



Tips for Social Media Marketing

Resort Tips to Socializing

After interviewing more than a dozen ski area managers in both large and small organizations that are at the forefront of experimenting with social network marketing, here are ten tips to success in the social sphere.

- 1. Keep content current.** Do updates frequently to stay credible and to keep guests coming back for more. Mix up what you post. Keep the content helpful, fun, and informative. (Loveland Ski Area, CO)
- 2. Pick and choose the best for you.** You do not have to be all places. Pick the networks that are right for you. Determine your demographics first. Then target the networks that fulfill your objectives and where you will have the most impact. Remember to be engaging! (Park City Mountain, UT)
- 3. Just do it.** Try out a social site personally first. Watch for about 30 days to get a feel for how people interact. Once you get a good handle on how it works, and then create a company profile page. (Mt Hood SkiBowl, OR)
- 4. Embrace conversation.** Don't just feed information such as conditions. Remember, this is an opportunity to talk, interact and create advocates from your customers. (Boreal Mountain Resort, CA)
- 5. A picture speaks louder than words.** Content is important but don't forget the visuals such as photos and videos. Show off what attracts people to the sport. (Monarch Mountain, CO)
- 6. Be friendly. Create advocates.** After you join a network, make sure to connect with other ski areas, industry people, athletes, and major brands that partner with you and others in the industry. The more people you connect with, the more they can spread your messages. (Loveland Ski Area, CO)
- 7. Give guests a reason to participate.** Social networking is an incredible outlet for grass roots marketing within this high tech culture. For example, the Sugar Bowl, CA, Park Crew uses their social site as a way to stay connected with the park followers. They post information on the up-coming competitions, prize give-aways, and recaps of competitions, new features, videos and photos. This not only encourages participation both virtually and on the slopes but keeps people coming back for more. (Sugar Bowl Resort, CA)
- 8. Resist the temptation to sell, sell, sell.** When guests are invited to participate in online communities, they expect resorts to listen and consider their ideas. They don't want to feel like they're simply a captive audience for advertising. If they do, they're likely to leave and not come back.
- 9. Jump on the bandwagon now, and remain in the conversation for the long haul.** The sooner you act, the more leeway you will have with experimentation. You'll also be a significant step ahead of your competitors (unless they get there before you).
- 10. Oh the humanity.** Get creative and try to let the conversation flow freely. The more accessible you are to your customers than your competitors, the more likely it is that you're going to be a part of your customers' lives. So, as a brand, this is your opportunity to humanize your company and be part of your customers' life experiences and their personal networks, from which they draw so much. You can be part of a positive association in the good times. And, in the bad, you may have the support of your friends and followers when you need it.

Samantha Rufo is President of nxtConcepts, an Interactive Marketing & Media Company. For more information contact her at 888-215-0820 or sam@nxtconcepts.com To develop your own strategic social media plan, visit nxtConcepts.com or myMarketingGuide.com