
HOW TO CREATE A SUCCESSFUL GLOBAL SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY?

Nazmije Merko-Zabzun

International University of Struga, Macedonia n.merko@eust.edu.mk, info@eust.edu.mk

Jeton Shaqiri

International University of Struga, Macedonia, j.shaqiri@eust.edu.mk

Abstract: In a world where advertising is classic denigrated by a growing consumer, buzz marketing appears to be a real alternative to war trusts. Buzz marketing is the implementation of a planned action to advance the cause of mouth. According to the book of Briones and Stambouli (2002), it is mentioned that buzz marketing is initially appeared on the Internet and has an exponential diffusion of the medium. The Internet has been instrumental in the rise of the concept. Indeed, the tools inherent in this type of media used to convey information in a few clicks. The message can be sent directly to a third person. Born around 1997, it travels out of bounds and win virtual "reality." The best illustration of this phenomenon is the rise of communication campaigns that grow out of the media. Social media websites allow marketers to employ a broad range of tactics and strategies to promote content and have people engage with it. Many social networks allow users to provide detailed geographical, demographic and personal information, which allows marketers to tailor their messages to what is most likely to resonate with users. Because Internet audiences can be better segmented than more traditional marketing channels, companies can ensure that they are focusing their resources on the audience that they want to target.

Social media strategy involves the creation of content that is "sticky," meaning that it will get a user's attention and increase the possibility that he or she will conduct a desired action, such as purchase a product or share the content with others. Marketers create viral content designed to spread between users quickly. Social media marketing should also encourage customers to create and share their own content, such as product reviews or comments (known as "earned media").

Keywords: buzz marketing, social media marketing, audience, goals, languages, cultural differences, social networks.

INTRODUCTION

Morrissey (2007)³⁹ uses this definition for buzz marketing: "The buzz marketing is like a virus, it is ideally spread with a predefined target which will relay the message to the people who love surrounding the same products and services that carry the message." Gicquel (2006)⁴⁰, defines the buzz marketing as a technique formerly called "street marketing", it aims to promote products and services in public places in order to develop a "word of mouth" with a large population focused.⁴¹

Social media marketing is a main component of buzz marketing. Facebook and Twitter are two of the main social media platforms that companies try to maintain a presence on. Using these and other, smaller social media sites, companies can interact with customers, receive feedback, address issues or concerns and promote their products and services. Cultivating a rich set of shareable content and amassing a strong following on these sites enable consumers to obtain needed materials straight from the company and also, more importantly, allows the company to have a real-time dialogue with their constituents to foster an atmosphere where customers feel valued and informed.⁴²

Social Media Marketing is marketing that focuses on people, not products (Diamond, 2008)⁴³. The products can be presented by the company with as many qualitative features and promotional tools as possible, but what really matters is the comments and appreciations left by the customers. People provide the content, and this is the reason why Social Media Marketing is so scary and challenging for marketers. They do not control the marketing content anymore. Negative word-of-mouth can be spread worldwide in a couple of minutes only. With the explosion of Internet-based messages transmitted through the Social Media, they are now a main factor in influencing many aspects of consumer behavior, such as awareness, consideration, information gathering, opinions, attitudes, purchasing decisions and post-purchase evaluation. International marketers need to

³⁹ Morrissey, B. (2007). 'Clients Try to Manipulate 'Unpredictable' Viral Buzz,' *Adweek*, 48 (12), 12-13.

⁴⁰ Gicquel, Y. (2006). *Le Buzz Marketing, Le Génie des Glaciers*.

⁴¹ Chebli, L., Gharbi, A. (2013). "The Impact of the Effectiveness of a Buzz Marketing Campaign on the Image, Awareness and Purchasing Decision: The Moderating Role of Involvement," *Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion de Tunis, Tunisie*, p 2.

⁴² Retrieved from <http://searchcrm.techtarget.com/definition/buzz-marketing>

⁴³ Diamond, S. (2008), "Web Marketing for Small Businesses: 7 Steps to Explosive Business Growth", Sourcebooks Inc., Illinois.

recognize the power and critical nature of the conversations being held by consumers using Social Media. Consequently, the ability of influencing the crowd effectively is the main quality needed by the marketing team (Evans, 2008)⁴⁴.

Also, what is important about Social Media Marketing is that marketer can listen, track and measure what is shared on the Social Media Sites in order to improve the offered message and adapt it more to the customers' needs. Thanks to the Social Media analytics and metrics available, the impact of Social Media on a company's marketing strategy can be measured and evaluated relatively easily.⁴⁵

1. WHAT STEPS SHOULD COMPANIES TAKE WHEN CREATING THEIR GLOBAL STRATEGY?

When creating marketing campaigns of any sort, it is important to understand who your audience is. Social media is a great way to connect with company's audience and have a two-way conversation. However, it can be easy to forget that not everyone who finds company's social media pages will speak its language, or be able to relate to its region's latest trends. If the company is only targeting a local audience, that is all right.

But what if the company is targeting a global audience? What if the company is located in a county in Europe and needs to branch out to other markets to scale? What if it is in the U.S. seeking the attention of a French and Spanish audience?

When targeting multiple nations, there are several challenges to plan for:

- Being understood by an audience that speaks multiple languages;
- Reaching an audience that lives across multiple time zones;
- Supporting different interests, cultures, and regulations;
- Segmenting social media efforts to the right audiences;
- Prioritizing company's efforts in accordance with its resources.

Creating a global social media strategy early on will help the company plan for all of these challenges, and will keep it from overextending its resources.

Companies should establish overall social media strategy before they start tweeting, updating their Facebook status in multiple languages, or creating tons of new pages for each target country.

Setting a strategy ahead of time will ensure that the company can launch, optimize, and measure its global campaigns' success without getting overwhelmed. Social media shouldn't be overwhelming. It should be fun.

The six steps that the companies should go through while creating their global strategy are:

1. define their audience;
2. set their social media goals;
3. choose their languages;
4. learn cultural differences;
5. choose social networks;
6. know localization capabilities on each social platform.

1. Define their audience

It is essential to first determine how to segment the company's audience based on their region or language. The following are example questions that must be answered internally before the company begins working on its social media strategy:

- Which countries does the company want to focus on?
- Where does the majority of company's current customer base live?
- Where does the majority of company's non-domestic customer base live?
- Is there opportunity for the company's product or service to extend to other nations?
- Is the company already getting leads or prospect interest from other nations?

2. Set their social media goals

Companies should define the goals of their social media strategy. Setting goals in advance will keep their social media team accountable and increase their likelihood of success. Having a strong unified approach will help them shape the strategy for each country they are targeting.

Also company should decide if the primary goal of their social media campaign is to:

- Generate more traffic for their website from social media platforms;
- Increase their brand exposure by getting more followers and engagement;
- Tap into new markets via social endorsements and paid advertising;
- Provide a customer service platform on their social profiles.

⁴⁴ Evans, D. (2008), "Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day", Wiley Publishing Inc., Indiana, United States.

⁴⁵ Celine, A. (2012), "Social Media Marketing benefits for businesses", Aalborg University, Denmark, p 14.

The company might decide that one of these goals is a higher priority than the other three, and this could help it decide how to cater to its audience across multiple countries.

3. Choose their languages

If the company decides to target multiple nations that speak different languages, it will have a few decisions to make:

- Should company's blogs be in multiple languages?
- Should the company create a new social profile for every language?
- Should the company monitor social media platforms in multiple languages?

Keep in mind that nine out of ten European internet users prefer browsing in their own language, so if the company wants to engage an audience in non-English speaking countries, it needs to speak their language.

Company's decision will depend largely on its resources and the bandwidth of its team, but remember to focus on delivering ROI. For example, if the company has very few prospects in Spain, it might not be worth setting up a separate Spanish-language blog. However, if the company has a large growth potential in Spain, it might be worth testing out.

4. Learn cultural differences

If company's business targets customers in countries foreign to its native, the company should learn about the different countries' cultures to understand what appeals to them versus its country. Certain markets are much more difficult to break into than others and may require an agency to get the company a head start. If the business culture requires an agency to get the company started, it should not be afraid to work with one.

5. Choose social networks

Companies should identify the most relevant social networks in each country they are targeting. They should not feel pressured to set up a new profile on each social network for every country they are targeting. This is the wrong way to implement the company's global social media strategy. Instead, they should choose social networks wisely. They can always grow their reach across more platforms as they prove the ROI of the networks they get started with.

Also, companies should not be afraid to test the waters in different social networks. If they have the bandwidth to test out a new social network, they should go for it. After three months, they can look at the data and see if it's worth continuing their efforts on that network.

6. Know localization capabilities on each social platform

Which of these social networks will the company be able to segment by location or language? For example, Facebook allows the company to segment each post by country and/or language, making it possible to use only one Facebook page for company's entire global audience.

2. HOW TO ORGANIZE COMPANY'S ASSETS AND CHANNELS?

Even after completing the six introduced steps above, the company is not ready to start tweeting yet. First it is important to define a clear social media execution plan.

If the company is targeting different channels for different audiences, things can get complicated very quickly. The company should know which social media profiles go together, which pages on company's site should be linked to, and how all of company's campaigns tie together.

Here is how to keep the company's global social media strategy organized.

1. Define hub for each audience

Defining a hub on company's website for each audience segment will help keep things organized. The hub is most commonly a blog, but can also be a forum or a community page that the company maintains.

The company's blog for each audience segment should be written in the most commonly spoken language of that segment. All of company's new content should be posted there first, so company's social media channels can link back to a main content source. Company's blog should also be a key part of company's SEO strategy.

If the company does not have the resources to create a dedicated blog for each region or language it targets, default to the secondary language of that region or English. English is the most widely-used language in the world, and is the dominant language of international business and global communication.

In an ideal world with unlimited resources, the company should have a different blog for each region it is targeting. But in the real world with budgets and limited bandwidth, the company needs to be strategic about how it groups regions by interest or language.

- **English blog:** United States, United Kingdom, Ireland, Canada
- **Spanish blog:** Spain, Mexico, Argentina
- **German blog:** Germany, Belgium, Austria, Switzerland.

Note that for each blog, the company should choose one dialect and stick to it. For example, people in Spain and Latin America speak different dialects of Spanish. Ideally, the company should cater to each audience separately. If the company does not have the resources to do so, it should choose one dialect for its Spanish

blog. The company should make this decision by comparing the size of its customer bases in Spain and Latin America, and prioritize based on where the biggest opportunity for growth exists. The company should not spread itself too thin, especially in the beginning. If it is just launching its website, it should start with one blog in English and add blogs later as it builds momentum.

2. Choose social sites to target for each region

Next, decide which social networks to target for each region. Determine the number of social media profiles the company will create based on the resources it has at its disposal. Putting its efforts into one Facebook page, for example, will allow that page to build momentum and grow a fan base much faster than if the company had five different Facebook pages to maintain.

Let's say the company targets audiences that speak English, Spanish, and German. The company should choose to:

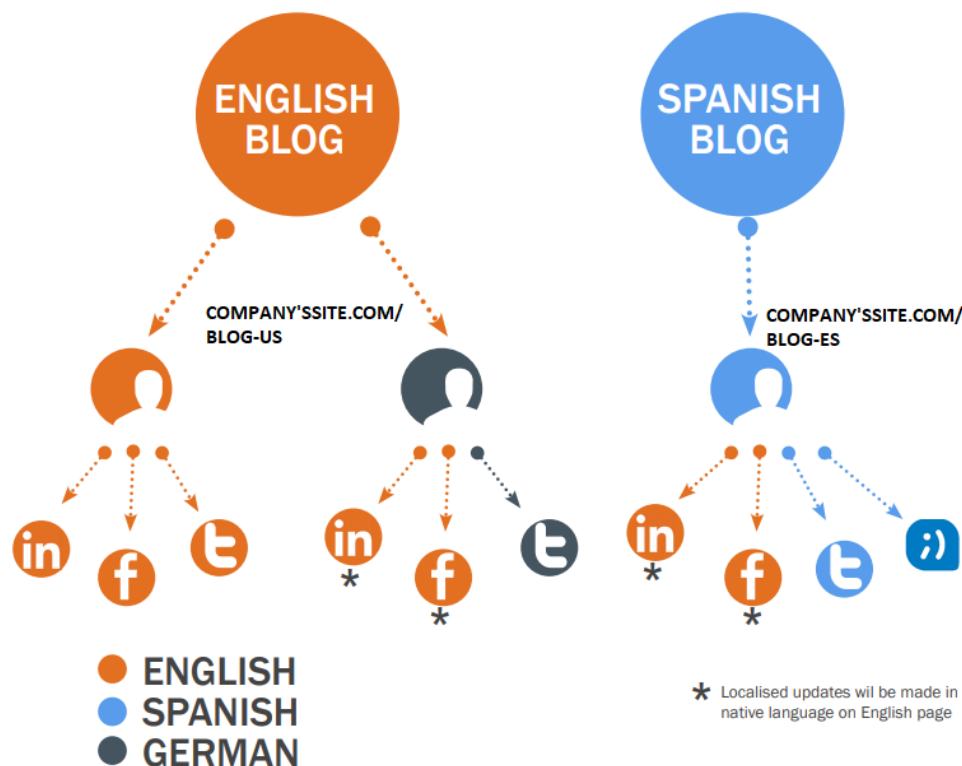
- Have one **Facebook** page in English with language-targeted updates;
- Have one **LinkedIn** Company Page in English with localized product pages and language-targeted updates;
- Create separate **Twitter** profiles in English, Spanish, and German;
- Have one **Tuenti** profile in Spanish.

By localizing company's Facebook and LinkedIn profiles, instead of creating separate profiles in each language, the company should now have to manage six social profiles instead of ten.

3. Link company's blog and social profiles

Now that the company has defined its blogs and social profiles, it is time to tie them together. Create a map so the company knows which social profile should link to which blog on its site.

Picture 1: Map of company's blogs



Source: Diana, U. "The Complete Guide To Global Social Media Marketing", HubSpot, Unites States, p 21. Retrieved from <http://www.ciccorporate.com/download/the-complete-guide-to-global-social-media-marketing.pdf>

3. HOW TO DEVELOP A CONTENT STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA?

After setting the channel strategy, it is time to make sure company's strategy aligns with its channel strategy. Whether the company is posting content on one of its global blogs, Facebook pages, or Twitter profiles, there are certain content creation best practices for global audiences that the company should keep in mind. It is all about being highly targeted and relevant. If the company can talk to each of its audiences about what they care about, it will garner the best results from its social media campaigns.

1. Provide native translations

Do not simply take a blog post from company's English blog and copy/paste it into Google Translate for company's Spanish blog, or vice-versa. Same goes for Tweets and Facebook status updates.

Company's content will sound Google Translated to anyone who speaks the language natively. Get help from someone who is fluent in the language the company is creating content in. here are some translation service providers the company could choose from:

- **Milengo** <http://www.milengo.com/>
- **Translations.com** <http://translations.com>
- **Lingo24** <http://lingo24.com>
- **Verbatim Solutions** <http://verbatimolutions.com>

2. Use correct spelling variations

American and British folks may speak the same language, but there are nuances that are important to address (color vs. colour, optimization vs. optimisation, etc.).

3. Use one language per blog

Company shouldn't mix languages on the same blog. Even though it might think this might make company's blog "global friendly," it will not help company's overall user experience.

Mixing languages on social networking sites is more acceptable because when the company sends out an update, it is mostly consumed via users' newsfeeds, not via its page or profile itself.

4. Use images wherever possible

An image does not need translation. Pictures and graphics are much easier for international audiences to understand, especially if the company is not creating separate profiles for each region or language.

• **FACEBOOK**

Use the photo share functionality and make sure company's cover image portrays company's brand well.

• **TWITTER**

Use TwitPic or Instagram to frequently share photos with company's followers from around the world.

• **LINKEDIN**

Share URLs in which the pages have an enticing image; the image will be automatically pulled into the post.

5. Be relevant

Make sure that the company is informed about hot topics and sensitive issues in each of company's target markets, or hire someone to specialize in each market. Also, make sure the company is only posting relevant content for each audience – a news story in Australia may not be relevant to company's audience in Ireland.

Each of company's global blogs and social media profiles should contain topics relevant to that audience. On the company's blog can be included pieces such as:

- Educational guides, which can be applicable to multiple audiences;
- Thought leadership pieces that are new to certain cultures;
- Industry news from relevant regions;
- Product updates relevant to the region.

6. Learn colour connotations

Figure out what certain colours mean in different countries before designing company's blog and social media profiles. In most of Europe and the Americas, white is associated with purity and marriage. In Japan, China and parts of Africa, white is traditionally the colour of mourning.

7. Get local contributors

Recruit guest bloggers from each region to provide local insights that company cannot provide itself. This will keep the content on company's global blog fresh and varied, and relevant to the local audience. Also, with guest bloggers come inbound links from global domain extensions, so it will give company's blogs an SEO boost.

Recruit local help to manage and monitor company's foreign-language interactions. Translation services are great for the content schedule the company pushes out each month, but they are no substitute for native social engagement, especially if the company is using its social profiles as a customer support resource.

8. Interconnect each asset with links

Company's ultimate goal of participating in social media is likely to drive traffic back to company's website so the company can convert visitors into leads. Make sure the company links to the corresponding blog in the *About Us* or URL sections of company's social profiles.

Also, link all of company's social media channels for each language together.

Company's goals here are to:

- Make it easy for people to find its other channels in their language.
- Make it easy for people who have landed in the wrong place to find the channels most relevant to them.

CONCLUSION

As we can summarize by the information presented in this thesis, the buzz marketing is like a virus and social media marketing is its main component. Social media is a great way to connect with company's audience and have a two-way conversation.

When targeting multiple nations, there are several challenges to plan for: being understood by an audience that speaks multiple languages; reaching an audience that lives across multiple time zones; supporting different interests, cultures, and regulations; segmenting social media efforts to the right audiences and prioritizing company's efforts in accordance with its resources.

The six steps that the companies should go through while creating their global strategy are: define their audience; set their social media goals; choose their languages; learn cultural differences; choose social networks; and know localization capabilities on each social platform.

Company's global social media strategy is kept organized by defining hub for each audience; choosing social sites to target for each region and linking company's blog and social profiles.

After setting the channel strategy, it is time to make sure company's strategy aligns with its channel strategy following these steps: provide native translations; use correct spelling variations; use one language per blog; use images wherever possible; be relevant; learn colour connotations; get local contributors and interconnect each asset with links.

REFERENCES

- [1] Morrissey, B. (2007). 'Clients Try to Manipulate 'Unpredictable' Viral Buzz,' *Adweek*, 48 (12).
- [2] Gicquel, Y. (2006). *Le Buzz Marketing, Le Génie des Glaciers*.
- [3] Chebli, L., Gharbi, A. (2013). "The Impact of the Effectiveness of a Buzz Marketing Campaign on the Image, Awareness and Purchasing Decision: The Moderating Role of Involvement," *Faculté des Sciences Economiques et de Gestion de Tunis, Tunisie*.
- [4] <http://searchcrm.techtarget.com>
- [5] Diamond, S. (2008), "Web Marketing for Small Businesses: 7 Steps to Explosive Business Growth", Sourcebooks Inc., Illinois.
- [6] Evans, D. (2008), "Social Media Marketing: An Hour a Day", Wiley Publishing Inc., Indiana, United States.
- [7] Diana, U. "The Complete Guide To Global Social Media Marketing", HubSpot, Unites States. Retrieved from <http://www.ciccorporate.com/download/the-complete-guide-to-global-social-media-marketing.pdf>