**Marketing on Reddit: A Platform Digest**

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***How are brands currently marketing on Reddit? Outside of AMAs what are the opportunities for brands? What makes an AMA successful?***

\*\*AMA = Ask me anything (a marketing tool on Reddit)

Brands market on Reddit because the goal of the platform is to bring together people with similar interests. This creates a perfect environment for branded content and is similar to influencer marketing, in which people share positive and negative experiences with a brand or product. Users do this on Reddit by creating "subreddits," which allows for discussion of a more focused topic or issue. According to bloghotspot.com, "To put it plainly, this social media network puts discussion first, rather than just focusing on content. While other networks offer comment threads, their feeds highlight content first and discussions second. Meanwhile, Reddit's feeds highlight active threads, discussions, or subreddits, and most of the platform's best content exists within those threads or subreddits.”

In 2019, Bud Light created a digital spot specifically for [Reddit](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9w-MfMW1Ec&list=PLW8WDQniSGxSbd1yWED7P9v4AYkXc8sEW&index=9) users. Reddit is infamous for being one of the "trickiest platforms to crack," according to Bud Light's digital director, Conor Mason. "In terms of paid media strategy, it's one of the trickiest platforms to be able to crack because it's people anonymously uploading great content independently of where it came from." Previously, ads on Reddit appeared in banner ads, but now marketers are posting content that they believe will directly drive user communication about the brand. "The average user on Reddit is spending more time on Reddit than they are across almost any social media platforms," said Mason. "There is a huge user base there, and the question is, really, how do you speak to Reddit and the 150,000 plus subReddits in a way that you don't feel like a brand?"

In my opinion, I believe that Reddit is tricky because of the chance of the brand becoming unpopular or putting out content that doesn't agree well with the intended audience. The nature of the content is discussion, so one wrong move and a company could have a serious PR problem on their hands. However, I've noticed that Reddit doesn't have the same cross-channel popularity that apps like TikTok and Instagram do. For example, most TikTok stars can accumulate a relatively large amount of followers on Instagram and vice-versa. Alternatively, Reddit doesn't seem to have the same kind of reach onto other platforms. This is both a blessing and a curse for companies who are doing really well and or really bad on Reddit. On the flip slide, Reddit is a good tool for brands using word-of-mouth advertising and an excellent forum for unpaid brand discussion.

A recent example of Reddit’s cultural influence can be seen through the [WallStreetBets](https://www.reddit.com/r/wallstreetbets/) Reddit. WallStreetBets isn’t an organized group with a leader, but the community will come together through collective action to make a handful of different companies stock price spike. Most recently, the subreddit boosted Game Stop’s stock through collective action. The users dramatically impacted the stock market by communicating with people who have similar interests and talents, in a way that makes Reddit responsible for boosting the value of companies. For example, their activity and influence can be enough for shares of bankrupt companies like Hertz to spike, which led the company to try to issue new stock in 2020 even though it was bankrupt. According to Insider.com, in under a month, WallStreetBets gained [6 million subscribers](https://subredditstats.com/r/wallstreetbets), became the center of mainstream media attention, had a Super Bowl ad shout out, and [dealt with a moderator coup](https://www.insider.com/wallstreetbets-reddit-bans-moderators-gamestop-started-movie-deal-coup-2021-2). This moment became heavily “memed” and shared across all social platforms- leading to a rare moment of Reddit content being cross-platformed.

Another interesting aspect of Reddit is that brands and users don't have verified accounts like they do on platforms like Facebook and Instagram. If a possible consumer goes onto Reddit to find information about a brand or product, there is no guarantee that they'll encounter the official company page. They're more likely to find subreddits about that company or product. This brings up an interesting dilemma about marketing on this platform as opposed to Instagram or Facebook. On Instagram and Facebook, brands can filter the comments, tags, etc., about the brand on their account, but companies do not have this same level of control on Reddit.

Users engage on the platform by "upvoting" and "downvoting." The algorithm values both time and popularity, which means that content must be actively upvoted by the platform members for others to see it. On the other hand, content can be downvoted if the users do not deem it important. The process of voting for content on Reddit is unique in itself because it is unlike the system of likes that are used by apps like TikTok, Instagram, and Facebook; an upvote is like saying, "I think this content is important/interesting, and other people should see it." A like on the other platforms is more like a stamp of approval, agreement, or praise. Lagorio-Chafkin says that "Reddit's different in a sense. It has not traded in people's data at all in its history. Users on Reddit are anonymous or pseudonymous, which is a funny way of saying that you can have as much of your own identity as you want or be as anonymous as you want. They're not asking for your phone number or your friend circle. People are coming together over shared passions and shared interests".

According to BU Public Relations, "Reddit AMAs (which stands for "Ask Me Anything")—whether they're timed around the news cycle or simply focused on a topic of great general interest—are Q&As designed to bring an authority on a subject to a community of interested people. It's an organic, engaging, and fun way to increase awareness of your work, your research". [This](https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/%29) thread has over 19 million subscribers and is the number one place for AMAs. The AMA subreddit began in 2009 as an entirely new form of interviewing. Anyone could ask a subject a question. Others could upvote questions.

At first, AMAs were hosted by various people from all different backgrounds, but as its popularity grew- so did the number of celebrity participants. Most notably has been the AMAs by President Obama and President Trump. President Trump's [page](https://www.reddit.com/r/the_donald) has since been suspended, but you can find President Obama's [here](https://www.reddit.com/r/IAmA/comments/z1c9z/i_am_barack_obama_president_of_the_united_states/). For a list of intriguing AMAs, see [here](https://www.buzzfeednews.com/article/expresident/the-15-greatest-reddit-amas).

According to semrush.com, these are the best ways to host a successful Reddit AMA: set a specific topic, select the right subreddit for the conversation, schedule the AMA for the right time, and determine the right person to answer the question. The following are ways to measure the ROI of an AMA: increased brand exposure, improved brand sentiment, collected feedback, gaining new users, interactions with your audience, and earned media coverage. Outside of AMAs, companies can engage in promoted content and branded subreddits.

Reddit has directly impacted business growth and shaped culture ([examples](https://jungletopp.com/advertising-on-reddit)). The Wharton School of Business at the University of Pennsylvania calls Reddit the "[Most Influential Site on the Internet"](https://knowledge.wharton.upenn.edu/article/history-of-reddit/). In the article, Christine Lagorio-Chafkin, the author of the book "We Are The Nerds" (a book about the influence and birth of Reddit), calls it "the least known and most influential site on the internet. It's remarkable that it's the fifth most popular site in the United States, with 330 million monthly users who type more than 50,000 words into it every minute. It is the last textual engine of the internet.”

Further reading:

* <https://digiday.com/marketing/one-trickiest-platforms-crack-bud-light-now-testing-paid-media-reddit/>
* <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/reddit-marketing>
* <https://www.bu.edu/prsocial/best-practices/social-media/guide-to-reddit-amas/>
* <https://www.reddit.com/r/TheoryOfReddit/comments/1n1ode/the_costs_and_benefits_of_self_promotional/>
* <https://revelation.agency/how-to-set-up-a-reddit-ama/>
* <https://interestingengineering.com/10-of-the-best-reddit-amas>
* <https://www.reddit.com/r/AskSocialScience/comments/2chgmj/regarding_the_media_shaping_culture_and_culture/>