

GUIDE TO SOCIAL COMMERCE: POWER CONNECTIONS TO GENERATE REVENUE



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Introduction

With the widespread adoption of social media across markets and demographics throughout the world, brands have increasingly turned to social media platforms to generate and increase revenue via social commerce. There are two main types of social activity that help catalyze e-commerce via Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and share buttons across the open web:

- ▶ Interaction, conversation and engagement
- ▶ Social sharing and recommendations between connections

Keeping these types of social activities in mind, it is important to look closely at potential conduits to the conversion funnel for sales – messaging context and custom content on all social platforms.

What makes social commerce so powerful? Social actions position consumers deep in the funnel because they come from highly qualified consumers expressing an affinity for a brand, thus increasing the probability of intent to purchase.

In this white paper, learn effective strategies to utilize Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and social sharing in an effort to power commerce and drive sales.

Facebook



Within Facebook, there are a number of pathways for brands to drive consumers to a point of purchase online. Three strategies, in particular, have proven successful across a number of brands:

- ▶ Publish limited-time offers via the Wall and tabs
- ▶ Highlight individual products across Facebook
- ▶ Showcase a gallery of related products

Build-A-Bear Workshop uses Wall Posts to drive fans from its Wall and fans' News Feed to its website. The discount is for free shipping, but at the same time, Build-A-Bear encourages conversation on the Wall within the Posts.



Publish limited-time offers via the Wall and tabs

- ▶ **Use status updates to present limited-time offers.** Brands can quickly and easily create status updates that generate a high number of Impressions. Since Facebook users spend the bulk of their time on their News Feeds, the content reaches a significant number of brands' fans.
- ▶ **Use tabs to create an incentive for fan growth.** By placing limited-time offers on tabs, brands can provide exclusive content solely to fans of their Pages. If the offer is compelling enough, users will 'like' the brand, which ultimately becomes a win from a fan growth perspective.

Facebook

(Continued)



Gilt Groupe uses a tab to provide exclusive Facebook-only offers to its fans. Fans are rewarded with significant savings just by clicking through to its Facebook Page. From the tab, fans can sign in to their Gilt Groupe memberships and add to their carts directly from Facebook.

The screenshot displays the Gilt Facebook page interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links for 'Wall', 'Support', 'Gilt.com Sneak Peek', '+ Share Store', and 'Shop Gilt.com'. The main header features the 'GILT' logo with 'FAN EXCLUSIVE SALES' and a 'Sales' dropdown menu. A 'Cart (0)' icon is visible in the top right. Below the header, the page is divided into several sections:

- Today's Exclusive Facebook Sales:** This section features two main promotional tiles. The first is for 'MEN' with the headline 'Get the Look: Weekend Wear' and an image of a man in a dark jacket. The second is for 'HOME' with the headline 'Atticus Home: Serveware & Accessories' and an image of a white pitcher and a wooden bowl. Both tiles include 'Like' buttons and 'View All' links.
- Upcoming Exclusive Facebook Sales:** This section shows two upcoming sale tiles. The first is for 'HOME' titled 'HomArt Home Accessories' with a start date of '09/27 NOON ET'. The second is for 'HOME' titled 'Mirror Image' with a start date of '09/28 NOON ET'.
- Featured Sales on Gilt.com:** This section displays four featured sales tiles with right-pointing arrows. The tiles are: 'EMU Australia' (showing a chair and ottoman), 'Get Dressed Up: Evening Attire' (showing a man in a suit), 'Safavieh Furniture & Lighting' (showing a yellow chair and a lamp), and 'D&G Junior Apparel: Infant to Tween' (showing children's clothing).

At the bottom of the page, there is a navigation bar with the text 'Shop on Gilt.com:' followed by category links: 'Women (11)', 'Men (13)', 'Home (5)', and 'Children (15)'.



Facebook

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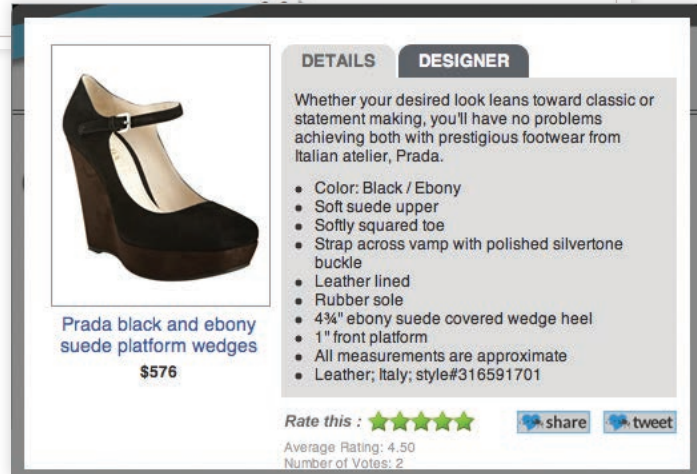
Under Armour used its Wall to highlight a particular product: a pair of cleats from NFL quarterback Cam Newton. The Post was timely as it was posted just hours before Newton actually wore the shoes during a game.

Highlight individual products across Facebook

- ▶ **Promote relevant products that are topical to current news, season and trends.** To reach fans through the clutter of their News Feed, highlight a product that appeals to a large number of fans at the current time. In doing so, fans are more likely to click through to the point of purchase.
- ▶ **Use status updates to post product images.** Attach an image of the product that appears in fans' News Feeds, and include a link so that interested users can head directly to the point of purchase.
- ▶ **Use the larger tab canvas to highlight products.** Tabs provide a larger area than the Wall in which brands can promote a product. Use the space to display images, descriptions, pricing and reviews, which ultimately help make consumers more highly qualified purchasers.



BlueFly uses space on its tab to promote a gallery of shoes. When users click a particular shoe, a modal (modern version of a pop-up) window opens to provide additional product details, including price, ratings and product specifications.



Showcase a gallery of related products

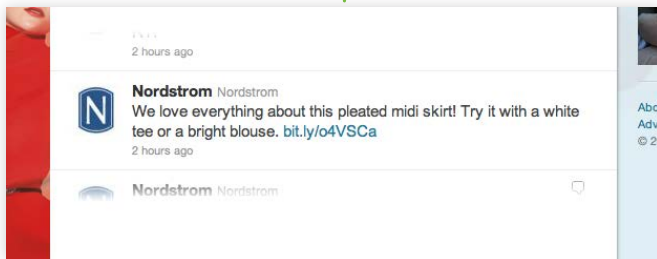
- ▶ **Present related products within the same area on a tab.** Give users the ability to click through products within a photo gallery and embed links within each photo to allow brands to drive users to a point of sale. Highlight additional features and pricing, and if possible, include video and flash content to give users an enriching and engaging experience.
- ▶ **Give users a voice.** Allow users to state preferences on products by creating polls in which users can vote for their favorite items or comment on the items they like best. Providing users the power to express themselves creates a feeling of value.



Twitter has its own unique features that allow brands to drive social commerce in ways that are both similar to and different from other social platforms. When it comes to Twitter, there are three main conduits for brands to drive to social commerce:

- ▶ Provide offers within time-sensitive campaigns
- ▶ Leverage Twitter to drive traffic to other social networks
- ▶ Brand the Twitter page

Nordstrom uses its Twitter feed to promote an individual product. Beyond simply listing the product with a link, the content contains the word “We” to give the account its own personality and a recommendation that catches a follower’s eye.



Provide offers within time-sensitive campaigns

- ▶ **Remember Twitter’s time sensitivity.** Optimizing times when the greatest number of followers see a tweet containing an offer is critical to garnering the largest number of Impressions. Retweets are arguably even more important to extend the shelf life of a tweet and to make the offer truly viral.
- ▶ **Write meaningful and concise tweets.** Twitter’s 140-character limit means it is imperative to make offer and product descriptions short and direct. Keep in mind that any image links or point-of-sale links take up characters. Recognize whether followers are more likely to click shortened URLs versus full-length or branded URLs.



Twitter (Continued)

Leverage Twitter to drive traffic to other social networks and the open web

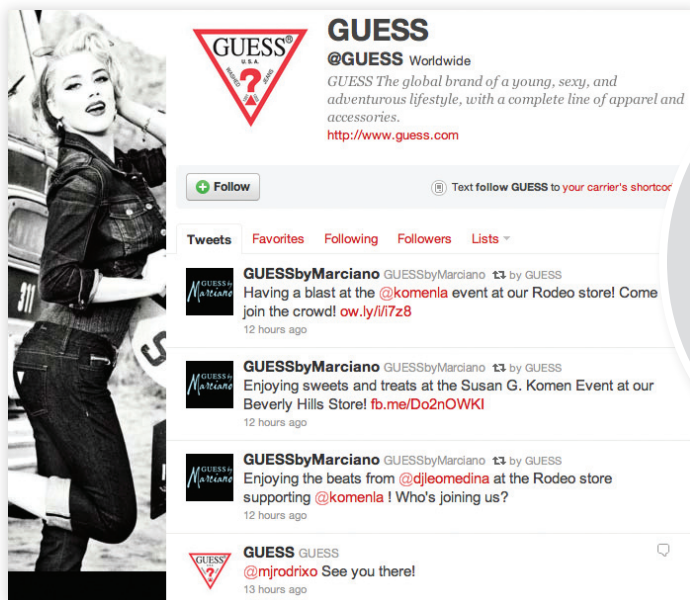
- ▶ **Tweets cannot hold a lot of content, but they can take users to websites that do.** Other social networks, such as YouTube and Facebook, are better suited to express detailed sentiment. But many users keep Twitter open on their computer and mobile phones, whether it's in a browser or open on the desktop using a third party application. Twitter can take an already captive audience and redirect it to other social networks, thus starting the sales conversion process.



NintendoAmerica riles up its Twitter followers about the new Super Mario 3D Land by providing them a sneak peek at the new game. The link drives its followers to YouTube where they can watch the new trailer.

Brand the Twitter page

- ▶ **Create a unified brand presence.** Customize the background image of the Twitter page to create a cohesive look and feel when users visit a brand's timeline. Creating a branded background helps ease users' concerns regarding brand authenticity and creates a unified presence across all digital platforms.

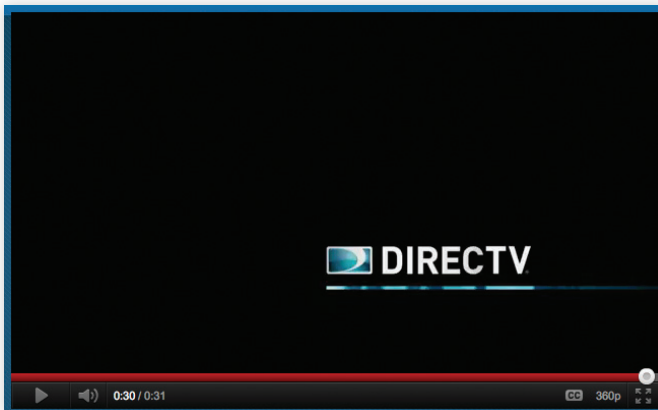


GUESS brands its Twitter page to create a cohesive look and feel that matches the overall aesthetic of its brand. The account logo and the background image, which stretch across the entire page and behind the main text, gives users the same feeling it would if they were on GUESS website.



YouTube's role in the social commerce funnel is slightly different than that of other social networks. The video platform has a great deal of functionality, but it is best served for creating awareness and interest about a brand's campaign and initiatives. There are three uses for YouTube within the context of social commerce for brands:

- ▶ Use branded channels and videos
- ▶ Drive brand interest using videos
- ▶ Create a viral brand experience by embedding videos outside of YouTube



DIRECTV
provides a branded experience on its YouTube channel. The background image provides users with a look that exudes the brand's aesthetic, and creates comfort and familiarity for the user immediately upon landing on the channel.

Use branded channels and videos

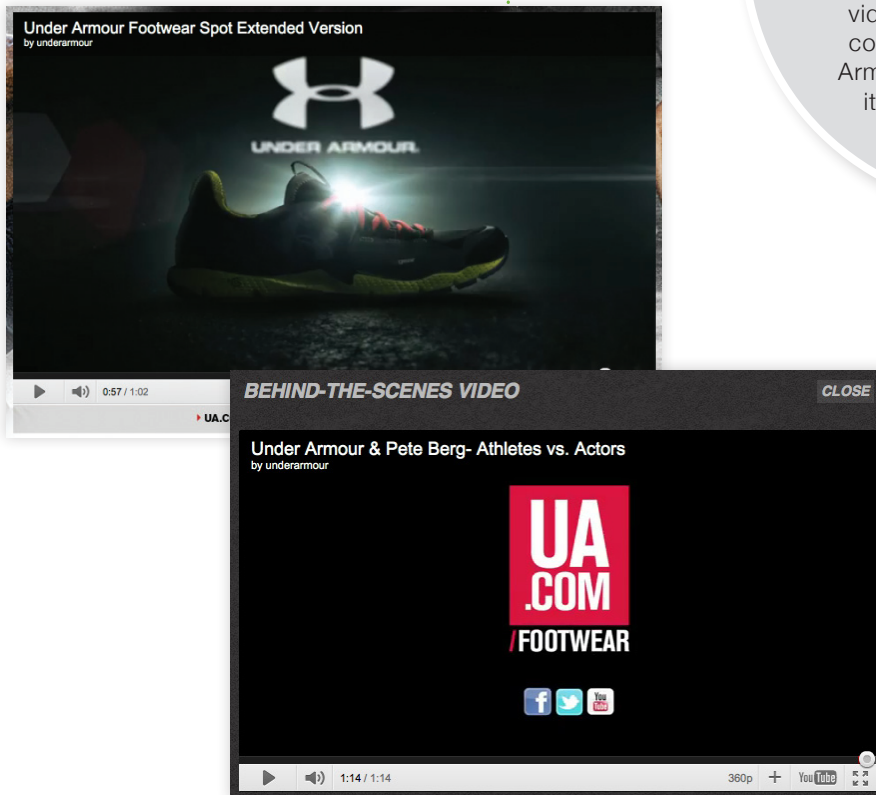
- ▶ **Create a branded channel with branded videos.** Customize the YouTube channel page with a branded background to provide familiarity to users. For videos hosted in the channel, place recognizable brand logos and content to create a hub of brand videos whose legitimacy is unquestioned by users.



YouTube (Continued)

Under Armour's

YouTube presence expands outside the scope of the video screen. In the first video, persistent links below the video player send users off to various areas of the Under Armour website. In the second video, a screen at the video's conclusion calls out to Under Armour's footwear website and its presence on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.



Drive brand interest using videos

- ▶ **Use small additives within and around videos to continue the path to point of purchase.** Well-placed links within a video or below the video player, and clickable paid lines laid on top of a video, are great ways to drive traffic to websites directly from the video. As users watch a video, their eyes are bound to wander around the video, and links relevant to the video content have the most momentum.



YouTube

(Continued)

Create a viral brand experience by embedding videos outside of YouTube

- ▶ **Grab an embed code and place it anywhere on the web.** Videos can be placed across social networks, blogs, websites and a number of other places. YouTube videos are great for sharing because of their ease of use and familiarity across the web. Engaging content can easily become viral, in turn spreading brand messaging. Additionally, and as noted above, using small additives within and around videos are great ways to drive traffic to websites directly from the video and continue down the path to point of purchase.



HP Play uses its tab on Facebook to promote artist Ellie Goulding by embedding her YouTube videos directly on Facebook. The YouTube player's recognizable features remain intact.

KIROTV.com writes a blog post about a Nordstrom event, and uses a video created by Nordstrom to display the event in ways that scope beyond text. The video was initially uploaded to YouTube, but is then embedded on the blog, giving it additional viral reach.



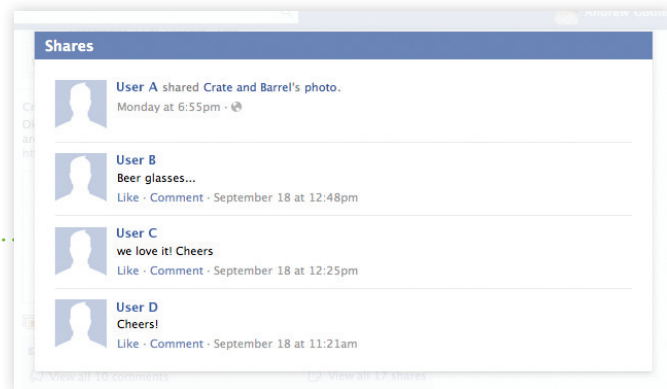


Share Buttons

Sharing is the essence of social networks. Content that is shared across Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and other social networks is one of the most effective ways to drive social commerce. Because users are more likely to purchase something recommended via word of mouth, any brand's goal should be to optimize the number of shares for a product or offer presented within these networks. There are three important considerations for brands when it comes to sharing:

- ▶ Share on Facebook
- ▶ Share across the open web
- ▶ Find new ways to prompt users to share

Because Facebook now tracks 'shares' for any Post, brands see how many users have broadcasted its updates across users' communities of Facebook friends. **Crate & Barrel's** photo had numerous 'shares,' and several users added their own commentary to the photo.



Share on Facebook

- ▶ **Every Post on Facebook has a 'Share' button. Promote it.** Users can take any piece of content, link, photo or video and send it out to their communities of Facebook friends. Facebook recently unveiled the ability to track the number of times content is shared. In order to hone in on effective content creation strategy, track both the content that becomes viral as well as the content that gains few Impressions.

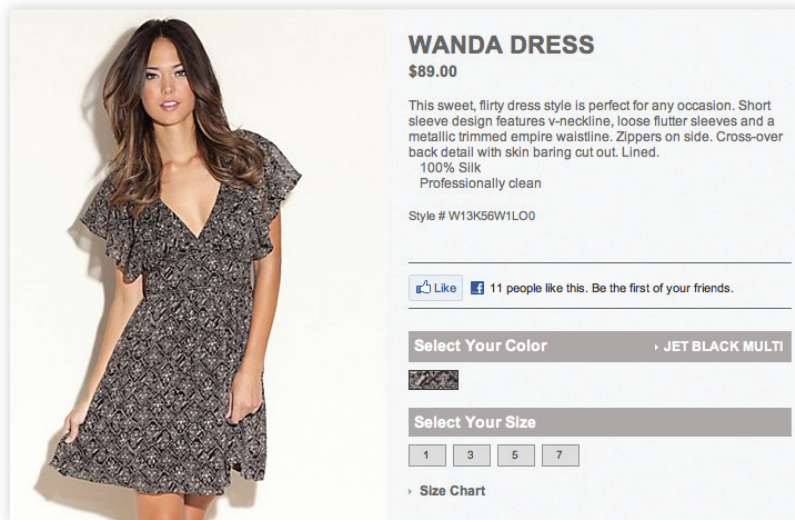


Share Buttons

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Sharing across the open web

- ▶ **Place 'Share' buttons on products pages.** Give users the ability to do more than just browse or purchases products. Allow them the power to blast out product recommendations to hundreds or thousands of connections.
- ▶ **Place 'Like' buttons on product pages.** The 'Like' button provides users with familiar social functionality to voice support. Users can also see whether any of their connections have 'liked' the product directly on the page.



GUESS product pages contain a Facebook 'Like' button, which users can click to express interest or support for a particular item. If a user's friend already 'liked' that product, the user sees it to the right of the 'Like' button.



Share Buttons

(Continued)

Finding new ways to prompt users to share

- ▶ **Use the power of consensus.** With popular user review sites like Yelp, a greater emphasis has been placed on consensus evaluations than ever before. It is not uncommon for users to consult Yelp before making restaurant reservations or for users to read reviews on Amazon before making purchases. Some brands have begun allowing shoppers to share reviews from their websites out to social networks.
- ▶ **Shares are more than just words on a page.** When users share reviews to their social networks, the share serves two purposes: it drives traffic back to the product page via a first-hand recommendation and it provides a useful recommendation directly from a user on the website.

QVC allows its consumers to share product reviews from its website directly on Facebook or Twitter. If a review is particularly helpful, a consumer can indicate so by sharing that information with his or her own social community of connections, further qualifying the product.

Aerosoles Rollatini Dress Pumps

QVC Price: **\$79.00** Save! Buy two or more and save on S & H. See Details

Shipping & Handling: \$6.97

Select Size: 5M 5.5M 6M 6.5M 7M 7.5M 8M 8.5M 9M 9.5M 10M 10.5M 11M 12M

Select Color: [Brown] [Black]

Select Quantity: 1 Select Gift Options: None

ADD TO CART or **SPEED BUY**

ADD TO WISH LIST

1 Customer Reviews Write a Review

Community Q&A Be the first to ask a question.

Navy wonderful Posted by Reeseym 11-13-11 (read all my reviews)

Overall Rating ★★★★★

"I have been searching for Navy shoes forever and I finally found the perfect pair. I love these shoes! The rubber sole will be great when the weather gets bad, the leather is super soft and flexible and the heel height is great. I normally wear between an 8.5 and 9 so I ordered the 9. They are a tiny bit big but if I wear with socks they are ok. I think the 8.5 would have been too small. The reason I gave them 4 stars is the price. I normally do not spend this much on shoes but hopefully they will last and \$ = quality."

Was this review helpful to you? Yes | No Report Inappropriate Review

Share this Review: [Facebook] [Twitter] [LinkedIn]



Conclusion

Social commerce is driven by a number of factors, and determining which factors hold the most weight is no easy task. Fortunately, there are trends and strategies that have proven effective in an effort to increase revenue using social networks.

Three overarching themes, presented in this white paper, help drive commerce using the power of social networks.

- ▶ **Content** - Create content that is tailored to maximize the potential of various social networks. Avoid using a one size-fits-all approach.
- ▶ **Branding** - Because anybody can create a page and impersonate a brand, steps need to be taken to create a unified brand aesthetic across all digital platforms to reassure users they are in the right place.
- ▶ **Sharing** - Connections across all social networks can provide information with the bonus of a personal recommendation, driving commerce in a way that even widespread advertising cannot.

Any comments?

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