

A 6-Step Guide
To Mastering Social

WORD OF MOUTH Marketing

74% OF CONSUMERS IDENTIFY WOM AS A KEY INFLUENCER IN THEIR PURCHASING DECISION.

[Ogilvy/Google/TNS]

INTRODUCTION:

As the original “social media,” Word of Mouth Marketing (WOMM) is hardly a new concept when you consider its ancient, storytelling origins. Since the dawn of communication, people have been finding ways to express their opinions, share their likes and dislikes, and gather information from trusted sources throughout the ages. From ancient markets to modern-day media, this highly personal, highly effective form of expression plays a vital part in the customer journey.

What is new, however, is the advent of the internet and the ever-increasing power of social media platforms. With social, conversations and engagement traveling at supersonic speeds in unprecedented ways. Tweets, Facebook posts, reviews, blogs—these methods deliver real-time WOM (both positive and negative) around the web, and subsequently, around the world. Essentially, it’s the new-and-improved version of WOMM.

This new version of word of mouth—let’s call it **WOMM 2.0**—is changing the way brands communicate with their customers in the social stratosphere. This is because WOMM 2.0 marks the first time that companies are able to obtain detailed insights about their communities in order to truly engage the most relevant audiences—the right audiences. Social media allows brands to gather extraordinary amounts of data about their customers without ever conducting so much as a survey. Interests, hobbies, geographics, opinions, likes, dislikes and more: it’s all out in the open and ripe for the picking. These user-provided social insights and data make it possible for brands to execute more effective WOM strategies than ever before. The Insightpool WOM platform proactively starts the conversations from predictive social data. With advancements in technology and data, for the first time, brands are able to analyze this data, pull out clusters of topics and create marketing strategies around it. For the first time, brands can make intelligent marketing decisions based on data. This gives them the opportunity to drive conversations and word of mouth on social, predicting the success by using data.

Taking into account the fast-and-furious nature of this form of communication, it’s time for brands and business to join in on the conversation. As the most trusted form of marketing, WOM cannot and should not be ignored, especially considering that, according to Nielsen, 92% of consumers believe recommendations from friends and family over all forms of advertising. But is it possible, considering its highly personal and authentic nature, for companies to harness its power? Yes—and we’re going to tell you how to harness **WOMM 2.0** with 6 tips on how to generate, monitor and manage WOM around your brand in order to take advantage of this powerful form of marketing.



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**92% OF CONSUMERS BELIEVE
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FRIENDS
AND FAMILY OVER ALL FORMS OF
ADVERTISING.**

- Nielsen



1. IDENTIFYING RELEVANT AUDIENCES

The first and arguably most important step in generating WOM starts with identifying relevant audiences. How do you reach your core audience and the people that would be interested (or already are interested) in what you have to offer? One way to do this is by identifying those who have an influential voice or specified knowledge on a particular topic or product related to your brand. Additionally, you should aim to have a hyper relevant audience that will share and broadcast the conversation. If you can reach these influencers, then they can ultimately spread the word (your word) to their audience.



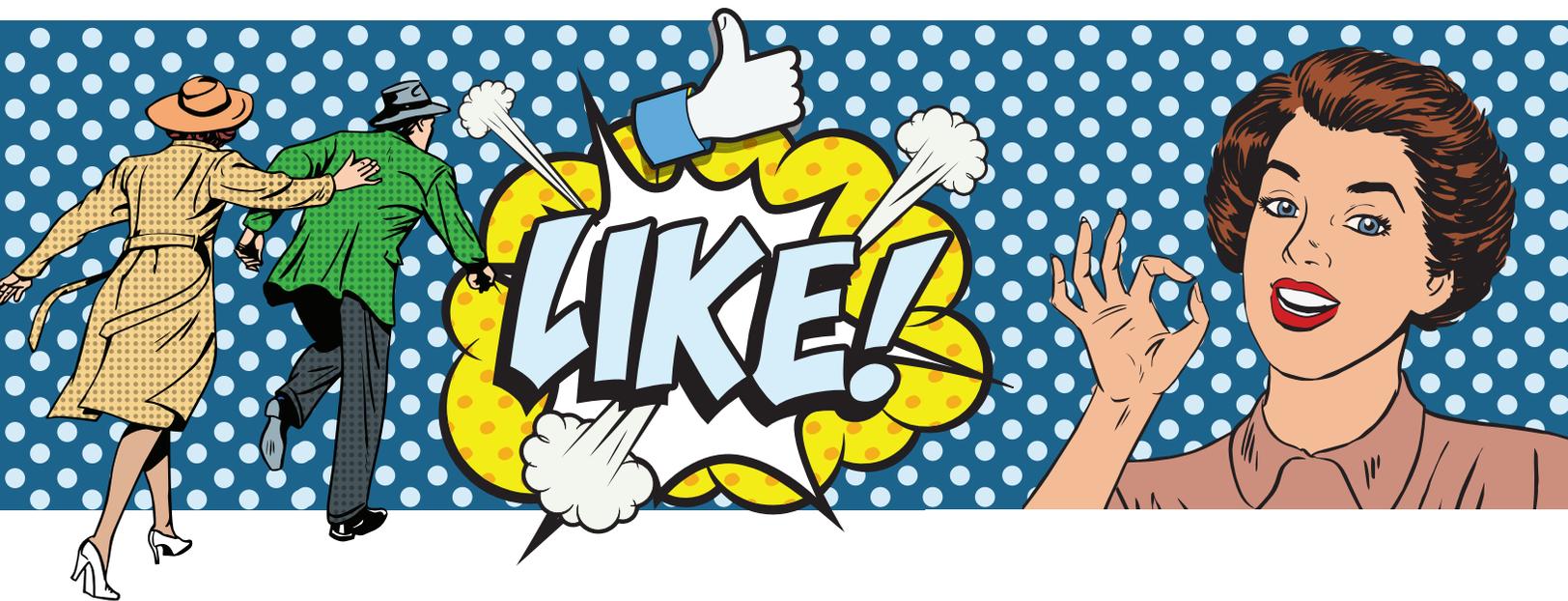
"IT'S IMPORTANT TO HAVE A HYPER RELEVANT AUDIENCE THAT WILL SHARE AND BROADCAST THE CONVERSATION. IF YOU CAN REACH THESE INFLUENCERS, THEN THEY CAN ULTIMATELY SPREAD THE WORD—YOUR WORD—TO THEIR AUDIENCE!"

Using influencers to create word of mouth around your brand is about much more than who has the most followers. Let's pretend, for example, that you're a major athletic brand coming out with a new line of baseball bats, and you're looking for an influencer that can help spread the message. Would you work with, let's say, Kim Kardashian West, who now boasts almost 35 million followers on Twitter? Or would you team up with MLB player Alex Rodriguez, an athlete with significantly less followers? While the reality star's following is impressive to say the least, A-Rod's career and fan base make him a more credible source and better-matched influencer for your company.

When identifying relevant audiences to create WOM, it's important to recognize the different "communities" of influencers that exist and how they vary. Here are the different community categories you need to know:

INFLUENCERS

Influencers are the individuals who have the power to affect purchase decisions due to their (real or perceived) influence, authority, knowledge, position, or relationship. In consumer spending, members of a peer group or reference group act as influencers. Influencers aren't just the Kim Kardashians and Derek Jeter, even though they have their own level of celebrity influence. There are also audiences that are hyper focused on a specific niche or community—these are called citizen influencers or industry influencers.



BRAND ADVOCATES

These are the individuals who talk favorably about a brand or product, and then pass on positive word-of-mouth messages about the brand to other people in their network. **Considering that 85% of brand-fans, according to Syncapse, recommend good brands to others via social media**, this is an important category to get involved with. Brand advocates are usually fans but not customers (yet) and can help brands measure sentiment, as they are usually the ones to convey positive or negative opinions towards the brand. Additionally, brand advocates (as are customer advocates), are the best referral business you can have.

CUSTOMER ADVOCATES

Comparatively, customer advocates are individuals, typically satisfied customers, that act as facilitators between other customers and the company. Customer advocates are your champions that drive the best word of mouth about your brands. These advocates can be fans and customers, and happy customers show that they are not only happy with your product but with your customer service. Customer service comes from the account managers as well as the community managers that engage them on social channels.

2. HYPER-TUNED SEGMENTATION

Market segmentation has long been used to classify consumers into groups in order to reach specific targets based on common interests and/or demographics. These days, the amount of audience data available is almost unfathomable, making market segments much more specific, highly detailed and hyper relevant. Thanks to social media, we now know more about our targets than ever before: personal facts, interests, hobbies, activities, connections and more are all out in the open and provided by the sources themselves.

This rich source of information comes in handy when you're looking to generate WOM about your brand. Tapping into the "right" market segments—segments whose interests and values are aligned with your brand—can be the catalyst your word of mouth campaign needs. But there are many ways to divide people into groupings, and not every option works for WOM.

SEGMENTS BASED ON MARKETING INITIATIVES

Segmenting your audience based on marketing initiatives and campaigns is one way to group consumers in order to drive action. Let's say, for example, your company is planning an event on influencer marketing in a specific city. Your first steps would be to build out a segmented audience based on **1) their interests and 2) their location**. As we know, finding and targeting people that are interested in your cause (in this case, influencer marketing) are more likely to engage and act on your message. Once you've grouped your audience by relevant interests, narrowing that segment based on location is the second step. If your event is taking place in Atlanta, it's unlikely that people from Los Angeles will be able to attend your event. Don't waste your time and resources reaching cross-country demos—instead, focus on local folks that will realistically be able to attend.



3. PERSONALIZED MESSAGING

Word of mouth is a highly personal, highly *human* exchange that occurs organically on an everyday basis. The reasons why people participate in WOM are also highly personal. Social acceptance, distinction, and the desire to share experiences with others are all reasons why people engage with this type of promotional communication.

Subsequently, shouting to the masses is no longer an effective way for brands to reach people on this personalized plain. In order to create WOM, companies must deliver their messaging on an equally intimate level. Custom directives, 1:1 communication and relationship retention are all part of the philosophy that “brands need to become more like people” in order to succeed.

That’s right brands, It’s time to get personal. Here are a few ways to create personalized social messages:

CURATED MESSAGING

Today’s market leaders demand curated, hyper-personalized messages and relevant communication. Word of mouth marketing stems from firsthand experiences—so why not create a positive one? Discerning the interests, connections, likes and dislikes of your intended audience makes them more likely to engage with what you have to say.

PROACTIVE MESSAGING

Curating your messages is only half the battle. Relationships of every kind take consistent work—just because someone initially likes your brand does not mean they will continue to like your brand. Being proactive versus reactive and starting conversations with the audience will allow your brand to lead the conversation. Your brand must continuously share insightful information, follow up and adapt a 1:1 social strategy in order to maintain those relationships you’ve worked hard to build.

SCALE SOCIAL OUTREACH

The most effective social outreach involves predicting those who will be most likely to engage with your brand—not how many people you can reach or how many followers an influencer has. Those who can inspire conversations that result in the outcome you’re looking for are the people you want to reach. For brands that have a larger following, the challenges are scaling outreach, consistently sharing and keeping up with all engagements.

4. AUTHENTIC ENGAGEMENT

The success of any WOM campaign hinges on authenticity. Is your brand communicating genuinely? Does your brand come across as trustworthy? Once you start the conversation with your audience, it's important to continue to nurture those relationships through real interactions. Your community cares enough to engage with your brand, so make sure they know you care, too.



of U.S. online consumer's purchase decisions are influenced by their friend's social media posts versus **78%** who are influenced by the posts of the brands they follow on social media.

(MARKET FORCE)

Keep it real with these quick tips:

- **Focus on the individual** with personalized messaging and 1:1 interactions.
- **Truly listen** to what your audience has to say.
- **Be honest** and don't over-promise if you can't deliver on something.
- **Admit when you're wrong**—everyone makes mistakes, even big-time brands.

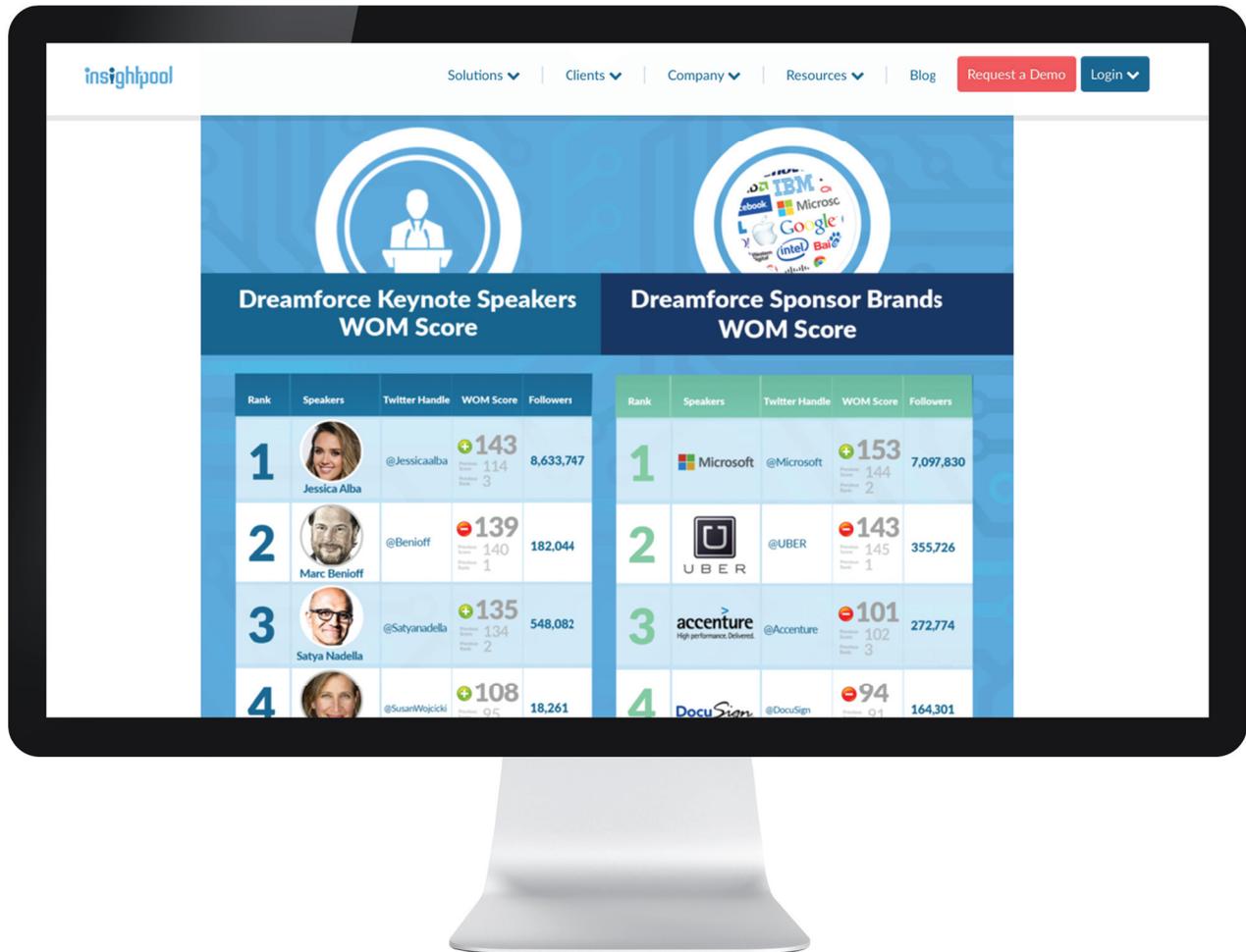


5. DATA-DRIVEN MARKETING INITIATIVES

Using social data to influence marketing strategies and decisions is a definite “do” when it comes to generating word of mouth around your brand. As we touched on previously, there is endless amounts of data and information made available thanks to social media. And when you collect this data and analyze the insights, you can ultimately distill your strategy and optimize your game plan. Now, thanks to the ability to access PYLON Facebook Topic Data, brands can get insights into their communities like never before.

ORGANIC INSIGHTS

Utilizing organic insights can help power paid media spend. In fact, [WOM amplifies the effect of paid media by 15 percent according to WOMMA](#). We also know that word of mouth leads to twice as many sales as traditional advertising methods, and that 53 percent of a brand’s sales volume change can be attributed to changes in online advocacy. Knowing these numbers about the impact that WOM has can help you hone your approach.



6. MEASURE YOUR SUCCESS **WOM**

The only way to know if your brand is successful with any marketing campaign is to measure the success. Word of Mouth Marketing has never had a measurement—until now. Insightpool has created the first ever Word of Mouth Score (WOM Score). A word of mouth score is the score used to measure how many people are talking about your brand and how influential and topically relevant they are to your brand based on specific topics. The score is found using proprietary big data technology to capture every brand interaction based on a topic based taxonomy engine. Using this score, which Insightpool has pulled together using industry WOM power rankings, can help your brand drive the conversation around a specific topic to a hyper relevant audience.

WORD OF MOUTH IS THE PRIMARY FACTOR BEHIND 20% TO 50% OF ALL PURCHASING DECISIONS.
(McKinsey & Co)

92% OF CONSUMERS TRUST RECOMMENDATIONS FROM OTHER PEOPLE — EVEN IF THEY DON'T KNOW THEM PERSONALLY — OVER PROMOTIONAL CONTENT THAT COMES DIRECTLY FROM BRANDS.
(Nielsen)

WHAT?!

74% OF CONSUMERS IDENTIFY WOM AS A KEY INFLUENCER IN THEIR PURCHASING DECISION.
[Ogilvy/Google/TNS]

43% OF SOCIAL MEDIA USERS REPORT BUYING A PRODUCT AFTER SHARING OR FAVORITING IT ON FACEBOOK, TWITTER, OR PINTEREST. OVER HALF OF PURCHASES INSPIRED BY SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING OCCUR WITHIN ONE WEEK OF SHARING OR FAVORITING, AND 80% OF PURCHASES RESULTING FROM SOCIAL MEDIA SHARES OCCUR WITHIN THREE WEEKS OF SHARING.
[VisionCritical]

!!!
ON SOCIAL MEDIA, 58% OF CONSUMERS ACTIVELY SHARE THEIR POSITIVE EXPERIENCES WITH A COMPANY, AND ASK FAMILY AND FRIENDS FOR THEIR OPINIONS ON BRANDS.
[SDL]

OMG!!!

MILLENNIALS #1 RANKED WOM AS THE #1 INFLUENCER IN THEIR PURCHASING DECISIONS ABOUT CLOTHES, PACKAGED GOODS, BIG-TICKET ITEMS (LIKE TRAVEL AND ELECTRONICS), AND FINANCIAL PRODUCTS. BABY BOOMERS ALSO RANKED WOM FIRST AS THE MARKETING INFLUENCER IN THEIR PURCHASING DECISIONS ABOUT BIG-TICKET ITEMS AND FINANCIAL PRODUCTS, AND RANKED IT AS THE THIRD HIGHEST INFLUENCER ON THEIR DECISIONS TO BUY PACKAGED GOODS. [Radius Global]

WHY INSIGHTPOOL?

Before Twitter, before Facebook, before review sites and even before the internet, word of mouth (WOM) was a powerful way for people to share experiences, give advice and connect with others. In essence, WOM was the original social media: real life, face-to-face communication that served a purpose.

Today, WOM is alive and well. In the digital age, word of mouth has gone beyond in-person interactions and now takes place on online social channels. After all, 92 percent of people trust what others say over all other forms of advertising, according to Nielsen.

The problem? As a resource with such power and influence, businesses are searching for marketing tools to help manage what people say about their brand on social as well as proactively starting conversations with the most relevant audiences.

Insightpool, the Predictive Word of Mouth Marketing Suite, is revolutionizing word of mouth marketing through data powered social solutions. Insightpool's data science and insights drive effective consumer targeting, messaging and activation at scale that drives real ROI. The challenge for many brands is finding a solution that combines data and social.

Insightpool is able to achieve this within an intuitive cloud suite that provides marketers with an end-to-end solutions to manage brand campaigns and make educated decisions on marketing strategies.

Interested in learning more about Insightpool's Predictive Word of Mouth Marketing Suite? Contact us today at marketing@insightpool.com.

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