

Comprehensive Guide to Marketing Like Starbucks



Introduction

[“6 reasons Starbucks Marketing Communications Strategy is so Effective”](#) is one of our most popular posts, continuing to be a top performer even after nearly 2 years in publication.

Some blog posts generate lots of attention and are sticky—viewership is high and site visitors actually stick around to read them...others, not so much—if they even get opened, a quick glance and readers are onto the next “cup of tea”.

One of the most rewarding aspects of analytics is discovering what grips people. *So what draws people to this Starbucks post?*

Well, we know that Starbucks is a brand that has won the affections of the masses. And we also know that our website visitors tend to be Marketers--who might love a cup of Starbucks coffee—but more importantly, they are always looking for ways to effectively communicate.

And one thing we know for sure: you don't have to be Starbucks to effectively communicate!

This guide is designed to help you assess your marketing presence using the six elements we identified in our post. It's important to remember that an integrated multi-channel marketing strategy is key.

Keep in mind: the six elements listed below should not function as islands; they must be integrated and coordinated.

Our hope is that once you've absorbed what follows, you'll be able to identify how each element fits within your overall marketing strategy and that you'll uncover ways to apply or enhance their current application. Just as important: develop metrics that will enable you to assess the efficacy of these efforts.

Marketing is all about asking the right questions. Curious questions that by their very nature inspire other questions. These questions lead to insight and sharing, especially if the culture supports learning and growing. Our hope is this document will help you think about your marketing with a whole new mindset.

1. Brand Consistency

Brand is about your identity, personality and consistency; it's knowing who you are and how you want to be known. These factors create an expectation for a certain kind of experience. In a world where there are ever-increasing touch points (for example online, offline, multiple locations, to mention a few), keeping the experience consistent is a real challenge; it's also potential for a competitive advantage.

Culture is often overlooked, yet it is the foundation of creating a consistent brand experience. The way you select, train and engage colleagues will play an important role in determining what your customers will experience.

Visual cues play a key role in your brand presence. Here are a few examples:

- logos
- graphic treatments
- color selection
- decorating style
- appearance e.g. uniforms, casual, formal

Then there is Voice. Yes, your brand has a voice. Voice expresses your brand's personality.

- Tone formal vs informal
- Language friendly or serious

Starbucks	Your Marketing
<p>Logo treatment must be consistent and recognizable</p> 	<p>Do you have a logo? Do you have an orientation for new hires that explains what it stands for?</p>

Starbucks	Your Marketing
<p>Voice and tone - Keep in mind, there is no good or bad just what is appropriate for your audience and is authentically who you are.</p> <p>Consistently helpful—may be casual and helpful or serious and helpful. Goal is to be friendly and welcoming some know customers and their order preference</p>	<p>Do you clearly communicate your expectations to employees?</p> <p>Are you a good model, setting the standard, or are your expectations and behavior sending mixed signals?</p>
<p>Barista's wear same uniforms, apron,</p>  <p>They use common language. For example, drink size terminology: Tall, Grande, Venti for Small, medium and large</p>	<p>How do customers recognize your staff? Do they wear uniforms? Have name badges?</p> <p>Do you enforce standards?</p>

2. Web is the Content Hub

For most of us, our website is the most important online marketing asset. The propagation of quality content management systems (CMS) has enabled us to host and update relevant content economically.

These days when someone wants to know about you or your business usually the very first question is “Do you have a website?”

You’ll have no shot of getting found by your consumers if you simply create a website. Getting found requires some effort and expertise; it’s called Search Engine Optimization (SEO). If you’re not planning to invest in SEO, you might as well save your time and energy because you’ll be invisible without it. If your site hasn’t been optimized, stop right here and find a partner who can help you -- this is really important. Also take the time to read [The Top 10 SEO Questions to Ask About Your Website](#).

Your site should be a dynamic doorway to your other marketing assets.

Remember what we said at the beginning of this document, you must think about how each marketing asset connects to consumers and to your other marketing assets.

After your web site has been found, it has to be easily accessible. These days, consumers have little patience, if they can’t see what they’re looking for or they are unsure what to do, they will leave within a few seconds. And chances are they will head straight to your competition.

Starbucks	Your Marketing
<p>From the site navigation one can immediately tell what is important to Starbucks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">ProductMenuThe experienceCorporate Responsibility  <p>The screenshot shows the Starbucks website with a navigation menu at the top: Coffee, Menu, Coffeehouse, Responsibility, Card, and Shop. The main content area features a large graphic with the text "Join your neighbors and volunteer with us." and a sub-headline "April is our Global Month of Service. See how you can get involved." Below this, there are sections for "Find us on Facebook", "What's New" (with a sub-headline "Rebuilding an American Dream in East Liverpool, Ohio"), "Newest Blog Posts", and "New Product Showcase".</p>	<p>Have you audited your own site? Does your navigation quickly reveal the essence of what you are about?</p>

Starbucks	Your Marketing
<p>Convenience is important. One is quickly able to secure a Card for purchasing and giving gifts.</p> <p>Gold Card</p>  <p>Mobile App</p>  <p>The site has a store finder feature to enable customers to locate the nearest retail store.</p> <p>Online commerce is an option for those wanting to order product online.</p>	<p>Have you looked at your site from the perspective of your customers and prospects?</p> <p>At each stage along the decision journey?</p>
<p>Relevant - On or near April 24th Starbucks recognized Administrative Professional's Day</p> <p>Menu/Nutrition information is easily accessible for those interested in one or both topics.</p>	<p>Do you effectively promote your product/service to tie into current or local events? Are you in-tune to seasonal demands?</p> <p>What about content to help customers get the most out of your product or service?</p>

3. Integrate Across Channels

Thanks to technology, the Internet and social media, consumers move effortlessly between channels or platforms. Research suggests that consumers don't differentiate between an online or offline experience, they just want one experience that satisfies their needs.

The focus must begin with helping the consumer, making their lives easier, more convenient. Starbucks has been a pioneer in integrating technology and data to create a seamless customer experience.

Increasingly consumers are researching or beginning transactions on one device or platform then continuing their path to purchase on another (for example, filling their shopping cart on a smartphone then finishing the transaction on a PC at home). Remove obstacles and allow customers to choose how and when they want to interact.

The primary goal is a consistent, seamless customer experience across all channels, so the consumer will be able to choose the path that provides the most value for them; this includes making it easy for them to help and share with other customers.

One way to approach this challenge is bringing together colleagues from different disciplines for some role playing. Assign some groups to play key internal and external roles, then create an exercise or scenario and see what happens. We've used this technique when conducting workshops, and clients are often surprised how much learning and sharing can occur in one day.

Starbucks

Options - text, email, phone, plastic card, gift card, direct mail, website



Your Marketing

Do you have a presence on multiple channels?

Are these channels connected?

Are your customers able to interact with ease using their channel of preference?

4. Mobile First Strategy

Starbucks has been a leader in experimenting with mobile marketing strategies that offer utility, enabling consumers more choices to enjoy the Starbucks experience.

One doesn't have to look far to find research that reveals consumers are increasingly using smart devices to connect, research, and shop. We have seen studies that indicate smart devices will soon outsell personal computers.

There are a many considerations required for an effective mobile strategy, but here, we'll only touch on a few. Start by making sure your web presence is accessible from a smartphone or tablet. Keep in mind that many consumers now read their email using smartphones and tablets, so don't overlook the basics when thinking about this strategy.

A mobile strategy should take into account factors like the physical location of the consumer and an understanding of the type of information they are looking for. Because of the limitations of smartphones and tablets, the experience must be tailored to the user needs. Most of these users are active and on-the-go. They will have little patience for scrolling, slow loading, confusing experiences.

Starbucks	Your Marketing
Among the first to create app that allowed purchase payment using phone.	Have you viewed your site from mobile devices?

Starbucks	Your Marketing
<p>Full functionality of web site managing account. Payment, transfer, gift, purchasing, redeeming rewards One can access their account with full functionality from the web or a smart device.</p> <p>When connected customers are able to redeem rewards or gifts, purchase gifts, add or transfer money, make purchases</p> 	<p>Have you purchased products or services from these devices? How about customer service questions or transactions?</p> <p>If a consumer researches on one device then continues the journey from another device is it seamless?</p> <p>How can you identify and remove obstacles?</p>

5. Social CRM

Starbucks recognizes that coffee is a social product. Their retail stores are designed to facilitate social connection; however, they have extended this connection through their social presence on multiple digital platforms.

While one can argue that all CRM is social, keeping track of consumer behavior across multiple channels is challenging. It requires accurate and timely information.

Make it easy for consumers to share their experiences with your brand to their network. Facilitate conversations, listen and encourage feedback because people do business with those they like and trust. Being authentic and human is a great way to build trust.

Starbucks	Your Marketing
Designed programs that connect and engage consumers beyond just buying products.	Do you have a formal program that recognizes customers who purchase or use your products or services?
	Are you diligent to align your internal resources (front-line and behind-the-scenes colleagues) with current programs and promotions?

Starbucks

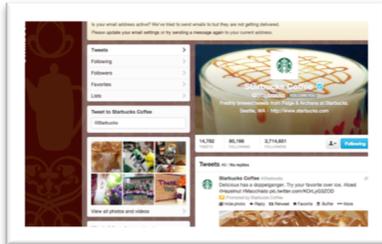
Your Marketing

Extensive Social presence

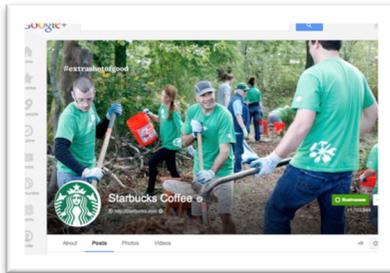
Do you have an active presence on social media channels?

Twitter

If you answered yes, who is responsible for monitoring and responding?



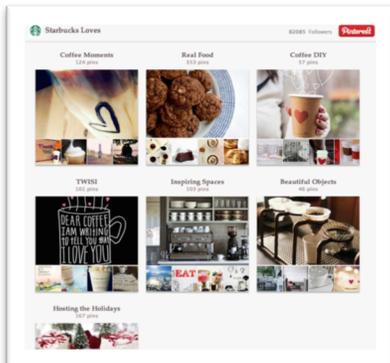
Google Plus



Facebook



Pinterest



6. Engage Consumers

Consumers want to have input, often they are willing to provide suggestions, feedback, willing to help even answer questions. Starbucks has an entire platform to allow them to listen to consumers. Equally important, they provide feedback and highlight results.

Even if you don't build an idea platform, there are ways to engage consumers day to day. If you do have a presence on social media, then monitoring and responding to comments is one important way to engage.

Allowing consumers to control what they receive, and how often they receive messages is also very important. If you don't have the technology to allow them to manage the communications from you, then be vigilant about observing the response behaviors from each communication. It's a good idea to create a touchpoint map so you will have a clear picture of the amount of communications your consumers are receiving.

Starbucks	Your Marketing
<p>My Idea site</p> 	<p>Do you have a plan for monitoring and commenting where you have a social media presence?</p>
<p>Size of following, posting comments reveals active presence</p>	<p>Who is responsible for monitoring and coordinating feedback and responses internally?</p>
	<p>Do you have a system of tracking communications against your database lists?</p>

Next Steps

Auditing your marketing communications using this process is a good start; however, the new landscape is fluid. If you don't consistently monitor and adapt, you will quickly lose relevance.

Listen to your staff, challenge, engage and encourage them to be active participants in creating a differentiating customer experience. Empower them to be part of the solution.

Marketers often express a fear of venturing into social media for fear they will lose control. We submit: the greater fear should be avoiding the challenges of a social business.

Future trends suggest it's only a matter of time before businesses that fail to adapt to social business practices may find themselves out of business. We aren't suggesting that adopting a new social business mindset is easy or painless; in fact, it requires a great deal of experimenting and learning. As with most endeavors, the sooner you begin to explore this new land of opportunity, the sooner you will reap the benefits.

Seem overwhelming?

Perhaps we can help you get started...Or, maybe you got started...but then got stuck. We'd be happy to help you.

Regardless of the size of your company, [Strategic Marketing Solutions](#) can work with you to successfully incorporate aspects of Starbucks marketing strategy and techniques into your business marketing plan.

Even if you just need help brainstorming how to fill out the chart, sometimes it helps to talk about the challenges, get a different perspective. We are excited about today's marketing. We view today's challenges as opportunities to be seized. Contact us!

Yes, I want a FREE Consultation!