

Lithium



Vistaprint Case Study
Measuring Positive ROI
from Social Engagement



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About Vistaprint

Vistaprint is a leading online provider of professional marketing services and printed products for the home and family. A global company headquartered in Venlo, the Netherlands, with US operations in Lexington, MA—Vistaprint employs over 2,700 people, operates 24 localized websites, and ships to more than 120 countries around the world.

Empowering over nine million micro-businesses and consumers annually, they offer a one-stop option for dozens of customizable, high-quality goods and services, and they do it all online—from business cards and brochures to invitations, note pads, and thank you notes. More than delivering a printed product, Vistaprint also supplies online solutions such as websites, email and postcard marketing, and wearable options like hats and T-shirts. As it has grown, the company has become a turnkey marketing solution for micro-businesses looking to stand out from the competition.

The Story of Going Social

It was time to go social—everyone knew that—but taking the plunge and doing it right, that was another thing entirely. For Vistaprint it took a forcing factor. Their public relations manager, Jeff Esposito, said his boss at the time tossed him Stephen Baker's May 2008 Business Week cover story, "Beyond Blog," with the instructions to: Figure it out.

"We started out very small, we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into," says Esposito. "Our idea was to use social for reputation management. Little did we know at the time, but it's turned into a lot more."

Starting with the basics, the team drew up a game plan for their community engagement and listened for a few months before getting involved. They

began with Twitter and about 115 outbound conversations in their first month. Shortly after that, it jumped up to 500 interactions, and by July 2009 the team was surpassing 1,000 interactions a month. Right away they discovered a passionate online customer base that wanted to connect with Vistaprint. With customers asking to be involved, the team knew they needed to start monitoring and measuring the conversation.

Vistaprint didn't just listen, they answered.

Early Success: How Customer Conversations Made Dollars... and Sense

Vistaprint has over 35,000 Facebook fans today, but what matters at the end of the quarter is how their investment in social

pays off. Their audience was talking, and about six months into their activities, social marketing had become an active component of Vistaprint's go-to-market mix—not just for promotion, but for support as well.

They needed the right tools for the job and metrics to understand exactly what conversation was going on. So the Vistaprint team went looking for a new social media monitoring solution.

"We chose a social media monitoring solution when we started," says Esposito. "As our strategy evolved, it became clear that it didn't meet the measurement requirements that our team was looking for. When we looked at the offerings out there, Lithium's Social Media Monitoring solution was the perfect tool for us. The features were just what we needed and the tool's flexibility let our whole team access that critical data."

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When you understand the social conversation and how to engage with it correctly, when you can measure the outcomes, you can directly impact your bottom line.

Jeff Esposito
Manager PR & Social Media, Vistaprint



Looking at the bottom line, Vistaprint started to correlate their social conversations and responses to the sales funnel, and started to measure what some people believe isn't possible: revenue from social.

"When you look at the conversation coming in, there's a mix of product development, of real-time feedback and user experience." It was easy to track conversations to direct points of purchase online. And, just by knowing who was saying what—and then reaching out to them—the team could start to turn some of our frustrated customers into some of the biggest advocates.

"As a company that measures everything, tracking engagement back to revenues is something that we were doing from day one," says Esposito. "When we look back to 2009, that first calendar year when we started, we brought in over \$30,000 on

social networks in revenue. The majority of that came through Twitter. It's very simple: the more you converse in a helpful, open and transparent manner, the more money comes in."

Once the team was comfortable with the nuances of Twitter and how the engagement played into their daily workflow, they expanded and scaled to another social network—bringing Facebook into the mix.

The Right Tools: Competitors, a Tropical Storm, and the Human Element

Vistaprint had wanted to formalize the way they understood social and tie their commerce transactions to their social data. For months the team had been looking at their numbers in a vacuum: just the Vistaprint activity. They needed

better tools to measure the competitive landscape. "When we made the switch to Lithium's SMM product we gained the ability to look at our numbers compared to our competitors. It gave us a look at what really moves the needle across the competitive landscape."

Vistaprint started to track how specific promotions affected online activity and how conversations drove sales and repeat purchases. Suddenly the team could spot emergent trends right away, and see what worked and what didn't. If there was a serious problem, they had the tools to identify and pass the intelligence to the appropriate teams. Just by knowing who was saying what—and then reaching out to them, as human beings—they could turn frustrated customers into some of their biggest advocates.

Tropical Storm Nicole made those benefits perfectly clear.

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Vistaprint's Engagement Checklist

- ✓ Know in real time how you—and your competitors—are faring
- ✓ Find and motivate your superfans
- ✓ Build and maintain your online reputation
- ✓ Track online sales
- ✓ Track how promotions drive activity and how interactions drive purchases and repeat sales
- ✓ Give customers real-time support and feedback
- ✓ Turn frustrated customers into your biggest advocates
- ✓ Get feedback affecting product issues and development
- ✓ Quickly discover—and be able to address—important product issues and trends
- ✓ Enhance your customers' experience and knowledge
- ✓ Find the right tools for the job

For more information about Vistaprint, visit: vistaprint.com

Vistaprint's English-speaking customer service center is located in Montego Bay, Jamaica. When Tropical Storm Nicole blew through in October 2010, their call center had to be closed for the safety of employees. Right away they saw a giant spike in the social media space: people were talking about their orders. Esposito explained, "We said, 'Hey guys, we're going to try to get to these as fast as we can, but our customer service is down right now because of Tropical Storm Nicole. We'll post more information as we get it'. We posted that initial message along with periodic updates on Twitter and Facebook – and the result was an outpouring of positive responses."

Customers who'd been angry about the delay saw the human side of the company. They knew there were real people working there and real people affected by a natural disaster. "The human element helped us transmit the

reason for closure to our customers. It got to the point to where people didn't mind waiting for some of those answers."

The Bottom Line: Results That Matter

"What we're seeing," says Esposito, "is that the more you talk, the more everything grows, whether it's the overall volume of conversations or the bookings. The more you're active, the more active the whole ecosystem is overall."

Because for Vistaprint—for any company—it's ultimately about seeing the dollars and cents. By the second year, the team had the tools to correlate their activity in the social platforms with their reputation and their bottom line.

"We could actually see what was being said if someone was not happy with us, how many conversations it would take to turn them to a positive. Or, how many follow-ups does it take? How many conversations translate to sales?... When you're looking at tools, the more knowledge and data you have, the more it helps you make a quantitative decision, rather than just say that social media is cool."

About Lithium

Your customers are everywhere. Lithium helps you find your social customers, understand their influence, and build lasting relationships. For market leaders such as Best Buy, AT&T, Research In Motion Limited (RIM), Univision, and PayPal, Lithium is the leading provider of social customer solutions that deliver real business results.