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A Pinch of Social Media Makes a Helluva Broth

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Guest post by Scott Severson ([@scottseverson](#)), President of **ARAnet, Inc.** in Minneapolis. He is widely published on the subject of digital marketing, and has been a driving force in the development of Adfusion, an article-based advertising solution that utilizes a two-click model to drive qualified and motivated consumers to its clients' Web destinations.

Do you have the right media recipe?

While I haven't **drunk the social media Kool-Aid** yet, I am getting close to pouring myself a glass. Why, you ask? Why would an obsessively metrics and results-focused guy like me embrace a space that doesn't naturally lend itself to metrics or measurement?

Two words: Media Recipe.

We all know that today the average consumer has more media touchpoints with an organization than ever before. But what I find interesting is how all this media works together to generate results. Yet, most marketers ignore this and still **measure to the last click**.

Credit Where Credit is Due

The classic example is attributing a sale to Google when a user visits your Web site after conducting a search for one of your products. The concept of "attribution" attempts to determine what other media inspired the user to search for your product by looking at recent exposures. For example, a recent study conducted by the smart folks at **ICrossing** found that online display advertising resulted in a 13.7 percent increase in natural search traffic. The display ads inspired the searches.

Anecdotally, I can confirm this finding. As the president of an **article-based ad network**, I continually hear from our clients how their other media perform better when they're running a campaign with us.

Attribution studies generally measure the effect of one thing on another (e.g., display on search). The real trick is to understand the interplay between all of your media and how each channel supports the next. So what we're really looking for is the optimal combination of media, or "Media Recipe." Like any recipe, I think it's natural to focus on the key ingredients. But as any good cook will tell you, it's the combination of ingredients, the amounts and the process that make for a great dish.

Is Social the Secret Ingredient in Your Media Recipe?

The right media recipe for your business is going to take some experimentation. Generally speaking, the more variety the better, as media exposure in one channel tends to have a positive effect on other media channels, enhancing the performance of each. It's this concept of multiple channels working in concert that has influenced my thinking around social media. I see social quickly evolving as the center of the vortex that other media spins around.

From my perspective, including social media in your marketing plan will help you achieve three important goals: 1.) Feedback: It helps you understand the messages that will resonate with your audience. 2.) Impressions: People tend to forget the media portion of social media, as it provides another important touchpoint in your recency/frequency quest. 3.) Engagement: Social media provides a platform for a 1:1 relationship with your customers like no other.

The mistake that many social media devotees make is to think social media is all a company needs to market its wares – and it's free. Neither is true. **Social media isn't a solo act**. However, when **social is thought of as an ingredient** in a marketing plan, it can be truly powerful.

Pass me the Kool-Aid.

(photo by [Rebecca Pollard](#))

