Tito’s Handmade Vodka Establishes Brand Loyalty With an Authentic Social Strategy
If Tito’s Handmade Vodka had to identify a single social media metric that most accurately reflects its mission, it would be engagement. Connecting with vodka lovers in an inclusive, authentic way is something Tito’s takes very seriously and the brand’s social strategy reflects that vision.

Founded nearly two decades ago, the brand credits the advent of social media with playing an integral role in engaging fans and raising brand awareness. In an interview with Entrepreneur, founder Bert “Tito” Beveridge credited social media for enabling Tito’s to compete for shelf space with more established liquor brands.

“Social media is a great platform for a word-of-mouth brand, because it’s not just about who has the biggest megaphone,” Beveridge told Entrepreneur.

As Tito’s has matured, the social team has remained true to the brand’s founding values and actively uses Twitter and Instagram to have one-on-one conversations and connect with brand enthusiasts.

“We never viewed social media as another way to advertise,” said Katy Gelhausen, Web & Social Media Coordinator. “We’re on social so our customers can talk to us.”

To that end, Tito’s uses Sprout Social to understand the industry atmosphere, develop a consistent social brand and create a dialogue with its audience. As a result, Tito’s organically grew its Twitter and Instagram communities by 43.5% and 12.6% respectively within four months.

### Informing a Seasonal, Integrated Marketing Strategy

Tito’s quarterly cocktail program is a key part of the brand’s integrated marketing strategy. Each quarter, a cocktail recipe is developed and distributed through the brand’s online and offline marketing initiatives.
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Katy Gelhausen
Web & Social Media Coordinator
@TitoVodka

It’s important for Tito’s to ensure the recipe is aligned with the brand’s focus as well as larger industry direction. Therefore, Gelhausen uses Sprout’s Brand Keywords to monitor industry trends and cocktail flavor profiles.

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These learnings are presented to Tito’s in-house mixology team and used to ensure the same quarterly recipe is communicated to the brand’s sales team and across marketing channels.

“Whether you’re drinking Tito’s at a bar, buying it from a liquor store or following us on social media, you’re getting the same quarterly cocktail,” said Gelhausen.
The program ensures that, at every consumer touchpoint, a person is receiving a consistent brand experience—and that consistency is vital. In fact, according to an Infosys study on the omnichannel shopping experience, 34% of consumers attribute cross-channel consistency as a reason they spend more with a brand. Meanwhile, 39% cite inconsistency as reason enough to spend less.

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Katy Gelhausen
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Building an Inclusive Community

At Tito’s, gathering industry insights starts with social monitoring on Twitter and Instagram through Sprout. But the brand’s social strategy doesn’t stop there. Staying true to its roots, Tito’s uses the platform on a daily basis to authentically connect with customers.

Sprout’s Smart Inbox displays Tito’s’ Twitter and Instagram accounts in a single, cohesive feed. This helps Gelhausen manage inbound messages and quickly identify which require a response.

“Sprout allows us to stay on top of the conversations we’re having with our followers,” Gelhausen said. “I love how you can easily interact with content from multiple accounts in one place.”

Spreading the Word on Twitter

Tito’s’ approach to Twitter is simple: Engage in personal, one-on-one conversations with fans. Dialogue is a driving force for the brand and, over the course of four months, 88% of Tweets sent were replies to inbound messages.
@JeNero the Greyhound is a team favorite, too! Thanks for joining us!
3:40 PM - Feb 25, 2016

Using Twitter as an open line of communication between Tito’s and its fans resulted in a 162.2% increase in engagement and a 43.5% gain in followers. Even more impressively, Tito’s ended the quarter with 538,306 organic impressions—an 81% rise.

A similar strategy is applied to Instagram, which Tito’s uses to strengthen and foster a relationship with fans by publishing photos and videos of new recipe ideas, brand events and initiatives.

Capturing the Party on Instagram

On Instagram, Tito’s primarily publishes lifestyle content and encourages followers to incorporate the brand into everyday occasions. Tito’s also uses the platform to promote its cause marketing efforts and to tell its brand story.

The team finds value in Sprout’s Instagram Profiles Report, which helps it identify what media is receiving the most engagement, analyze audience demographics and growth, dive deeper into publishing patterns and quantify outbound hashtag performance.

“Given Instagram’s new personalized feed, it’s important that we pay attention to what really does resonate,” Gelhausen said.

Using the Instagram Profiles Report, Tito’s has been able to measure the impact of its Instagram marketing strategy and revise its approach accordingly. By utilizing the network as another way to engage with fans, the brand has steadily grown its organic audience.

In four months, @TitosVodka saw a 12.6% rise in followers and a 37.1% increase in engagement. On average, each piece of published content gained 534 interactions and, mentions of the brand’s hashtag, #titoshandmadevodka, grew by 33%.
Where to From Here?

Social is an ongoing investment in time and attention. Tito’s will continue the momentum the brand experienced by segmenting each quarter into its own campaign.

“We’re always getting smarter with our social strategies and making sure that what we’re posting is relevant and resonates,” Gelhausen said.

Using social to connect with fans in a consistent, genuine and memorable way will remain a cornerstone of the brand’s digital marketing efforts. Using Sprout’s suite of social media management tools, Tito’s will continue to foster a community of loyalists.