



janrain® white paper

10 Best Practices to Drive On-Site Engagement

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Introduction

Today's web user has a number of fundamental expectations about what they should be able to do online. Regardless of the type of website (media, entertainment, retail, etc), users are increasingly expecting an element of social interactivity. This change in behavior creates new acquisition and engagement opportunities for marketers.

This paper explores best practices for incorporating the following social tools into your site, including key considerations for how, when, why and where to integrate social components, as well as real-world examples.

Components covered:

- Social Login
- Social Sharing
- Leveraging the Social Graph of Your Users
- Loyalty & Rewards
- Mobile and Tablet Consideration

1 Leverage Existing Social Identities

Today's online user typically maintains accounts on different social networks like Facebook, Twitter, Google

Social login allows users to connect to your website using an existing social identity.

and LinkedIn. They associate social tools with social networks already, and are willing to use these tools across the web. Historically users needed to create a new, site-specific profile in order to have a meaningful interaction with a website.

With social login tools, like Janrain Engage, users connect their account from a social network to your website, and have the ability to bring their profile data from those accounts to your site. That includes basic information like name, email address, and date of birth, as well as deeper information, like their existing social graph.

So, not only is the experience easier for your users than creating a traditional account, they can begin to have much richer social interactions on your site using social tools that use their existing profile data.

From a technical standpoint, the process of integrating Janrain Engage for social login into your site is very straightforward, but it is important to begin with defining a user experience that encourages registration with a social identity.

2 Define Reasons to Register

First, and most important, you must clearly define and communicate why a user would register on your site in the first place. This critical step is often the most overlooked. Your users are rational economic actors. They will weigh what they are giving up (personal information) for what they are receiving in return. Even when there is no money involved, your users still need to find value in this exchange.

Although there are a number of ways to provide value for a registration, here are some ideas to start with:

Premium content: Some websites keep high-value content behind a registration wall. There are many ways to build value into content, like creating long-form reports, high-value videos, or early access to regular

content. For content-driven sites, this is the easiest way to build value for registered users.

Contests and promotions: Short-term contests with valuable prizes are a great way to build registrations. Remember that prizes don't necessarily have to be expensive, but they must be valuable to your audience. An in-person meeting with a famous singer doesn't cost anything, but has a huge value to fans.

Community: Access to message boards, comments, or your branded social network are all valuable add-ons to your users' experience—and are sometimes the primary experience of your website. In those cases, it's natural to register in order to participate.

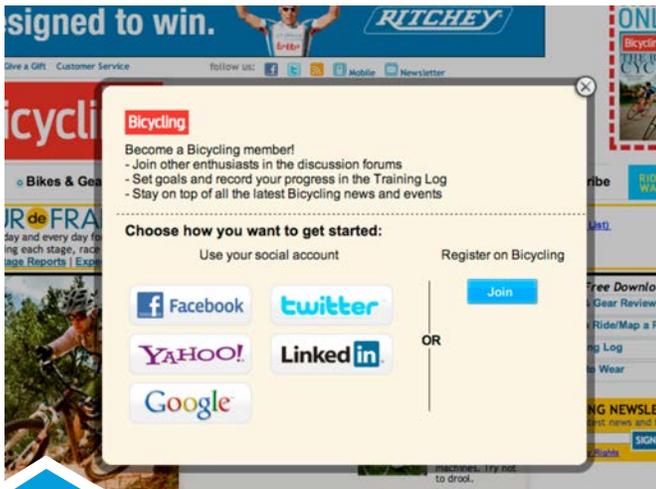
The type of experiences you put behind registration will dictate the type of users who will register. Your most loyal fans will want access to premium content; more casual users may be interested in a contest (depending on the prize). Consider your goals in relation to the 1/9/90 rule: in general, 1% of users create content; 9% will comment on those creations; and 90% will be passive readers.

Of course, there are other ways to trigger a login event. Most users will register on a site to participate in an activity that requires login; most will not login without a clearly defined purpose.

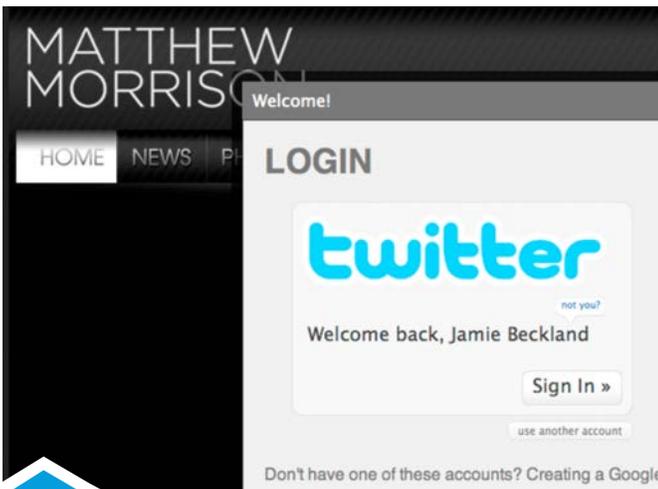
3 Provide a Welcoming Return Experience

Naturally, if a user registers on your site, they likely want to return in the future. Therefore, it's important to consider the return experience early in the process of defining your registration process. For most websites, the value of a logged in user is significantly higher than an anonymous, new user. It is in your best interest to make it easy for the user to re-enter the site and feel connected.

This type of greeting by name is designed to show the user that the website recognizes and remembers them, and is ready to offer a more customized experience if the user chooses to login again.



Bicycling.com does a good job outlining why the user should register, and what they will gain access to through registration.



Matthew Morrison's website greets return visitors with a strong visual reminder of their preferred login provider.

Acclimating a user to logging into your site during each visit provides a crucial strategic objective: it allows you to build a detailed profile of each user's profile over time. This becomes increasingly important as you segment experiences and offers based on projected lifetime customer value.



NASDAQ allows users to map multiple accounts to their login profile.

Other things to consider on the return experience:

- The welcome back message can be discrete, in the corner, or front-and-center, in a modal overlay or using prime screen real estate.
- Do you want the first prompt to login to appear when they first return to your site, or at some other point as they are surfing the site?
- How many times do you want to prompt a user to login when they return to your site? It doesn't have to be just once.

4 Encourage Users to Link Multiple Social Accounts

Research shows that today's user maintains identities on a variety of social networks to serve different purposes. While a user might prefer to login using their Google identity, they may want to share content to Twitter, or invite their friends from Facebook. Offering the ability to link multiple identities makes that process easier for users.

Most importantly, you build a more complete picture of the individual user by connecting data from multiple accounts in one place. That's the strategy behind NASDAQ.com, which allows users to map multiple accounts to their login profile.

Consider using a progress bar or other measurement icon to show the user how far along they are in completing their profile, to encourage linking multiple identities.

5 Encourage Social Sharing

Social sharing is when users share links to your site with their communities on Twitter, Facebook, or other social networks. It allows users to tell their networks about the content or activity they have discovered on your website. Sharing has come a

long way from constrained widgets. Janrain offers unmatched flexibility and tracking for social sharing—from simultaneous network broadcasts to sharing from a mobile device.



AMC allows users to choose which suspect is the killer on the TV show "The Killing."

Project Noah's social sharing via their mobile application demonstrates the entire share process.

1.
User posts activity or views content.



2.
User selects a social network for sharing.



3.
Content shared to user's social network news feed



Social sharing can start with a click on a sharing button, or in a number of other ways. Some possible sharing events include:

Reaching the end of an article: Users who read an entire article are more likely to share it than a user who read just the first paragraph. Encourage sharing with a trigger at the bottom of a page.

Commenting on a piece of content: The publication of a comment can trigger a recommended share event. In this case, the user is not done with the comment flow until they decide whether they want to share the comment to their social network.

Completing a sequence of events: Completing events or reaching accomplishments are potentially sharable experiences, whether its getting to the end of a checkout process, viewing a video series, or interacting with advertiser elements on your site.

6 Drive Engagement with Invite Friends

While social sharing is a great broadcast tool, sometimes users want to send a specific message to several of their selected friends. That's why the ability to Invite or Refer Friends is an important additional tool. It's the difference between a "come one, come all" poster to the Friday night party, and a party invitation delivered through the mail. More targeted, more personal.

This functionality can be used for a number of purposes, like sharing a deal or offer, telling friends about an achievement, targeting a sensitive message to the best connections in the user's network, or asking a friend to join the user in a new social experience.

Janrain offers Invite Friends functionality for Facebook, MySpace, Twitter, Google, Yahoo, and Windows Live (Hotmail). The end result in social networks is a network message (e.g. a Facebook Message or Twitter Direct Message) from the user to their friend; for Google, Yahoo and Windows, the end result is an email from the user to their contact's email.

In order to implement this functionality, you must first ensure that you have asked for the correct permissions from the user. In Facebook, the user has to authorize your site to access their contacts. In email providers, the user authorizes access to their email address book.

There are a two common options for rendering contact lists. You can queue them up to be auto-populated from a keystroke trigger, like Gmail, or you can



Gmail offers auto-populated contact lists.

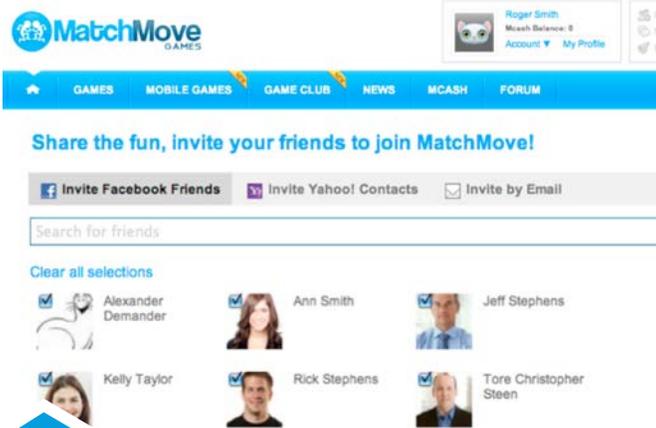
import photos and allow users to check which contacts they want to communicate with.

Make sure to allow the user to select all or none of their contacts easily, in addition to toggling a selection for an individual contact easily. Also note that Janrain won't return any information from a Facebook user's friend that the friend has not authorized for the user to access.

Another way to leverage your user's social graph is through a Refer a Friend experience. This is a highly targeted way to maintain the exclusivity of an experience, by limiting access to social referrals. You can enhance the velvet rope feeling by limiting the number of friends that can be referred.

Inviting friends with a targeted message is important functionality to consider for higher value, or more sensitive experiences that don't make sense for

users to broadcast to their entire network. Not surprisingly, they are also more effective marketing messages than anything you could send directly from the brand. Open rates on messages and emails from known contacts are 43% higher than from email marketers, and transaction rates are 2.5 times higher.



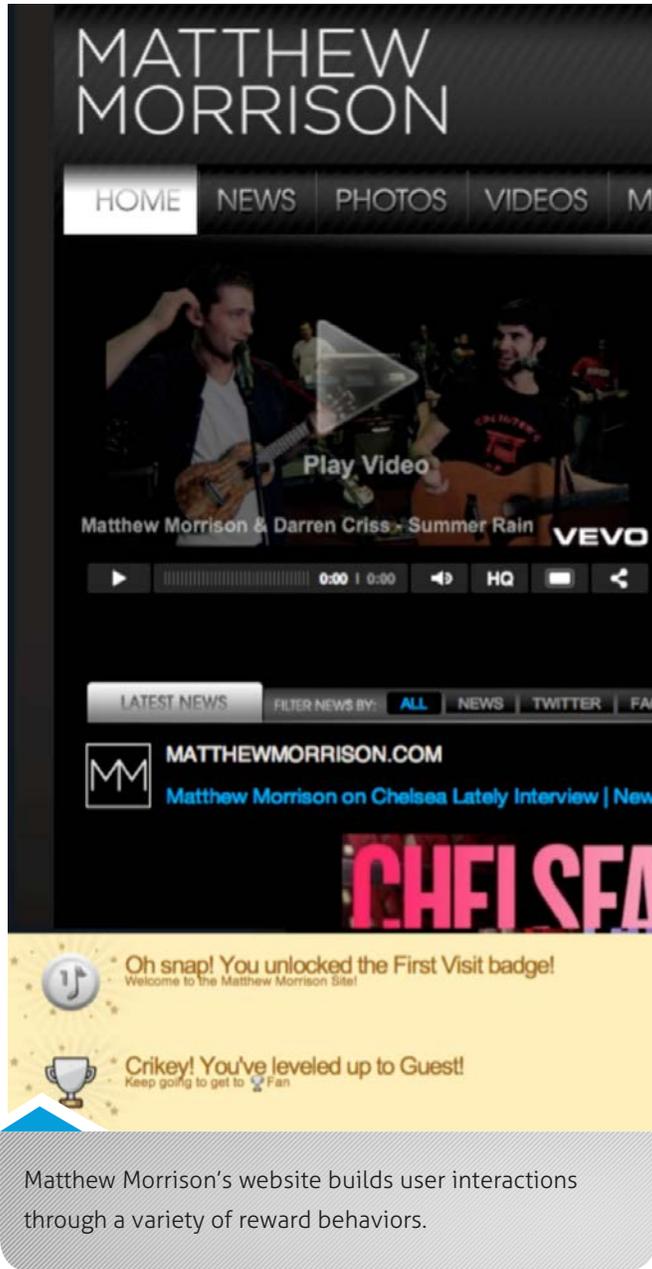
MatchMove Games allows user to invite friends from social networks.

7 Optimize for Mobile Browser Experiences

Mobile and social work together well because people want to share experiences with their social network as they experience them in the real world. They want to tweet about the rock concert while they are there, and allow their friends to experience some of the excitement in real time.

In fact, using a social identity makes even more sense on a mobile device than on the desktop. The smaller screen real estate and difficulty typing into form fields makes clicking a button to login with a social identity the natural choice for most users. Users have come to expect ease of use for mobile experiences, without sacrificing social tools.

If you are building a custom UI for your login experience, you will want to build in a mobile-optimized login flow. Button sizes, number of selections, and visitor return experiences should all be designed for touch interfaces, with larger buttons taking up the majority of the screen.



Often times it's more efficient to look to a service that conforms to mobile browsers automatically. Layout, fonts, and image sizes will render correctly out of the box, saving development time and resources.

8 Demonstrate User Goals with Rewards

Loyalty and reward programs help educate users on what kinds of social and other activities to take on your website. When users earn badges and points for their actions, it also becomes a naturally shareable moment, which in turn drives the entire social experience on your site. That's why Loyalty and Rewards programs are such useful social tools.

Establishing clear task paths and goals for users helps acclimate them to the site quickly, and provides incentives for useful behaviors, like filling out their user profile, that can be leveraged to further socialize the site experience.

Also, evolving your loyalty program over time is important to maintain high interactions for long-time users. Don't allow your most valuable users to feel like they know the system and understand the rules, and there's really nothing new for them to discover.

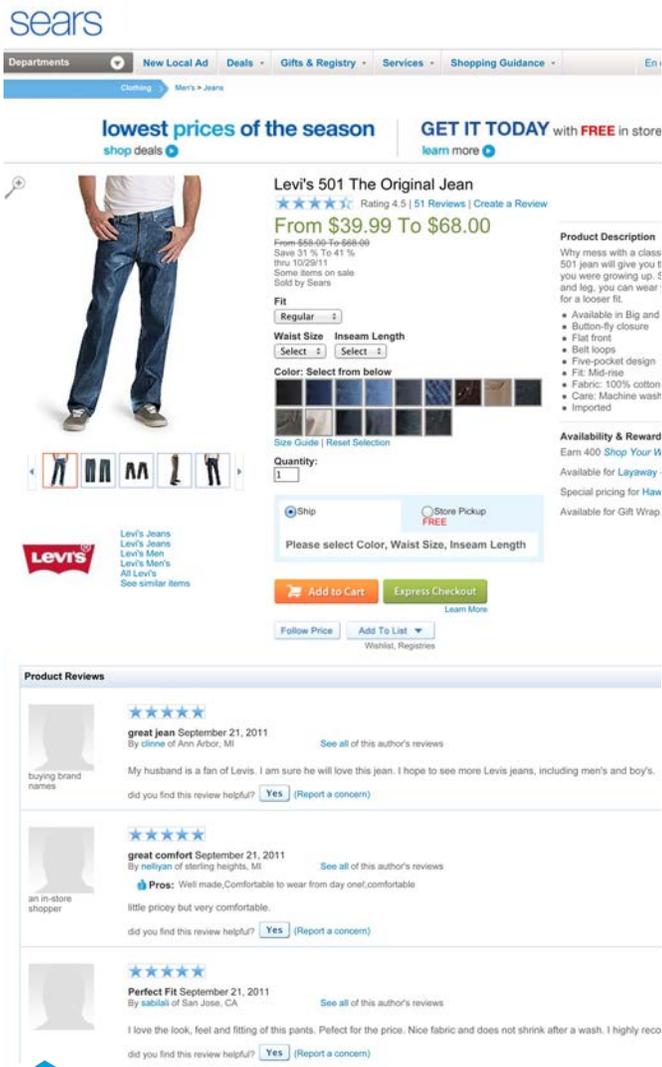
Evolving the ways in which users build credibility and reputation on your site is an important way to drive engagement—doubly so because it drives more activity from your most important members. Only a few are trailblazers, but they will define norms and behaviors for the majority.

Tracking and incentivizing user contributions, behaviors, and actions on your community site helps you define a program of increasing relevance for your users, and value for your brand.

Of course, communicating new activities and incentives are just as critical. Make sure you have a clear communication plan in place whenever you change user incentives.

9 Offer Ratings and Reviews

Consumers trust each other more than your team's marketing speak. So, give users the chance to have their voice heard with review platforms that allow specific products to be discussed by users who may be in the market, or have used the product before.



Sears works to build community engagement on its e-commerce site through offering ratings and reviews on all products.

One concern with ratings is that they are frequently abused with paid or incentivized reviews coming from all sides—competitors, marketers, and affiliates.

In order to maintain the quality of your reviews assets, it's important to require a real identity to be linked to the user's account. Even better: have users use their real names, and put a face and reputation to a critical review. Of course, this becomes another shareable element on the page, so set up social sharing for all review actions.

10 Test, Learn and Iterate

One thing is certain in social media: there will be new features and experiences that users respond to in the future. That's why testing and learning continue to be important.

Track time on site, conversion rates, pageviews, and other basic website analytics elements for logged in users vs. anonymous users. This will show you the increased value of socially-engaged users right away, and help build a business case to drive more users into social funnels over time.

In addition, analyze performance for social metrics like recency and frequency of visitors; average sharing activity and return traffic from social channels; and quality of visitors who engage with social content. This allows you to understand what experiences are valuable for your audience, and evolve your content and technology based on those learnings.

Solutions that integrate with your existing analytics tools are critical. Also, make sure that standalone analysis provides additional value beyond what metrics you are tracking currently.

Conclusion

A healthy social environment requires a number of elements working in harmony. Much like any other community, websites need activities for users to undertake. They also need to clearly motivate users toward taking action. Finally, they need to support a variety of social experiences to allow users their most comfortable and familiar task paths.

About Janrain

Janrain helps organizations succeed on the social web with its user management platform—a suite of products to improve user acquisition and build engagement. **Janrain Engage** provides social login and social sharing to enable a user to login with an existing account from over 20 different networks including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google, as well as share activities from the site to their social networks. **Janrain Capture** is a turnkey registration and social data storage solution. **Janrain Federate** provides single sign-on functionality to extend a brand's online ecosystem. Janrain customers include industry leaders such as Universal Music Group, MTV Networks, AMC Networks, Postmedia Network, Ning, Kodak, NPR, Sears and Citysearch. Founded in 2005, Janrain is based in Portland, Oregon. For more information, please call 1-888-563-3082 or visit www.janrain.com and follow [@janrain](https://twitter.com/janrain) on Twitter.