



SALES & MARKETING

A QUARTERLY EBULLETIN FROM THE PEOPLE WHO BRING YOU
THE MARKETING WORLD AND SALES NOW EXECUTIVE MINDXCHANGES

THOUGHT LEADER SPOTLIGHT

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After attending Marketing World Chicago last month, thought leader J. de Francisco Lopez filed this report. For more thought leadership by de Francisco, visit his blog on innovation practices, www.consultaglobal.wordpress.com.

I recently participated in Frost & Sullivan's Marketing World as a thought leader on social media. The role of the thought leaders is to share practices and insights as part of interactive sessions. The session on social media was facilitated by J.K. Rohrs, Vice-President of Marketing at ExactTarget.

Social media is better known by the growth of user-generated content and online social networking services. What's relatively new is the fact that businesses are paying attention to public discussions taking place on the Web, which can positively and negatively impact the company's brand equity and sales.

Most marketing executives are still wrestling with understanding how relevant any of these emerging communication tools might actually be to their company's top line. If that's your case, I suggest considering the following:

- Some forms of social media have achieved a level of professionalism that now rivals traditional marketing and communication channels.
- Traditional media is embracing blogging, open online discourse and cross-platform syndication (share this) for messaging and content which used to be confined to the company's official corporate site.
- Many marketers feel overwhelmed by the number and scope of the online dialogs, these being social media conversations which involve their brands.
- Embracing the level of openness that social media entails is seen as counterproductive when customer complains overpower a silent majority of happy customers.
- Conservative practices mostly relying on mass marketing and traditional market segmentation might no longer do a good enough job. While some forms of social media will come and go, the fact is that its underlying communications paradigms have already permeated mainstream marketing.

As a result, tools addressing: social media listening, data mining, analytics, semantic search and social graphs across online platforms will help marketers reach a higher level of customer engagement through significantly improved recommendation and social communication engines.