



Dec 18, 2008

How To #CS1400:

[How to Use Social Media to Boost SEO: 5 Strategies](#)

SUMMARY: You've adopted SEO best practices for website architecture, content and inbound links. Where do you turn next?

Social media channels can create keyword-rich content and links that boost your search rankings. Here are 5 strategies for generating conversations and links in the Web 2.0 world from a company that has achieved the top organic placement for several industry terms.

Marketers looking for new SEO tactics often focus on the mechanics of search engines. Instead, marketers should examine the kind of sites that increasingly show up in search results, says John Fischer, Owner, Sticker Giant, a site that has achieved the top organic placement for terms like "Stickers" and "Custom Stickers."

"If you scan the first page of results, more and more sites come up that are social networking sites," he says. "You find Twitter, Facebook, blogs, videos -- these are not static websites. These are things that have a human being front and center."

The rise of these social media sites offers marketers a new channel for communicating with customers to create enormous SEO benefits. By reaching out to the members of those communities and encouraging customers to talk about your company and products, you can create keyword-rich content and inbound links that raise your profile with the search-engine spiders.

Fischer and his team use a wide-ranging approach to social media that's helped their website, stickergiant.com, dominate their industry's organic rankings. The site is the number-one result on Google for such broad terms as:

- o Stickers
- o Custom stickers
- o Sticker printing
- o Political stickers
- o Funny stickers

Top five strategies for using social media channels in SEO efforts:

Strategy #1. Be everywhere your customers are

Fischer's social media efforts encourage conversations about Sticker Giant all over the Web. For that reason, his team participates in seven major social media channels:

- o Blip.tv
- o Facebook
- o Flickr
- o LinkedIn
- o MySpace
- o Twitter
- o YouTube

“When I was in college, I tried to go to all the parties,” says Fischer. “Now you can be at all the parties at the same time.”

The team includes links to each of those accounts on the company’s blog page.

Strategy #2. Choose a real person to interact with social communities

Fischer manages and maintains the accounts personally – although his team uses Sticker Giant for the account name in each of those online communities.

“It’s all me in these communities -- John Fischer, not Sticker Giant,” he says. “It shows customers that I’m a real person who is here to help you. I’m not going to rip you off.”

In each account, Fischer provides his own email address and phone number to encourage interaction with customers.

Strategy #3. Blog about your customers and their passions

Like many marketers, Fischer uses his blog as a cornerstone of his SEO efforts. Blogs create lots of new content and generate links back to your site that help with search engine coverage.

Rather than focus on the company itself, Fischer uses his blog to highlight interesting customers and the stickers they’ve created.

“People are excited about their business, their club, their band -- whatever it is they’re promoting,” says Fischer. “That’s what the sticker is about and that’s what I want to talk about.”

- Fischer’s blog posts feature images of new customers’ stickers, along with:

- o Brief stories about the customer
- o Description of their business, band, blog, etc.
- o Details about the sticker design or printing process.

- He posts a new customer story at least once a day, and often creates several new entries a day.

- By posting about a customer’s sticker project, he increases the chances of that customer linking back to the Sticker Giant blog post, and sharing the link with friends – something he sees often.

- At the bottom of each blog post, Fischer features icons that let readers share the article on community and social bookmarking sites, such as:

- o Slashdot
- o Reddit
- o Digg
- o StumbleUpon

The team also allows visitors to bookmark or add images to their social networking profiles of all the stickers sold in the Sticker Giant online store. “That generates links and sales,” he says.

Strategy #4. Create and promote videos

Search engines increasingly incorporate videos onto search results pages. Marketers need to incorporate

videos into their outreach strategies.

Fischer's team uses several approaches for creating videos:

Weekly features on new custom sticker projects

Like Fischer's blog posts, Sticker Giant's videos highlight interesting stories about printing projects and the customers who requested them. A Sticker Giant employee hosts these weekly features.

Short promotional videos for new stickers in the retail store

Fischer has a video camera in his office to record short promotional videos for new products. For example, the day after the presidential election, he created a 42-second video describing a line of new Obama victory stickers.

Instructional videos about Sticker Giant

Fischer also creates videos that describe Sticker Giant's services and product offerings. For example, one video explains the company's sticker product line for rapid turnaround projects. Another introduces customers to the company's client services team.

"Thank You" videos for custom orders

Fischer also has recorded three short videos of himself thanking customers for interacting with the company:

- o Thank you for requesting information about custom printing
- o Thank you for submitting material for a custom printing project
- o Thank you for ordering a sticker from a retail store

The team emails the appropriate video to customers. The goal is to get them to tell their friends about the video or post it to their blog or social networking page.

Strategy #5. Talk on Twitter, but listen too

Fischer is a big Twitter fan. It gives him the ability to stay in frequent communication with customers and friends. Sticker Giant's Twitter account has 484 followers and, as with all the company's other social media accounts, Fischer handles most of the communication in the channel.

Besides personal conversations with friends, Fischer's typical posts include:

- Notifications of new blog posts, with a link to the page.
- Random samplings of recent purchases from Sticker Giant's retail store.

Several times a day, Fischer will tweet the first name and location of a new customer, along with a link to the sticker they bought, such as, "Anna from PA just bought one of these".

"Most people on Twitter know Sticker Giant as a printing company, so those Tweets are out there to say we have all this other cool stuff, too."

Fischer also monitors Twitter posts to keep track of discussions related to stickers.

- The team uses RSS feeds from Twitter monitoring services, such as TweetScan, to update them on any tweets related to stickers.
- An employee monitors those feeds and looks for opportunities to join the conversation with relevant

information. For example, if a Twitter user asks the community for advice about a sticker printing project, the team member can offer technical advice to begin a conversation.

All of Sticker Giant's social media efforts focus on creating links and conversations that help the team maintain their relevance and high organic rankings.

“Our increase in search rankings is because we are interacting with people more,” says Fischer. “When you do that, they're going to blog about you, Tweet about you, talk about you in their Facebook profiles. However they exchange information with their peers and friends on social networks, they're going to talk about you.”

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Comments about this How To

Dec 18, 2008 - Janet Driscoll Miller of Search Mojo says:

While I agree Social Media (some components) DO indeed help organic rankings, I think first we need to separate social media into two distinct areas: 1. Tactics that help improve organic rankings 2. Tactics that help with online PR Here are some notes about the 5 strategies listed here: Strategy #1: Be everywhere your customers are. That's true, but in order for the links from those areas to impact your organic rankings, they must be DO FOLLOW links. Unfortunately, many social media sites, including Facebook, use NO FOLLOW links, therefore they have no bearing on organic rankings for SEO, but they are good for online buzz and PR for sure. Strategy #2. Choose a real person to interact with social communities Very good point. However, what I did find in trying to build better organic rankings through social media channels was that it took much more time to build a community and get links from it vs. building directory links on various websites. Many of the community links (often found in comments of blogs) were NO FOLLOW or just took too long to cultivate with little result on SEO. Our time, we found for SEO, was better spent on directory linking. Strategy #3. Blog about your customers and their passions Great strategy to promote viral linking by customers and visitors. We found this strategy to be a good one for SEO. Strategy #4. Create and promote videos This too is great, as it serves as link bait for SEO. Strategy #5. Talk on Twitter, but listen too This strategy, like 1 and 2, involves NO FOLLOW links as Twitter is NO FOLLOW today. That being said, it's a great online PR tactic, but not a good SEO tactic per se. Your time is better spent, if SEO is your primary goal, on other tactics.

Dec 20, 2008 - Vaibhav of Envap.com says:

I truly appreciate the John's initiatives not only from in terms of building back links for organic rankings but also in terms of their effectiveness in building their brand online. Initiatives like giving importance to your customers by featuring them in their blogs resonates into building customer loyalty for your brand. Proactively reaching their prospective customers when they have certain requirements conveys how much he/she is important to them. All these measures will surely translate to sustainability of their brand. Their work is really appreciable and I would love to know more about it.

Dec 22, 2008 - Marc Engelsman of Digital Brand Expressions says:

Social media can be useful for SEO but each of these digital outposts has its own "personality" that needs to be addressed and tailored to in your communications if you want to also benefit from successfully engaging its unique community.

Dec 22, 2008 - Nina of PainFreeU.com says:

Thanks, this article was helpful. It's important to be reminded to share one's personal identity on 2.0 sites, and to create person-to-person connections.

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