

5 Types of Social Media Content Your Audience Really Wants

Why do we follow brands? What's the point? They're not our friends. We're not going to make plans with them on a Friday night or invite them to our birthday parties (though some we would if we could). Why do we let them into a world where we're sharing and consuming content from the people closest to us?

Social media has provided a unique opportunity for consumers and brands to connect on a level much deeper than that of a monetary transaction. It may sound obvious, but it's worth noting that historically, a true fan of a brand didn't have many options for celebrating his fandom. I could watch my favorite show, but I couldn't get behind-the-scenes content (unless that too was on television). I could purchase a shirt bearing the logo of my favorite team, but if I wore it in a special place (say I climbed Mount Kilimanjaro in it), how would they know? I'd have to mail them a picture, and even if they received it, where would they share it? The relationship was one-way, aside from the moment when I handed over my money and they handed me the product, or when I sat down and tuned in to my show.

There's no single reason we follow brands, but it's certainly rooted in the idea that we as consumers, supporters and fans want to have a deeper relationship with them. But just because a fan wants to follow your brand doesn't mean you're entitled to provide them with any content you wish. On the contrary, a fan can opt out of receiving your brand's content with a single click, so **it's imperative that they're receiving the type of content that's valuable to them.**

To that end, we've put together a list of **5 things your audience really wants from your social presence.**

1. Fan Content

Have you ever been to a concert and just wished that the singer would pull you onto the stage with them? Of course, that rarely happens at concerts, and chances are that if it does, you're not the one who's pulled up there. And just like a stage, social media is a platform that overlooks a large audience (often much larger than a concert audience!). The ultimate thank-you, which takes little time and hardly any money, is to celebrate the content created by fans. It's not that fans necessarily want to see content from other fans (though often they do), but that **they want to know there's a possibility that their content will be shared.**

2. Behind-the-Scenes Content

The casual fan may be content with the limited interaction they have with a brand. Simply buying and wearing the hat, eating the candy or watching the show is enough for them. But the true fans want to go deeper. They want to **look behind the curtain to a place only a certain number of people can see.** They want the unreleased footage, the photos of the actors on set and the outtakes, [like this cool photo set of actors laughing in between takes.](#)

3. Shareable Content

I used to wonder why Facebook pages like “WTF Crazy Videos” and Twitter profiles that just post quotations existed. But as spammy as they seem (I mean, with no real brand to promote, what is the page/profile manager getting out of it?), people do follow them because **they provide users with content to share**. I’m not suggesting that your brand start auto-scheduling quotations or scouring Reddit for the latest #fail video, but when determining your content plan, think about this: Where’s the content that audiences will want to share with their audiences? **Is the content you’re creating actually worth sharing?**

4. Exclusive Content

Why would a fan follow your brand’s content if everything you post there is accessible elsewhere? If you’re just posting your readily available commercials on YouTube or links to your products on Facebook and Twitter, there’s no value in actually subscribing to, liking or following your brand’s accounts. **Consider releasing content only on a specific channel**. This can be anything from video blogs to sneak previews to coupons to presale codes, but make sure fans can’t get it anywhere else. The Boston Celtics made more than \$200 off me recently when they sent a special presale code for playoff tickets to their email newsletter list. I hadn’t planned on going to a game, but when the code provided me with great seats before most other people, my plans were set. It ended up being one of the greatest games (and days) of my life.

5. Participatory Content

Most of our personal social-media activity is passive stalking...I mean monitoring. But this doesn’t mean that social media users aren’t up for a good game or contest! One of my favorite examples is from the [WGN America](#) (a Story client) How I Met Your Mother Facebook page, where WGNA has created albums of its fans suiting up (an homage to Neil Patrick Harris’s character, Barney Stinson) as part of a yearly “International Suit Up Day.” **Giving your fans a way to participate** (especially if prizes are involved) is a great means of activating them, and in turn they’ll be on the lookout for your content.

Every brand is different, so not all this content is applicable to every brand; but try to be open to sharing new types of content. It not only solidifies the relationship between your brand and its fans, but also gives your fans a reason to follow it.

Read more from Jon [here](#).