

Realm Digital delivers Facebook-integrated Web campaigns

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Standalone social apps or total Web engagement management - you choose.

Realm Digital, the online strategy, technology and solution partner, has lifted the veil on social media-integrated customer campaigns that will forever alter the online landscape.

[Wesley Lynch](#), CEO of the rapidly growing 11 year-old Cape Town firm, says there seems to be a sharp increase in interest in standalone and, increasingly, integrated social media as a marketing medium.

The company has delivered a wide range of social-integrated online tools for clients of all industries. "There is an almost infinite variety, beginning with the very basic and ending with full-blown integrated [Digital.co.za/solution/web-engagement-management/ Web engagement](#)," Lynch says.

Basic apps

One basic example of Realm Digital's [Digital.co.za/solution/ portfolio](#) is the [Twitter](#) integration it did for a travel firm, allowing the tour operator to connect socially with clients who have booked online.

In another project it developed a competition app for a cosmetic brand, accessed as a tab on the client's [Facebook](#) page. Once the competition is entered, the app runs as a fully-branded micro-site outside restrictive Facebook functional parameters). The competition can only be entered by 'liking' the branded page, thus increasing brand exposure. Once signed up (Facebook offers in-line validation of entrants' details), entrants write a few lines about the product. Winning entries are decided by vote (entrants only), creating a leader board of winners. Comments also appear on entrants' walls, creating viral chatter and attracting more entrants via friend networks. Entrants can further invite other entrants. Launched at the end of August, the fanpage has had tremendous uptake since then, says Lynch.

A third [Digital.co.za/product/facebook-platform/ Facebook campaign](#) with a very similar call to action - created for an FMCG group - attracted thousands of fans within weeks. This site operates in much the same way as the one above, with the difference that the brand chooses winning entries. Lynch notes that entrant details are exported in .csv format, allowing customers to build a database of willing fans and prospects. In addition, the site can be content-managed, should the client choose.

Lastly, a financial services organisation enjoyed massive uptake of its Facebook application, which was developed by [Digital.co.za/ Realm Digital](#) as part of a heavily advertised consumer campaign. Lynch says previous Facebook applications required the user to allow it to use their information and post on their page before it could be activated. "This one requests those permissions only after the app is ready to use. That way, it is much less in-your-face."

Content-sharing

Social applications on platforms like Twitter and Facebook are a dime a dozen, but not the fully-integrated kind, says Lynch. "We build Facebook apps that integrate so tightly with your [Digital.co.za/ online business](#) or campaign site that the two are driven by the exact same business processes."

For example, Facebook applications can automatically "pull" new website content from a company's website onto its fanpage, once created. This could include news articles, stock items or promotions. Alternatively, Facebook product listings or articles can be syndicated to a website.

To drive traffic from a social page to the website, a company's Facebook page might display tabs with the most-read articles on the website or the best-selling products on their e-tailing site.

A requirement for online success

Lynch says Vodafone Europe's Facebook fan page must rate as one of the best examples of commitment to social integration. "If you're a fan, you're billed less for their product. There's no clearer illustration of how seriously some companies are taking it."

And they're right to. Lynch says social media is as much a requirement for online success today as enterprise content management and [Digital.co.za/solution/e-commerce e-commerce](#) was last year.

"The best way to think about Facebook and other successful social platforms is that it's a whole new market. It's where everyone is. You can't just view it as a nice-to-have that doesn't merit total commitment or proper integration with the rest of your marketing or careful consideration about messaging. It must be absolutely entrenched into your online business."

Why it's better than just a website

But isn't the current preoccupation with social media just a case of chasing the customer around? What makes Facebook so different from a corporate website? "The big difference is that a website visitor comes alone," says Lynch. "A Facebook fan comes with an entire network. [Digital.co.za/product/facebook-platform/ Facebook apps](#) that make use of Facebook's well-known user interface elements such as Like, Invite, Suggest and so on, can be enormously successful because of that viral potential."

Besides being inherently suited to viral success, Facebook is also somehow a more acceptable medium to share friends' details. "A website campaign that tries to get visitors to enter friends' emails will not be successful," says Lynch. "Somehow, suggesting friends is OK in the Facebook context."

Web Engagement Management

So why would you still need a website? "Some smaller companies may go with Facebook and forego a website entirely," says Lynch. "With a fan page and some articles on it and some customer engagement, what more do they need? There's no hosting cost, no development cost, and no need for a blog and website."

"But of course it won't do for companies of a certain size that want control over their branding and functionality. Bigger companies with the budget for branding will have a website for that and Facebook integration for all the other aforementioned reasons. The challenge is to find a provider that can offer total [Digital.co.za/solution/web-engagement-management/ Web engagement management](#); total integration of all your Web properties."

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