

# Marketing Return on Investment:

## Why Numbers Don't Tell the Whole Story

As social media marketing has grown, so has an emphasis on quantitative metrics to measure marketing effectiveness has grown, too.

**Because online marketing gathers statistics so easily and so exhaustively, it has become common to define campaign success according to the number of Shares, Likes, Follows and such.**

Agencies cite these metrics as a meaningful indication that the marketing they created is working.

**I disagree. The only true metric of marketing success is your bottom line.**

Did the person who Liked, Followed and Shared actually buy anything? Did they even click on the link to your site? Can you make a clear connection between a lot of Likes and a jump in sales?

**The job of marketing is to inspire purchasing choices in its audiences, and that requires more than statistics – it requires an understanding of human behavior.**

Even children know that marketing depends on timing, presentation and the ability to be persuasive in order to be successful. ("Mom, can I stay up till ten tonight? Pleeeeeze?") When you have to rely on human choices to meet your goals, you are entering the realm of emotion. Tying success solely to logic and numbers won't tell you the whole story.

This is evident when reading marketing how-to books. **They say that in order to close a sale, you have to connect with or "touch" the prospect anywhere from 5 to 27 times through various media.** This is because each prospect needs a unique number of encounters with your product or service to feel comfortable making a purchase.

**So since everyone is different, how can you know exactly at which of the 5-27 points of contact any given prospect decided to pull the trigger?**

Unless you are targeting individuals one by one, you can't. You can track some of your sales through tools

10,000 Likes  
and two sales ...  
*dang.*



such as coupons, discounts and time limits, but these aren't appropriate for all businesses, especially services. You could try surveys, but often people don't remember the exact moment they decided to buy or what the trigger was.

**So we are back to the pre-social media mode of serial testing.**

How it works: you develop a clear understanding of your target market, including their general preferences for getting information, and then you choose several means of communicating your offer to this group based on that understanding. Since different people look at different media at different times in different emotional modes, you will choose a range of marketing media, *not one*, and deploy them in a systematic way over time, *not once*, so you can plot general sales results against them.

As you continue your marketing program, you will hone your sense of what works best through looking at your sales, *in addition* to the numbers that show how well your social media are doing.

**Taking the time to create and execute a marketing program based on thoughtful consideration of your market has a much greater chance of success.**

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