

# The Third Dimension of Marketing

Embrace it Before it's too Late

Shiv Singh and Andrea Harrison, December 2008

As the recession hits us the pundits are busy prophesying what the downturn means for marketing and digital in particular. Marketers themselves are focused increasingly on direct response activities, as Christmas sales look dismal. But it is at this very time, that marketers need to retool their departments and organize for the future. Just as the downturn has turned innovation into a necessity from being the luxury it once was so too must the innovative thinking be applied to how marketing departments are organized.

Today a typical marketer's existing cost structure is probably already untenable, his core customers are aren't as loyal as they once were and his products aren't flying off the shelves as they did six months ago. How can the marketer respond to these worrying circumstances? What does it mean to restructure a marketing department? We believe the answer is by organizing the marketing department to truly take advantage of social influence marketing.

## A Marketing Imperative for the Recession

Back in January 2008 we developed a hypothesis that the way people are influencing each other online across the social web in small groups through peer pressure, reciprocity and flattery is giving rise to a whole new form of marketing that we called Social Influence Marketing. We defined it as marketing to the network of peers that surround and influence the customer across the social platforms and on brand websites. It was also about taking the brand social and making it ownable by customers. 2008 has proven that what started as a hypothesis is today very much a reality and with the recession a new imperative too.

We believe that Social Influence Marketing is the third dimension of marketing and as fundamental as direct response and brand marketing. It does not replace the first two but complements them. Marketers can't ignore social influence marketing anymore. Customers are turning away from traditional forms of advertising and are depending on their peers online in the form of friends, colleagues and anonymous experts for guidance when making brand affinity and purchasing decisions. Marketers must embrace that.

## Operationalising Social Influence Marketing

You need a stronger message, better reach and frequency and crisper desired states for your various marketing efforts. How do you get all of that? There could never have been a greater need. Here's how social influence marketing can help you today.

1. **Stop marketing just to your brand advocates.** They're not always the most influential. It's the other audiences that often have the most trusted voices. Know who is influencing your customers online are market to them with messages that resonate.
2. **Get a grip on the different kinds of influencers.** Establish the differences between key influencers, social influencers and peer influencers. Account for all of them in creating marketing programs and develop clear value exchanges that correspond to each audience.
3. **Blur the lines between sales and marketing.** Digital is bringing these together. Embrace that change. The journey from awareness to purchase can be short or convoluted. Work closely with sales to understand this and how influence plays a role.
4. **Make the social graph work for you.** The dream of the portable social graph is finally becoming a reality. Talk to your agency today about innovate ways of leveraging your customers' social graphs to amplify your own marketing efforts. Your customers maybe willing to help you market your brand.
5. **Organize your marketing department for Social Influence Marketing.** It is no use being a believer in the theory alone. Put your money where your mouth is and organize your department into brand, direct response and social influence marketing. That's the only way to make it work effectively for you.

The last economic downturn in 2000 forced marketers to think harder about their marketing programs. The net result – marketers embraced digital like they never had before because it was more measurable and impactful. Digital entered the mainstream and moved away from being a niche activity.

Similarly, this recession is bringing social influence marketing to the forefront. The brands that cut through the noise around the social media and think strategically about social influence marketing by organizing their marketing departments differently, allocating meaningful dollars to this domain, and applying it in a measurable, holistic and influence driven fashion will be the ones that successfully weather this recession.

### About the Author



Shiv Singh has been with Razorfish since 1999 and has worked in its Boston, New York, San Francisco and London offices. Before that, he ran a small web consulting firm. Shiv helps Razorfish clients leverage digital technologies to develop meaningful and value-driven customer and employee relationships. As Vice President Social Media & Global Strategic Initiatives, he leads Razorfish's foray into Social Influence Marketing and is responsible for capability development, advising clients, partnerships, evangelism and experimentation. In addition to writing extensively on social media, he has also spoken on Social Influence Marketing and Social Media at conferences such as the O'Reilly Graphing Social Patterns Conference, South by Southwest, DMA Leader's Forum, MediaBistro Circus and OMMA Social.

Prior to his current role, Shiv founded and led the Global Enterprise Solutions practice at Razorfish, and, before that, was a user experience practitioner. He completed his undergraduate studies at Babson College and conducted graduate research into social

networks at the London School of Economics & Political Science. An active blogger, Shiv blogs at [www.goingsocialnow.com](http://www.goingsocialnow.com) and [www.theappgap.com](http://www.theappgap.com). His twitter id: sszd. Please share your insights or thoughts to [shiv.singh@razorfish.com](mailto:shiv.singh@razorfish.com).



Andrea Harrison works as part of the engagement team to provide in-depth understanding of internal and external factors which effect business to help formulate digital strategies. An instrumental member of the Social Influence Marketing team, she works with Razorfish clients to ensure strategic focus throughout the planning and execution of SIM programs.

Andrea provides clients and internal teams with competitive intelligence on how industry verticals and consumers use social media and the impact it has on business strategy and marketing. Her focus includes primary and secondary research of consumer insights, products, services and technologies.

Programs she has been involved with include integration of Social Media and eCommerce for Condé Nast Publications, Social Media and Automobile Buying Behavior for Ford Motor Company and Social Media and IT Sales/Support for EMC.

### **About Razorfish™**

Razorfish is one of the largest interactive marketing and technology companies in the world, and also one of the largest buyers of digital advertising space. With a demonstrated commitment to innovation, Razorfish counsels its clients on how to leverage digital channels such as the Web, mobile devices, in-store technologies and other emerging media to engage people, build brand loyalty and provide excellent customer service. The company is increasingly advising marketers on Social Influence Marketing™, its approach for employing social media and social influencers to achieve the marketing and business needs of an organization. Its award-winning client teams provide solutions through their strategic counsel, digital advertising and content creation, media buying, analytics, technology and user experience. Razorfish has offices in markets across the United States, and in Australia, China, France, Germany, Japan and the United Kingdom. Clients--many of them served in multiple markets--include Carnival Cruise Lines, Coors Brewing Company, Levi's, McDonald's and Starwood Hotels. Visit <http://www.razorfish.com> for more information.

### **Razorfish**

821 2<sup>nd</sup> Avenue, Suite 1800  
Seattle, WA 98104  
Phone: 206.816.8800  
Fax: 206.816.8808

For more information please visit: [razorfish.com](http://razorfish.com).