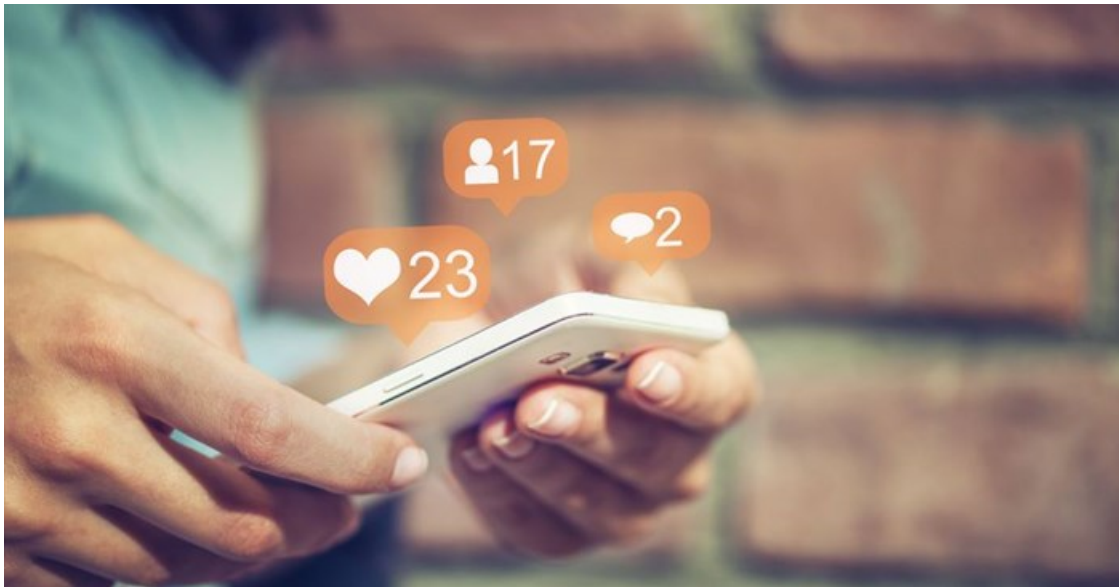


3 ways to elevate customer trust and confidence in a brand on social media

By [Dr Rukudzo Pamacheche](#)

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With over 4.5 billion social media users globally, the power to convince customers has shifted: customers approach persuasive marketing copy more intuitively and have an affinity with other customers.



Source: © 123rf [123rf](#) W's Dr Rukudzo Pamacheche gives three ways to elevate customer trust and confidence in a brand

It is now easier for customers to test brands from other customers' shared brand experiences and testimonies on social media. Social media present an attractive digital marketing avenue for customers to experience their favourite brand's personality in real-time interactions.

Businesses are leveraging this, too. Nike and Coca Cola, for example, count over 200 million and 100 million followers respectively on their social media accounts.

Nielsen's 2022 annual marketing report projected a 50% increase in budget allocations for social media marketing for Europe, the Middle East and African companies' in the near future.

The reality of intense competition and constant brand wars cannot be understated because customers have the luxury of choice. Brands can no longer rely solely on product performance; they need to connect with customers on a deeper level to encourage loyalty and prevent switching.



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Trustworthy social media marketing interactions

Focusing on building confidence by targeting trustworthy social media marketing interactions is increasingly important for the following reasons:

1. Enhancing customers' experiences

Discrepancies between rival brands are exposed social media users' experiences that they record and share. Customers are more inclined to relate with and project similar user-generated and shared sentiments onto the brand. Therefore, customers with positive (or negative) social media experiences can influence the brand perceptions of others.

2. Access to first-party data

The data age prioritises generating intelligence from analytics. Google Chrome's third-party cookies will soon become obsolete while brands still need to track and maintain relationships and customer targeting online. Social connections with customers offer first-party data that provides real-time information about customers' thoughts and behaviours towards the brand, creating an avenue for monitoring and changing those perceptions and relationships.

3. Testing brand social appeal

People generally gravitate towards others who are authentic. Social media marketing continuously reveals a brand's personality and tests its promises in real-time in the social arena. Therefore, customers can experience this first-hand and make their own judgements. Free and paid social media analytics tools are available online to test brand social reach, share of social voice and conversion rates from social engagement.



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3 ways to elevate customer trust and confidence in a brand

While social media strategies vary across businesses, here are a few nuggets of wisdom that could help to elevate customer trust and confidence in a brand:

1. Authenticate brand social media accounts

Social media presence is crucial and an authenticated identity is even more crucial for assuring credibility and trust. Successful brands are susceptible to impersonator accounts that want to capitalise on the brand's name and reputation. Facebook, Twitter and Google My Business offer options to verify individual and business social media accounts.

Social media users feel reassured of a brand's social identity when they recognise the famous blue tick across several platforms. Account verification is no longer exclusive to celebrities with large followings; so large and small businesses can opt for that blue tick as well.

2. Share and sponsor authentic brand interactions

Followers are dynamic human beings who relate to the social experiences of other humans. Successful companies like Lego have attributed sales increase above 25% to its *Rebuild the World* campaign in 2021, which engaged children's and adults' problem-solving skills in creative rebuilding through storytelling and play.

Immersive storytelling and interactions between the brand and its followers create valuable user-generated content that appeals to personal and social dimensions and helps customers to connect to authentic experiences.

3. Micro-influence your brand

Businesses need not target large followings on single social media accounts; micro-influencers boast the highest social engagement levels compared with other types of influencers.

They make top-of-mind and top-of-click easier to achieve by creating niche brand communities of 1000 – 10,000 highly vested followers on a given platform. Fashion and lifestyle brand Banana Republic credit their multi-million social reach to collaborations with lifestyle micro-influencers on Instagram.

Trustworthy micro-influencer content is essential in customers' purchasing and group psychology, which opens the gap for brands to leverage micro-influencers' loyal followings.

Social media remain the most progressive and inclusive channel for communicating and engaging directly with customers in data age.

The benefits of user-generated content and user-engendered trust present lucrative opportunities for businesses to leverage brand communities and (micro-)influencer trust for brand trust and confidence.

Being more socially relatable improves the chances that customers will perceive it as authentic and trustworthy.

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