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SOCIAL MEDIA TIP OF THE MONTH

In this monthly series, EM brings you tips and tricks from pros and experts who've been eating social media marketing for breakfast. So eat up, and check us out on Twitter @eventmarketer and Facebook.com/eventmarketer for more.

THIS MONTH, we bring you the benefits of geolocation technology. If you're not sure what that is, we're talking about platforms like Foursquare, Gowalla and Facebook Places where millions of consumers have already gotten on the bandwagon and are "checking in" at restaurants, friend's homes and everywhere else they go. Some compete for bragging rights in the form of "badges" and others do it for coupons and incentives at their favorite spots.

FOR BRAND MARKETERS, it's all about driving attendance and behavior, and getting consumers to use social media to "check in" at your events, trade show booths and retail locations. Brands have also recently begun leveraging the technology as a loyalty program and even as a competitive sport that pits consumers against each other in a race to be the first to check in.

For those looking to dip a toe into geolocation, EM is here to give you the intel you need, thanks to Matt Rednor, vp-strategy at Mr Youth, a social media agency specializing in creating brand advocacy. Rednor says the key to effective geolocation is helping consumers connect with each other quickly and easily. It also has to deliver value beyond the entertainment, or it will fall flat. Read on for more of Rednor's top geolocation commandments.

1 Thou shalt not overcomplicate it. Every attempt to get consumers to check in at your event has to be easy to use. Operate within an existing platform, be it Foursquare or Facebook or one of the others, instead of making a custom solution. The average person won't download a new app, or use your custom service just for the pleasure of interacting with your brand. It's just not worth it to them. They won't do it. Neither should you.

2 Thou shalt be where they are. Do the research and be sure you know if your target consumers are already using a geolocation service or tool, and if so, which one. Then build your activation on that platform. If your fans use Facebook, use Facebook; if they like Twitter, try out Foursquare. When it comes to this kind of technology, very few consumers want to go out of their way to take part, so don't make it hard for them. When in doubt, see the first commandment.

3 Thou shalt not rely on the game. A big part of the success of check-in services used to be the competition between the consumers for badges and mayorships (that's when one person has more check-ins at a certain place than any others). But now only the most hard-core users are into that. Most other users are in it for the incentives or the social connections with other local users. Rednor says the activation has to have a concrete benefit for users like a coupon or promotional item and make them feel like part of a special community or else they won't take part.



4 Where two or more gather, there shalt you be. This one is crucial. Geolocation is ideally suited for hyper-targeted niche markets and demos. Use the service to bring these groups of like-minded people together, and your brand can reap big-time rewards in terms of equity, good feelings and even purchase consideration. Remember: people are more likely to love you if you share, or help them share their existing interests.

5 Ignore the past at thine own peril. Check-in data is super valuable. The existing platforms collect data on every

user, interaction and transaction on the service. Facebook is the superstar when it comes to this. You can tap into that data, too, and you should, not just to measure the success of a current program, but also to make adjustments and course corrections for future initiatives. An important data point some marketers forget: the check-ins *before and after* your event. That will tell you what kind of interests your attendees have and will help you find commonalities in their behaviors, which will lead to a data-based activity prediction model that will help you build future programs. **EM** *—Kenneth Briodagh*