

AT&T

Company Background

AT&T is one of the world's leading communications services providers to businesses and operates the nation's fastest mobile broadband network. AT&T is dedicated to providing innovative, reliable, high-quality products and services with excellent customer care that help connect people with their world.

Campaign Objective

AT&T created a presence on Facebook to talk directly with its customers and to build one-to-one relationships with them. As Jenn Fisher, Director of Digital and Youth Marketing at AT&T, explains, "We want to be where our customers are, and our customers are on Facebook en masse. The ability to reach 1.4 million people through a Wall post, to us, is extremely valuable." Facebook also allows AT&T to accomplish its goals across business units. "It gives us the opportunity to engage our customers, talk about our products, and help resolve service issues," says Jenn. Recognizing the rich dialogue and feedback on its Page led AT&T to build a customer care operation dedicated to Facebook.

In addition, Facebook allows AT&T to bring its brand to life in a unique way, the brand says. Chris Baccus, Executive Director of Digital and Social Media at AT&T, says, "Being on Facebook makes us a more human company in the public space. As a brand, you're usually just simply a logo, but on Facebook, we can have conversations with our fans in real time, with names associated with those responses." This activity helps AT&T increase brand awareness.

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Chris Baccus

Executive Director of Digital and Social Media, AT&T



Facebook Executive Summary

Client:



at&t

facebook.com/ATT

Objective:

Use Facebook to talk directly to its customers and build one-to-one relationships

Solution:

Create a digital leadership council including marketing, e-commerce, corporate communications and customer care dedicated to fostering the AT&T Facebook community

Key Lessons:

- Customer service on Facebook does not need to require additional development work
- Investing in customer service on Facebook can build brand favorability
- Maximizing return on investment from Facebook ideally requires inter-departmental cooperation

“It’s about surrounding our products, services, and our company with a better light,” says Jenn “Increasing that willingness to recommend has the byproduct of increasing market share and brand perception.”

Approach

Achieving objectives across business units at AT&T requires a high level of collaboration, AT&T says. Today, AT&T operates with a digital leadership council that meets weekly, with an executive representing the various departments involved in creating the consumer Facebook experience, including: PR, customer care, e-commerce and marketing. The council discusses best practices and provides a feedback loop to the different teams about what is going on within the community.

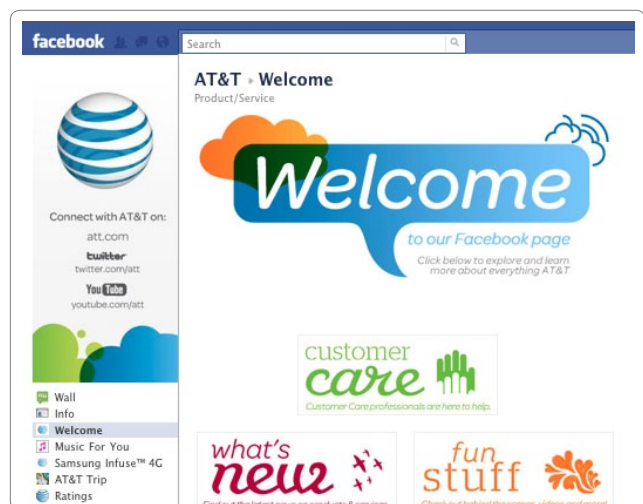
Marketing: For marketing, Jenn says, “The onus is on AT&T to create content that is so valuable that our fans have to share it with their friends. When we get that right, that’s when we can reach those 150 million additional people.” The marketing team is constantly looking for ways to make the message more relevant and active. “It’s not just seeing our logo on a billboard, but it’s bringing that to life,” says Jenn. “It’s asking people about how they ‘rethink possible’ (AT&T’s tag line) on a daily basis.” In a recent campaign, AT&T allowed fans to vote on concert locations for the singer Drake, who held a private show at the last tour stop exclusively for AT&T’s Facebook fans. “It’s not the number that’s the important piece for the fans,” Chris says. “It’s really how you go ahead and activate what’s going on with the fans who became a fan of your page.”

E-commerce: For e-commerce, AT&T leverages both Facebook and AT&T’s website to drive sales. “When we do a product launch, we’ll have a custom tab that provides information about the new product and allows our fans to click through to learn more about that product and purchase it on AT&T.com,” Chris says. From its website, AT&T uses Facebook’s Platform tools, such as the Like button, to create word of mouth about its products within the Facebook community. The

Like button “becomes a great enabler to have a conversation with your own friends, to help make wise, intelligent decisions as a consumer,” Chris says.

Customer Care: AT&T is also one of the first companies to have a fully dedicated customer care team monitoring its Facebook Page. When it launched this team, AT&T assigned a group of more than 20 of its top performing customer service managers exclusively to social media. Without building any extra applications, members of the customer care team use their real first names to respond to questions publicly on the Wall. During regular business hours, they respond within about 15 minutes. If an issue requires private information to be shared, representatives reply with their email address and invite the person to continue the conversation over email. “One of the key aspects for customer care on Facebook is that we have our seasoned managers on the Page, so they are empowered to respond and resolve issues quickly,” says Chris.

Finally, AT&T had created a tightly knit communication loop to take in feedback and make any necessary changes. The customer care managers will feed information to the Facebook team and visa versa to address the total customer care experience. Plus, Jenn says, AT&T is constantly striving to answer, “What can we do better?” She explains, “Facebook allows us to get this feedback directly from our consumers – it is just invaluable; it’s a marketer’s dream.”



Results

- Based on AT&T surveys, AT&T is over delivering on all customer service measures
- Brand perception is much stronger among the AT&T Facebook community, compared with the general population, according to AT&T
- AT&T says its Facebook efforts drive sales and consistently show very positive return on investment
- AT&T currently has over 1.4 million fans, which means it can reach over 145 million friends of those fans through Friend of Connections targeting

AT&T says it has a rigorous approach to measuring success on Facebook and that it is seeing very positive results. “On a daily basis we track every single thing that we do on Facebook, so everything on our Page and all of our posts are tagged,” says Jenn. “We measure all of our promotional activities, traffic and e-commerce and we put an ROI to everything we do, so we know that being on Facebook helps generate sales for us.”

The company has integrated Facebook on AT&T.com, so it is also able to monitor actions on its e-commerce site and drive engagement at the point of purchase. “It’s really about the idea of carrying Facebook outside of just Facebook.com and bringing that social share functionality into the dotcom property, and then bringing those actions back to the person’s community on Facebook,” explains Chris. “Our Facebook activities have helped sales and adoption in a variety of ways by creating a two-way dialogue between different dotcom properties.”

In addition to sales, AT&T’s customer service and Page engagement initiatives have greatly

impacted the brand, the company says.

Fan-specific marketing activities have been a powerful loyalty driver. After the Drake campaign, Jenn says, “We saw increased positive brand sentiment on the Page, we saw increased sales, and we saw people actually moving through the marketing funnel right in front of our eyes.”

When it comes to customer service, Chris says, “We did survey our Page recently and we found that we’re actually exceeding people’s expectations. The richness of really surprising or delighting somebody makes them want to stay engaged with the brand and carries on into what their next consideration is. They’ll look at us for their next device because they remember that positive experience.”

AT&T believes that people talking to their friends about AT&T, instead of the brand delivering the message, has contributed to its success. “There’s

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from Shane Lynch to the AT&T page. The post text reads: "Right now I have the DataPlus 200 MB for iPhone. I was thinking of switching to DataPro 4GB for iPhone after we get 3G here (47586) I was just wanting to share." The post was made 3 hours ago via iPhone. There are five replies:

- AT&T:** "Hey Shane, we'd love to give you an answer. Could you clarify your question?" (2 hours ago)
- Ken Scott Kletzin:** "This is an educated guess, but I would think you're talking about tethering. If that's the case the plan is 4GB + tethering for \$45 a month with each additional GB priced at \$10. I believe you can use any of your combined data total either for personal data over 3G on your phone or for tethering when 3G is available in your area." (2 hours ago)
- Shane Lynch:** "Yes, as Ken stated I was wanting to know how much of the 4GB of data could be shared by tethering." (2 hours ago)
- AT&T:** "In that case, the tethering option is \$20 on top of the DataPro plan. Hope that answers your Q!" (2 hours ago)
- Jacob Landrum:** "No, I don't think that was his question. It looks like he wants to know how much of that 4GB can be used for tethering. If it's 2gb for the phone and 2gb for tethering, or if you can use it how you please." (2 hours ago)

a great word of mouth aspect that happens with Facebook because in addition to the community on the AT&T Page, there's also the community that all of our fans have with their friends, family, and coworkers," says Chris. "Our fans also tend to have a certain level of influence within their communities, so when they say something about AT&T, they're seen as experts."

AT&T says it has also seen unexpected developments on its Page as people have become more engaged with the brand over time. One example is an independent group of AT&T brand self-identified ambassadors banded together and nicknamed themselves the Wolf Pack. The group has created its own AT&T Page assembling enthusiasts for conversations about the brand. "That ripple effect happens across Facebook, which is fabulous," says Chris.

Often, AT&T's biggest fans will help answer questions and support the brand outside of business hours, AT&T says. "They'll say, 'AT&T is not on right now but they'll get to your question early in the morning,' or they'll actually answer the question themselves," says Chris. When AT&T staff members return to the office, they post thank you notes to these fans on the Wall, Chris says.

What's more, the feedback that AT&T receives about its products and marketing efforts through Facebook is invaluable to the brand, Chris says. "It gives us an opportunity to really go ahead and really get to the pulse of what's happening with our company whenever we take any kind of action," says Chris. This feedback helps AT&T know right away what people think of a new product or what is missing from its device portfolio, he says.

The Future

In thinking about the future Jenn says, "It's all about testing and scaling, and Facebook allows us to do that, literally, by the minute. The more relevant content that we get out to our consumers, the more positive brand impression will increase, so we rely on Facebook, as part of our media and marketing mix, to reach our customers and talk with them in a really meaningful way." Jenn adds that, "What I personally love about working on Facebook, is that you never know what's next. This is fantastic, because it's all about what our customers are telling us and it's empowering."

As Chris looks ahead, he says he sees AT&T's success on Facebook continuing. "We think the conversation is going to keep getting richer, and happen in more and more places across the Internet with Facebook," Chris says. "Now that we have this instant connective-ness across so much of our daily life, and every single minute, Facebook really brings our friends, our family, our coworkers and our own community all within one simple, easy place." AT&T says it is also excited about the potential for Facebook and mobile. Chris says, "With integrations like Facebook Places and the popularity of Check-ins, we look forward to seeing how we can bring a lot of what's happening in real life at that particular moment back into the community."



Jared Hendler

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