

SocialEyes

The Insurers' View of Social Media

Facebook: How Engaged Are You?

One common belief among insurers is that engaging with existing fans is more critical than building bigger fan bases. Certainly, with the way Facebook works, getting fans to share information takes advantage of social relationships and increases the priority afforded to future stories. With the emphasis on engagement, no wonder Facebook has added a new metric to gauge the level of conversation generated by a page. "Talking About This" (TAT) refreshes daily but captures a week of activity.

Some of the interactions that make up TAT includes:

- Liking a Page
- Posting to a Page's Wall
- Liking, commenting on or sharing a Page post
- Answering a question posted
- RSVP-ing to an event
- Mentioning a Page in a post
- Photo-tagging a Page
- Liking or sharing a check-in deal
- Checking in at a Place

We have added the TAT metric to the industry Facebook table alongside our own measure on engagement (see page 5). Our measurement, Engagement Index (EI), is more limited, measuring interactions to company posts during the period, with 'shares' and 'comments' weighted higher than 'likes' and poll votes.

For both metrics, we present raw

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Communicate With Those You Know Modern Woodmen Cuts a Path To Members

According to a recent study commissioned by Pitney Bowes Business Insight and conducted by the ESCP Europe Business School, only 48 percent of consumers in the U.S. and the U.K. trust their insurance providers. Also, respondents believed that improving customer communications would have the greatest impact in terms of developing trust.

The question is: what can insurers communicate with customers about? Most consumers do not want to have an ongoing conversation with their insurers, but they do want to be involved in their communities. They like to see their insurers sharing their community interests and this is where niche carriers might find that social media gives them an advantage over big national brands.

Fraternal benefit societies are one example. Members share a common bond such as an ethnic, religious, or occupational background; more than 9 million Americans belong to a fraternal organizations. Modern Woodmen of America is the third-largest fraternal financial services organization in the country. It was founded in 1883 to protect families and their financial futures following the death of a breadwinner. Modern Woodmen members team up to improve the quality of life in their local areas. Adult and youth members clean up parks; spend time with the elderly; and conduct fundraisers for individuals, shelters, schools and other community organizations. There are more than 750,000 Modern Woodmen members and the scope for conversation is endless—highlighting projects, sharing ideas and showcasing members quite apart from the financial benefits of being a member. Social media is a natural fit because even though the fraternal organization provides life insurance and financial services, the relationship is deeper and enhancing trust will reduce the view of products and services as commodities.

Modern Woodmen started a Facebook page in March 2011 relying on organic growth as it learned to cope with the demands and set up internal processes and training. The corporate communications department is responsible for the Modern Woodmen fan page, while marketing oversees the financial repre-

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Communicate With Those You Know

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FACEBOOK STATS: Modern Woodmen

The Normalized Engagement Index, taking into account the size of the fan base, was 986 (higher than all leading insurers) in October vs the industry average of 116

The company posted 16 times and had 281 interactions

Fan count stood at 865 at the end of October, up 21% since September

The Share button represented 40% of interactions in October vs the industry average of 10%

The Facebook Talking About This metric was 80 and the normalized equivalent, taking into account fan base, was 9.33% against the industry average of 1.58%.

sentatives' use of social media. Together the two departments work with other areas of the organization to manage Modern Woodmen's social media presence.

A critical guideline deals with regulatory compliance so every post is pre-approved, as are most responses to customer questions. To reduce unrealistic internal demands, a content calendar is in place well in advance. One exception is responding to natural disasters, which has a well-defined separate process.

The strategy is simple—to connect with Modern Woodmen members. There is no interest or need to reach random prospects, as Modern Woodmen has a defined area of influence that it wants to be part of. There is no demand to promote or sell products. It is trying to engage and cement the bond with members.

Recruitment of fans therefore is reliant on members sharing information with each other. The company does not plan sweepstakes or competitions but does not rule out promotions that benefit community charities in line with the overall mission. Modern Woodmen's members are organized into local chapters and youth clubs and can help spread the message now that social media policies have been put into place for chapters and clubs.

One of the biggest ongoing challenges is creating fresh, sharable content. There are no fulltime employees dedicated to social media and the frequency for media postings is more demanding than traditional newsletters. The organi-

zation recently had a good experience using video. A Life Insurance Awareness Month clip proved very popular and was shared extensively by agents, but time and money are limiting factors.

Content creation resource is one reason to hold off blogs for now (there is nothing worse than a dead blog). There are ongoing discussions about whether to tap into content that today is available only through member-only publications. The debate is whether social media can create broader readership, encourage more sharing and thereby increase the reach, or reduces the value of the member publication.

As for success metrics, initially they consisted of internal processes, flow charts, and policy documents, but have now broadened to Facebook fan count, albeit a temporary metric until engagements and influence can be measured.

The Facebook page now has 865 fans with October seeing a 21% increase, the largest to date. The company posted 16 times, slightly below the industry average, with 281 interactions. Looking at the Normalized Engagement Index that takes into account fan size, it has a score of 986, against an industry average of 116, and higher than all leading insurers. The Facebook Talking About This metric stands at 80 and the normalized equivalent is 9.33% against the industry average of 1.58%.

Modern Woodmen is optimistic about the recent introduction of the Facebook Share button. Dialogue was previously encouraged by asking questions but that is not always appropriate. It wants to provide useful information to share. Clicking the Like button is a low commitment by consumers and did not do the job. The fan base has taken quickly to the Share button and last month was preferred for 40% of all interactions against an industry average of just 10%.

Social media is about developing a deeper relationship with customers, building trust, moving away from viewing insurance as a commodity where price rules. The more insurers become part of their community, the more social media will contribute.

Community is not limited geographically, or by faith, occupation, or interest; it is whatever binds the group together. USAA is very successful with social media for the military community and Thrivent Financial is a case study in building communities with Lutherans. Looking wider, Dairyland Cycle has 7,000 Facebook fans almost entirely made up of Harley riders and Acuity has separate Facebook pages for truckers, merchants, construction, and manufacturers. □

Facebook: How Engaged Are You?

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METRICS EXPLAINED

ENGAGEMENT INDEX (EI): our measurement of interactions to company posts, with 'shares' and 'comments' weighted higher than 'likes' and poll votes.

NORMALIZED ENGAGEMENT INDEX (NEI): factors in fan base size

TALKING ABOUT THIS (TAT): Facebook metric comprising elements such as likes, post, comments, answering questions, responding to events, mentioning pages, photo-tagging, sharing check-in deals, checking in, and so on

NORMALIZED TALKING ABOUT THIS (NTAT): factors in fan base size

data as well as a normalized values. The normalized value is arguably a more accurate reflection of engagement as it takes into account the size of the fan base.

There is a strong correlation between the raw EI and TAT metrics as well as the normalized values. The exceptions are, in most cases, due to spikes in one or more of the broader metric items, in most cases a burst in page 'likes'. In the past month, State Farm and MetLife both had strong fan recruitment and their TAT numbers were higher than the equivalent normalized figures.

The very high TAT metric for Farmers Insurance is harder to explain. During the period, Farmers did not post any stories, and fan recruitment, while high numerically (48,000) was low in percentage terms and lower than other insurers. Fans posted stories but the volume was not spectacular (22 against USAA at 250). In spite of this, Farmers led the Facebook metric for the industry. Mayhem came in second, which is more understandable with over 145,000 interactions during the period, and next was Flo, which also had strong numbers with 30,000 interactions and about the same number of new fans as Farmers.

Mayhem leads the EI rankings with Flo and MetLife second and third.

Normalized metrics, where fan count is considered, provides insurers a benchmark of how well the recruitment process has worked.

In the simpler EI which looks just at post interactions, Primerica leads with high levels of interaction with its 40,000 fans. It aggressively recruited many of its 100,000 representatives to be fans and uses Facebook for 'internal'

updates and announcements. MetLife again performed strongly but with another strong recruitment month, the Normalized Engagement Index (NEI) metric suffered. The company has increased the rate of posting and at 89 in October, more than three times the average, might stretch even the most enthusiastic fans. Farmers, top of the TAT list is bottom for NEI, with just 2,600 interactions with 2.4 million fans.

Normalized Talking About This (NTAT) is calculated by dividing the Facebook TAT value by the fan count. The average for the industry is 1.58 with the top 10 insurers by fan size performing slightly lower at 1.29. Putting this into context: the average of a range of retail, travel and entertainment brands is 1.34 so (perhaps surprisingly) insurers are more engaged. Major brands such as Starbucks, Amazon, JetBlue, and Coke failed to reach the insurance average. Neither for that matter did Lady Gaga though Justin Beiber inched above insurers with 1.96.

MetLife and State Farm (with a combination of strong recruitment and engagement) are strong in this metric as are Sentry (due to strong recruitment) and Modern Woodmen (highly engaged fans).

Looking closer at the type of engagement for the industry, 80% of all story interactions are 'Likes', with Mayhem leading with 86% and Aflac lowest at 27%. 'Shares' and 'comments' both average 10% of interactions with Northwestern Mutual and Modern Woodmen of America highest for 'shares' with 40% and The World's Greatest Spokesperson (Nationwide) highest for comments at 70%.

As a rule, questions attract comments; quirky notes or expressions attract likes; and interesting information attracts shares. Consequently, brand and mascot accounts such as Flo, The Gecko, and Mayhem tend to have strong like rates. Corporate communications identities such as Northwestern Mutual, American Family, New York Life and Thrivent Financial have higher share rates.

Engagement is the battleground most insurers are focusing on, recruiting enough fans to have meaningful conversations and providing information that might even reach extended networks. The mantra for social media could be "To you, Through You". We have provided a range of metric ideas so you measure your activity in a way that makes sense. □



Facebook activity in October 2011

- **FARMERS INSURANCE** continues to limit its output, with just two posts for the month, the same as previous months. User-started posts included a range of complaints, help requests for CityVille, compliments, and people wondering how they had ever become fans. Farmers posted just two responses. It has recruited an extremely large fan base, gaining a boost in brand recognition, but is choosing to limit engagement. Sweepstake recruiting can experience an attrition rate of up to 50%, affected by the nature and frequency of posts. Farmers looks to have chosen to “stay low” and limit the dreaded “unlike”.
- Most people agree insurance is not a compelling topic. **STATE FARM NATION** tested this theory with a Facebook poll. “Staring into headlights” beat “dealing with insurance” by 7 to 1. The good news was that 1,550 people chose to vote. State Farm Nation, targeted at younger consumers, posts mostly about concerts and sports.
- **USAA** prides itself on the lack of sweepstakes and prizes, or even charitable donations in exchange for page likes. It has now topped the 200,000 follower mark. Most posts are business related but even USAA fans need light relief. The largest interaction was a poll about favorite car color (4,017)—black it seems and the most comments were in response to a question about Pet Peeves (449).
- The **GEICO** post that attracted most shares was video (a growing industry trend). The clip showed how guinea pigs were taught to row (you need to see the TV ad!).
- **NEW YORK LIFE** is benefiting from its developing agent program. The most-shared post was about retirement planning and many of the sharers were company agents.
- **METLIFE** posted 89 times with Peanut characters, especially Snoopy, accounting for 25. MetLife blends mascot popularity on the corporate page unlike Progressive (Flo), GEICO (Gecko, Caveman, Pothole) and Allstate (Mayhem) that all host separate pages.
- **21ST CENTURY** offers a weekly sweepstake to fans. In the past few weeks, prizes have included Xbox consoles, Omaha Steaks, \$500 Gas Cards, and GPS boxes. Get three friends to take part, and the prize upgrades to a new car. The best response came from a simple request for happy customers to like the post— over 1,000 did so.
- **THRIVENT FINANCIAL** acknowledged the 494th anniversary

Flo the Progressive girl posted 19 times with 12 centered on dressing like Flo for Hallowe'en. Last year, Flo added



almost a million new fans around Hallowe'en. Flo never mentioned insurance with the most likes (3,346) coming from a post about the return of football; the most comments from a favorite scary movie question (1,865); and the most shared a video on how to look like Flo (221).

- sary of Martin Luther nailing his 95 Theses to a door. By asking fans to share a post, it recognized the close community it enjoys. Nearly 1,000 fans shared the post and over 800 clicked ‘like’.
- In a digital ‘hide and seek,’ **TRUSTED CHOICE** is posting trivia questions on Facebook with the answer to be found on its website. The lucky winner gets a \$50 gift card.
- Industry Facebook recruitment grew by less than 3% for the second month in a row. Insurers reaching double-digit growth, which was commonplace six months ago, is now restricted mostly to campaigns. Facebook ads, sweepstakes, and charitable donations remain the most popular recruitment devices. Corporate accounts gained 4.4%, up slightly from last month, while mascot pages inched up 1.4%, slightly below last month.
- **SENTRY INSURANCE** continues to donate \$1 for a ‘like’ to the United Way chapter nearest the company HQ.
- **ACUITY** InGear (Truckers) has a \$100 Visa Card sweepstake for fans and is a big believer in developing distinct communities. Aside from InGear, it has recently launched Facebook pages for merchants (Flying off the Shelf), manufacturers (Made in America), and construction (If You Build It). It has also added a consumer-focused page (WOW).
- Like Acuity, other insurers are using Facebook to reach niche communities; motorcyclists is one example. GEICO, Progressive, and Nationwide all have motorcycle pages but the leader is **DAIRYLAND CYCLE** (a subsidiary of Sentry Insurance), catering largely to Harley riders, a very tight community of fiercely loyal consumers.
- The average number of Facebook posts in the month was 24, about the same as the previous month, but the average has risen slightly from 19 at the start of the year. □

Facebook data for October 2011

Page Name	Category	Fan Count	October Growth	Talking About This	Normalized Talking About This	Posts	Share/all Interactions	Engagement Index	Normalized Engagement Index
Flo, The Progressive Girl	Mascot	3,225,128	1%	18,114	0.56%	19	2%	48,913	15.17
Farmers Insurance	Corporate	2,349,220	2%	32,275	1.37%	2	15%	5,959	2.54
State Farm Nation	Demographic	1,316,819	1%	6,074	0.46%	35	6%	13,401	10.18
Mayhem (Allstate)	Mascot	1,085,668	2%	29,844	2.75%	14	10%	228,545	210.51
Aflac Duck	Corporate	288,254	1%	2,045	0.71%	30	9%	9,392	32.58
USAA	Corporate	200,585	3%	6,716	3.35%	37	6%	15,076	75.16
The Gecko (GEICO)	Mascot	197,569	2%	1,942	0.98%	10	5%	5,850	29.61
GEICO	Corporate	192,944	4%	3,241	1.68%	8	12%	3,031	15.71
State Farm Insurance	Corporate	152,457	34%	17,867	11.72%	38	29%	13,788	90.44
New York Life	Corporate	122,587	7%	2,983	2.43%	37	18%	7,694	62.76
The Hartford	Corporate	108,935	1%	248	0.23%	20	12%	1,242	11.40
MetLife	Corporate	89,469	28%	11,753	13.14%	89	10%	24,039	268.69
Soy La Mala Suerte	Demographic	74,740	17%	4,818	6.45%	14	2%	16,501	220.78
State Farm Latino	Demographic	67,614	21%	3,136	4.64%	38	1%	2,170	32.09
21st Century Insurance	Corporate	66,825	25%	4,971	7.44%	16	2%	5,170	77.36
University of Farmers	Mascot	53,499	0%	164	0.31%	7	14%	733	13.70
Allstate	Corporate	42,176	19%	788	1.87%	38	23%	5,126	121.54
American Family	Corporate	41,763	1%	454	1.09%	24	32%	2,842	68.05
Thrivent Financial	Corporate	41,422	1%	672	1.62%	23	31%	9,849	237.77
Progressive Insurance	Corporate	34,655	7%	514	1.48%	5	2%	416	12.00
World's Greatest Spokesman (Nationwide)	Mascot	28,622	0%	62	0.22%	11	1%	842	29.42
Northwestern Mutual	Corporate	23,774	0%	420	1.77%	16	40%	3,085	129.76
Trusted Choice	Association	22,198	0%	129	0.58%	19	36%	1,851	83.39
Primerica	Corporate	21,477	2%	1,023	4.76%	53	12%	10,102	470.34
Aviva USA	Corporate	17,781	18%	525	2.95%	5	9%	366	20.58
Mass Mutual	Corporate	17,194	15%	1,566	9.11%	49	11%	1,229	71.48
Esurance	Corporate	14,799	0%	98	0.66%	34	4%	617	41.69
Aflac	Corporate	13,865	5%	211	1.52%	2	6%	848	61.16
Nationwide Insurance	Corporate	12,112	4%	155	1.28%	19	8%	485	40.04
Liberty Mutual Insurance	Corporate	10,464	11%	318	3.04%	22	23%	878	83.91
California Casualty	Corporate	9,994	4%	406	4.06%	35	13%	3,175	317.69
Medical Mutual of Ohio	Corporate	9,336	1%	140	1.50%	18	5%	284	30.42
Gerber Life	Corporate	8,745	2%	79	0.90%	1	0%	88	10.06
Travelers Insurance	Corporate	7,413	5%	147	1.98%	9	31%	651	87.82
Dairyland Cycle Insurance	Product	6,788	0%	52	0.77%	4	5%	156	22.98
Ameriprise	Corporate	6,570	5%	164	2.50%	8	26%	796	121.16
Industry Average			2.9%		1.58%	24	10%		89.72

Lights, Camera, Policies

Increasingly, insurers are looking for new ways to communicate. Gone are the days that a well-written brochure would do—content needs to be engaging, interactive and get to the point quickly. Studies show that online readers scan rather than read information and content must be designed accordingly.

A growing trend is the use video shorts of about three minutes length. Production costs are falling and distribution through YouTube is easy. USAA releases a new video short every couple of days, Mass Mutual has launched a life insurance campaign based on Facebook and video, and Allianz Life has produced videos to “demystify” annuities. Insurers are, and need to be, in the video business.

One new approach to video is to help reach independent agents, to gain mindshare, and help them sell policies. American Collectors is a leading insurer for collectibles and collector vehicles, a niche market, and few agents would see a significant business opportunity. The company needs to sell through a large range of independent agents who need their policies infrequently. The overall inclination for agents is to pass on the opportunity as the overhead of getting up to speed too high.

Enter video. The company broke the story into five short pieces of about 3½ minutes each. The time investment for the agent with a new prospect was the length of a Beatles song. The first —“Why collectors are good for your business?”—explained that, according to the Wall Street Journal, nearly seven percent of Americans own a collectible car and have high net worth and incomes. These are great customers to own. The video has had more than 1,000 views.

The other videos step through the “Identify, Cultivate, and Serve” processes including quotations. The videos are popular, agents can become brand experts quickly, reducing the missed opportunities and the assistance required from the company. The investment for an agent at each stage is 3½ minutes. Video length is important, the amount of time agents (and consumers) will invest is limited. Clarifying the message and squeezing words to fit the time constraint has been an invaluable exercise that now benefits other mediums.

A valuable lesson is learned. Provide information to suit the audience. Now the goal is to reach consumers. Referrals are the number one source of new customers and the community actively shares, discusses, and meets with other collectors. Video could be highly sharable content. □

Twitter followers: October 2011

	Type	Followers	October Tweets	Follower Change
State Farm Nation	GenY	28,473	91	-1%
Allstate Insurance	Corporate	25,462	389	13%
USAA	Corporate	21,648	133	6%
State Farm Insurance	Corporate	17,298	523	4%
Aflac Duck	Mascot	12,514	116	2%
The Hartford	Corporate	10,463	24	3%
New York Life	Corporate	10,380	56	81% ↑ 5
Progressive Insurance	Corporate	9,808	137	15% ↓ 1
Nationwide Insurance	Corporate	8,206	22	7% ↓ 1
Primerica	Corporate	7,570	112	3% ↓ 1
Chubb Insurance	Corporate	7,298	171	5% ↓ 1
Travelers Insurance	Corporate	6,633	79	6% ↓ 1
GEICO	Corporate	5,779	19	7%
Progressive It's Flo	Mascot	5,573	67	32% ↑ 4
Farmers Insurance	Corporate	5,508	2	5% ↓ 1
Liberty Mutual	Corporate	5,160	60	7% ↓ 1
GEICO Gecko	Mascot	4,857	36	24% ↓ 2
USAA Help	Help	4,655	97	3% ↓ 2
Progressive Help	Help	4,170	65	6% ↓ 1
American Family	Corporate	3,931	251	9%
AON	Corporate	3,736	54	11%
Cigna	Corporate	3,298	144	7%
Zurich North America	Corporate	3,149	21	7% ↑ 1
Esurance	Corporate	3,133	66	5% ↓ 1
PEMCO	Corporate	2,846	188	3%
Northwestern Mutual	Corporate	2,378	161	5%
AXA Equitable Gorilla	Corporate	2,257	123	5% ↑ 1
Safe Auto	Corporate	2,244	38	4% ↓ 1
Munich Re	Corporate	1,980	43	8%
California Casualty	Corporate	1,794	8	2%
Thrivent Financial	Corporate	1,716	14	4%
Safeco Insurance	Corporate	1,711	12	11%
AXA Equitable	Corporate	1,700	110	12% ↑ 1
MetLife Blimp	Mascot	1,624	57	6% ↓ 1
AON Solutions	Sub-Corporate	1,600	13	13%
Foremost Insurance	Corporate	1,455	20	9%
Westfield Insurance	Corporate	1,409	40	6%

New York Life Seeks Agents of Change

New York Life is one of the more successful insurers using social media, boasting more than 120,000 Facebook fans and over 10,000 Twitter followers. It has long been a leader on LinkedIn for recruitment with over 17,000 subscribers. The corporate social media presence focuses on developing name recognition, opening dialogue, and developing trust—it is all about enhancing the brand. As a result, the company claims over 125 million positive impressions per month on social platforms. In traditional terms, this is marketing.

Enhancing sales is a more difficult task in this period of record low life insurance policy ownership. Like many insurers, the vast majority of sales come through the agent network and New York Life has over 60,000 licensed agents.

Social media is a natural fit for agents—they are natural networkers, constantly looking to expand their networks, build authentic relationships and develop dialogue. This could well be the Jeopardy answer to “What is social media?”

Developing a strong corporate social media presence was a necessary first stage before reaching agents. Company commitment needed to be seen and value needed to be shown. Agents are busy people, they have no time to ‘play’ with new toys that may or may not drive business. Ultimately, success comes when agents demand access to social media; it is not something that can be imposed.

Creating agent programs has proven difficult for most insurers. The challenges are real with few tried and tested methods. New York Life has embarked on small pilots at every stage and has not rushed programs out prematurely. Among the many challenges, two were particularly significant, one for the company, the other for the agents.

The company needs to protect both itself and consumers by complying with all relevant regulations. Social media can be a minefield, not least with the potential proliferation of unchecked advertising and communications that lack recording, checking, and archiving processes.

New York Life saw compliance as a deal-killer early on and to move from prohibition to participation, a solution was needed. Part of that solution was to be an early adopter and functionality adviser of compliance technology developed by Socialware. Clearer guidance from FINRA was a critical factor that allowed New York Life to develop a com-

prehensive set of guidelines, training, and controls.

The biggest agent objection is always time. Agents never signed up to create content especially when it needs pre-approval from compliance personnel. New York Life needed to create a program that came as a toolbox with polished tools inside.

Agents need a regular supply of need pre-approved content, articles, or information that they can share with friends and customers. They need time-focused promotions, either calendar events such as the Valentine’s Day “Insure Your Love” campaign, or timeline events such as childbirth.

Agents need guides to building Facebook or Twitter pages, recruiting fans, and creating local (non-preapproved) content. Social media needs to be a blend of business news and more personal items.

Agents respect other agents, often more so than corporate personnel. They want best practice information, ideas that have worked in the field. Above all, they want to feel supported. New York Life provides a dedicated quick

After the initial pilot program ... almost 20% of agents have signed on with a commitment to attend training webinars and passing an online test.

turnaround email address. After the initial pilot program that ran from 2009 to early 2010, almost 20% of agents have signed on with a commitment to attend training webinars and passing an online test.

The benefits are obvious. Agents get a set of new tools—currently they can use LinkedIn, Twitter, and Facebook—to grow their customer relationships. They get a steady flow of content and promotions. New York Life gets a potentially huge channel for content. If each agent recruits 100 fans on Facebook, the company could have a reach of more than six million consumers.

The next stage is to develop social advertising models. Local agents have forever placed ads in yellow pages and social media has its equivalents. Facebook ads have proven effective for carriers to recruit fans by leveraging network relationships. New York Life is working with seven agents to build ad models. Testing is focusing on relative effectiveness of various interests, ad text, and images. So far, the best-performing image is the company logo, and a surprisingly strong-performing interest in Disney. These ‘nuts and bolts’ details are critical to provide turnkey solutions to agents to build their business. □



Around The Horn — November 2011

New York Life is the latest insurer to use Promoted Tweets and Accounts and with great success. It boosted Twitter followers from 5,700 to 10,400 in the month and it continues to climb by up to 500 a day. Organic follower growth ran through the summer in single digits.

Promoted accounts are sold on an auction-based model. **Automotive advertisers are paying as much as \$70 per follower** but the overall average for all advertisers is about \$10. Reports suggest the insurance industry is significantly below that level but that may change with the strong results.

Twitter also provides enhanced Twitter analytics to advertisers. This offers insight into tweet performance (both promoted and organic), number of RTs, clicks, and which tweets trend best. Also included is which tweets influence unfollows/follows at rates higher than others.

MassMutual launched “a Why Life Insurance?” awareness program, its first campaign to be solely on social media. MassMutual enlists kids to underscore the importance of life insurance with a combination of videos, interactive tools, and content. Facebook fans are provided links to financial planning tools, helpful tips and a platform to engage in real-time conversation.

According to a report by Registered Rep/WealthManagement.com, of all financial advisors, **insurance advisors are most likely to use social media.** According to the report, insurance advisors tend to have conversations with prospects that address their insurance needs, and this is easy to do using social media. About 65% of insurance brokers use social media.

LinkedIn now offers a company status feature so subscribers can see news, employee moves, job opportunities or the latest on products and services

in their homepage news feeds. The updates also allow Facebook-style comments, “likes” and “shares”. Eight insurers have jumped aboard including Liberty Mutual, New York Life, MassMutual, and MetLife.

Marketers spent 25% more on Facebook advertising during the third quarter of 2011 compared with the second quarter, resulting in a 54% jump in the average cost per click (CPC). CPC rates are expected to rise through 2012, at a rate of 30 to 40% per quarter. Fan engagement per post rose by an average of 31% quarter-over-quarter, while impressions per post rose 24% over the same period.

According to a report by Mintel Comperemedia, **of all the direct mail sent, just 13% reaches the 31-45 age groups.** This target segment for insurers is increasingly hard to reach, further evidence supporting the use of social media which has strong penetration in this group.

Actiance is in beta for a critical extension of its Socialite compliance solution. As with other providers in the space, it is now addressing the two-pronged problem insurers face with social media. First, to protect the company by helping to comply with regulations; second to be pro-active by distributing pre-approved content to agents. Content distribution can be increased significantly through agents but it must be simple. The new extension, called Engage, also offers a range of performance metrics and was launched with Raymond James as an early adopter.

GEICO launched the Facebook app “GEICO Shortcuts” to provide policyholders access to their insurance information. Features include Bill Pay, ID card retrieval, and access to GEICO deals. Adding core web functionality to Facebook is becoming a strong trend.

The average number of tweets per month for the industry was 70 compared to 73 for September and 82 per month for the year. Accounts that use Twitter for customer help, as always,

topped the list with GEICO, State Farm, and Allstate leading the field. Twitter followers for insurers grew 7.5%, up from 6.1% last month. Corporate communication accounts rose by 9.6%, against 7.9% last month.

Allianz Life released three videos to “demystify” annuities. The company encourages viewers to share the animated shorts, called Retirement Realities, Annuity Basics, and Annuity Myths and Truths. The videos are hosted on YouTube so consumers can access the content and share easily. A focus is to promote the videos via network groups like the ones on LinkedIn that are aligned around retirement income topics.

New York Life claims 1 billion “positive impressions” a year from social media.

Matrix Direct, a subsidiary of American General Life, which in turn is a subsidiary of AIG, **now offers Facebook and Twitter access to its “Ask a Question” service.** Matrix accepts that consumers are more likely to be on social sites than its website. It has also added a quote engine to its Facebook page.

Primerica uses Facebook as an internal news tool communicating to its 100,000 representatives. The company posts daily updates featuring news and promotions and launched with a giveaway sweepstake competition leading up to its 2011 convention. Representatives are strongly encouraged to be fans to get up-to-the-minute news.

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