

Effective Social Media Marketing with Friendemic



Steve Pearson
CEO
Friendemic

CEOCFO: *Mr. Pearson, your website indicates, “We Make Social Media Make Sense.” How do you do so?*

Mr. Pearson: Social media is a new and powerful venue for businesses to reach their target audiences, but it is constantly changing and it is a big landscape. That makes it difficult for many companies to handle and manage effectively on their own. We provide a software suite as well as a service team of social media experts that can support your in-house marketing group to be able to effectively deliver on the promise of social media marketing.

CEOCFO: *What do you understand about social media that many people do not?*

Mr. Pearson: We have five years of experience helping our clients, which are generally medium sized business. That has given us a wealth of experience into what works and what does not work in social media marketing for our clients and for our future clients. It is difficult for many businesses to jump into social media marketing because the only point of data they have is their own company's previous experience. There is so much that has been done for other companies and across the social media landscape that we have been able to learn from and study and perfect over the course of these years.

CEOCFO: *What would surprise people that might work as well as might not work?*

Mr. Pearson: I would say the temptation that so many marketers succumb to with social media is to treat it like their other media. I think many of them have been surprised in a bad way to learn that social media is not a broadcast channel, at least not effectively. Most businesses and most marketers have spent many years taking their message, honing it and then trying to put it in front of as many eyes as possible. You can use social media that way but it is probably not going to be as cost effective as other types of marketing channels would be. Where social media can and should be very powerful is in getting several specific messages out to a many target audiences and then engaging in two-way conversation with them.

CEOCFO: *Who is coming to you for services? Is it a common thread?*

Mr. Pearson: Most of our clients are medium-sized B2C businesses with significant marketing budgets who want to put them to work and they want to track their results. However, they do not have the ability or the staff to have to have a team of five or ten people full-time dedicated to social media. Social media does not sleep. It is 24/7, 365 days a year and we generally find that unless a business is able to have full-time resources dedicated specifically to social media, it can be difficult to perform consistently and effectively on social. We often work with companies that have a product or service for which they are trying to generate demand as opposed to capture demand. Running a Google Adwords campaign can be great if you are selling something that people are already searching for. But what if your business is selling something that people aren't searching for? To borrow a concept from Henry Ford, had the internet existed then, everyone would have been Googling “faster horses” and not “cars.” Social media and Friendemic are particularly powerful for clients looking to generate demand, rather than spending a lot of money trying to capture what little bit of demand is out there. So much of what we see people spending on marketing is just chasing a little bit of existing demand all over the place, often with steadily increasing costs as these companies all compete against each other, when the better way is to just grow the whole pie.

CEOCFO: *Would you walk us through a typical engagement?*

Mr. Pearson: A great client of ours is a company called Owlet Baby Care. They developed a type of baby monitor that is essentially a baby sock with embedded pulse oximetry technology designed to monitor your baby's heart rate and oxygen levels. It syncs to your phone and will send you alerts if your baby's heart rate or oxygen levels go above or below certain

levels. They recently received venture funding and wanted to help get the word out about this product. As you can imagine, running an Adwords campaign for “baby monitor” is a crowded space and people who are looking for traditional baby monitors probably are not looking for something like this product anyway. Consumers do not even know what an Owlet monitor is or how it works. They would never know to search for it. Owlet has focused their marketing efforts almost entirely on social media and PR, and it has been phenomenally successful. Our team is working together with them on social media to promote videos, pictures, customer stories and so on. We respond to the questions that come in from customers or potential customers. We coordinate closely with bloggers and other online influencers who are very active on social media. It has been a huge success in getting the word out about this product that very likely might otherwise have been an obscure niche product that perhaps only appealed to people going home from the hospital with a baby with known problems. Instead, we are seeing it getting mass appeal.

CEOCFO: *Are clients coming to you because they understand the depth or are they surprised?*

Mr. Pearson: We see both. We hear from CMOs or other folks in marketing. We were recently recognized as a Market Leader by [Clutch.Co](#), a third party market research firm. We definitely gain knowledgeable clients from that type of recognition. But we also often we talk to clients who are confused by social media and do not know a lot about it, or sometime even do not want to know a lot about it. We see both. We do a significant amount of work in the automotive space as a certified provider with Toyota, Kia, BMW, and Chrysler. We work with a number of those dealerships who are coming to us in some cases based on the recommendation of the manufacturers. Those are often cases where they might come to us without a great understanding of what it is we do but are anxious to learn more and be forward thinking and effective in their marketing.

“Social media marketing can be very effective, but like anything worth doing, it needs to be done right.” - Steve Pearson

CEOCFO: *Was that a deliberate strategy to work with the auto companies?*

Mr. Pearson: It was quite deliberate. In the company’s early days, we got a lot of traction in automotive space and very definitely made that a strong focus of the company. It made sense and it works well on social media. Serving some other industries, such as banks for example, would require a very different strategy. People do not naturally want to talk publically online about their personal finances. Trying to engage customers and conversations can be more challenging with a client like that. Similarly, in terms of the content that we might produce or post for a bank, there is only so much you can say about a checking account. Most of the products have been around for a long time and they do not change dramatically, frequently or perhaps ever. Consumers generally understand them very well already. In the auto space, by contrast, there is a whole slew of new products every year; people love talking about their cars; people share many pictures about their cars all the time so there is lots of good content that we can comment on and retweet or otherwise promote. It also made sense for us because there is a high individual customer value. That is certainly something we see with many of our clients. We have one-on-one conversations with real people online on social media. We serve restaurants but it is going to be a different strategy. If one of my employees is going to spend twenty minutes on a Twitter conversation with someone telling them how great this restaurant is for lunch and you should go eat there and we convince them to do so, that is a win but it does not necessarily financially make sense. Whereas if you can convince someone to buy a car, well sure, we will spend all day talking about a person on Twitter if they have questions and want to learn more. It was a logical fit.

CEOCFO: *How do you know when something like Twitter or Facebook is becoming old hat?*

Mr. Pearson: Metrics, metrics, metrics. There is a myth out there that social media is not as trackable as other kinds of advertising and you should just do it because you need to be on social media and it is the new thing so you should just be there; or that social media is just for high-level branding and you are going to have a tough time measuring results. Friendemic completely rejects those notions and sometimes we are baffled even where these ideas come from. The social network platforms provide enormous amounts of data about how every post performs, how every dollar in advertising spend is performing. The vast majority of that is available via API connections. Our software platform ties into all those and collects enormous amounts of data, which we are then able to provide back to our clients in an aggregate form that makes sense and shows ROI. How do we know how a platform is performing? It is very client specific; certainly some clients do very well on Pinterest and for some Pinterest is not an effective channel. It all comes down to the metrics and studying and understanding the data.

CEOCFO: *What surprised you as Friendemic has grown and evolved?*

Mr. Pearson: As trite as this might sound, what comes to my mind more than anything else is just how fast it changes. I have worked in a few other industries and social media is like riding a bolt of lightning. All of the networks are constantly

changing and adding new ways to advertise. Client expectations change very quickly and even consumers' expectations change very quickly. It really was not that long ago when Facebook tried to rollout paid ads and the entire Facebook community rose up in rebellion and Facebook scrapped the whole thing. Now, they are getting billions of dollars of advertising every quarter. When you compare it to other industries, it is amazing how fast social media changes.

CEOCFO: *Why use Friendemic?*

Mr. Pearson: Social media marketing can be very effective, but like anything worth doing, it needs to be done right. It is very difficult for small and medium businesses to do social media right. There are so many variables and moving pieces. It requires expertise and dedication. Our software can help you if you want to do it yourself. Our team can help you if you want help. We deliver great ROI so if you want to grow and improve your business, consider Friendemic.

Interview conducted by: Lynn Fosse, Senior Editor, CEOCFO Magazine



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