Social Influence System

Say No to Zombie Social Media Marketing

How to Bring Sustainable Digital Communications to Life

Overview

How do you build influence in an increasingly diverse and unpredictable media landscape? Some brands try a little of this and a little of that without committing to any one channel. Others mindlessly plug in the social media du jour and hope for the best.

Aimless actions like these won't yield long-term success. Real influence requires a sustainable synthesis of content to build and feed an audience, and a process to listen, measure and adjust to your audiences' needs. Like your competitors, you need a solution that optimizes for each.

This white paper outlines how the **Social Influence System (SIS)** will act as your communications linchpin. You already have social media, websites, blogs and campaigns in place. Now you need a framework that ties them all together so they work in unison, support the all-up marketing initiatives, spark conversations, hardwire influence over time and assure that the connections you are making with your audience are fostered throughout your brand or product lifecycle.

SIS is the central nervous system of your digital media strategy. It is a new way to harmonize content, workflow and engagement to drive ongoing results.

Today's Influence Problem

Many brands have difficulty connecting campaigns with social media to reliably generate action from fans. Why? Because the marketplace is more fragmented, and it has more potential influencers and channels than ever. Winning influence in this environment takes calculated management of messages, trends and responses.

Becoming a Zombie

Companies unwittingly gamble on their products' success by launching ill-conceived or not-thought-through social media marketing campaigns.

Instead of carefully targeting key channels (Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, etc.) and integrated content across channels to amplify engagement, they dump press releases into mass market engines or choose a single social channel and bombard it with information until it fails to perform. In these cases companies

are not taking advantage of the dialogical nature of social media and are instead using it solely as a broadcast tool. We call this behavior “Zombie Social Media Marketing.”

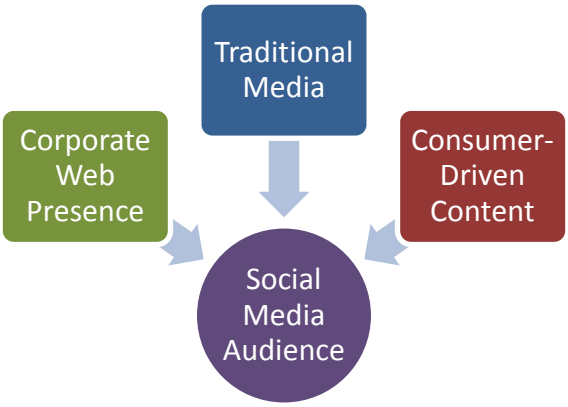
> **Zombie Social Media Marketing:** One-off, shallow, short-term and unsupported social media marketing campaigns that cripple brands from harnessing the true power of social and digital communications. This zombie marketing approach promulgates drive-by culture and triggers zing and wow spikes, but it doesn’t foster long-term, healthy, profitable relationships with key audiences. The result is missed opportunities, fragmented messages and lost credibility.

While social media marketing can lead to real, measurable and lasting business gains, often campaigns are not well executed and end up as fragmented as the influence space. When brands react to media fads or hijack headlines with no long-term action plan, impact spikes and then flat lines. These are campaigns that leave stakeholders no choice but to disengage, going from potential brand ambassadors to fickle, disheartened audiences skeptical of your brands commitment to bringing value to their lives.

Are You Engaging in Zombie Social Media Marketing?
Most social media marketing efforts fail for the following reasons:

- They are treated as one-off campaigns.
- They are not aligned to communications goals.
- Their ROI is not accurately mapped to existing business goals.
- They are not integrated into “regular” workflows.
- Content isn’t optimized for each channel.
- Internal decision-making hierarchy is murky.
- Infrastructure is not built to support or amplify campaigns.
- Audience media habits are not understood.
- Engaged audiences are not nurtured.

If you’ve checked more than two of these points for an effort you’re involved in, you may be guilty of zombie tactics. It is understandably difficult to visualize the complete picture of this new and complex digital communications world when you don’t have a framework to tie everything together, so luckily we have a solution.



Influence RX

The perfect antidote to chaos is strategy. At Waggener Edstrom Worldwide, we believe that a clear understanding of the problem (chaos) will lead to identification of effective solutions (strategies). In the “zombie” situation, we surmised that not all pistons were firing — at least not together.

The remedy we developed breathes life into the opportunities afforded by social media campaigns and fortifies a brand's entire communications architecture. It's holistic, evolutionary and elegant. We call it the **Social Influence System**. This plug-and-play matrix enables any brand to synthesize its content creation, audience engagement and media publishing with internal processes.

> **Social Influence System (SIS): SIS is** a system of sustainable, targeted social media strategies and campaigns that share the right content with the right audience at the right time. This integrated framework relies on internal workflows and response mechanisms to support each content channel, from social media to message creation, and engages in conversations that build brand influence over time. It ensures two-way conversations between brand and customer, as well as brand and influencer.

SIS Vitals

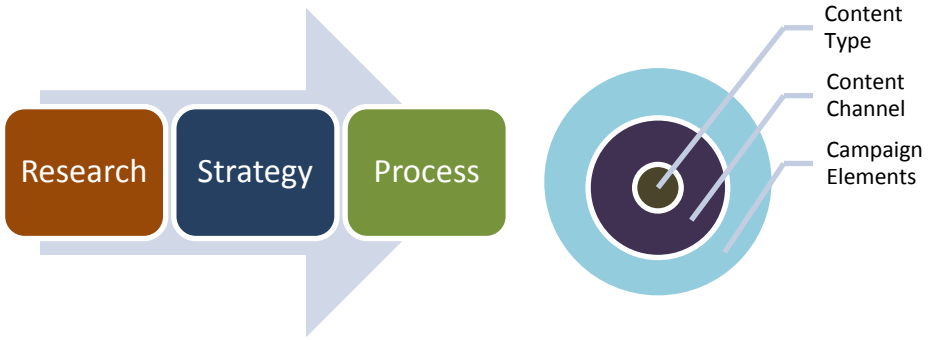
The beauty of the **Social Influence System** is that it allows processes to function together as one. Much like the human body, when the heart of your message is supported by calibrated responses, your brand moves forward.

Constructing **SIS** is simple, once you understand the framework. Here are five vital steps to get started:

1. **Build a sustainable process**
2. **Create workflows and assign resources**
3. **Create your own News Stream® system (if your organization is "publishing" large quantities of content)**
4. **Plug campaigns in on top of the SISMonitor and measure**

Vital #1: **Build a Sustainable Process**

An effective Social Influence System requires a wide-eyed look at the big picture:



1. **Research.** Take a systemic view of your social and digital communications program. How are campaigns supported and launched? What channels is your target audience using? What types of content most appeal to that audience? How is your brand perceived in the social sphere?
2. **Strategy.** Identify the business results you want to achieve and the integration points needed to ensure success. Devise a strategy to engage with influentials and build influence with them.
3. **Process.** Align campaign strategy with business goals. Create a process that connects the right content with stakeholders at the right time and on the right channels. Establish internal roles to

amplify engagement and share content. Then continually monitor your current impact across key social media and blogs.

Vital #2: **Create Workflows and Assign Resources**

The SIS framework hinges on having the right resources and workflows in place. What's getting in the way now? Unclear or misaligned objectives and poor processes are likely to blame. These missed opportunities can jeopardize customer trust, ruin campaigns and slow response time — a disaster if a crisis strikes.

Establish order by putting employees at the social media helm, setting up feedback loops, formalizing internal best practices and identifying crisis communications channels. These changes can work wonders by doing the following:

- Automating processes
- Creating decision hierarchies to speed up reaction time
- Clarifying roles between the agency and the client
- Establishing direct-to-customer communication channels for promotion as well as crisis management

Vital #3: **Create Your Own News Stream System**

Content is the big daddy of marketing communications. It manifests as Web copy, social media posts, campaigns, videos, blog posts, teleconferences, intellectual property, feature articles, headlines … the list goes on. Because content is so vast — and influential — harnessing it is the key to the success of any social strategy.

Enter Waggener Edstrom Worldwide News Stream® services. We recommend this step for organizations that have a desire to centralize their content and recognize the need to become integrated across channels.

By using this unique methodology, organizations can conceive, create and publish compelling content elements and content packages that tell their brand story. It's a digital publishing and communications solution that neatly nests content creation, news generation and content analysis within Social Influence System. With News Stream services, any brand can determine how it generates news by mastering the flow of its digital content.

> **How the News Stream** methodology works**:** Internal knowledge management systems are set up to gather and push out content. Story elements are then directly distributed through external media such as websites, social networks and news aggregators. A newsroom draws people in, provides context and fosters ongoing content distribution. Performance metrics can be applied to retool content and drive users to desired business outcomes.

The News Stream methodology includes three main systems: A Content Engine, Platform and Design, and Insight & Analytics. Combined services cover editorial strategy, writing, content management, publishing, search optimization, social media distribution and detailed reporting.

News Stream Services in Action
News Stream services are the brains behind Microsoft News Center. This content hub enables Microsoft Corp. to publish and distribute news, releases and announcements to a wide variety of audiences. With full ownership, Microsoft controls story integrity, facilitates integration with key media and ensures that content supports business goals.

Vital #4: **Plug Campaigns In On Top of the SIS**

Many brands jump into social media before they get the basics of workflow and scalability sorted out. They want instant gratification sparked by easily measured metrics, such as fans, friends and followers. The trouble is campaigns built on quantitative metrics have no staying power. Highs soon plummet and messages turn stale, brand advocates become disappointed.

The **Social Influence System**, on the other hand, positions research and strategy as the pillars of any social media campaign. In-house mechanisms — such as resource workflows, response protocols and metrics — integrate with outbound outreach efforts. When a campaign launches, you are ready to respond, replay and repurpose content as needed.

The payoff to balanced planning and executing is true social influence.

Vital #5: **Monitor and Measure**

Sustainable content and effective social media strategies have one thing in common: strong metrics. The Social Influence System can help ensure that your metrics stay that way.

Build buzz, trends and influence
Waggener Edstrom Worldwide works with clients to optimize SIS for the best possible return. Our listening, measurement and analytics tools reveal the buzz and trends that impact your brand. You can use this insight to uncover the influencers and content most closely aligned with your goals.

The Social Buzz™ application ferrets out around 50 key influencers every day by monitoring how they're trending, what they're saying and when they're responding. This front-end listening system runs four reports daily to reveal true buzz and influence. Brands discover which topics to promote, when to engage and which messages to amplify.

Our WExPulse® media monitoring system media monitoring tool lets brands listen to online conversations as they occur and highlight issues that matter most. Trending terms surface through news articles, blogs, tweets and comments. Data informs smarter marketing choices and better business outcomes.

The WE twendz pro™ Twitter-monitoring and analytics dashboard helps measure brand impact of important Twitter conversations. Its keyword algorithm calculates tweet sentiment to identify key influencers. This knowledge can inform long-term planning or in-the-moment problem-solving.

Conclusion

Marketing has always worked because of influence. Remove influence, and marketing impact disintegrates. To maintain influence, you need a zombie-proof framework that connects marketing practices to today's fragmented, digital space. While influencers can now number in the thousands, brands must retool to meet that need. That's why the Social Influence System is so critical.

At the end of the day, SIS will help you scale to engage rising volumes of influencers and customers. It is the solution that maps your internal and external channels to each key media and audience segment.

Aligning these forces is the holy grail of modern communications strategy. When you synchronize content, process and technology, your brand wins.

Earning trust and influence demands this kind of calibrated engagement. It requires a system of spokes, wheels and hubs tuned to each business goal. To breed influence on this level, you must say "no" to Zombie tactics, such as blind tweeting or half-baked campaigns.

Instead, invest in strategy that harmonizes each part of your communications program to play in unison. The music you create will breathe life into your brand and fuel influence that lasts a lifetime.

Connect

Want to amp up your social media strategy? Contact us to learn more:
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About Waggener Edstrom Worldwide
Waggener Edstrom Worldwide (WE) is a global, integrated communications agency. For more than 26 years, the independently owned firm has developed strategic communications programs for innovative and world-changing clients, working to influence markets, inspire people and improve lives. WE has earned numerous honors for its outstanding work on behalf of clients, for its exceptional people and for its innovation in communications. The agency has more than 800 employees in 16 offices around the world, and its 17 Global Alliance partners expand the agency's reach to 30 additional international markets. WE has seven global practices: Analyst Relations, Consumer Marketing, Corporate Communications, Healthcare, Public Affairs, Technology and WE Social Innovation.

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