**Syndicated Social Content is Almost Dead. Channel Partners Want Something Better!**

There isn’t a builder, contractor, dealer or retailer on earth who wouldn’t tell you that their best advertising is word-of-mouth advertising. It’s true, your best referrals come from happy customers. But word-of-mouth has evolved over the last 10 years. The new form of this type of referral advertising now comes with a metaphorical megaphone your customers carry around, shouting your name, called Facebook® and LinkedIn®. Social media is the new form of word-of-mouth advertising!

**How Small Businesses can Capitalize on the New, Louder Form of Word-of-Mouth Advertising**

But how can a small business representing your products at the local level, capitalize on this? It’s easier than you might think! It just takes a few minutes every week. They start with a social media presence on at least one social platform and need to engage with their followers at least a couple times each week. And if they don’t have any followers, they can start boosting their posts to attract more followers. Social advertising with “[Like](https://www.facebook.com/business/help/507612906001199?id=2223788217707136)” and “[Follow](https://www.linkedin.com/help/lms/answer/a423314/follower-ads-overview?lang=en)” campaigns can help too. But inviting friends who are connected in other ways to their business page is a best practice.

**How to Get More Engagement Locally**

The types of posts that get the most engagement are centered around what a small business is doing in the community, posts about their employees and awards they’ve won, and generally any type of human-interest post that is relatable to their followers.

Obviously, it’s important to promote their brand and have some posts that focus solely on brand messaging so that they’re top-of-mind when one of their followers (or all the friends of their followers) are in the market for their products or services. Their followers need to know what they do. But the most success they’ll see is going to come from posting on things that people care about, so they’re missing the boat if they don’t also include some content that has local appeal in their social media strategy.

**How Brands can Improve Engagement at the Local Level Through Their Dealers**

“We recently got a single post for one of our Butler® Manufacturing builders, which is a small B2B business, that saw 228 reactions, 8 comments & 3 shares on LinkedIn with similar results on Facebook”, said Kelly Magers, a 20+ year digital marketing veteran and Director of Digital Fusion, a digital agency within Channel Fusion whose team focuses on implementing turnkey digital marketing campaigns at the local level for brands like Butler who run channel marketing co-op programs with Channel Fusion. Butler Manufacturing builds pre-manufactured giant steel structures, so their builders are very dependent on referrals for new business. And their sale’s cycle is often at least 18 months long. Getting strong engagement for these B2B builders can sometimes be a challenge, but Digital Fusion has figured it out.

“Most brands focus on syndicated content for their dealers because it’s more affordable and it focuses almost exclusively on the brand, but it’s just not what their dealers want or need to be successful in their local markets” says Magers. “Who wants to have the same images and posts pushed out to their social networks that the dealer across town has?” (None of them.) “We talk to tire dealers too who are so annoyed that their brand-provided social presence looks like everyone else’s. They’re inspired when they see what we’re doing.”

Digital Fusion’s goal this year is to improve social engagement for their clients by 7% over the prior year. “My team is blowing that goal out of the water! We’re currently running 17.64% over prior year across our book of business and we’re not stopping there. We constantly test and optimize what we’re doing every single month” says Magers. The Digital Fusion team meets once a month and the whole team of content and advertising specialists is expected to bring one “win” and one “dog” (something that didn’t work well) to share with the team. The wins are intended to inspire and create best practices, and the dogs are invited to keep the team humble and share suggestions for what could be improved and make them better the next month. “It’s my very favorite meeting of the whole month!” said Magers. “I love how inspired the team gets from one another. We all want to get better for our clients and the brands we represent.”

**Syndicated Content – Why it’s Almost Dead**

Bring up syndicated content in a room with Magers and you’ll see her get visibly uncomfortable. “It’s not that syndicated content does nothing. It makes sure that content is pushed at the local level in a way that properly represents the brand. It’s just that it doesn’t truly make a difference for the local dealer.” But if you can find a way to sprinkle in the brand with truly engaging posts that are unique to each dealer, it makes something special that benefits both the brand and the local dealer in a way that really drives word-of-mouth advertising to the next level. Digital Fusion prides itself on being able to do this with unique social content for every single dealer, every single month.

You can have good, syndicated content, don’t get us wrong. It’s just that if every dealer who represents the same brand is using that syndicated content, they aren’t getting the one thing that makes them stand out from the crowd. It’s the unique “special sauce” their business brings that local consumers on social media are looking for. Without that special sauce, they’re just like everyone else!

When a consumer is investing a lot of money in a product, they care more about how the dealer is going to treat them after the sale, than during the sale. And it’s that special sauce consumers and followers of the dealers really want. “They’ll listen to a reputable dealer who has good online reviews and buy any brand they tell them to”, Magers says. “The minute you make them look like everyone else is when they lose their advantage. And then the brand loses its advantage at the local level too.”

**Takeaway for Brands**

The takeaway for brands is to help your dealers, retailers and channel partners to be different from the other dealers who represent your brand. If you don’t, you’re missing out on something that can bring lasting growth to your channel program. Consumers want to get feedback from your dealers as to what the best products are on the market. They’re going to trust your dealer, but only if they appear trustworthy. And in order to appear trustworthy in online word-of-mouth discussions, they can’t look just like everyone else. Kill your syndicated social content programs! Give your channel partners what they need – to stand out from the crowd.

Digital Fusion, powered by Channel Fusion, provides turnkey digital marketing services for the dealer networks of brands Channel Fusion represents. They pride themselves on pushing the envelope to constantly improve and prove out the ROI tied to their marketing efforts for the brands they work with. For a refreshing experience with a digital vendor who cares about running digital campaigns the right way, [contact us](https://www.channel-fusion.com/contactus/) here.

About Channel Fusion

For 20 years, Channel Fusion has been delivering strategy, customer experience and return on investment outcomes for brands and their channel partners with a wide variety of solutions and industry expertise. We continue to invest in the overall ecosystem of our channel marketing offering to ensure our clients provide their partners with an optimal customer experience. Our core technologies and configurable platforms are supported by a team of customer-centric “Fusers.” [**Let us know if you’d like to learn more about how we deliver desired outcomes for brands and their channel partners.**](https://channel-fusion-website.websitepro.hosting/blog-landing-page2/)