



Reed's ginger soda expands social marketing outreach via YouTube

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Natural ginger soda manufacturer Reed's Inc. announced that it has launched a YouTube channel and is aggressively expanding its social media marketing efforts, according to the [company](#).

The Los Angeles-based company expects social media marketing to succeed due to the fierce interaction of Reed's loyal brand ambassadors who like to talk about the company's ginger and natural soda products.

"Social media is new to us, but we are seeing the results of participating in the online conversation already," Founder and Chief Executive Officer Chris Reed said in a statement. "We plan to continue expanding our strategy with new ideas and feedback from our online fans. Social Media is a key way for us to hear from our customers and create areas of support and networking."

Reed's, Inc. makes natural ginger beverages that are currently available in 10,500 supermarkets both in the natural food and mainstream segments. The company manufactures non-alcoholic ginger brews and also owns the top selling root beer line in natural foods, the Virgil's Root Beer product line.

Founder and Chief Executive Officer Chris Reed told DailyVista that [Reed's](#) social media initiative is primarily an outreach campaign targeted at its core consumers – those that have enjoyed Reed's products for many years, while also targeting some specific demographics the company has identified as likely to purchase Reed's goods.

"To begin with, we established a presence on the leading social media sites like Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and others," he said. "Our investor and public relations firm lobbied to get us chosen as a 'case study' for a Webinar series... we were chosen, and in the last 60 days we have been structuring our strategy, re-developing our Web site to accommodate social media, optimizing our content so people searching for related terms find Reed's and, working on RSS and blog ideas, including video blogging."

Reed's has been a well-established brand in the natural soda market for the last 20 years, and recently the company has begun a transition into the mainstream market.

"We felt that in order to reach the largest number of people quickly and cost-effectively, we needed to engage the online community," Reed said. "We found in our analysis that we already had what some call 'brand ambassadors' online talking about our products and ginger in particular."

By way of the viral power of the Internet and this social media marketing effort, Reed's is essentially allowing the brand ambassadors do most of the marketing for the company's products.

“We haven’t had much of a strategy over the last 20 years. Until now, most of our growth has been through grassroots and word-of-mouth,” Reed said. “Once people try our products they keep buying them, it’s getting them to know we are there, and that’s where social media and the Internet can be so effective.”

Reed’s intends to continue its push into the mainstream market, and even though it does dominate the natural foods category, Reed feels that the brand is still relatively unknown in the mainstream.

“We realize that most consumers still shop at mainstream stores, but those consumers share the ‘ether’ with everyone else,” he said. “It’s much easier to target online, where we can identify what people are searching for and develop campaigns to reach them.”

Building brand awareness will always be a top priority for Reed’s – and the founder’s long-term goal is to have his namesake become a household reference. He feels that the product is unique – nobody else uses the word “brews” to describe a commercial soft drink – and he is hoping to piggy-back on the success of some craft brewers that have experienced an upturn in the beverage market.

Reed’s has maintained a Web site, touts stylish packaging and also does giveaways on the soda bottles, neck tags, etc. Reed said that the company worked with a public relations firm for a while, which helped it find a place in the media, but ultimately Reed’s has not done any traditional advertising.

“The majority has been word-of-mouth and guerilla marketing to our base. We spend the majority of our marketing dollars on packaging. We don’t do any print ads; nothing on television or radio at this time,” he said.

Reed said that the company’s ideal audience are those that are looking for a natural substitute for sodas, dubbed “label readers,” who are typically highly-educated, independent thinkers and in the middle- to upper-income brackets who will invest in products they feel are healthy and will benefit them and their families.

“You can’t put on a façade when you jump into social media, you’ll be found out quickly, and it can do a lot of damage to your image and your brand. There are a few rather large companies that have already discovered this the hard way,” he said. “Reed’s is a small company, with a great brand that has been supported by loyal customers, employees and shareholders. I am the main brand evangelist in the company – I started this in my kitchen. It’s really a great American success story and people love a winner, they identify with that.”

Reed said that the company works with a small boutique investor and public relations group out of Santa Monica, Calif. called IRTH Communications. Because Reed’s is a publicly traded company, it has certain disclosure responsibilities and relationships with stakeholders that are different than a private company.

“IRTH replaced a much larger investor relations agency several months ago, one of the biggest in the country in fact,” he said. “Working with a small company like Reed’s is different than working with a larger one. We expect our consultants to wear multiple hats because we can’t spend the money on three or four different agencies.”

With IRTH's assistance, Reed's has also reached out to other experts in the field including search engine optimization and Web 2.0 specialist Expansion +, and has worked with these firms to craft a concise strategy to roll out additional media initiatives.

"We have a couple of months to go with our plan, but we already see all the pieces coming together nicely," Reed said.

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