Jaffe, public relations and marketing manager for the not-for-profit Currier Museum of Art. “And who is online is constantly changing. Yesterday it was young adults; today older people are increasing in numbers online.”

Reaching different audiences, engaging them, and ultimately bringing them back to the museum for exhibitions and events are the primary objectives for the Currier's marketing department. To accomplish these goals, Jaffe and her team rely on Engagement Marketing.

DELIVER THE WOW! EXHIBITIONS THAT ROCK, LITERALLY

The Currier often features New England artists; exhibitions range from photography and video to ceramics and, yes, rock and roll. In the *Backstage Pass: Rock and Roll Photography* special exhibition (October 7, 2011 to January 15, 2012) organized by the Portland Museum of Art, visitors were treated to 175 photographs, including studio shots and candid outtakes, drawn from the largest private

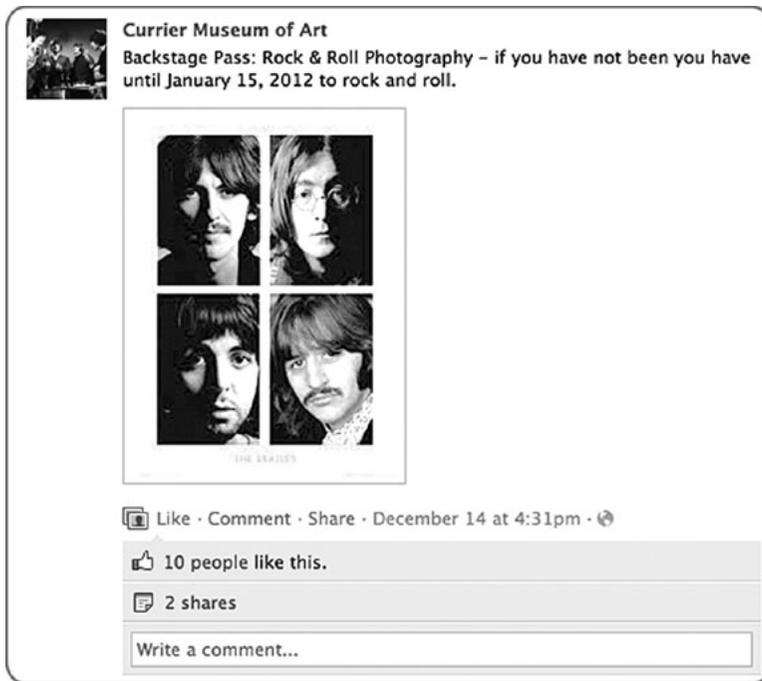


Figure 7.11 Currier Museum’s Facebook post about the Backstage Pass exhibition

collection of rock musicians in the United States. Many of the photos had rarely been seen in public.

Response to and attendance at to the exhibition was fantastic. Fans shared their feedback on the Museum’s Facebook Page, which you can see in Figure 7.11. This post, which shows off a photo of the Beatles, netted 10 Likes and two shares, further increasing exposure and accessibility to the Museum. Due to the exhibit, attendance was up from the same period a year before. Says Jaffe, “In November 2011, when the exhibition ran, 7,193 people visited the Museum, compared to November 2010 when 5,658 people visited—a 27 percent increase.”

Since Currier’s expansion in 2008, roughly 60,000 visitors a year have explored the Museum’s world-class American and European

art collections. Currier, located in Manchester, New Hampshire, also owns the Zimmerman House, the only Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home in New England open to the public. Currier's Art Center provides a year-round studio art curriculum for 2,000 students from 40 communities.

Currier is one of two large art museums with collections in New Hampshire, with the other museum located in Hanover, which is about a two-hour drive for people who live in the southern part of the state. "Because of our location—which is more urban—we have a large and diverse community," says Jaffe. "It's our mission to let the community know what's going on at the Museum and to invite them to participate in what we offer. To do this, we use a combination of e-mail and social media marketing."

MULTIPLE TOUCH POINTS KEEP PEOPLE CONNECTED AND INFORMED

The Currier has depended on e-mail marketing since 2004 and sends out its main e-newsletter, *eNews*, to over 7,000 subscribers on the first day of each month. The timing is especially important because the Museum holds its *First Thursdays Live* event on the first Thursday of each month. (Programming includes special exhibitions, gallery tours, a chance to mingle with other art patrons, and live music.) Each e-newsletter is packed full of news about exhibitions, tours, family events, art classes, and more. "We've had people opt out of receiving the print newsletter, so the electronic version, delivered on a monthly basis, keeps them connected," says Jaffe. The Museum also sends separate "e-blasts" to those who have chosen to receive news about the Museum's Art Center, which provides art classes, camps, and workshops for children, teens, and adults. In addition to the e-newsletters, the

marketing team sends out targeted e-mails alerting people to exhibitions and other timely announcements.

One *eNews* that's a big hit every year is the Top 10 holiday gifts issue, which lists items available for under \$20 at the Museum gift shop. According to Jaffe, people print the e-mail out and bring it with them to the shop. "That particular e-mail has definitely increased sales!" she says. As you can see in Figure 7.12, the e-mail lists some pretty cool and unique gifts—everything from artisan jewelry and knickknacks to toys and board games.



Figure 7.12 The Currier Museum’s holiday gift guide *eNews*

SOCIAL MEDIA LETS PEOPLE “PLUG IN ON THEIR OWN”

The Museum set up its Facebook Page in 2009 and since then has seen it grow to over 2,800 fans. Topics run the gamut, from visitor feedback on exhibitions and reposts of Twitter content to announcements about scheduled events and “free to the public” viewing hours. “We get fairly good traction with Facebook,” says Jaffe. Followers look forward to the “CMA Pick of the Week,” a photo post in which a staff member poses with his or her artistic pick and shares information about the featured work. These posts not only pique people’s interest and showcase the Museum’s collection but also make art accessible and interesting to its fans—and anyone searching Facebook. In addition to its Pick of the Week, the Museum also posts notices of upcoming exhibitions, which helps to draw people back to the Museum, as seen in Figure 7.13.

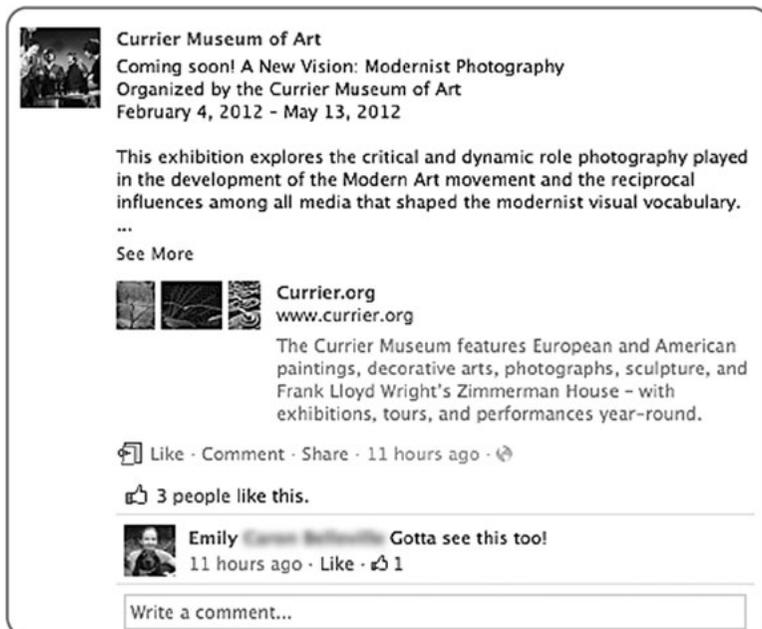


Figure 7.13 A Currier Museum event notice on Facebook



Figure 7.14 The Currier Museum’s Twitter profile

The Currier marketing team uses Twitter to check into the larger world (Figure 7.14). The Museum follows local media outlets and organizations and responds to followers whenever the Currier is mentioned. The team **repurposes content from both the print and e-newsletters as well as content from local publications for use on Facebook and Twitter**. Jaffe and her team use hashtags when referring to exhibitions and events in order to solicit discussion. In addition to Facebook and Twitter, the Museum also manages a YouTube channel.

ENGAGEMENT ENHANCES ALL MARKETING EFFORTS; HELPS DRIVE ATTENDANCE

According to Jaffe, Graphic Designer Neva Cole manages the bulk of the Museum’s Engagement Marketing efforts. “When Neva went on maternity leave, it took five of us to fill her shoes,”



she jokes. “Seriously though, we’ve learned that to manage everything effectively, you have to say, ‘Okay, it’s time to check in and take care of Facebook or Twitter.’ You have to give it your focus.

“Every year, the makeup of people who go online changes,” she adds. “More older people are online; younger people use Facebook more than e-mail. It’s all very fluid. You can’t ignore social media if you want to reach various types of audiences.”

According to Jaffe, attendance at the Museum varies from year to year and month to month, often based on which exhibitions draw the most interest. The Public Programs team does surveys and asks visitors how they heard about the Museum. Jaffe sums up the results: “All of it—the newsletter, social media—it’s all part



Figure 7.15 The Carrier Museum’s Engagement Marketing campaign components

of the mix. The e-newsletter complements Facebook and Twitter, and vice versa (Figure 7.15). It's definitely helped us reach various audiences, kept us in touch with them, and helped us bring them back to the Museum."

As you can see from these stories, Engagement Marketing is easy and fun. Start with one initial connection method, such as an e-newsletter or a blog, and once you have that piece in place and are gaining traction, add a social media platform, such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, or Twitter. Engaging content is the centerpiece. Experiment with different content types. Then measure your results and repeat what works. If you have an Engagement Marketing success story that you want to share, visit our Facebook Page (www.facebook.com/constantcontact) and let us know! See more stories at engagementmarketing.com.

In the next chapter, you'll find five additional tips for increasing engagement. They're all easy to do and will definitely increase your Engagement Marketing fun quotient.