

The Evolution of Social Media Marketing: 9 trends to know now.

It's hard to think of a time when social media didn't exist—when people of all ages weren't snapping photos of their food, sharing “selfies” with their friends and shaking hands with future LinkedIn connections. And maybe that's because the idea of social media has actually been around **since the 70s**, when a website gave users the option to log in and interact with content for the very first time. From there, users were introduced to chat rooms, live journals, photo sharing and video sharing sites. And in 2003, when MySpace launched, users were given access to features they'd never had before. They could send private messages and post public comments. They could even post public bulletins that all their friends would see. In 2006, Facebook expanded upon those features. Then Twitter did. Then Tumblr. Then Snapchat. Then Instagram. Then Vine. And the list goes on.

Brogan & Partners has been there since the beginning. From brand engagement to community management to content creation, we evolve with every new social channel—refining our strategies every time a new trend takes off. Because we know the idea of social media has come far from what it once was, and it continues to change every day.

Social media is changing rapidly. And while some may think it's still in its adolescent years, in some ways, it's also growing up. Audiences are getting smarter. Platforms are recognizing innovative ways to make money. Marketers are learning the best ways to engage. And these changes are moving social media closer and closer to other kinds of marketing mediums.

In this whitepaper, we'll explore the Evolution of Social Media Marketing and the nine trends you need to know now.

1. Social visualization is shifting content strategies.

A picture is worth a thousand words—which is infinitely more than 140 characters. It's why Twitter launched TwitPic and Periscope. It's why Pinterest was the **fastest-growing social network** in 2014. It's how Instagram inspired the photo editing apps on almost everyone's' smartphones. And it also explains the spontaneous trajectory of stories on Snapchat.

Whether you're a brand or a person, visuals are becoming your timeline, your story and your history. And because of that, maintaining your brand standards and the quality of your visual content is even more important today than it was yesterday.

With social visualization, your social strategy must be crafted with the same care as all of your branding materials, and it must have the same level of quality, conceptual content and design.



DID YOU KNOW?

Scleroderma can involve almost **EVERY** organ system in the body.

 **Scleroderma Foundation Michigan Chapter**
added a new photo.
Social Services · 1,559 Likes · October 22, 2014 · 

29 Likes · 1 Comment · 44 Shares



“WORRY LOOKS BACK,
HOPE
looks forward,
BUT FAITH ALWAYS
LOOKS up.”

Umar Naeem



 **Scleroderma Foundation Michigan Chapter**
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Social Services · 1,559 Likes · August 13, 2014 · 

44 Likes · 2 Comments · 23 Shares



Stretch

SCLERODERMA TIP #1

 **Scleroderma Foundation Michigan Chapter**
Social Services · 1,559 Likes · June 12 · 

When you suffer from muscle stiffness, crawling back into bed may seem like the most appealing option, but exercise is actually the best way to relieve your discomfort. Try this simple stretch to loosen up your muscles. Your body will thank you. <http://bit.ly/1C2TVng>

21 Likes · 1 Comment · 15 Shares

2. Big idea concepts are driving brand engagement.

Marketing has always been about the big ideas—and social media should be, too. Social, like any medium, should be anchored in the big ideas of your brand and business goals. And it needs to be just as compelling.

Ultimately, brands need to treat social like everything else: as an important, integrated marketing medium that demands the same strategic attention and creativity as all other extensions of the brand.

For one of our clients, the Michigan Department of Community Health, we developed a powerful brand engagement campaign called MI Healthier Tomorrow—encouraging people to pledge to lose 10% of their body weight. It had roots in outdoor, radio, print and mobile. But it also grew wildly on social media.

As of today, more than 32,000 people have taken the MI Healthier Tomorrow pledge, and the campaign continues to support them with ongoing text messages, emails and Facebook status updates that give tips for a healthier tomorrow.



3. Gamification is making social media more fun.

Within the past five years, gamification has turned into one of the biggest industry buzzwords. While developing marketing plans, business proposals, and editorial calendars, advertisers commonly ask their teams, “What can we do to increase engagement?” And as most have found, the answer is gamification.

So, what exactly is gamification? To put it simply, it’s a piece of creative that encourages your audience to play a game. Maybe there’s an opportunity to score points, compete with others, win a prize, or maybe it’s just a chance to show off your brand personality—proving you’re more than just a product or a service.

The biggest benefit of gamification is that it adds an element of fun to your social media channels. And when something is fun, users are more likely to engage with it... a lot more likely. **Studies have shown** gamification can lead to a 100 to 150 percent increase in engagement.



4. More and more users are tuning in to video.

If you haven't already noticed, video has taken over the social media space. YouTube now has more than **one billion users** generating billions of views every day—with 300 hours of video being uploaded every minute. Snapchat comes in a (kind of) close second, with **100 million users** accessing the platform on a daily basis. Over on Vine, **40 million users** are sharing videos each day. Periscope hit **one million users** in the first 10 days. Meerkat is currently home to **156,000 users**. And these numbers are only growing.



Which video site is the best fit for your brand? It all comes down to these three questions:

- What is your objective?
- Where is your audience?
- What is your message?

5. Native advertising is on the rise.

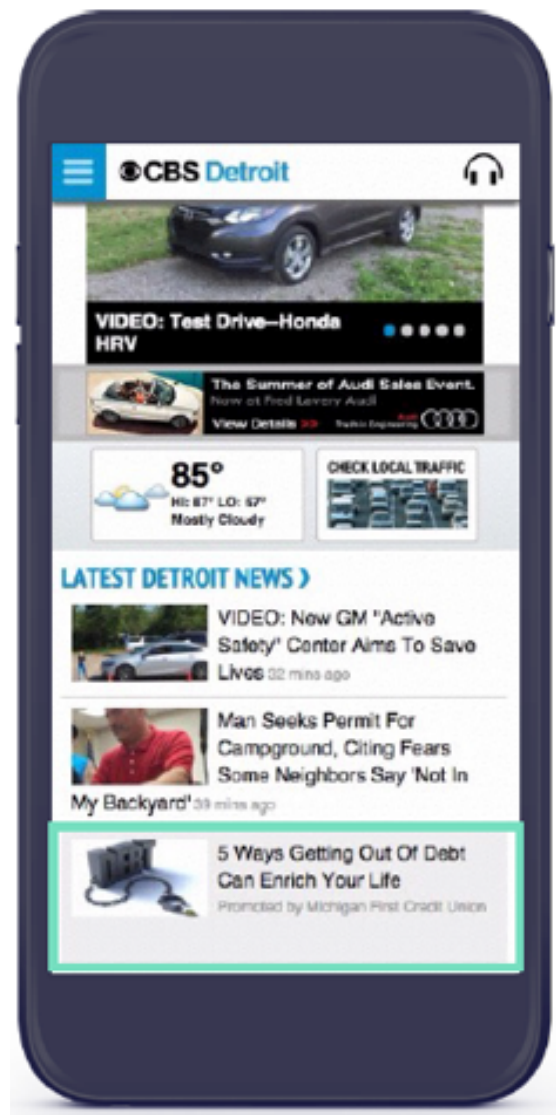
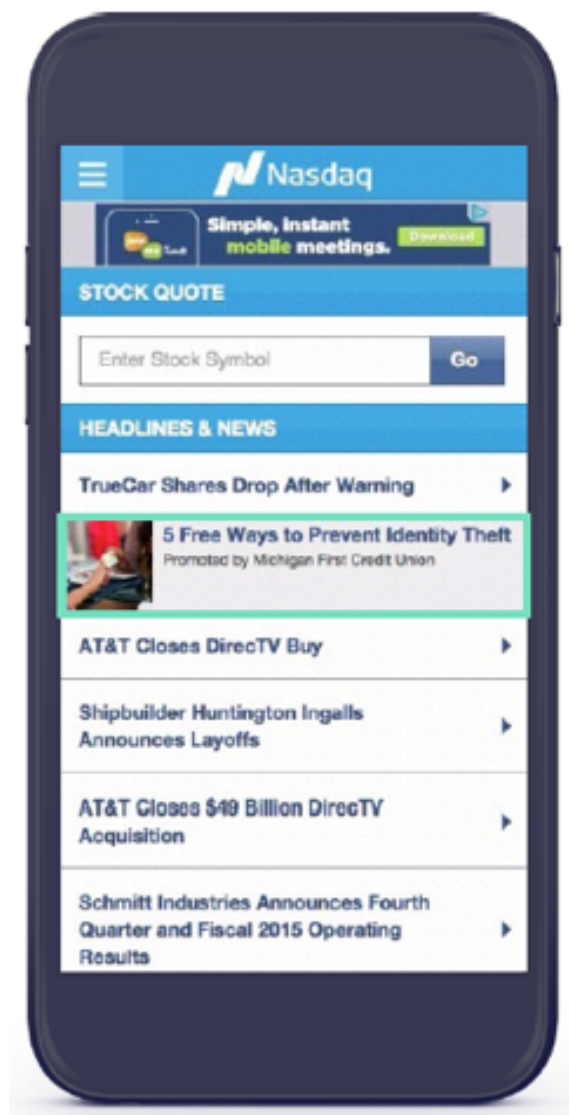
You've probably heard of native advertising. But, what is it?

Perhaps the easiest way to describe it is content that seamlessly integrates with a site, as opposed to interrupting it. Ultimately, it's advertising that looks like content. And it's growing in social media because of how personal the platforms are.

Many times, we've used Facebook promoted posts and sponsored stories for our clients. They're easy, inexpensive, and you can target them with precision—by gender, age, region, career, interest, etc. Native advertising also allowed our client, Michigan First Credit Union, to have their blog content featured in context of other news.

Some **fun facts** about native advertising:

- People view native ads 53% more than banner ads.
- Native advertising generates up to an 82% increase in brand lift.
- Purchase intent is 53% higher with native ads.



6. Social channels are changing regularly, and so are audiences.

As much as you may want, you can't be all things to all people—especially on social media. On each channel, you're talking to people of different ages, in different regions, with different interests. And with that, the challenge becomes reaching the right audience, on the right channel, with the right content, at the right time.

But... how can you do that?

We recommend evaluating your existing social platforms often (monthly, quarterly, annually) to identify who your audience actually is—because it can change often. Take a look at the insights to see your audience in terms of gender, age, career, purchase history, interests, etc. See who's most engaged. Because as soon as you know who you're talking to, you'll be able to find new ways to build relationships, grow your page and engage with your audience—the right audience.

For our client, Frankenmuth Insurance, their Facebook page is “liked” mostly by consumers, while employees and insurance agents are closely following their LinkedIn. Thus, with different audiences comes different content. Facebook has become a place we can share consumer tips, trivia questions and current events. Meanwhile, on LinkedIn, we're sharing job openings and industry news to keep insurance professionals engaged.

Insure your *jewelry*.



 *friendly tips from*  **Frankenmuth**
INSURANCE


 **Frankenmuth Insurance**
Insurance Company · 1,501 Likes · February 16 · 🌟

Did your Valentine surprise you with an engagement ring or new earrings? Simply bringing the receipt and the appraisal to your insurance agent can get them added to your policy and give you peace of mind. Now tell us...which jewels did you get?

11 Likes · 1 Comment · 18 Shares



Facebook

Frankenmuth Insurance It's officially wedding season. Here's how you can help your policyholders simplify their insurance after they say "I do."



What your client should do after saying "I do:" Insurance for newlyweds


fmins.co · Planning a wedding can be stressful – but agents can simplify one aspect of the couple's lives with this one simple piece of advice.

 **Organic** 
Targeted to: All Followers

2,004 impressions	10 clicks	10 interactions	1.00% engagement
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Sponsor update

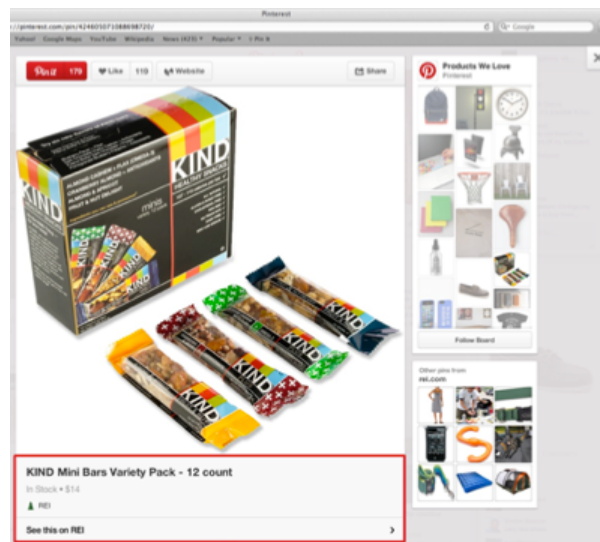
Like (9) · Comment · Pin to top · 1 month ago

 **Melanie Klebba, CAWC, Newton Bezeng** +7

LinkedIn

7. Social commerce is turning likes into sales.

Almost every social media site has found a way to monetize, but one standout is Pinterest. With the introduction of **Rich Pins**, you can now buy the items you like on the spot. Rich Pins tell consumers whether the item is in stock, how much it costs, and they take the pinner directly to the manufacturer's site to make a purchase. It's a brilliantly simple way for Pinterest to monetize without assaulting the site's aesthetics.



On Pinterest, it's **estimated** that each pin...

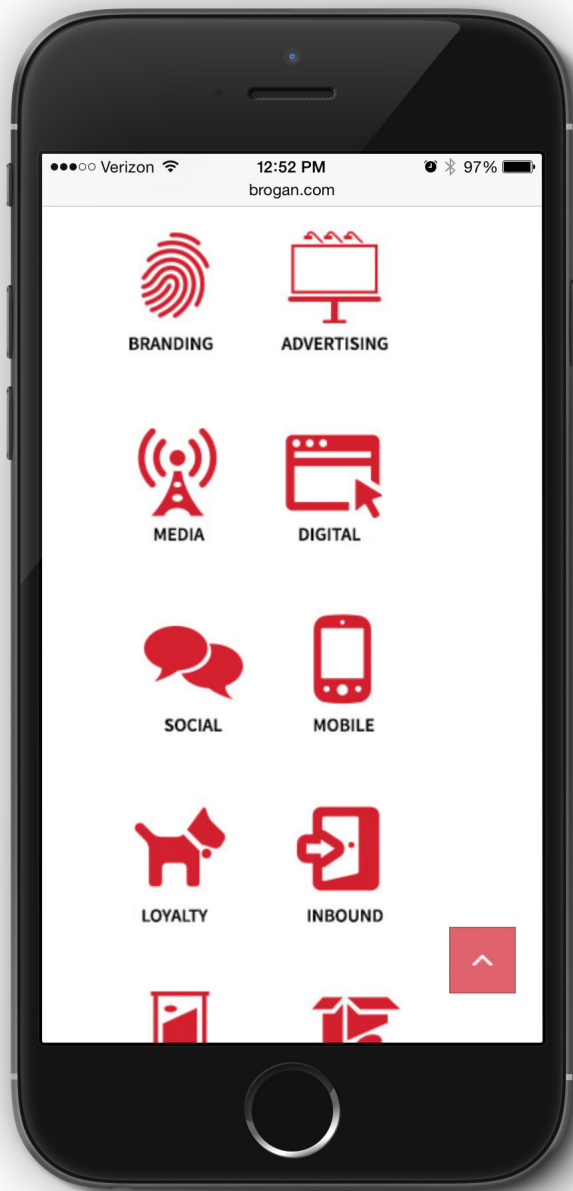
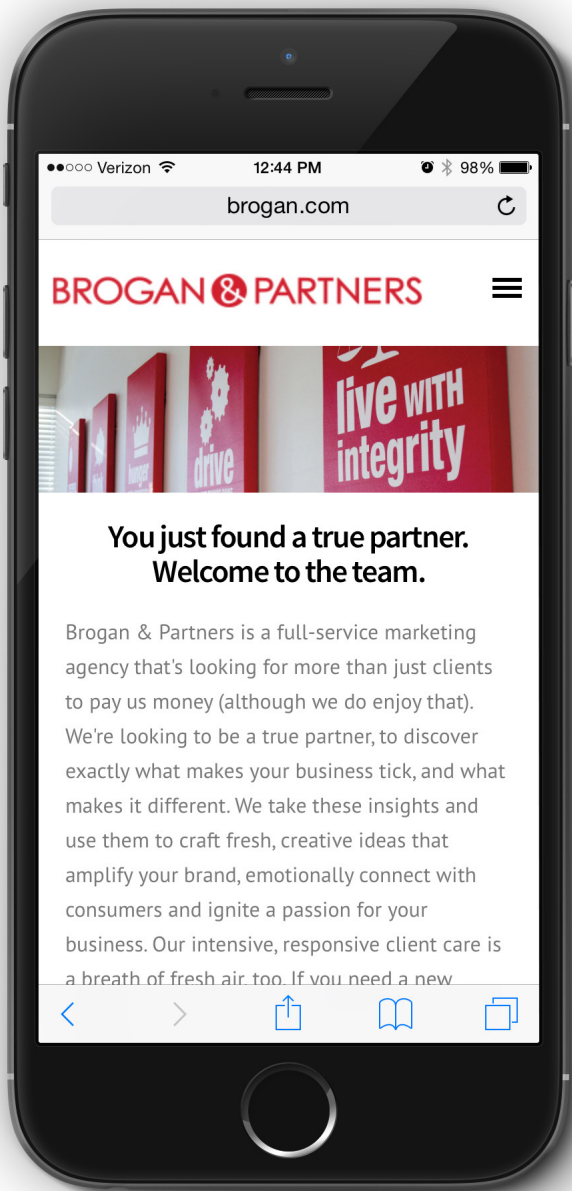
- Is worth 78 cents in sales (a 25% increase from this time last year)
- Drives two site visits and six page views
- Is repined 10 times
- Is 100 times more viral than a tweet

8. Mobile-friendly destinations are becoming mandatory.

How much do you love your smartphone?

You're not alone. It's staggering to think that **more people have mobile phones** than clean drinking water. And as technology evolves, more people are shopping on their mobile devices than desktops. In fact, according to an eMarketer study, it's predicted that **25% of all online sales will be mobile** by 2017. Pinterest is leading the way with their buy-it button. Twitter is testing in-feed purchases. That's why having a mobile-friendly site is critical.

If you don't have a mobile-friendly website, it should be at the top of your to-do list. Experts actually suggest designing your mobile destination first, instead of making it an afterthought, as many do. Earlier this year, there were rumblings that Google was going to **downgrade search engine rankings** if websites were not mobile-friendly—meaning Google wants to promote professional, high-quality sites with fresh content that are relevant to consumers. Having a responsive, fluid design shows you are.



9. Big data is now the big picture.

Social media is powerful. How powerful, you ask? Just take a look at your analytics.

Most channels come with robust insights platforms that track the amount of clicks, conversions, engagements, impressions and more. They make it easy to see how certain status updates and tweets are performing in real time. You're able to see what works, what works really well, and what isn't working as well as you hoped. That way, you can optimize accordingly to make sure your advertising efforts are moving the needle.

To keep a close eye on our client's social media channels, we create in-depth reports and dashboards on a quarterly basis—analyzing everything that happens on a channel. Then, we take those learnings and apply them in the future.

What should your brand be measuring? We recommend the following:

- Engagement (likes, comments, shares, retweets, favorites, etc.)
- Engagement rate (engagement/reach = engagement rate)
- Impressions (the amount of times your content was seen)
- Reach (the unique people your content reached)
- Number of fans/followers

The most powerful form of advertising has always been word of mouth. That's why social media has such power—and is sure to have staying power, as well. Knowing the emerging trends and how to maximize and optimize engagement with the right message to the right audience on the right social channels is the key to success.

Nine questions to ask yourself about the nine trends you know now:

1. Is your content visual enough?
2. Is your content anchored in the big idea of the brand?
3. Are you using gamification to increase engagement?
4. Are you telling your story with video?
5. Are you capitalizing on native advertising?
6. Is your audience who you think it is?
7. Are you turning likes into bucks?
8. Do you have a responsive website or mobile destination?