



Success Story: Serengetee



Acquired over over
234,700 social
media followers
in 2 years



Grown a
community of
ambassadors



Grown their
business and
product offering



Has donated
over \$60,000 to
32 causes in 28
countries

Wearing the World:

Serengetee Builds a Following by Sharing Their Success

Serengetee's story starts on a boat. Company co-founders Jeff Steitz and Ryan Westberg were sailing the world with Semester at Sea, an academic program in which undergraduates take classes aboard a ship and visit various countries along the way. The two friends collected fabrics made by local artisans, with the idea of transforming the fabrics into colorful pockets on t-shirts. They decided they would support the communities they sourced the materials from by donating five percent of profits to local causes.

The friends launched Serengetee.com from a college dorm room in the spring of 2012 with the last \$2,000 in their bank accounts. "We knew nothing about fashion," says Ryan Westberg, co-founder and marketing director of Serengetee. "We knew nothing about e-commerce. We knew nothing about starting a business. What we did have was an idea we believed in, so we went for it."

Starting with social media brand ambassador

What the company lacked in industry acumen, they made up for in the strength of their idea and brand story. With no cash for a traditional marketing budget, the founders realized they needed to get creative, and looked to social media to help. To get started, they reached out to their fellow students from the Semester at Sea program to become Serengetee's first brand ambassadors.



"We asked everyone on our ship to change their profile pictures to our logo and post three status updates about us on Facebook, in exchange for a two-for-one shirt code," Westberg says.

The promotion was a hit. With a new community of over 400 brand ambassadors, the company quickly grew their fan following. For Serengetee, the decision to use social media as the driving force behind their customer outreach and brand development was based on a strong understanding of their primary market, which consists of active social media users.

"We have always been targeting high school and college students, people who live on social media, so it seemed obvious for these to be our main marketing platforms," Westberg says.

Social media engagement through Hootsuite

Serengetee became active on several social networks, including Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest and Instagram, and started using Hootsuite to help schedule their social media activities. As travel to distant destinations is essential for sourcing their fabrics, they needed a way to maintain connections with their audience.

Westberg and his team use Hootsuite to manage their streams of social networks. Serengetee adopted the hashtag #WeartheWorld, and they monitor conversations from their Hootsuite dashboards. The team also uses Hootsuite for customer service. "We ask questions about new products and changes, and we actually listen and make these changes—our fans have a voice," says Westberg.

"Hootsuite helps me manage social media, especially while on the road. I am able to schedule tweets for weeks in advance, to help continually build a fan base while I don't have access to the Internet."

*Ryan Westberg,
CEO, Serengetee*



The results are impressive. In their first year of business, Serengetee went from one Facebook fan to 20,000; in year two they rose to 125,000. As the time of this writing, they have over 193,000 Facebook fans, 23,000 Instagram followers, and 18,700 Twitter followers. Their social success has been vital in supporting the company's mission of giving back to communities. Since its launch, Serengetee has donated over \$60,000+ to 32 causes in 28 countries.

Staying true to their brand

Serengetee has expanded beyond t-shirts and tank tops, and now offers sweaters, pants, shorts, formal wear and backpacks. While they have expanded their product offering, their mission and approach hasn't lost its focus. They continue to build a loyal fan following by sharing their successes and contributing to communities, and using the one-on-one nature of social media, helped along by Hootsuite, to connect with customers in an authentic way.

"Finding Serengetee's voice was very easy," says Westberg. "We launched while we were still students in college and we were marketing to our friends—other college students. Our voice was sincerely our own."

To start building your brand on social media, sign up for [Hootsuite Pro](#).

