

Case Study

Cirque du Soleil: Embracing Brand Ambassadors

The [Cirque du Soleil](#) shows in Las Vegas are truly something to behold. Full of spectacle and amazing visual experiences, fans of the shows know that Cirque experiences are special indeed.

Over the last 25 years, Cirque du Soleil's brand has been built largely on the power of word of mouth and the enthusiastic recommendations of their audiences. So when Cirque got started in social media, in many ways, it was like returning to their roots.

CIRQUE DU SOLEIL[®]

Brand and Community

“Our fans are an extension of our brand,” says Jessica Berlin, Cirque du Soleil's social media manager. “The great part about social media is that we can now participate in conversations directly with our fans, in the communities and on the sites where they're gathering.”

Cirque empowers their online community to be brand ambassadors by giving them access to insider information, special promotions and discounts, and tickets to the shows.

They recently hosted a Cirque-n-Blog where Berlin invited a dozen Las Vegas bloggers to attend their Zumanity show and post reviews of the performance. To them, it was proof that social media – and the community around it – matters a great deal to their brand.

“When we tracked the coverage of the show in Radian6 across social media, Zumanity emerged as our most talked-about show overall. And as a result of the blogger event, our coverage and reach on microblogs like Twitter was much higher than usual, bringing us awareness and interest from new audiences and creating conversation among our existing fans.”



Building Loyalty through Listening

Social media monitoring with Radian6 has become a key component of Cirque's social media strategy, largely because they can identify influencers and evangelists that are passionate and want to be engaged with their brand.

In May 2009, Cirque du Soleil announced their "Summer of Cirque" promotion to celebrate their 25th anniversary. As part of the promotion, they offered ticket specials, and they launched a contest to win a trip to Las Vegas and tickets to all seven of the Cirque shows. In the first two weeks of the promotion, all of their communication was done through social media, and they could directly track the conversation – and sales – that resulted.

Over the course of the next several months, Cirque used what they learned about their community through listening to build excitement for future shows. Instead of traditional audience outreach, Berlin and her team used and is using social media as the primary means to distribute insider, sneak-peek information to their audience members. By following Cirque on Twitter or joining them on Facebook, fans will get exclusive content and special discounts that they can't get elsewhere.

Berlin uses Radian6 to track the buzz around promotions, measure the reach and impact of their efforts, and understand what content drives the most awareness and ticket sales. They'll also learn the role that their evangelists and brand ambassadors play in spreading the word about the promotion, and identify new fans of Cirque du Soleil to continue to build their community.

Measuring Success

By tapping audiences exclusively in social media, Berlin and the team at Cirque du Soleil have been able to prove the power and reach of social media for their brand.

"We've had great success giving our online communities exclusive access and special offers for our shows," Berlin says. "The ROI for our social media outreach has been better than for any other form of advertising for us."

And with the Radian6 dashboard, Berlin has been able to generate reports around various social media metrics and present them to her marketing team in terms that they understand. From measuring the number of conversations in specific online channels to identifying influencers and seeing how their promotions are trending and tracking across social media, Berlin and her team can demonstrate to upper management that social media is a wise investment of both time and resources.



“Building our brand in social media has been rewarding and successful for us at Cirque,” says Berlin. “Our fans are our greatest brand ambassadors and it’s now become a priority for us to closely monitor what is being said. By listening and engaging in these conversations, we can only improve the Cirque du Soleil experience.”

“We’ve always believed that our fans are what make the Cirque du Soleil experience fantastic, and what keeps our brand vibrant and healthy. By not only participating in social media but tangibly measuring and communicating our success, we can harness the power of our online community to keep Cirque du Soleil shows in demand for another 25 years.”