

## **Snapchat - How social media's new kid on the block can be a marketing secret weapon**

When Evan Spiegel floated the idea of a selfie app, in front of class mates at Stanford University in the April of 2011, an app that would allow users to share short-lived and self-deleting images, he was basically laughed at. Focusing on the temporary nature of the images that would be shared, his peers could see no value in the product when the likes of WhatsApp and Kik were already allowing users to send permanent images for free. Undeterred, and with the help of his friend Bobby Murphy, Spiegel went ahead and launched the app in the July of that year from his father's living room. Fast-forward five years and the app has over 150,000,000 users and Spiegel and Murphy each have a net worth of around \$2 billion. Makes you wonder how many of their class-mates are laughing now.

The app has since evolved to allow users to share videos (still short-lived and self-deleting), apply an array of filters which are changed out daily, send typed messages, and more recently, create 'stories' where users compile videos over the course of the day and post them to be viewed by their followers for 24 hours before self-deletion. The intention of having a platform that would only allow images and short videos to be accessible for a few seconds was to encourage a degree of frivolity, and as such Snapchat's user demographic has been firmly at the younger end. In the US, 71% of users fall within the 18-34 age bracket. It's hard to see then how a temporary image sharing platform used by such a young audience, could become a powerful marketing tool, but it has, and here are some of the ways you could use it too...

### **Take your audience behind the scenes**

Let's face it, people are nosy. They like peeking into places they would never normally be allowed or able to peek into. If you think you're the only one who's stood in wonderment at what could possibly lie behind the 'Staff Only' door at any Argos, don't worry, you're not. Is there a Narnia-style Wonderland with candy cane trees? Do the staff break into communal song as they search for items? Are they helped by Umpa Lumpas? Perhaps we'll never know. What Snapchat allows is for users to provide real-time, behind-the-scenes content to their community which excites and can engage a strong and curious following. It's a channel through which companies can showcase a fun side to themselves, capturing Friday frolics, birthdays, parties, and staff outings. Altogether a more intimate and entertaining side to your enterprise can be shared. It becomes something people want to be a part of, to interact with, something they *talk* about. They feel part of what you're doing and thus, over time, a degree of loyalty can be engendered.

### **Share exclusives**

One way some companies are using Snapchat is by sharing exclusives. The likes of LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter tend to be utilised more for sharing industry specific articles, announcements of upcoming promotions, news of updates on official sites and so on. The temporary and playful nature of Snapchat is instead being employed increasingly to provide a different kind of insight. In the fashion world, major labels have taken to sharing images and videos of models in new items just before they hit the catwalk. It's another way of bringing an audience into an exclusive world and making them feel involved in real-time. The

self-destructing images and videos actually work well when used for this purpose as users are shown a product for only a tantalising few seconds. Though heavily used in the fashion industry, most industries could use Snapchat in this way as part of a launch for a new product.

## **Snap Ads**

For a more direct approach, Snapchat offer users the opportunity to advertise with a 'Snap Ad', a 10-second, full screen vertical video ad that appears between users' stories. Advertisers can configure the ad to offer users the choice to swipe up to view more in-depth content such as long form videos, articles, app installs, or links to a mobile website. The swipe-up rate for Snap Ads, according to Snapchat, is five times higher than the average click-through rate on equivalent social media platforms. The music streaming and downloading app Spotify purchased Snap Ads in a campaign intended to allow users the opportunity to review some of the songs they'd listened to on Spotify over the year. Spotify's Ads popped-up on Snapchat's Discover channel, displaying a different music genre every day. From that campaign, Spotify earned 26 million total views and a 30% increase on subscriber intent.

## **Competitions and Prizes**

There are few better ways of enticing an audience than offering them the chance to win something or get something for free. Snapchat provides all kinds of fun ways of doing this. Discounts or promo codes could be offered to users who watch full stories, or maybe get users to pose with or by your product in exchange for a nominal gift. American online and mobile food-ordering company GrubHub are trend-setters in using Snapchat in this way. In fact, they were the first brand to execute a Snapchat 'scavenger hunt'. Each day during a five-day campaign, they asked their followers to post a snap, whether it was a selfie with food, or a 'food doodle'. GrubHub's Snapchat scavenger hunt involved five contests, and users submitted their snaps daily to be eligible for prizes. The innovative campaign highlighted GrubHub's brand personality and produced a reciprocal communication between consumers and the brand. The company managed to capture user-generated content while increasing customer loyalty, the two main ingredients for a successful Snapchat campaign.

## **Partner Up with an Influencer**

Collaborating with a social media influencer is a great way of tapping into an audience you might otherwise be struggling to engage with. For example, confectionary manufacturer Sour Patch Kids partnered with social media star Logan Paul for a 'Real-life Sour Patch Kid' Snapchat campaign. Paul, who has half a million Twitter followers, directed his followers to the Sour Patch Kids Snapchat account so they could watch a series of so-called 'sweet and sour' pranks he carried out over five days. The campaign earned Sour Patch Kids 120,000 new Snapchat followers. If going down the influencer route, choose one whose follower base is comparable to yours, to share snaps that chime with your brand's image. A make-up firm may get exposure by partnering with a social media-savvy football pundit, but it's probably not going to be the exposure they want.

## **Summary**

Depending on the nature of your business, you may feel that Snapchat is an inappropriate platform to share your brand and message. Bear in mind though, that once upon a time, people said the same thing about Facebook and Twitter. At the last count, Snapchat was getting ten billion video views per day, that's billion with a 'b'. As with any marketing tool, you're going to have to dust off the plastic to get the best results, but as Snapchat's popularity grows by the day, there is compelling evidence that it could play a considerable role in your business' story.