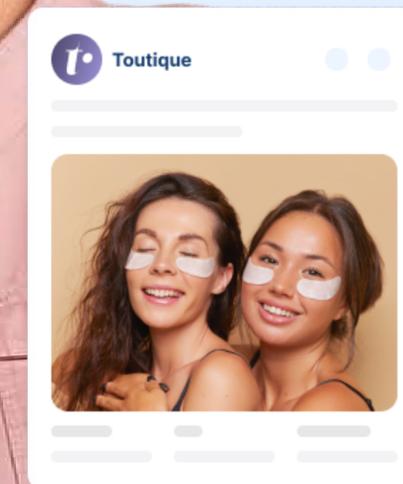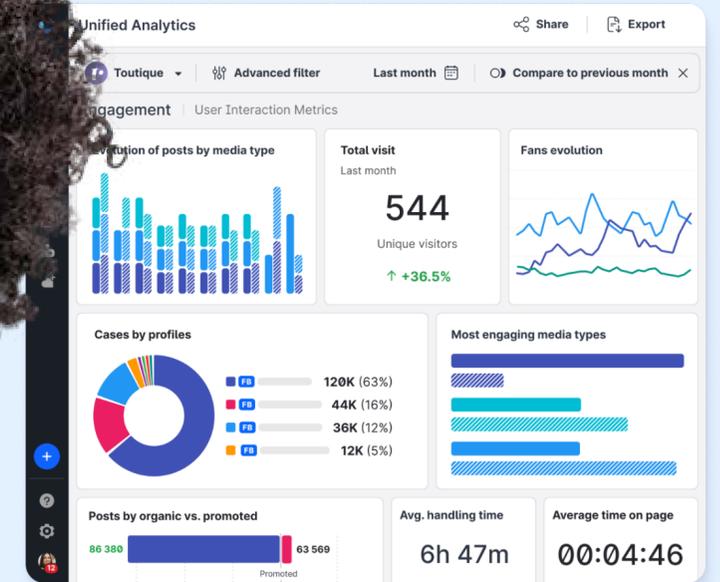# The ultimate guide to social media ROI

How to maximize the value of social media and optimize its impact on your bottom line

INTRODUCTION

The evolving role of social media in business success

—

Social media has evolved far beyond a place for likes and comments – it's now a powerful business engine that can influence brand perception, drive sales, and deliver exceptional customer experiences. But simply having a presence on social media isn't enough. To get a true return on your investment, you need a comprehensive strategy that integrates social media across marketing, commerce, and customer care.

That's where this guide comes in. Drawing from our experience working with leading consumer brands, we'll show you how to turn social media into a high-performance tool that scales with your business and delivers measurable ROI. Whether you're looking to optimize your social strategy, identify hidden costs, or enhance customer care, this guide will help you navigate each stage of your social media journey.

Here's what you can expect to learn:

Setting the foundation for ROI: Learn how to define your social media goals, select the right platforms, and build a team designed to maximize returns.

Choosing and vetting the right solutions: Discover how to identify hidden costs, calculate the true total cost of ownership (TCO), and avoid vendor pitfalls that can eat away at your budget.

Driving engagement and conversions: Optimize your posting strategy, leverage social commerce, and integrate user-generated content (UGC) to build trust and boost sales.

Enhancing customer care through social channels: Use social media to resolve issues quickly, turn negative interactions into positive outcomes, and reduce support costs.

Measuring and refining your strategy: Understand which metrics matter most and how to use data-driven insights to continually improve your social media ROI.

We've helped some of the world's top brands achieve these results, and now we're sharing our expertise with you. By the end of this guide, you'll be equipped to maximize the value of every social media dollar and position your brand as a leader in the competitive digital landscape.

Let's dive in and unlock the full potential of your social media strategy.

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What you will find in this guide

—

(CLICK SECTIONS TO JUMP TO PAGE)

GETTING STARTED

Laying the groundwork for maximum ROI

Defining clear goals and KPIs to maximize social media ROI.

To achieve meaningful ROI from social media, brands must start with clearly defined goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) that align with broader business objectives. Without a well-defined strategy, it's easy for social efforts to become scattered and for results to be inconsistent or hard to measure.

When setting goals, it's critical to consider both short-term and long-term business needs. Short-term goals might include boosting brand awareness or increasing social engagement, while long-term goals should focus on driving sales, enhancing customer loyalty, or improving customer satisfaction. This ensures that social media activities are not just reactive but strategic and purpose-driven.

Best practices for defining goals and KPIs:

Align social goals with business objectives:

For example, if the company's objective is to increase customer satisfaction, your social media KPI might focus on response time and resolution rates for customer inquiries.

Establish specific KPIs for different functions:

Separate KPIs for social marketing, social commerce, and social care provide clarity and allow teams to focus on what's most relevant for their roles.

Use unified analytics to measure effectiveness:

Leverage tools that aggregate data from all your social channels into a single view. This unified approach is essential for accurately measuring the impact of your social media strategy across different departments and ensuring everyone has access to the same data.

Clemson University's experience illustrates the importance of using unified analytics. Before adopting a single platform to manage all social activities, their team often struggled with fragmented data and manual processes that made it difficult to measure effectiveness.

Now, with unified analytics, Clemson can easily assess performance across all social channels and share actionable insights with internal teams – ensuring that social media activities are contributing to the university's broader goals.

This approach not only simplifies reporting but also helps creative teams understand what types of content resonate most with audiences, making it easier to adjust strategies and improve future results. With a clear view of your social media performance, you can identify trends, optimize your content, and ultimately drive better outcomes.

"Having a platform rooted in analytics and data has allowed us to make better decisions, streamline reporting, and share key insights with leadership."

Hillary Smith
Assistant Director of Social Media, Clemson University

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TEAMS

Building your team with social media ROI in mind

Even the best social media strategy will fall flat without the right people in place to execute it. To maximize ROI, brands need a well-structured team that can effectively manage social media initiatives across posting, listening, commerce, and customer care. The key is to build a team that not only understands social media platforms but can also connect their work to broader business goals.

For many brands, the social media manager is the linchpin of the operation – overseeing strategy, content creation, and engagement. But to ensure the strategy delivers results, a more comprehensive team structure is necessary. Consider incorporating roles that provide specialized support and make your social media efforts more agile and responsive.

Key roles to consider when building a high-ROI social media team:

Content Creator: Responsible for developing visually compelling content, from graphics and videos to long-form posts. This role should have a deep understanding of brand voice and be adept at creating content that resonates with different audience segments.

Community Manager: Engages with followers, manages comments, and facilitates conversations across social channels. Community managers help foster relationships, encourage UGC, and build trust – ultimately driving higher engagement and conversion rates.

Social Care Specialist: Dedicated to managing customer interactions on social media, providing timely responses to questions, comments, and complaints. Social care specialists can turn a single negative interaction into a positive experience, improving overall customer satisfaction and brand perception.

Social Commerce Lead: Focused on integrating social media with eCommerce strategies, this role helps align product promotions, influencer partnerships, and UGC campaigns to drive direct sales through social platforms.

Tips for structuring your team for maximum ROI:

Encourage cross-functional collaboration: Facilitate communication between your social media, eCommerce, and customer care teams to break down silos and ensure that insights from one area can inform strategies in another.

Create clear processes for approval and reporting: Establish workflows for content approval and reporting, improving efficiency and reducing bottlenecks in content production and response times.

Leverage technology to support roles: Use a unified social media platform to streamline workflows, provide better visibility into team activities, and centralize data. This will allow your team to focus more on strategic efforts and less on manual processes.

With the right team in place, brands can be more proactive, nimble, and capable of driving meaningful results. And keep in mind that distributing the workload across the team is also a viable option for efficient and cross-functional teams. Once your team and responsibilities are set, the next step is to ensure that your platform selection and cost planning support the growth and performance of this team, setting the stage for long-term success.

Key takeaways

A high-ROI social media team should include specialized roles like Content Creator, Community Manager, Social Care Specialist, and Social Commerce Lead.

Collaboration across departments is essential to ensure social media activities align with broader business goals.

Unified platforms and streamlined processes can boost efficiency, allowing teams to focus on strategic initiatives and deliver stronger results.

VENDOR CHOICE

Choosing the right social media platform and calculating the Total Cost of Ownership

—

Vetting vendors for transparency and hidden costs.

Key questions to ask vendors during the vetting process:

> **What is included in the base price, and what features come as add-ons?**

Vendors often present a base price that covers only limited functionality, with additional charges for premium features such as advanced analytics, integrations, or enhanced support. Make sure you have a clear understanding of what's included and how much each add-on will cost.

> **Are there usage-based costs?**

Ask whether there are any costs associated with exceeding certain limits, such as the number of posts, user seats, or API calls. This helps prevent your team from unknowingly incurring overage fees when scaling up activity.

> **What is the policy for data access and storage fees?**

Some platforms charge for data storage or for accessing historical data. Determine if there are limits on data retention and any associated costs for exporting or integrating that data with other systems.

> **How does the platform scale with your needs?**

Inquire about costs related to adding users or features as your team and needs grow. You want a platform that scales with your organization without penalizing you for growth.

Red flags to watch for:

> **Complex or vague pricing structures:**

If a vendor isn't willing to provide a detailed breakdown of costs or their pricing structure seems overly complex, it may indicate potential hidden fees.

> **Restrictions on support or service levels:**

Some vendors limit access to customer support based on your pricing tier. Make sure you know what kind of support is included and whether premium support packages are available (and at what cost).

> **Inflexible contracts or auto-renewal clauses:**

Pay attention to contract terms – especially regarding auto-renewal policies or fees for early termination. Ensure there is some level of flexibility to adjust your plan as your needs evolve.

Key takeaways

Engage vendors with a clear understanding of your needs and ask targeted questions to uncover potential hidden costs.

Look for vendors that are transparent about pricing and willing to negotiate flexible terms.

Avoid platforms that penalize growth or have restrictive support structures, as they may hinder your ability to scale efficiently.

We can help.

If you feel like your platform doesn't deliver on these questions and has red flags, let's have a conversation about how Emplifi can address your challenges.

PRICING

Understanding pricing structures and negotiating contracts

—

After you've identified potential vendors, it's crucial to dig deeper into their pricing models and contract terms. Many social media platforms offer tiered pricing structures or usage-based models that can appear attractive at first glance but often come with hidden costs or rigid terms. To ensure you're making a financially sound decision, you need to understand exactly what you're paying for and negotiate a contract that fits your organization's needs – both now and in the future.

Understanding common pricing structures:

> **Flat-rate pricing:**

This model offers a predictable monthly or annual fee, which can simplify budgeting. However, it's important to clarify what's included and whether there are any limitations on users, features, or data storage, as these can impact scalability and future costs

> **Tiered pricing:**

Many platforms offer different pricing tiers based on the number of users, social accounts, or feature sets. Higher tiers often unlock premium features or support, so it's essential to evaluate if the added cost aligns with your business goals and provides real, ongoing value.

> **Usage-based pricing:**

Some vendors charge based on actual usage metrics, such as the number of posts, data volume, or API calls. While this model provides flexibility, it can lead to unpredictable costs if your team's activity spikes or your business scales quickly, requiring close monitoring of your usage patterns

> **Per-user or per-seat pricing:**

This model is common among platforms that scale with team size. Be mindful of how adding new users could increase costs, and consider how this model can smoothly accommodate growth without disproportionately raising expenses

Pricing model	Best for	Potential pitfalls
Flat-rate pricing	Predictable budgeting	May include limitations or hidden costs
Tiered pricing	Scaling with specific feature sets	Can require costly upgrades for small changes
Usage-based pricing	Flexibility for fluctuating usage levels	Costs can become unpredictable with growth
Per-user/Per-seat pricing	Teams that scale with additional users	Increased costs as teams expand

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Understanding pricing structures (cont'd)

Tips for negotiating favorable contract terms:

> **Clarify upgrade and downgrade policies:**

Make sure the vendor's contract allows you to upgrade or downgrade your plan as your business needs change. Look for contracts that let you make adjustments without penalties or lock-in periods, making it easier to adapt to shifting demands

> **Discuss support and service levels:**

Understand what level of support is included in your plan. If premium support packages are available, evaluate the cost and consider if the added responsiveness or dedicated account management justifies the expense you'd be taking on.

> **Negotiate flexibility into your terms:**

Contracts should not be one-size-fits-all. If your needs fluctuate seasonally or you plan to scale significantly, negotiate terms that provide room for flexibility – such as the ability to add or remove users or access premium features for a limited time.

Key questions to ask during contract negotiations:

- Are there any additional fees for exceeding usage limits or adding users mid-contract?

- What happens if the platform doesn't deliver the promised performance? Are there service-level agreements (SLAs) or penalties for non-compliance?

- How are price increases handled upon contract renewal?

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TCO

Calculating total cost of ownership

—

Understanding the total cost of ownership (TCO) of a social media platform is crucial for making an informed decision. TCO encompasses every expense associated with a platform, beyond just the upfront licensing fees. This comprehensive view helps you budget accurately, ensures there are no surprises, and enables you to evaluate if the platform will remain cost-effective as your needs evolve.

TCO should include direct costs, such as subscription and support fees, as well as indirect costs like scalability and potential downtime during implementation. Without a clear grasp of these factors, what seems like a cost-effective solution now could turn into an expensive liability later.

Key components of TCO:

Initial costs: Include setup, implementation, and onboarding fees. These are typically one-time costs but can be significant, especially if custom configurations or extensive training is required.

Ongoing costs: Consider recurring monthly or annual fees for licensing, support, and maintenance. It's also essential to clarify the costs for add-on features, data storage, or access to premium services that may not be included in the base price.

Scalability expenses: As your team and social strategy grow, the need for additional user seats or expanded features may arise. Some platforms can become exponentially more expensive when scaling, so it's critical to know how these costs will evolve over time.

Hidden or indirect costs: Be aware of fees associated with exceeding usage limits, data export costs, or the expense of switching to another vendor. Also, consider opportunity costs such as reduced efficiency or delayed campaigns due to platform limitations or a steep learning curve.

Best practices for calculating TCO:

Request a detailed breakdown: Ask vendors to provide a complete list of costs, including initial and ongoing fees, scalability costs, and any charges related to data usage or exporting. This transparency is key to avoiding unexpected expenses.

Consider long-term scenarios: Project your organization's growth over the next 1-3 years. How will your TCO change as your team expands, or as you need additional functionality?

Account for qualitative factors: Beyond costs, consider the value a platform provides through better productivity, improved team alignment, or faster response times. These intangible benefits can have a significant impact on overall ROI.

Calculating TCO accurately will give you the confidence to choose a solution that's not only cost-effective today but also sustainable for future growth and success.

TCO Calculation

Initial Costs =
Setup Fees + Implementation Costs + Training Costs

Ongoing Costs =
(Subscription Fees + Support Costs + Maintenance Costs + Data Storage Costs) per month/year

Contract Duration =
Number of months or years the contract will be active

Scalability Costs =
Additional costs for adding users, seats, or new features as the organization grows

Opportunity Costs =
Estimated costs for downtime, productivity loss, or limited features that affect team performance or customer satisfaction

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POSTING STRATEGY

Effective posting and engagement:
Boosting ROI through smarter social strategies

—

Optimizing your posting strategy to maximize engagement.

Creating content is just the first step in a successful social media strategy. To truly maximize ROI, brands need to optimize their posting strategies for the highest impact. This involves more than just understanding when to post – it requires aligning content with audience preferences, leveraging platform-specific insights, and adapting to trends in real time.

For example, the Department of Culture and Tourism in Abu Dhabi (DCT Abu Dhabi) successfully engaged its audience with the #StayCurious campaign during the height of the pandemic. By utilizing deep audience insights and Emplifi's primetime scheduling recommendations, DCT Abu Dhabi drove strong organic reach and engagement, proving the value of a well-optimized posting strategy.

Best practices for optimizing your posting strategy:

Leverage audience insights:

Use analytics to identify when your audience is most active, what content types they engage with, and which platforms they prefer. This allows you to tailor your content and timing to maximize reach and engagement.

Create platform-specific content:

Different social platforms favor different types of content. Ensure that your content is designed for the unique characteristics of each platform – from video-first strategies on Instagram and TikTok to link-driven posts on Facebook.

Utilize scheduling tools and automation:

Tools like Emplifi's primetime scheduling recommendations can help you automate and optimize your posting times based on audience activity, and AI can provide insight on the best times to share content. This increases the likelihood of your content appearing in feeds and driving interactions.

Monitor and adapt in real time:

Keep a close eye on your content's performance. Adjust strategies based on what's working and what isn't, and use data to refine your approach over time.

The #StayCurious campaign's success shows that smart content planning and distribution can significantly amplify engagement. DCT Abu Dhabi's campaign achieved a lower cost per engagement (CPE) and more effective content reach by boosting top-performing posts and managing all community feedback from a centralized platform.

Abu Dhabi
Tourism & Culture والثقافة للسياحة

CASE STUDY SPOTLIGHT

Abu Dhabi Culture and Tourism

By leveraging audience insights and primetime scheduling, the #StayCurious campaign drove exceptional organic reach and engagement during a challenging time for the travel industry. The key? An optimized posting strategy that adapted to audience needs and delivered value at the right moments.
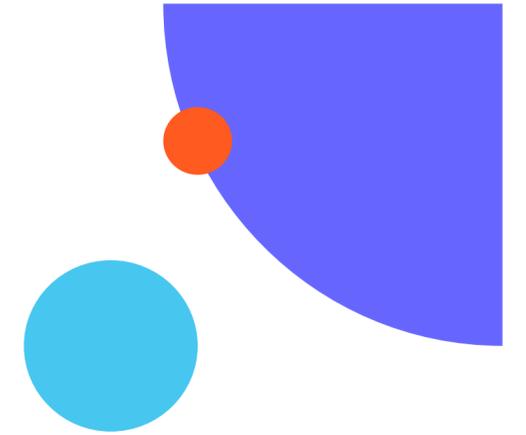
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ANALYTICS

Utilizing analytics for continued improvement

Leveraging social media analytics is crucial for making data-driven decisions that refine your strategy and drive continuous improvement. Analytics provides the insights needed to understand what's working, where there's room for improvement, and how you can optimize content for maximum impact. By systematically analyzing data, brands can adapt quickly to changing trends and ensure their efforts are aligned with overall business goals.

Start by establishing a robust analytics framework that tracks KPIs across all social channels. This framework should be tied to specific goals – whether you're aiming to boost brand awareness, increase engagement, or drive conversions. When KPIs are clearly defined, you'll be able to measure progress accurately and make adjustments to stay on track.

If we examine an analytics value chain, you can see how each step of using analytics builds upon the previous one to establish a greater ROI.

1

Data collection & integration

Description: Collect data from various social platforms, integrating it into a unified view to avoid silos and ensure that all teams have access to consistent information.

Key consideration: Use advanced tools like Emplifi's unified analytics to consolidate data across channels.

2

Insight generation & analysis

Description: Analyze the data to generate insights into audience behavior, content performance, competitive intelligence, and engagement trends. Identify which content resonates most and what topics drive the highest engagement.

Key metrics: Conversion rate, engagement growth, audience sentiment.

3

Strategy refinement

Description: Use the insights gathered to refine your content strategy. Identify top-performing content formats, posting times, and audience segments to optimize future campaigns.

Example use case: A/B testing different post formats or experimenting with new content types to determine what works best.

4

Real-time adaptation

Description: Track performance in real time to adapt quickly to emerging trends or changing audience preferences. Make immediate adjustments based on what's working.

Actionable step: Adjust messaging or creative assets in active campaigns based on real-time data.

5

Measurement & continuous optimization

Description: Measure results against KPIs and long-term goals. Identify areas for improvement, and create a cycle of continuous optimization.

Example metrics: ROI, customer lifetime value (CLV), and engagement rate.

Summary: Analytics' value can be exponential as you use it in more sophisticated ways to measure performance. By leveraging analytics effectively, you can continually refine your approach, optimize performance, and maximize ROI over the long term.

If having analytics that integrates your social performance across all the channels you use is a priority for your team, let's set up a conversation about your unique needs and how to ensure your success.

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Analytics implementation checklist

☑ Identify and define relevant KPIs that align with your business objectives

☑ Select tools that offer comprehensive, cross-platform insights

☑ Set up dashboards and reports to track performance in real time

☑ Conduct regular content audits and A/B testing to optimize strategies

☑ Review and adjust strategies based on insights to drive continuous improvement

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COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Enhancing community engagement with social listening

—

Community engagement is the foundation of strong brand relationships, but achieving it requires more than just reactive social media management. Social listening provides brands with the ability to understand audience sentiment, monitor relevant conversations, and identify trends – all in real time. By leveraging these insights, brands can build deeper connections, respond proactively, and strengthen their position within their industry.

A perfect example of social listening's impact can be seen in Hardee's successful use of Emplifi's platform. During a viral incident outside one of their restaurants, Hardee's team detected an unusual spike in social mentions using real-time listening alerts. Instead of ignoring the chatter, they quickly developed a playful response that turned the situation into a positive brand moment. This engagement strategy led to over 8 million impressions and a 300% increase in social media followers – demonstrating how a brand can leverage unexpected situations to drive engagement and visibility.

Best practices for using social listening to build community engagement:

Set up monitoring for brand mentions, competitors, and industry keywords:

Track mentions of your brand, related keywords, and even competitor activity. This will keep you informed about what's being said and give you the opportunity to engage with relevant conversations that could boost your brand's presence.

Analyze audience sentiment to understand perception:

Use sentiment analysis to assess whether conversations are positive, negative, or neutral. This insight helps you adjust your messaging, show empathy, or celebrate positive feedback, creating a stronger emotional connection with your audience.

Respond quickly and strategically:

Timely responses are key to making the most of engagement opportunities. Hardee's capitalized on the momentum of a trending topic by responding creatively and strategically, which led to a huge boost in impressions and positive sentiment.

Use social listening insights to refine content strategy:

The data you gather can inform your content strategy by highlighting which themes, topics, or formats resonate most with your audience. This feedback loop enables you to create content that your community finds valuable and engaging.

Identify influencers and brand advocates:

Social listening can help you spot potential influencers or loyal customers who are already talking about your brand. Engaging with these individuals can further amplify your message and increase reach.

Hardee's social listening success by the numbers:

300%
INCREASE
in social media followers

8 MILLION
IMPRESSIONS
from a single engagement

18,000 **RETWEETS**
from a follow-up tweet

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USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Leveraging social commerce: Driving sales and credibility with UGC and reviews

—

UGC as a driver for commerce.

UGC is one of the most effective ways to boost engagement and drive ROI from your social media platforms. UGC resonates with audiences due to its authenticity, and it can significantly reduce content production costs. Because UGC is created by real customers, it often performs better than branded content – leading to increased trust, engagement, and even conversions. Moreover, UGC can be leveraged across multiple channels, making it a highly versatile asset that maximizes your investment.

European hospitality company Center Parcs showed just how impactful UGC can be when integrated into a social media strategy when they partnered with Emplifi to collect authentic customer photos and videos that highlighted guests' experiences. The curated content was then used to populate Center Parcs' social channels and website galleries. The result? A 15% increase in social engagement and a 40% uplift in positive brand sentiment, ultimately driving higher bookings and a stronger brand community.

How to calculate UGC's cost savings and ROI:

Reduced content production costs: Producing in-house content can be expensive and time-consuming. Based on Emplifi research, creating a single piece of in-house content can cost up to 9 times more than deploying a piece of UGC. When you consider the volume of content needed to maintain an active social media presence, incorporating UGC can lead to significant savings annually by reducing the demand for in-house production and outsourcing costs.

Lower cost per acquisition (CPA): UGC often drives higher engagement and CTRs compared to traditional ads, resulting in a lower CPA. Emplifi's data shows that clients utilizing UGC see increased conversion rates and a higher likelihood of repeat purchases. This makes UGC an ideal component of performance-driven campaigns, as it reduces the cost required to acquire new customers.

Improved content efficiency: UGC can be repurposed across multiple channels, including social posts, website galleries, email marketing, and even digital advertising. This reduces the need for additional creative development and ensures that your brand has a consistent stream of content to support various campaigns. The Cosmopolitan of Las Vegas saw a 35% increase in CTR by using customer-generated photos in their display ads, highlighting the power of UGC to drive tangible results.

By leveraging UGC, brands can not only boost social engagement but also achieve significant cost savings, driving a higher ROI from their social media platforms.

Want to have a talk about the huge potential UGC could have for your bottom line? We're here to help.

UGC impact on ROI

9X COST DIFFERENCE
between in-house content production and UGC

15% INCREASE
in social engagement for Center Parcs using UGC

40% UPLIFT
in positive brand sentiment

2X HIGHER
engagement rates with UGC compared to brand-generated content

RATINGS & REVIEWS

Ratings and Reviews: Building customer trust and conversions

Impact of Ratings & Reviews on ROI

Ratings & Reviews are crucial in driving purchase decisions and maximizing ROI. When customers see positive reviews from peers, it builds confidence, reduces hesitation, and increases the likelihood of purchase. For brands, this social proof not only increases sales but also reduces return rates and boosts ad performance by enhancing credibility. A great example of this comes from Drybar:

300% INCREASE in review collection for Drybar using Review Incentives

1. Discovery stage: Building trust

Customer behavior: At the start of their journey, potential customers often research products and look for peer validation. Positive reviews act as social proof, increasing confidence and encouraging customers to explore further.

Example from Drybar: By showcasing authentic reviews, Drybar **increased product exploration by 15%**, as customers trusted feedback from other users, helping them see the value of each product.

2. Consideration stage: Validating decisions

Customer behavior: During this phase, customers compare options and look to reviews for details that align with their specific needs, such as quality and benefits. Detailed reviews are key here in solidifying product appeal.

Example from Drybar: Featuring customer-generated reviews and photos helped ease hesitation among shoppers, resulting in a **300% increase in the review collection rate.** This provided a rich set of testimonials, helping guide new customers toward purchasing.

3. Decision stage: Converting buyers

Customer behavior: Positive reviews offer the final nudge for customers on the fence, reducing cart abandonment.

Example from Drybar: Using Emplifi's Review Incentives, Drybar increased review submissions, leading to a **20% boost in conversion rates** as customers felt assured by others' experiences.

4. Post-purchase stage: Encouraging advocacy

Customer behavior: After purchasing, satisfied customers are more likely to leave reviews, refer the product to others, and even create user-generated content. This reinforces trust and builds a cycle of advocacy.

Example from Drybar: Engaging with customers post-purchase helped Drybar foster loyalty and increase repeat purchases, contributing to a higher CLV.

270% HIGHER purchase likelihood for products with positive reviews

15% REDUCTION in return rates for products with high-quality reviews

HIGHER CTR for ads featuring real customer reviews

Incorporating Ratings & Reviews into your strategy enhances trust, encourages conversions, and drives stronger long-term ROI by creating a loyal customer base that actively promotes your brand.

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LIVE SHOPPING

Leveraging live shopping experiences to boost ROI

Live shopping experiences significantly enhance the customer journey, bridging the gap between digital and in-store interactions. By adding live video shopping, brands humanize the online experience, offer real-time product demos, and foster direct engagement that encourages conversions. This approach not only improves customer experience but also strengthens ROI by increasing AOV and CSAT.

Bensons for Beds, a top British retailer, partnered with Emplifi to bring one-to-one live video shopping to their platform, Bensons Live. With Emplifi's Live Advisor solution, Bensons connected online shoppers to in-store experts who showcased products and answered questions in real time. This integration allowed Bensons to replicate an in-store, consultative experience for online shoppers, leading to measurable improvements across digital KPIs.

Impact of live shopping on ROI:

Increased average order value (AOV): Live shopping offers personalized consultations that increase confidence in purchasing. Bensons for Beds saw a **20% rise in AOV** for customers using the live shopping feature compared to standard online shoppers. By providing product insights and live demos, customers were more likely to purchase premium products or add-ons, raising their overall order value.

Enhanced CSAT: Real-time consultations allow brands to respond to customer questions instantly, making the shopping experience more enjoyable. Bensons achieved a **CSAT score of 4.7 out of 5** within the first few months of launching Bensons Live, showing positive customer feedback and a more satisfying experience.

Improved conversion rates: Real-time interaction helps overcome common online shopping barriers, like the inability to physically examine products. Bensons' live shopping feature turned hesitant browsers into confident buyers, resulting in higher conversions compared to the standard eCommerce funnel.

Optimized staff utilization and operational efficiency: Live shopping solutions also help retailers make better use of in-store staff. During quieter times, in-store experts assist online shoppers, maximizing productivity and reducing downtime.

By integrating live shopping into their digital strategy, brands create a more immersive online experience that closely mirrors in-store interactions – ultimately driving higher conversion rates and stronger ROI.

Benefits of live shopping for ROI

20% INCREASE
in AOV for customers using live shopping versus regular online shoppers

4.7/5 CSAT SCORE
achieved through personalized live video consultations

HIGHER CONVERSION RATES
through real-time, interactive experiences

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SOCIAL CUSTOMER CARE

Integrating social media with customer care:
Enhancing brand loyalty and reducing costs
—

Building a seamless customer care experience on social.

Social customer care is more than responding to comments – it's a strategic component that can significantly impact ROI. Brands that effectively integrate social care into their customer support strategy can reduce costs, improve satisfaction, and build loyalty.

For Dine Brands Global, owner of Applebee's and IHOP, these challenges became clear in practice:

Problem

Managing customer service across disconnected systems led to longer response times and higher operational costs. Dine Brands experienced these issues when handling social media inquiries separately from other support channels, resulting in slower resolutions and missed engagement opportunities.

Solution

Dine Brands tackled these challenges by integrating Emplifi's Service Cloud into their customer care operations. This solution consolidated social interactions into a single platform connected to other support channels, allowing the team to manage all inquiries from one place. Centralization streamlined case handling, automated workflows, and provided real-time insights into common issues and trends.

The unified platform automated case routing, reduced manual data entry, and ensured each inquiry was assigned to the right team members based on expertise. Emplifi's analytics also enabled Dine Brands to monitor customer sentiment and key metrics like response and resolution times.

Outcome

This integrated approach boosted Dine Brands' customer care efficiency. Average handle time for social cases dropped from five minutes to just one, with customer satisfaction increasing to a CSAT score of 4.7 out of 5. Shorter handling times cut costs and enabled the team to manage a higher volume of inquiries without additional staff. The result: improved ROI through better service at a lower cost.

Faster response times and streamlined operations led to more satisfied customers and a stronger brand reputation. Integrating social customer care with a broader support strategy proved transformative, creating consistent, effective customer interactions while maximizing ROI.

By investing in robust social care solutions, brands can boost efficiency, enhance service, and drive ROI through stronger customer relationships and cost savings.

Key points to maximize social customer care ROI

> **Key points to maximize social customer care ROI**

> **Consolidate social care with traditional support channels to streamline operations**

> **Use automation to reduce response times and lower operational costs**

> **Monitor sentiment and feedback to identify areas for improvement**

> **Train agents to deliver empathetic, personalized responses**

> **Track key metrics like average response time and CSAT to measure success**

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SOCIAL LISTENING

Connecting social listening to social care

—

Integrating social listening with social customer care is a powerful way to create more cohesive customer experiences and drive higher ROI. Social listening provides insights into how customers perceive your brand, while social care offers direct support to address their needs. Connecting the two ensures that you're not only reacting to customer inquiries but also proactively managing brand sentiment and resolving issues before they escalate.

When social listening and social care work together, teams gain a holistic understanding of the customer journey. This integration allows for quicker responses, better issue resolution, and improved brand perception. Instead of waiting for customers to reach out, you can use social listening to identify potential problems early on, provide proactive support, and even turn negative situations into positive interactions.

How connecting social listening and social care impacts ROI:

Proactive issue identification and resolution:
Social listening enables brands to monitor conversations across social platforms and detect emerging issues. This capability allows social care teams to act before a complaint becomes public or escalates, reducing the volume of inbound support inquiries and mitigating negative sentiment.

Improved response times:
When social listening insights are routed directly to social care teams, brands can respond faster and more efficiently. Teams have the context they need to address customer concerns quickly, leading to better resolution times and lower operational costs.

Enhanced customer insights for tailored support:
Integrating social listening with social care allows you to understand what your customers are talking about most frequently. These insights can reveal recurring issues or product-related concerns, helping your support team tailor their responses and preemptively address common questions.

Stronger brand reputation and customer loyalty:
Effective social care backed by real-time insights builds trust and demonstrates that your brand is actively listening and responding to customer feedback. This responsiveness not only improves customer satisfaction but also fosters long-term loyalty.

Strategic alignment across teams:
Sharing social listening insights with other departments – like product development, marketing, and sales – can inform cross-functional strategies, enhance messaging, and ensure consistent brand communication.

By combining social listening with social care, brands can proactively manage customer relationships, improve service quality, and ultimately drive stronger ROI through better engagement and more efficient support operations.
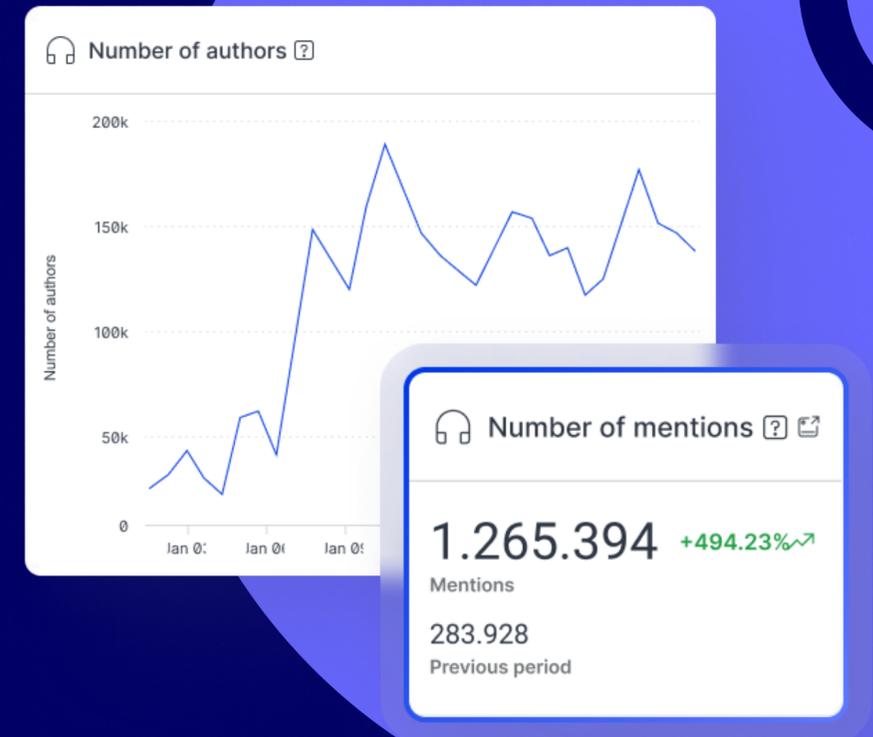
If you're interested in learning more about how this sort of integration can positively impact your social strategy, our experts are ready for a quick chat.

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MINI CASE STUDY

From insight to action

Scenario: A well-known cosmetics brand notices an increase in complaints about a new skincare product through social listening. Customers are mentioning issues with sensitivity and irritation on various social channels.

Social listening insight: Analyzing sentiment and keyword trends reveals that these complaints are focused on a specific ingredient.

Social care response: With this insight, the brand's social care team proactively reaches out to customers, offering personalized advice and suggesting alternative products. This timely response reduces the volume of public complaints and strengthens customer trust.

Outcome: The proactive engagement and personalized responses lead to a notable increase in customer satisfaction and a reduction in social escalations. Integrating social listening with social care allowed the brand to react quickly and protect its reputation.

Lesson: Connecting social listening insights directly to social care workflows enables brands to address issues early, demonstrate empathy, and ultimately enhance customer loyalty and satisfaction.

Top keywords

Face mask 18%	Natural Beauty 10%	Beauty routine 6%
Skincare 16%	Skincare fail 9%	Lipstick 5%
	Glamorous Makeup 8%	
Makeup 16%	Glow 8%	Serums 4%

SPIKE ALERT Skincare Fail

DURATION
6 h | ● Ongoing

NUMBER OF MENTIONS
3 845 | ⤴ +51.8 %

NOTIFIED USERS
+3

Skincare fail
Toutique Cosmetics

Dianne Russell
commented to FB Toutique | Listening - Comment | ↑ URGENT

Really disappointed with this hand cream. 💔 My hands feel just as dry and the scent is too overpowering. Not buying again. #SkincareFail #DisappointedCustomer #HandCream

Reply

Hello, Dianne Russell! We are...
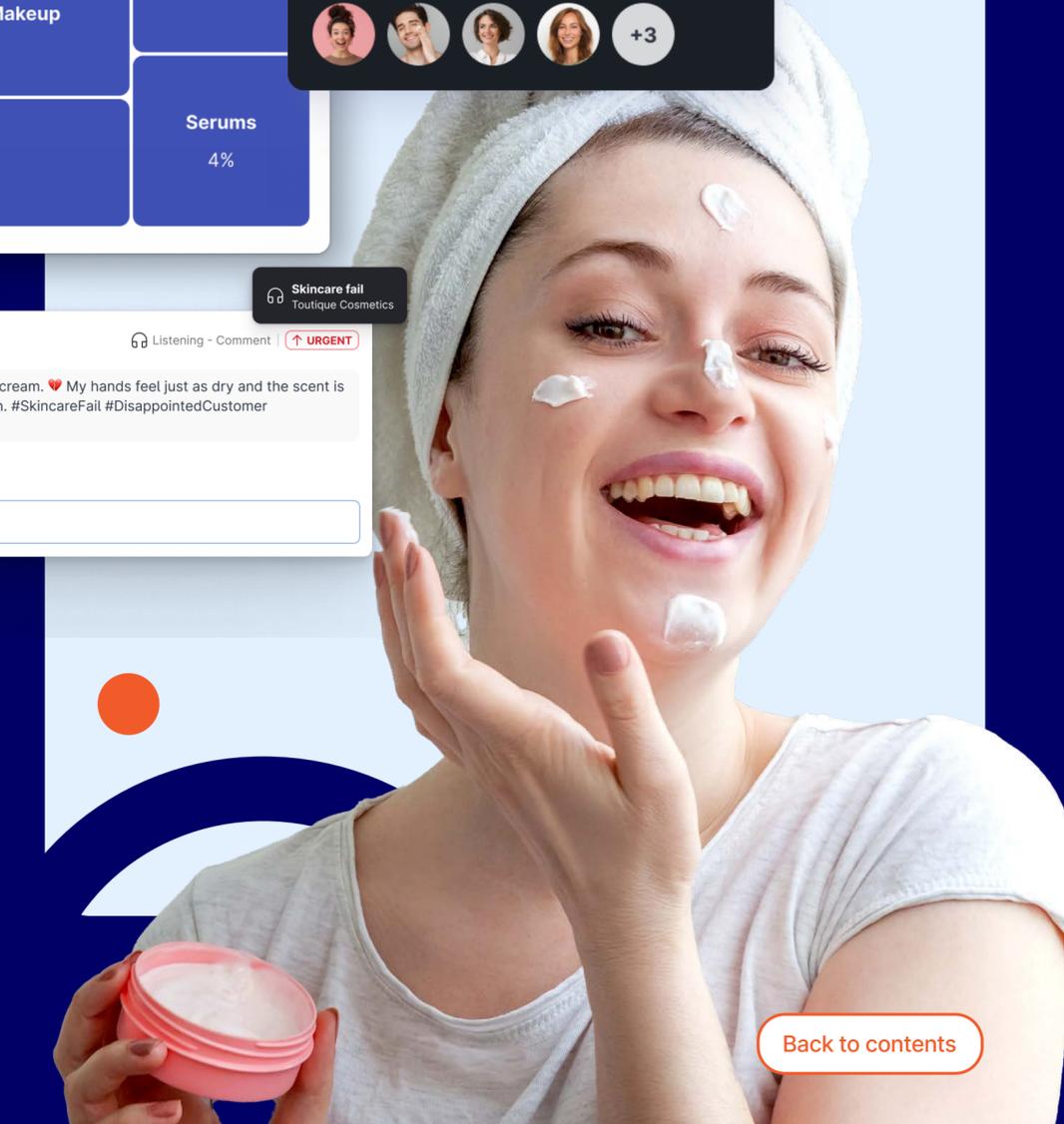
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SCALING

Optimization and scalability: Scaling your social media strategy for maximum ROI

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Consolidating tools for greater cost-efficiency.

Managing multiple tools for social media marketing, customer care, and social listening can be both costly and complex. When teams work with fragmented systems, they face challenges in communication, data integration, and workflow efficiency – all of which can negatively impact ROI. Consolidating these tools into an all-in-one platform helps brands streamline operations, reduce costs, and boost productivity.

Domino's, for example, faced difficulties in managing a rapidly growing volume of social interactions. After implementing Emplifi's Social Marketing solution, Domino's was able to consolidate its social media management, customer engagement, and social listening into a single platform. This consolidation resulted in a 53% reduction in social case handling time and allowed them to manage a 128% increase in social media volume without adding headcount. By centralizing their operations, Domino's not only improved efficiency but also elevated their overall customer experience.

Benefits of consolidating tools for cost-efficiency:

Lower operational costs: Using multiple tools often means paying for overlapping features and dealing with higher maintenance costs. Consolidating these into one platform reduces licensing fees and minimizes administrative overhead.

Increased team efficiency: A unified platform enables teams to collaborate more effectively by providing a single source of truth. With all data and interactions housed in one system, there's less time spent switching between tools and more time focusing on delivering value.

Better data integration and visibility: When teams operate in silos, data is fragmented and insights are lost. An integrated solution ensures that all teams have access to the same data, leading to more informed decision-making and better alignment on strategic goals.

Scalability and flexibility: As your business grows, a consolidated platform makes it easier to scale operations without the need for constant system upgrades or additional integrations. For Domino's, this flexibility allowed them to handle more interactions seamlessly as their social presence expanded.

Enhanced customer experience: When customers receive consistent, timely responses across multiple channels, it builds trust and loyalty. A centralized platform helps brands like Domino's provide a seamless experience that strengthens relationships and drives repeat business.

By consolidating tools, brands can reduce costs, improve efficiency, and ultimately enhance the ROI of their social media and customer care strategies.

Myth vs. reality: Tool consolidation for cost efficiency

Myth: Using multiple specialized tools is always better because it provides more capabilities.

Reality: Multiple tools often lead to overlapping features, increased complexity, and higher costs. Consolidating to an all-in-one platform eliminates redundancies, reduces training time, and lowers licensing costs.

Myth: Consolidating tools is too complex and disrupts workflow.

Reality: With the right partner, migration is streamlined and disruption is minimized. Integrated platforms simplify workflows, allowing teams to collaborate more efficiently and quickly adapt to new systems.

Myth: Consolidating tools will reduce the specialized capabilities of each function.

Reality: Modern all-in-one platforms are designed to provide advanced features across all functionalities, offering the depth of specialized tools along with seamless integration and enhanced data sharing.

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COLLABORATION

Cross-department collaboration for maximum impact

One of the biggest challenges for large organizations, especially those with distributed teams like chain restaurants, retail, and hotels, is managing siloed teams and disconnected systems. When marketing, customer care, and sales teams work in isolation, or when local branches have separate social initiatives, they often operate with incomplete data and fragmented strategies. This separation can lead to inefficiencies, miscommunication, and a lack of alignment on overarching business goals. Breaking down silos by unifying these teams through shared tools and processes creates a more cohesive strategy, ultimately resulting in stronger ROI and a more consistent brand experience.

The impact of silos is felt across multiple areas of business operations. Marketing teams might miss out on valuable customer feedback collected by support teams, while customer care agents may lack the insights from social listening data that marketing teams utilize. In distributed organizations, the challenge is compounded by the need to coordinate national brand messages with localized social content. By breaking down silos, supporting cross-functional collaboration, and aligning both national and local teams, brands can create a single source of truth that aligns everyone's efforts while preserving flexibility for local engagement.

Aspect	Siloed teams	Unified teams
Data Sharing	Limited data visibility across departments, leading to incomplete insights	Full data access, providing a comprehensive view of customer interactions
Customer experience	Inconsistent responses due to lack of shared knowledge between teams	Seamless experiences with personalized responses based on shared insights
Productivity	Repetitive processes and duplicated efforts across teams	Streamlined workflows and reduced duplication, enhancing team productivity
Strategic alignment	Different teams working with misaligned goals and strategies	All teams aligned to common goals, driving unified strategies and outcomes
Response to market changes	Slow reaction time to shifts in customer needs or trends	Faster, more agile responses backed by real-time data and insights
Collaboration	Isolated teams limit idea sharing and cross-functional collaboration	Open communication channels foster collaboration and idea sharing

By fostering a culture of collaboration and connecting previously siloed teams through shared technology, brands can create a more agile organization that drives stronger ROI and delivers better results across every touchpoint.

Key points for breaking down silos

> Encourage regular communication between teams to share insights and updates

> Use unified platforms that support cross-functional collaboration

> Establish shared goals that align with broader business objectives

> Remove barriers that limit access to data and information across teams

> Implement training programs to ensure all teams are proficient with shared tools and processes

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KEY METRICS

Measuring long-term ROI

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Measuring the ROI of your social media efforts requires a broad approach that looks beyond immediate gains. While metrics like reach and impressions offer insight, the true value of social media lies in its ability to support long-term business growth. By focusing on factors that directly contribute to your brand's profitability, you can better determine the overall ROI of your social initiatives.

Factors that can positively impact your ROI:

1

Additional customers:

Attracting new customers through social media expands your customer base, driving higher long-term revenue. Effective social strategies boost visibility and engagement, drawing in new audiences.

2

Improved customer relationships:

Strong, positive social interactions foster loyalty and retention. Social care and community engagement play a vital role in keeping customers satisfied and coming back.

3

Finding new revenue streams:

Innovative tactics like live shopping and UGC open up additional revenue opportunities. New channels and formats allow brands to expand their offerings and reach more customers.

4

Save money:

Streamlined tools, processes, or resources help reduce operational costs. Consolidating software or optimizing workflows, for instance, helps manage expenses while still delivering high-quality customer experiences.

5

Improved conversion rates:

Delivering relevant social content to the right audience boosts conversions. Strategic targeting and optimized content presentation move customers efficiently through the purchase funnel.

By focusing on these long-term factors, brands can better understand and maximize the impact of their social strategy, leading to increased customer satisfaction and stronger profitability.

ROI formula

ROI = (Net Profit/Investment) x 100

Net Profit = Final Revenue - Initial Revenue

Investment = Total cost of software or service

Example calculation:

If revenue grows from $1M to $2M over 2 years with a $100K/year software investment:

Net Profit = $2M - $1M = $1M

Investment = $100K × 2 = $200K

ROI = (1M/200K) x 100 = 500% after 2 years

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LONG-TERM VALUE

ROI impact pathway: Mapping metrics to long-term value

Step 1: Customer engagement

Regular social interactions, personalized responses, and valuable content lead to increased customer satisfaction.

Step 2: Higher rentention and CLV

Satisfied customers are more likely to remain loyal and spend more, increasing CLV and retention rates.

Step 3: Increased loyalty and NPS

Loyal customers become advocates, boosting your NPS and generating referrals through positive word-of-mouth and social shares.

Step 4: Enhanced brand sentiment and advocacy

Positive sentiment and advocacy contribute to a stronger brand reputation and attract new customers, further increasing ROI.

Final outcome: Long-term growth and profitability

All metrics combined drive sustained ROI, illustrating the long-term value of investing in social media strategies.

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NEXT STEPS

Elevating your social media ROI with a strategic approach

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Maximizing your social media ROI requires a comprehensive strategy that goes beyond basic engagement metrics. By understanding and applying best practices across content creation, social customer care, UGC, and cross-functional collaboration, brands can drive significant results that extend far beyond short-term gains.

Throughout this guide, we've highlighted the key elements that contribute to long-term ROI, starting with selecting the right tools and platforms. Consolidating fragmented systems into an all-in-one solution helps streamline workflows, reduce costs, and enhance data sharing, creating a more efficient operational foundation. We also discussed the importance of breaking down silos between departments – aligning marketing, social care, and sales to ensure all teams are working toward shared goals and making the most of unified insights.

Another key takeaway is the power of UGC and social proof. Incorporating UGC and showcasing authentic customer reviews helps increase trust, reduce content production costs, and influence purchase decisions. We shared case studies illustrating how UGC-driven campaigns and well-integrated review systems can significantly impact metrics like CLV and AOV.

We also explored how advanced social listening and proactive social care can build stronger relationships by providing real-time insights into customer sentiment and behavior. Brands that integrate these tools with their support strategies can identify emerging issues, address concerns before they escalate, and create a more consistent brand experience.

Lastly, understanding the full scope of ROI means looking at long-term metrics like CLV, retention rates, and NPS. These indicators help you measure not just the immediate financial impact but also the lasting value of your social media investments.

Taking your social media ROI to the next level means bringing all these components together under a unified platform. Emplifi's all-in-one solution helps brands streamline social marketing, social commerce, and social care – enabling you to connect with your audience more effectively and deliver results that matter.

Ready to see the impact for yourself?

Contact us today

Schedule a demo and learn how Emplifi's unified platform can help your brand maximize ROI and achieve your social media goals.

Schedule a demo

emplifi

Emplifi provides exceptional digital customer experiences via a platform trusted by more than 20,000 of the world's leading brands. With comprehensive and integrated social media marketing, social commerce, and care, combined with unified analytics and AI, Emplifi fuels growth, resulting in happy customers, increased product sales, and improved brand loyalty.

Want to learn more?

For more information, please visit us online:

emplifi.io