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You've heard the warnings. Don't make collecting friends, fans, and followers the goal of your social media marketing. That still holds true. It's not a reliable way to measure the effect of your marketing efforts through social channels. A recent study shows it is effective, however, at helping you do your job.

Not every friend or follower on your Facebook, or other social media channel is necessarily going to be your most frequent customer, if they actually engage at all. What they will do is become a referral source, regardless. In some cases, by simply "liking" your brand, they are unwittingly indicating to their friends that you should be "liked" by them as well.

Making friends is contagious

People like to keep up, and they trust their friends. A recent study from Ipsos OTX and Ipsos GlobalAdvisor backs that up. The study found that when a friend "liked" or followed a certain brand on a social network, 22% of them would buy that brand.

Simply put, those follows and likes are quite an influence on how others behave, or say they would act. Do the math. Take your number of fans and determine what 22% more would be. That's the increase in awareness, and likely a conversion that could take place because someone "liked" you.

So while collecting friends, fans and followers shouldn't be the goal of your social media marketing, it is important to cultivate your following. Getting people to like you is one thing, getting them to become true advocates is another. The news from this study, at least, shows that the latter doesn't necessarily require as much action on the consumer's part as you'd think.

Know why they like you

While many people may respond to your content with a "like" what they are really looking for is information. If you give them what they want, they are more likely to re-visit your page, follow you, and advocate for you over a longer period of time.

Emarketer reports™ findings from a study by Burst media that points to what people are looking for. They found that women are most likely to engage in tracking brands.

- * The majority of people follow brands to keep up with content.
- * Nearly as many share content with friends and family.
- * Sharing opinions or comments is the next most common reason people follow a brand.

Don't Get Dumped

Beware, though. Your fans and friends can drop you just as easily as they signed on. Some of the top reasons people dropped a brand from their Facebook or Twitter are:

- * Company posts too frequently
- * Repetitive or boring content

- * Only â€œlikedâ€• in the first place to get a deal

- * Company doesn't offer enough deals

- * Posts were too promotional

The take away

Get your timing right, be original, and generate posts that are more helpful or entertaining

than promotional. Keep in mind that there's much more to generating true, lasting conversions than collecting friends. Give them what they're looking for, and you could be recruiting a brand advocate that will generate a chain of followers.

Most importantly, know how to measure the effectiveness of your campaign by checking site visits, time spent on each page, and conversions resulting directly from social media marketing campaigns.

Do you have an effective campaign for social media marketing Atlanta in place? Learn how to create a campaign that will win you real fans, not fair-weather friends by contacting us today.

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