

Does putting people first deliver greater reach and engagement than a brand-first approach? We put it to the test.

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You've probably heard me talk (a lot) about peer to peer marketing – also known as people-first social marketing. I've always been a big believer that your people are your greatest assets.

In fact, I'm convinced that your people have an untapped ability to shape the way your customer perceives, interacts and buys from your brand. And I'm also convinced that if your people are having the right conversations, at the right time, with the right people, in the right places – the power of your people is infinite.

Our research reveals that 70% of employees are spending between 2 to 10+ hours a week on social media in their role, with the time being spent mostly on research followed by interacting with other people in their network.

Peer to peer marketing – does it even work?

Not so long ago, I had a teleconference with a marketing manager of a global financial services firm headquartered in London. The marketing manager wasn't convinced that a 'people first, brand second' approach worked. When I gave a couple of examples – Richard Branson and Bill Gates – who had built their brands from their own influence, she was pretty convinced that they were exceptions to the rule.

How could a people-first approach apply to other businesses, other people, other brands, she asked?

It's always good to be challenged, and after the conversation, I turned her question over in my mind. And – as is often the case (perhaps those Google-bots were listening in) – I happened to come across this article about the Top 8 most viewed CEO profiles on LinkedIn (thanks Chris Pash!). It's a few years old, but a good proportion of the CEOs are still in the 'most-viewed' lists, and all are still influential.

I decided to put this article to the test. When it comes to peer to peer marketing, how does the reach and engagement of these CEOs compare, versus that of their corporate brand pages? Are the people doing a better job of reaching and engaging their audience on social media than their brands?

Australia's most viewed CEO's on LinkedIn drove more engagement than their corporate brands.

Almost across the board, Australia's most viewed CEOs on LinkedIn drove a larger audience size and three of seven people have higher engagement ratios.



So What?

Peer to peer marketing works. However, it's important to remember, peer to peer is not about choosing to promote a person's profile over the brand; don't get this confused with personal branding.

It's about activating the people in an organisation, brand ambassadors, subject matter experts, business development execs and figure heads of organisations to help deliver the brand message and generate relevant two way interactions with the target audience.

As is evident above, one person is driving more engagement by 35X than Australia's most iconic teleco brand

Businesses are missing out on incremental opportunities to build their brand when the brand and people work in silos.

Three key interdependent ingredients to consider when adopting a peer to peer marketing model:

People

Activate people and their networks to incrementally grow your target audience. Build, optimise and activate personal networks to connect your brand directly to your target prospects and customers. Think C suite / business leader, specialist, academic, commercially oriented roles or anyone with a strong profile in market across your organisation.

Content

Develop shareable consistent content that's mobilised throughout the buyer journey. Create content that is easily shareable, consistent with your brand message and tailored to mindsets in the purchase journey.

Social

Activate social channels to navigate customer journeys, distribute content, to connect your brand and people directly with your audience, fostering relevant interactions.

We're generating significant results for a global set of b2b brands right now.

Want to learn how?

Get in touch now and I'll be happy to tell you!