

— SOCIAL MARKETING —

ADVANTAGE



GUIDE 1:

DEVELOP YOUR SOCIAL
MARKETING PLAN

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Develop Your Social Marketing Plan

So, you want to build a massive brand and you think that social media is the way to get there?

Well good news: you're on the right track! Social media is indeed a *highly* powerful tool for building a massive audience and connecting with that audience in a way that many brands and companies never will.

But before you can start posting media and content, you first need a *plan*. What, you thought you could just dive in without any strategy?

Your social marketing plan is essentially the strategy and the series of steps that you plan to follow in order to take your website or business from a small name or tiny blog; into massive, self-sustaining, professional organization.

It sounds impossible for many people but the fact of the matter is that this has worked for countless brands before yours.

Take a look at *any* of the biggest names in your industry, and you can almost guarantee that they started out where you are right now and that they used social media – possibly alongside other tools – in order to grow and to become something bigger.

While many people will fail to emulate that success story, that's because they followed the wrong trajectory – or because they had no *strategy* to begin with.

That's what we're going to look at here. We're going to look not only at how you can go about creating a blueprint based on other highly

successful sites but also how to make sure that you tailor that strategy to suit your brand, your mission statement and your audience.

The plan is the single most important part of your entire campaign. So, get ready and let's do this!

Goals and Objectives

The first thing to do is to identify what the goal of your social media plan is. You'd be surprised how many brands will jump into their social marketing without even considering this incredibly fundamental concept!

A lot of creators and businesses will look at you blankly if you ask them what their plan is, or answer that it's 'to be more successful'.

This isn't helpful because it doesn't provide us with a destination, meaning we can't come up with a road map.

So instead, ask yourself what success means for your business.

Maybe you're just trying to make lots of sales quickly?

Maybe you want to establish yourself as an authority within a small sphere of influence?

Or *maybe* you want to reach a massive audience and be considered a thought leader within a specific niche.

Whatever the case, this is going to subtly alter the way you go about things. Likewise, you should also look at your budget, you should look at your timeframe and you should look at the number of hours you can commit to this plan.

If you can build a whole social media department in-house as part of your business then *great*.

But if in reality you're only likely to be posting one or two status updates a day maximum, then be honest about this fact and build that into your plan.

It's better to have a moderate plan and to stick to it than it is to have a highly ambitious plan but then give up on day one!

Branding

The next thing you need to think about is your branding.

And I'm going to be brutal with you now: there's a very strong chance that your site and business needs a complete rebrand. Sorry!

The fact of the matter is that your social media success is going to hinge *massively* on your branding. If your branding is bad, then you won't be able to win over your followers and visitors.

The whole point of your social media is to create positive interactions with an audience so that they consider signing up and subscribing and so that you build their trust and they consider buying from you in future.

If you post regularly and with high quality content, but your page has an ugly logo or no real branding to speak of, then you are going to drive away your visitors.

A strong brand will instil trust and authority right away. People should look at your logo and instantly know what your site or channel is all about and whether or not they're likely to like it. At the same time, they

should see your branding and they should instantly feel that yours is a professional outfit and one that they can trust to produce high quality products and content.

That's why you should hire someone to create a logo for you and then make sure that you use this *consistently* across all your channels and that this helps to create more synergy between your various accounts.

Target Audience

Your branding should be directly influenced by your target audience.

What do I mean by this?

Essentially, depending on your brand and your business, you are going to have a specific target audience. That might be middle aged businessmen, it might be pizza shop owners, it might be young, stylish women or it might be martial artists.

Whoever your target audience is, knowing and understanding this audience is *critical* to your success.

Ultimately, if you try and create messages and branding that is appealing to everyone, then it will unintentionally end up being appealing to *no one*. It will be too generic and brand. What's always better is to go after a small segment of the web but to have them completely on-board with everything you're saying and selling.

And to do that, you need to first identify them.

You can do this with market research. Ideally, that means surveying your current audience or customers and finding out how old they are, what

their hobbies and interests are, what their beliefs are, what their passions are, where they spend their time...

All this information will help you build up a picture of someone and know precisely who you're going to be marketing to.

You can also do this by looking at your competition. Who spends time on their social media pages and websites? Who are they targeting? What can you learn from them?

Once you know this, you can decide how best to design your logo and other aspects of your brand in order to best attract that audience. The same goes for writing any copy that is going to go on your page such as your 'about'.

Now you know *who* you are appealing to, you can decide how *best* to appeal to them.

A Personal Brand

Something that more and more businesses should consider, is using a personal brand.

A personal brand means that you're not going to create a logo in the traditional sense or give your business a name. Even if you do, that is going to play second fiddle to your own name and your own face which *become* your brand.

This can work incredibly well, because by having a personal brand, you allow your visitors and followers to feel as though they can get to know you. In return, this then helps to build trust and familiarity. Would you be more likely to buy off of a friend, or a stranger in the street? Using a

personal brand allows you to put yourself somewhere in between those two points.

At the same time, a personal brand can also be used to promote a value proposition, a lifestyle and a 'dream'. The idea is that you *live* the life that you are promoting.

If you have a fitness brand all about eating well, feeling confident and breaking personal records, then you can post images of yourself training, go live on Facebook Live and more – showing yourself doing the things that your audience want to do.

This can be very inspirational when handled correctly and can motivate more people to follow you, to consider following your brand and to buy from you! This also gives you a near limitless supply of images, videos and other content you can share on social media.

Platform

It's only once you've settled on all these things that you can then decide on which platform you're going to use.

That's because the best platform is going to depend partly on your brand and the message you want to convey.

What is the best way to get this message across?

For instance, Facebook has the largest audience with 2 million users. This makes it fantastic for reaching the widest possible demographic, which includes more of the less 'internet savvy' groups such as older markets. It is great for sharing content, for live video, for discussion on

the wall and for PPC advertising if you have some budget to put into that.

On the other hand, Instagram is the second largest market with around 700 million monthly active users. That's still an awful lot but what's interesting is that proportionately more of these users are women and are slightly younger.

What's more, is that the visual nature of Instagram makes it great for selling a lifestyle and a value proposition. It's also great for promoting a product. The 'stories' aspect works very well in particular with a personal brand.

Better yet, the ROI is supremely low. Posting a few images to Instagram takes barely any time during a day if you have a good camera in your phone and you genuinely do practice what you preach – but it can build a massive following and gets lots of reshares, likes and more!

Plan

Finally, you can now come up with a plan. More specifically, you should try and come up with daily, weekly and monthly plans.

In other words, what are you going to do on daily basis to get to the point where you want to be in one year, two or three?

This will usually involve making regular posts of some sort, but in particular, it will mean doing that in a way that is sustainable for you and that fits into your routine.

In an ideal scenario, you would post as often as possible for all the major social media platforms and other that skirt the definition:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter
- YouTube
- Reddit
- Google Plus
- Tumblr
- Pinterest
- Snapchat
- Periscope/Meerkat
- And any others you can find!

This will help your brand to be 'everywhere' and maximize exposure. And by posting regularly, you will have a greater chance of your posts being seen. There's a saturation point at which you can start to overwhelm your followers but even this can be avoided by setting up 'sister' brands to help promote yourself.

So, there's not really an upper limit. The only upper limit is set by how much you can accomplish regularly.

And this is also going to be affected by other aspects of your marketing, such as your content marketing for instance and any video presence on YouTube.

Thus, your marketing plan is likely to be somewhat limited. Start then by focussing on one channel primarily whether that means Instagram or Facebook. Make sure you at least have a strong showing on the top three.

Think as well about the regularity with which you can post content to your site and where you're going to share that. Again, promoting content

on the three big platforms is always a good idea (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram) and you should also look at sharing in online communities like reddit and Google Plus communities.

Finally, look into the different tools you can use to make this process easier and to reach an even larger audience. This will likely mean using things like Buffer or IFTTT in order to automate posts when you don't have a chance to do anything yourself and it could also mean hiring additional services to help you.

Through the rest of these reports you'll learn more ways to grow your social media faster and reach an even bigger audience, so read the whole set and you should be able to come up with an ideal social media strategy to reach a massive audience!

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GUIDE 2:

USE SOCIAL MEDIA FOR
MARKET RESEARCH

Use Social Media for Market Research

A successful social media campaign is something that any business can benefit from to a massive extent.

That's because social media marketing offers you access to a gigantic network of people and adds tools and features that are ideal for encouraging virality.

But to think of social media *only* in those terms is short sighted. The power of social media goes far beyond giving you a platform – it also gives you an incredible amount of data and a huge amount of insight.

What's more, is that it lets your audience communicate *with you*.

Before you launch your own social media campaign then, one of the very best things you can do is to use this tool to collect data and build your own strategy. Use it to see what works and what doesn't, to better know your audience and generally to ensure that you are on-the-pulse.

Twitter for Short Term Research

Twitter has occasionally described itself as being the 'pulse of the planet'. What does it mean by this?

Well, essentially, it means that whatever is trending on Twitter is highly likely to be 'trending' in real life. Let's say that you head outside and you hear a very loud alarm coming from the nearby shopping arcade.

You do a Google search and you don't find anything particularly useful on here.

Why not?

Simple: because Google isn't fast enough to keep up with this kind of news. Someone needs to first write an article and then publish it. Then Google needs to 'index' that news with its spiders and it needs to recognize which search terms this is relevant for.

After a while, relevant results will start turning up at the top of Google. But it's not immediate.

Twitter on the other hand, gives you a direct line of communication with the local community. Just search the name of that shopping arcade and you'll see people posting about it. Some people will be asking what's going on and likely there will be a security member there who will post the answer.

This is how Twitter can make the claim to be 'the pulse' of the planet.

And likewise, if you look at what is currently trending, you will see longer term topics that lots of people are messaging about. This is the same effect but on a much larger scale.

People might be Tweeting about something that happened to a certain celebrity, or they might be tweeting about some political event in the news. Perhaps they are tweeting about a new computer game, new movie, or the latest Game of Thrones episode.

Either way, knowing these trending topics can be very useful for you as a marketer. And the reason is fairly self explanatory! Essentially, by knowing what topic is 'hot' at any given moment, it makes it far easier for you to create posts on that basis that will get searched.

Writing about 'hot topics' in fact is one of *the* best ways to get new followers and viewers. Why? Because the faster you are, the sooner you can get your post on Google or your video on YouTube before they are inundated with similar content.

I recently made a video covering the launch of a new phone. I was fortunate enough to get an invitation to the event and because of this, I could cover that event as soon as the embargo lifted with footage, written content and more.

In the first couple of days it had over half a million views. Content on the same page without this 'new' appeal tends to get a few thousand or a few hundred thousand maximum.

You see the difference?

If you can spot a topic this way, *as it develops*, then you can reach the audience you want to and gain massive traction before anyone else has even landed on the topic!

Likewise, by posting social media content with the right tags, you can also get much more engagement from people who aren't already your followers.

The key in this instance is once again to be early, but also to post content with tags that are popular without being *too* popular. That might sound a little nonsensical – after all, why *wouldn't* you want to post on a topic with the biggest reach possible?

And the answer is that if you choose a topic that is a little *too* popular, then you risk being immediately drowned out by all the other posts on the same subject. This can happen even when you aren't posting about

‘trending’ topics. For instance, if you post a picture of a sunset with #sunset then you can bet that so too are a million other people. Within the first minute, your image stops showing up in searches.

But if you post ‘twilight’, then you can be much more successful.

In fact, one of the very *best* strategies in this regard, is to post about local stuff. Remember that alarm situation? If you had Tweeted about it, then that would have been some guaranteed views for you and probably some new followers and retweets.

Or what if you were to attend a big event like a festival and then post *about* that event? Here, you’d have hundreds – maybe thousands – of people posting about that subject and searching for it. But it would never go that much larger than just the people in attendance.

Learning the Niche

What’s even more important though, is looking at how a niche behaves in the long term. That means doing your research to see what is hot and what’s not, what goes down well etc.

For example, if you were to create a site about fitness, then you might think that it’s perfectly fine to just *know about fitness*. You would think! But the reality is quite difference.

The topic of fitness can be split into numerous smaller camps and even ‘factions’. Almost everyone in this niche and this industry has a horse in the race. They all have strong opinions about what is the right way to go about losing weight and what is not.

There are ideas that are new and totally accepted. Ideas that are partially accepted and ideas that are already considered old-hat and defunct.

For instance, if you head over to the r/fitness subreddit, you'll find a community of people that *very much* believes in counting calories and measuring 'macros'.

Their dogma is that this is the only way to lose weight and the admins there come down heavily on people who promote ideals such as going paleo, or such as low carb diets.

Conversely though, there are corners of the web where paleo diets are considered the absolute cornerstone of a healthy eating program.

You see the problem? You can't simply dive in with your eyes closed and start posting about 'fitness'. If you do, you'll likely unintentionally step on toes and upset people.

You won't know who is really your target audience and you might well be completely unfamiliar with the terms that people throw at you like IIFYM (If It Fits in Your Macros) etc.

The point is, you need to immerse yourself in the niche and learn the ins and outs. There's nothing wrong with going against the conventional wisdom – in fact these can be the most powerful and effective posts.

The issue is simply that you can't afford to not *know* the landscape and you can't afford to jump in blindly.

That's why all brands and all creators should spend time learning their niche, they should spend time in these communities and they should do their reading and their research prior to getting started.

This way, you can write a post that is new, that doesn't look outdated and that is only confrontationally if that was your intention. You'll know which communities are likely to react in which ways and you can post in the correct forum for the best response.

Note

This is also a very easy way to find content that you can share with your audience. There are numerous tool you can find that will allow you to see popular posts with lots of likes and shares in your niche.

All you then need to do is to retweet these or reshare them to your audience, and now *you* will benefit from that popularity. As proven commodities, this is a strategy that is almost *impossible* to fail! (Almost!)

More Data Collection

While you're at it, there is much more information to be gleaned from social accounts.

For one, this is a great way to check out the opposition and to see what is working. Chances are that whatever niche you're looking at entering, there will be some established big brands that will already have quite the foothold. Very clearly, these brands have done something right.

Your objective should not be to try and copy these brands of course but rather just to see what worked for them and what didn't. At the same time, try to look at what people are *saying* on their pages.

What is missing from this campaign? What is it that people would like to see that they haven't seen yet?

This is a fantastic place to get clues and ideas regarding niches and audience members that aren't currently being catered to. Then you simply swoop in to help!

At the same time, doing this can *also* give you some excellent opportunities for marketing. You might find some other brands for instance that you could work with in future.

Or you might find an influencer – a personality on social media with a big audience that might be willing to do a shout-out for you.

There are tons of potential opportunities like this and doing your research beforehand can help you to learn where these are. In fact, it can allow you to come up with an entire strategy and then to decide precisely who to contact, when to contact them and how to get the most from them.

Finally, use this to gain a better understanding of your target audience. In other reports as part of this package, you can find information on the importance of having a 'buyer persona'. This is the ideal target audience for your product.

But how do you know who this is? Guess work is not the right strategy as you may have guessed (ironic!), so instead you need to look at who is following your competition, you need to look at who is reading and sharing the kind of information that you are sharing.

And you need to decide, based on this information, where the best place to market is and how you should design your brand and your content.

Surveying Your Audience

As your number of followers grows and as you gain more and more traction, your options for promoting yourself and for market research also grow.

One of the best things you can do for instance, is to simply *ask your own audience* what they want to see. It sounds so simple and yet it is something that a lot of companies never think to do!

In short, you simply post a question on your forum asking something like: 'what type of content would you like to see more of?' or 'what would you like to see for our next product?'.

Something as simple as this can be a fantastic tool for making sure that your content is on-point and it can help you to grow your brand.

Not only does this ensure that your content is right for the audience you want to read it, but it also gives your audience a sense of ownership over your content and makes them feel valued and as though they belong.

This is hugely beneficial and it can even extend to a large range of other uses. For example, how about using your social media to poll your audience on your new logo? Let them vote for their favorite one!

This is called 'crowdsourcing' and it opens up a ton of doors for a more synergistic relationship between content creator and audience.

— SOCIAL MARKETING —

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GUIDE 3:

SOCIAL TARGETING THE
PERFECT CUSTOMERS

Social Targeting the Perfect Customers

Building a successful social media campaign is about making enough of a splash to reach a wide range of people and to get big numbers on your follower and subscriber counts.

But it's not just about breadth – it's also about depth. That is to say that it's not just about how many people you can reach, but also how precisely targeted those people are.

If you set out to create something for 'everyone', then you will simultaneously create something for no-one. On the other hand, if you know who your perfect customer is, then you can make sure that you invest all your time, effort and budget into reaching those people – and the result will be far more profitable and far more rewarding.

Why You Need to Target Someone in Particular

A lot of companies are very short sighted in this regard, in that they want to create something that will appeal to the largest possible audience. This is why we see websites and brands in the fitness niche so often, in the dating niche, or in the money niche.

And this is why we see so much content that is 'safe' and not all that opinionated. It isn't too highbrow so as not to put off people who don't want to read reams of text and it's not too controversial so as not to turn away people who are easily offended.

The content is short, to-the-point and on topics that everyone knows and understands.

On the face of it, that sounds like a good plan. But in reality, it means you have no USP.

It is best if you think of your social media accounts as products. Like any product, it needs to offer value. Like any product, it needs a USP. And like any product, it needs an ideal customer.

If your website is called 'BurnFat.Com' then it's going to be competing with every single other fitness site on the net pretty much. Meanwhile, it gives your visitors no *real* reason to read it – it doesn't offer anything over all the other content they've seen so often.

But the worst offender of all? It's not exciting and it doesn't evoke emotion.

And this is super important because your content *needs* to be exciting to be successful. That's because it is emotion that drives action – not logic.

This is why clickbait works so well – because it *is* controversial, or mysterious, or absurd. Even people who know and hate clickbait will often click it just to see 'how much they hate it'. If you are safe and vanilla, then you give people no reason to promote your content.

What's more, is that sharing your content on Facebook or Twitter works FAR better if your content is *for* a specific person.

For starters, knowing your precise target audience will give you places to market and a person to aim for and it will allow you to avoid lots of competition.

If you create a site aimed at fishers, then you have clear and obvious ways to market that site on social media and you will be going up against a much smaller amount of competition.

If you go *even more* niche, then that effect is even stronger. Make a website about the sport 'curling' and set up a Facebook page to that end, and you're going to be one of the very few sites offering information on that subject.

Now, when someone wants to get information about their favorite sport, they will have limited options *other* than to read what you're putting out! And those visitors will become much more engaged as a result.

Targeting and Sharing

What's more though, is that the very psychology of sharing is pretty much reliant on targeting.

Why? Because ultimately, sharing is a social act. Social media is social – even though this is something a lot of brands forget – and pretty much everything we do on those platforms is social as well.

When you share something on Facebook, you are sharing something because you either want to communicate with the person you're talking to, or because you want to say something about yourself.

This is why questionnaire content is so successful. People are narcissists and so when they learn they are Joey from Friends, they want to share that to communicate it with their audience.

And in just the same way, when someone reads an opinionated piece about why science should define policy and not religion they will share

that because it is something they believe and they want people to *know* what they believe.

OR they will share it because they *don't* believe in it and it has made them angry and they want to post a comment saying why it's wrong!

Either way, this much more specific and opinionated piece has a much higher chance of being shared.

Alternatively, we might share something with a friend because it makes us think of them and we want to share something we think they might appreciate.

For instance, if we see a post about working from home and how it shows you're a strong-minded person, then we might share it with the friend we know who works from home and say 'you might like this!'.

But that only works because the content is *for* someone and because it says something. Now if the post was '10 productivity tips', who would you share that with? It's so vague and dull that it doesn't offer value to anyone in particular. It's kind of for everyone, meaning it's also kind of for no one.

Targeting and Selling

And don't even get me started on the value of targeting for selling. If the ultimate goal of your social media campaign is to make money (which is the case for a great many people) then you should *absolutely* ensure that your channel is highly targeted.

For instance, if you own a business that sells wedding dresses, then you can spend a whole lot of money marketing to everyone and see very

little ROI. Only a very small section of the population is looking for a wedding dress right now!

BUT if you target only *engaged women in your area*, then suddenly you are focusing all of your efforts and all of your marketing budget on just the kind of person who is likely to buy from you.

How to Target Your Social Media Campaign

So, with that in mind, how do you go about targeting your social media campaign? Here are some crucial pointers to get you started...

Create Your Buyer Persona

A buyer persona is a concept used in business that describes who the ideal customer for a product is – which can include your social media campaign as a whole.

This is the person who, on paper, is most likely to buy from you, most likely to like and share your posts and most likely to become highly engaged with what you're doing.

A buyer person is often written like a fictional biography – as though you were creating a fictional character for a movie script.

That means that you're going to take into account their age, their sex and their gender... but you'll also go one step further than this by asking yourself what their hobbies and interests might be, where they are likely to spend their time, what job they are likely to have.

Now picture this person as a real person. You might even be able to base it on someone you know. Give them a name. Let's call the Joe.

And from now on, every single social media post you make, ask yourself this question: would Joe like this?

If you think it would be right up their street and they'd be likely to hit like and share – then it passes. Otherwise, it's back to the drawing board!

Of course, this is guess work to a certain extent though, so make sure that you are also looking at the stats and consider surveying your audience as well.

Use PPC

If you have any advertising budget for your social campaign, then it is well worth driving a little of this into PPC. PPC is 'Pay Per Click', which is a form of marketing where – you guessed it – you pay each time someone clicks on one of your adverts.

There are two big PPC networks, which include Google's AdWords and Facebook Ads. AdWords shows ads on Google searches, which allows you to target by knowing what sort of thing someone who is looking for your brand would be likely to search for.

But what we're most interested in is Facebook ads. Facebook's ads allow you to target your audience based on their hobbies and interests, on their age, on their sex and their location. In short, any information that a user gives to Facebook can now be used to reach them and to market to them directly.

So, for our wedding dress shop, we could pay only for adverts to appear on the walls of women who are engaged. Every click would be more likely to lead to a sale.

This is immensely effective and especially if you use CPA which is 'Cost Per Action'. Facebook allows you to set up your ads so that you only pay if someone actually likes your Facebook page!

That makes a massive difference too because now you're only paying when you genuinely increase your following *with* a highly targeted follower!

Find Communities

A 'route to market' is any platform that allows you to communicate specifically with your buyer persona. In the case of social media, that often means online communities. These can include Facebook pages, Google Plus Communities or even subreddits.

Either way, these are places where people with a specific interest will hang out and where you will be able to converse with them and likely post your content for free.

Now that audience is seeing the content you created and every member *should* be targeted as a matter of fact. You can also do this outside of social media, for instance, why not speak to a local club in your area? Why not advertise in a magazine? As long as the niche is the same, that audience is going to be largely targeted.

Consider Your Branding

Branding is absolutely fundamental to any successful social media campaign, and it's a subject that we return to numerous times over the course of these reports. It is also very relevant here and the objective in this case is to create a brand that is clearly *specifically tailored* to your target audience.

In other words, when you come up with your logo (and your tagline – which is a powerful tool), you should think carefully about who you are aiming at and what you do and then make sure that you convey all that.

The ideal scenario is that someone sees some of your content or one of your social media posts and finds it interesting. Then they look at your brand and they know instantly what kind of content they can expect and whether or not it is for them.

For the right kind of person, your brand should look and feel as though it was created *entirely* for them. Because it pretty much was!

And Finally

And finally, do nothing to compromise your highly targeted list. Avoid the temptation to use strategies that build your list much bigger in an untargeted way.

For instance, make sure that you avoid *buying* subscribers – this will only ever mean that you get a completely untargeted list that never *agreed* to be messaged by you. Likewise, avoid offering freebies and goodies to try and get people to subscribe or follow.

Why? Because this will attract people who like to get free stuff – which isn't really the targeted audience that we want as a business!

Never strong arm, trick or push people into subscribing or following you. *Only* have people that genuinely want to be on your list and that can't wait to hear what you have to say next!

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GUIDE 4:

ENGAGING CONTENT ATTRACTS
CUSTOMERS

Engaging Content Attracts Customers

Content is what makes the web go around. Content is what makes people visit your website, it's what encourages people to follow you on social media and it's what eventually turns your visitors into *fans* rather than just followers.

Your social media strategy should largely be about sharing content. That means directly posting images, videos and text to your social media accounts but it also means posting to your blog or website and then *sharing* that on social media.

But this strategy will only work so long as the content you are providing is top quality and highly engaging. So now the question is: how do you ensure that this is the case?

Quality Blog Posts

In a future report, we will be talking about the importance of providing value. We discuss the difference between generic content and content that makes people want to come back, makes them want to share and generally keeps them engaged.

But what's also important is that the blog post itself is high quality. The aim here is that when someone clicks on a link you share to Facebook, or to Twitter, they can rely on themselves getting a certain level of quality and having a certain experience.

So how are you going to ensure that this is the case?

Here are a few tips:

Writing Quality

Your writing quality *needs* to be top notch. Poor English can actually seriously undermine your message and even if the content of what you're saying is good, you'll risk losing the trust and losing the authority that you need to build that audience and gain their trust initially.

So how do you write well? What makes written content 'good' in the first place?

The tip is to remember what the purpose of writing is in the first place: to convey information (value). And that means you want to do this as quickly and efficiently as possible so that the reader is getting the maximum ROI (return on investment, with the investment in this case being *time*).

This means you shouldn't fill your pages with jargon or flowery language. Forget showing off and forget demonstrating just what a great writer you are. Instead, focus on delivering that content efficiently.

The purpose of using a larger vocabulary or jargon should only be to provide additional meaning with fewer words.

In other words, you might choose a different word because it implies a subtly different meaning and thereby makes your text more nuanced. Only when it serves this purpose, should you get 'fancy'.

You also need to make sure that your writing is arranged in such a way that it won't put off your visitors. That is to say that you shouldn't make your blog posts consist of a single wall of text, as this will put your visitors off of reading and many of them will be instantly driven away.

Break your text up with lots of paragraphs and headings. Make sure that you use a large and easily readable font and think about your site's mobile friendliness. Remember that a lot of people are going to be reading this content on their mobile devices rather than on a computer!

Making Your Posts More Sharable

Having done this, your content is now going to be more readable and people who visit your pages will now stay on them for longer. This is a good start!

But you also want to make sure that as many people as possible see that content to begin with. Remember that if you share something through your Facebook page, only around 10-20% of your audience will see that come up in their homefeed and only a small percentage of *them* will pause long enough to notice!

So, you can't rely on your followers – you need them to share with their larger network and bring in even more visitors.

And you do this by making your content more sharable.

Some ways to achieve that include:

Using the Right Meta Descriptions: A good meta description can go a long way to bringing in more visitors. This should outline why people should visit your blog post and it should provide a brief summary so that it's clear who the post is for.

This is the text that is going to appear underneath the headline when your content is shared, so make sure that it does its job and really reels in those visitors!

Using the Right Title: Using the right titles for your posts is incredibly important if you want to ensure that you get the most clicks possible.

The aim here is not to create clickbait (meaning that your articles 'trick' people into clicking them) but to create content that is genuinely click-worthy and then *sell* that content in the title.

You do this by explaining how the article provides value in a subtle way and by making sure that people can see how and why it is different from other content on the web. At the same time, you need to make sure that the content has some kind of emotional hook and gains an emotional response – it's emotion that makes people click, not logic!

As an example, I recently wrote an article discussing the diet of a top athlete. When researching the article, I learned that this athlete also used supplements that had a 'nootropic' effect – a smart drug effect.

That is inherently an interesting angle and it's something that isn't often covered in similar posts. It also has a very emotional gut-punch of a reaction because the words 'smart drugs' conjure images of drugs (which are illegal!) as well as success, superintelligence, science fiction... it's a powerful combination!

So instead of a generic title like: "NAME'S Diet and Supplements Revealed!" I made something more interesting: "How NAME Stays Lean, Strong and Mentally Agile Using a Unique Diet and Supplements and Smart Drugs Regime".

Now anyone with an interest in that athlete is sure to be interested in reading the article! Always tell your story, find the unique angle and look for the emotional hook. And if you want to see an example of a social brand that does this very well, then check out 'IFL Science'.

Using the Right Images: Using the right images is also crucial if you want your social posts to really stand out and get clicked. The reason for this is that your images are going to appear alongside your link and the title and this is going to be one of the first things that people see.

Images are content in themselves on social media – especially on Instagram or on Pinterest. So, I'm not going to go into detail on the how just yet. But the 'what' is important.

To sell your content and get people to click, your links should include images that are high definition, that are the right dimensions (ideally 16:9) and that manage to stand out and get attention.

The way that an image stands out and gets attention is by featuring something that naturally draws the human eye.

The very best thing for doing this? Human faces!

Creating Great Images

Okay, but what if images are the main thrust of your content? What if we're talking about an Instagram profile here?

In that case, you need to know how to create truly stunning images that are going to really stand out and get attention. And to do that, you need to know how to create an image that offers value.

Value through images is a little different however. You don't convey information or provide 'entertainment' as such. Instead, most images should provide value by being inspirational in some way, or by being attractive in and of themselves.

This starts with the right technology. If you're going to run an Instagram account as a major aspect of your social media push, then you should make sure that you have a great camera to back that up.

It *is* possible to have success on Instagram with a smartphone, but you'll have significantly *more* luck if you use a camera such as a DSLR or a mirrorless camera with a good lens. The results will be much crisper, more dramatic and better quality all round.

You should also take time to think about lighting and composition. Try to learn what makes a good photo. Very often this means taking images that tell a story in some way and that are dynamic and exciting.

In other words, your images shouldn't just be squarely focussed on the 'subject' with that element right in the middle of the frame. If you have a square photo with an image of a product or a person in the middle, it will be dull and unexciting.

On the other hand, having a photo of the subject in the foreground off to one side with something more exciting in the background infers some kind of link.

This creates depth by focussing on multiple levels and drawing the eye in and it suggests that the foreground element in some way *created* the background element.

Likewise, instead of having a photo of someone working out, you might show a dumbbell that has been thrown to one side with a pair of weight lifting gloves. Again, this tells a story in a more engaging manner.

And ultimately, this helps to 'sell the dream'. It sells the lifestyle and the ideas that you're hoping to promote, and by doing that, it helps you to

make your content more interesting *and* helps to promote your brand and the value proposition of your products and services.

Create Video

Want a type of content that is *inherently* high value and that is perfect for social media?

Then create video. Videos allow you to convey more information in less time, and require less attention and effort from the viewer. Not only that, but videos allow your viewers to feel as though they are really getting to know you and getting familiar with your values and your persona. This helps to inspire more trust.

Video takes a lot more effort to *create* however and this means that you can actually raise the reputation of your brand. Anyone can make written content, but making video is significantly more challenging – thus simply by producing video, you demonstrate your organization to be professional and capable of offering high value.

Content On Social Media is Two Way

If you want to create great content for social media, then it is not enough to think of it purely in terms of what you want to sell, or what you want to say. You also need to engage with your users and viewers by responding to what *they* have to say and by inviting them to contact you or get in touch.

This is important because it is what will drive a sense of trust and it can greatly enhance your brand's appeal and engagement.

So how do create content that is two way?

Here are a few suggestions:

- Use Facebook Live and go live on Instagram, Periscope – this lets your viewers interact with you directly and can be highly transformative in terms of the way it engages people with your brand.
- Start polls, questionnaires and competitions – or even run AMAs. Answer questions and *invite* your followers to converse with you rather than just watching and reading
- Seek out your followers – follow others, comment on their videos and pictures and respond to their comments
- Post in social communities and get involved in the discussion

There are many more ways you can do this, but just try to get out of the mindset of ‘set and forget’. Social media is an ongoing discussion and you need to be constantly vigilant in order to maximize the engagement.

The more time and effort you invest in creating *quality* and consistent content, the more your brand will grow! It might sound obvious, but you’d be surprised how many people think they can get by simply by posting the same generic, low quality content.

— SOCIAL MARKETING —

ADVANTAGE



GUIDE 5:

BECOME THE EXPERT BY
PROVIDING VALUE

Become the Expert by Providing Value

One of the key objectives of any social media marketing campaign should be to become a top influencer and a top thought leader.

To do *that* you need to become an authority: to be viewed in your niche as someone who is an expert on the given subject and who can help others to achieve their goals, improve their skills or find accurate and entertaining information as they need it.

Once you reach this point, you will control the hearts and minds of your audience and as that audience grows, you'll be able to generate huge amounts of income just by suggesting products and services or working with other brands.

But how do you get to this point? The answer is incredibly simple, but also highly complex...

You deliver *value*.

Why Value = Influence

When you visit any web page, blog or site, you do not do so out of charity. You don't do it as a favor to the owner of that blog. Rather, the reason that you visit a webpage or website, is so that you can gain something from the page.

More of that not, what you're looking to gain from visiting is information or entertainment. We watch fail videos on YouTube because we want to be entertained, and we read fitness blogs because we want information that can help us to get into better shape.

And it's only if we find this information or entertainment to be high quality, that we'll then think about returning to that page or site in future. As such, the website is providing *value*.

And it's through this value, that you eventually come to trust the brand. Now, when that same creator recommends a certain product, or a certain service, you will be much more likely to trust them.

Simply: you have received a certain amount of value from that brand in the past and therefore, when the company recommends something else, you believe that this will also be able to offer a similar level of value.

If you get that much value for *free* from the website, you can only *imagine* the kind of amazing value you'd get if you paid for the ebook, the course, or whatever else is being promoted on the site!

That's why it's simple. The reason it's complex is that knowing how to create this kind of value is something that eludes an awful lot of business owners, brands and more.

How to Offer Value on Social Media

What also eludes an awful lot of content creators, is the notion that they need to provide value through their social media as well.

Many businesses are still stuck in old ways of thinking and specifically, they are still infatuated with the idea that marketing is something you do *at* someone.

That is to say that they are creating adverts or messages that they show to as many people as they can to raise brand awareness and to increase their chances of buying from them.

But the world has changed thanks to the web. This kind of traditionally marketing was useful in a time when users were limited about the information and entertainment they could get.

Once upon a time, the only way we could learn about a topic or be entertained for an evening was to watch a program on TV or to read a magazine. When adverts would punctuate those pages or be placed in between our scheduled programs, we had no option but to view them.

Thus, the marketing message would end up sinking in and we'd learn about certain brands more than others.

What was how things worked back then. Today though, thanks to the internet, we have more agency than ever before when it comes to how we get our information and entertainment. We're not *forced* to view any message that we don't want to.

And smart marketing has evolved to respond to this. Now the marketing has to offer something *in return*. Hence content marketing, hence video marketing and hence social media.

The outdated way of using social media then, is to post lots of promotional messages and images. Say a company sold an EPOS system to businesses, it might simply post messages like 'check out the latest features for our EPOS solution' or 'businesses can increase turnover and customer satisfaction by using our EPOS system'.

(An EPOS system is an 'electronic point of sale' – software to run a till. Not very interesting!)

Outdated yes, but this is still what you see a *lot* of businesses doing, a *lot* of the time.

Now ask yourself: who is this for? What purpose does this serve from the user's perspective? The people following you on social media will either:

- a) Already have your EPOS system and thus gain nothing from being told how great it is
- b) Not have your EPOS system, already have heard of it, and have no real interest in using it

So, in other words, your messages serve *zero* purpose. Those messages won't be seen by people unless they already follow you *unless* someone shares them. And why would anyone share them?

The Better Alternative

So, what might a better strategy be for the same business?

Well, let's say that you create a Facebook page and a Twitter account aimed specifically at small businesses. Through this page, you then share lots of useful tips and information, all explaining how they can optimize their business, improve customer satisfaction, get around budget limitations etc.

You build an active community so that small business owners can discuss the topic of business and you share lengthy posts that provide *true* insight into the operations of successful small businesses.

Then, every now and then, you also share a more marketing oriented post. People will now want to keep reading your social media account and maybe even share your posts because they're offering *genuine* value. Now they're a captive audience and when you come to promote

what you're selling, you'll have them (hopefully) eating out of your hands.

Or how about a Pinterest board where you share ideas for home decors? On this page, you could post all sorts of unique hacks and tricks that can make a room look more beautiful.

Homeowners and those that just have an interest in interior design might sign up and start following you.

And again, every now and then, you could post an idea that includes your own products – thereby subtly marketing to that audience in exchange for providing all those good ideas. There's a give and take here and it's a much more demographic and powerful way of marketing.

Want to know if you're doing this right? Then ask yourself this: if you shut down your social media account tomorrow, would anyone care? If they'd genuinely be sad and feel like a useful service is now missing from their lives, then congratulations, you're providing value!

If no one would notice and many people would in fact benefit from having a less spammy feed... well then you're approaching your marketing the wrong way and you need a serious rethink!

Want a little rule to remember how you should approach this? We'll be talking about this more in future posts but for now remember the '1 in 7 rule'. This is a rule that simply states that one in every seven of your posts should be explicitly marketing whatever your product or service is. The other six should all be offering value in other ways – though still on-topic.

But What is Value?

But let's take a break for a moment and get slightly philosophical. What is value anyway?

This is an important topic to consider. So far, you already know that your social media accounts need to be as valuable as possible. We're no longer going to be using every single post to shout about how great our products are!

So now you're trying to add value instead and only occasionally marketing. Bit step up! But trying and doing are two different things. This will only be effective if you are actually *successful* in providing that value as you intend.

So, what is value?

A simple way to look at this, is to state that 'value' comes from improving people's lives. You have provided value if that person's life is now in some way better than it was before – even if that's just for a fleeting moment (as might be the case if you make something funny).

The longer-lasting the effect is, and the more people you can affect, the more value you're providing.

But this is again where a lot of people go wrong: their content isn't really offering any actual value. It's just masquerading as value!

I have my sights set squarely on those 'nothing' posts and titles. These are the articles and the blog posts that do nothing other than provide tired, derivative advice. The same goes for social media posts.

Here's an example:

"How to Get Six Pack Abs!"

This article then offers tips on different sit up variations, states that you should go for long runs and recommends eating fewer calories.

Maybe it's even worse than that and it actually offers *inaccurate* advice (in this case, that might be to suggest that you can 'target' fat loss to lose it only from your abdomen).

Either way, you now have an article that's either tired and offering the same thing as 100 articles or that is inaccurate. Either way, this hasn't made someone's life better – it's made it worse. You've just *wasted their time* telling them things they already know.

The same goes for 'Top 5 SEO Mistakes'. Come on, you're better than that! We've all *read* that article already.

So, what you need to offer instead is something else. Something *imaginative*. Something that is really interesting and unique.

I watched a video from Athlean X recently that told me that many people do sit ups incorrectly because they bend *at the waist*. This means that they're actually using their hip flexors more than their abs. In order for the abs to really be targeted, you need to *roll* your mid section and actually fold *at the stomach* in the area you're trying focus on.

The video was called something like 'This one tip can improve your ab workouts 10-fold'.

That sounds like a clickbait article. It's interesting, it's unique and it promises to improve your life *so you click it*. But when you watch it, it actually *does* tell you something completely unique and useful.

That is fantastic because the next time I see a post from Athlean-X, I'm far more likely to actually click on it. And not only that, but if I learn that Athlean-X has a new product out, then I'll consider buying it because I've seen that the channel is *capable* of offering value.

In the marketing niche, I recently read an article comparing sales funnels to landing pages that work on their own. The idea behind the article was to see which was the most useful and whether a complex funnel was really necessary.

That's *much* more interesting than just another post on 'Top SEO Tips'.

So, what's the difference here? The difference is uniqueness. The writers/presenters have spotted a topic that hasn't been covered before, they've come up with a unique angle, or they've researched a lesser known tip. Either way, they can then provide something that someone else doesn't know and THAT is what creates value.

And THAT is what makes you want to buy from them again and to keep engaging with their channel.

And the best way to do that? That's to really care about your brand. Really know and love the niche that you're in and if you hire writers – make sure that they fully understand the niche too.

Don't just create generic content without giving it your full attention and then expect to sell. You won't.

Write about something your passionate about, in a unique and interesting voice and *then* you'll become an influencer.

— SOCIAL MARKETING —

ADVANTAGE



GUIDE 6:

SOCIAL FOLLOWER QUALITY
TRUMPS QUANTITY

Social Follower Quality Trumps Quantity

What is your objective with your social media campaign?

A lot of individuals and companies alike (especially the companies!) will answer this by pointing to a number or some kind of chart or graph. In other words, they have quantitative goals which involve growing followers and growing influence over time.

That sounds like a good aim. It is useful to have a yard stick with which to measure your success.

But it's also entirely misguided.

What's much more important is the *quality* of your social followers. And I'm not talking about good genetic stock here!

This is a very important concept to understand, so let's dive a little deeper into what that means.

What is a Quality Follower?

A high quality follower is a follower who is engaged, who is targeted and who would describe themselves as a 'fan' of your brand.

In fact, one of the best known books on marketing and branding is *1,000 True Fans*, which suggests that as soon as you get 1,000 *real* fans – loyal followers – your brand has made it.

And the subtext here is that having a million followers who don't care about you, is worth pretty much nothing.

So why is this?

Well, let's consider what it would mean to have an army of highly engaged fans for a moment. These high quality followers would be eager to hear more from you.

They are genuine fans remember, and so they're highly excited to read your blog posts, they want to see your next YouTube video and they can't wait to hear your podcast.

These are the kinds of people that will actively seek out the content you put out, rather than needing to have it stuffed down their throats – just like you probably actively seek out new episodes of your favorite TV shows.

So, if you have 1,000 true fans, then that means 1,000 views guaranteed for every single one of your new videos and 1,000 people viewing every single one of your blog posts and your social media posts.

That also means some guaranteed profit from every single piece of content you put out.

What's more important, is that a true fan will be likely to click 'like' on each of your posts on social media. Now, your Facebook posts will be seen by roughly 1,000 x the number of people in these viewers' networks. That's a pretty big boost.

And not only will the link be seen, but it will also be talked about and those contacts will see that their friend recommends your site as something that they should check out – which makes a huge difference.

Now imagine that you want to sell a product. Or imagine that you go onto Patreon – a site where you ask for donations for your work. Your average visitor is *not* going to be willing to pay for you to keep doing what you love doing!

But someone who absolutely loves your brand and who can't get enough of your content will – especially if they get to see their name in your next post or video as a thanks.

On top of all this, you'll also find that true fans buy your products. Of course, they do – they have been won over by the quality of the work you're putting out and so they more than anyone will be willing to buy *more* of it!

You have a bottomless revenue stream – guaranteed sales for pretty much any product you put out – and your own, free marketing agency that is shouting about every single thing that you do and that is making sure that the world hears about your incredible brand! As you can imagine, this does make rather a difference!

The Alternative

Now imagine the alternative: having an account with 10,000 completely *unengaged* fans. I've actually experienced this seeing as I had a YouTube account that was highly successful when I first launched it but which then got kind of *abandoned* seeing as I didn't have time for it.

So when I came back to revive it, I still had the followers but they had forgotten all about me and were not at all engaged!

Posts that I put out would get 10 or 30 views at first. 10,000 subscribers with 10 or 30 views...

And unfortunately, *many* businesses find themselves in this exact position because they essentially trick people into following them (with a free gift or promotion, or even by forcing them to sign up) and then they do nothing but advertise to them.

The subscribers that are still there are only there because they haven't been motivated enough to click 'Unfollow'! This is worse than useless because not only are you not making any impact, but you're also *completely* skewing your data and making it unusable.

How to Create High Quality Followers

So now you know why you need high quality followers, the next question is how you go about making that happen.

There are several steps and strategies to that end...

Target Your Followers: The first thing to make sure you are doing is targeting your followers to begin with. We've talked about this in previous reports so to keep things brief, the general idea is that not all followers are made equal.

You want to get people on board who fit your 'buyer persona' and your ideal customer. That means they should be a certain age, sex, gender and have specific interests.

There are lots of ways you do this. It comes down partly to how you market yourself and it comes down partly to where you are marketing. Look for the 'route to market' – the place where your ideal customers congregate.

That could be an online forum, or it could be a real-world club that you can attend and speak to the owner of.

Have a Great Brand: This is one of THE most important things for your social media campaign as well as for your success in business as a whole.

Having a great brand is the difference between being a corporate, dry and unexciting business, versus being a company that is exciting, passionate and something that people want to get behind.

The reason that people are so rabid about Apple has little to do with the technology (although this helps, of course!) and has a lot more to do with the branding and the marketing. It's what Apple *stands for* that matters to people, because they want to stand for that too!

People are excited about Apple because it represents artistry, free thinking, premium quality and thinking differently. These are all qualities that people want to express and so getting behind Apple is a great way to do that.

You can see the same thing with certain websites. These include the likes of T-Nation. T-Nation is a website for people who are seriously into strength training. It has your usual fitness and muscle building articles but also has a lot of content about the culture of weight lifting and life as being someone very strong.

It talks about strong supplements and in short, it certainly is not for everyone. But that's fine, because the 'T-Nation' that do follow the site are incredibly dedicated. It speaks to *them*.

If your website is called 'GetASixPack.net' and the only thing you stand for is trying to make money from ads, then don't expect people to get excited!

Create a Sense of Belonging: Notice how I referred to fans of T-Nation as *the* T-Nation just then? There are many other people and brands that do this. They create a collective noun for their fans and this then gives those fans a sense of belonging and importance.

Suddenly, they are no longer passive users or visitors – they are people who actually *belong* to that brand. They are a part of it. It is theirs.

You can further this by giving away merchandise. Giving away t-shirts with your logo printed on it has obvious marketing benefits but what it *also* does is to subtly influence the psychology of people who wear those shirts. Suddenly, they are part of an army of followers or fans.

Likewise, asking for money on Patreon can actually help this too. Believe it or not, asking for money can *boost* your status because the people funding your activities are now part-owners of your brand in a sense. This sense of ownership makes a massive difference.

You can also encourage people to follow your social media this way too. Instead of 'click here to follow', try something like 'click here to become a VIP'.

Interact: Another *very* important tip is to make sure that you are interacting with your fans. This is something that social media is perfect for, but which a lot of creators and brands simply forget to do.

If you just posted a picture to Instagram and someone posts a comment saying that it's fantastic and they're your biggest fan, what do you do? A

shocking number of users do *nothing* because answering involves a bit too much work. It's hard to know what to say back.

But this is essentially *throwing away* one of your *most valuable assets*. A very small percentage of people will *actually comment* on your content. If someone does, it suggests they are engaged with social media and very interested in your brand. In turn, that means they have potential to become a top fan.

If you ignore them, then eventually they are going to get tired and fed up. It's normal to an extent but if post after post goes unanswered, then it is hard not to eventually start taking that personally!

But if you simply write back and say 'thanks', suddenly that person knows you're there and knows you're listening.

This can make a massive psychological difference and it's something that you should definitely put the time into doing.

If someone messages you with a long list of questions, it can involve a fair investment of time to answer. But if you do, that user will now feel indebted to you – they will feel as though they know you – and they will be much more likely to like and share your posts in future.

And better yet, don't wait for them to interact with you – interact with them! Can you imagine how amazing it would feel if a brand that you know and love commented on one of your pictures, unprompted, and said it looked amazing?

Think of this as a relationship. And like any relationships, there must be give and take.

Build Real Relationships: Which takes us to the final point: build real relationships. If you can create a core legion of followers, then that passion will spread and that will lead to much more engagement with the *rest* of your followers.

That means it is highly worth investing some time to build some great relationships that will drive your brand onwards and upwards.

And one of the best ways you can accomplish *this*, is to spend some time on an online community. Some of the biggest names on the web started out this way. You spend time in the community and don't do anything to promote yourself.

What you *do* do, is make friends with other users, help them out where possible by answering questions and be supportive and helpful wherever possible.

At the same time, you demonstrate your expertise and your knowledge and you talk about your projects. Only then, do you eventually reveal that you have your own brand/site/product and then invite them to check to it out.

What you'll find is that this leads to a massive amount of visitors, of sharing, of likes and of support as those people that you've developed *genuine relationships* with are eager to not only see what you've created but also to help out.

And for that matter – don't forget your real world relationships either!

Social media platforms like Facebook are originally for fostering your real-world networks and that means that you can reach out to old school

friends, work colleagues and even family in order to support you and spread the word.

You'll never gain a bigger fan than your own Mum!

— SOCIAL MARKETING —

ADVANTAGE



GUIDE 7:

IMPLEMENT A MARKETING SCHEDULE
THAT WORKS

Implement A Marketing Schedule That Works

Knowing what you need to do to thrive on social media is just part of the story.

The other part of the story? Well that is actually *doing* it.

This might sound a bit redundant but consider just how many businesses will come up with a social media marketing strategy and begin with the very best of intentions. They genuinely intend on posting on a regular basis to Instagram and Twitter and building their following over time.

But then what happens is that life gets in the way. This is especially problematic for those smaller, one-man-band operations.

If you're an entrepreneur who is looking to promote themselves on social media, then you might have a plan to post a certain amount of images, written posts, links and videos per week or even per day.

While this is admirable, if you overshoot what's possible, then you will potentially end giving up on the attempt entirely – and this certainly isn't a positive thing!

The same goes for publishing to your website in general, and the same goes for vlogging etc.

It's all about finding a balance that works for you and the most important thing through all of this, is that your schedule is *consistent*.

Social media, blogs and vlogs are all most successful when visitors feel that they can rely on your content to arrive at a set time and set date, frequently.

It's better to post regularly once a week, than it is to *attempt* to post ten times a day, burn out in the first few days and then give up entirely!

As well as finding the balance though, you can also use a few optimization tricks and process fixes to speed things up. Let's take a look at how you can optimize your social media campaign.

The Essentials

Let's start by looking at the essentials – the bare minimum that you should be doing.

While it's best to be present on as many social media platforms as possible, the reality is that this can take up a huge amount of time.

At the very least though, you should be on the three biggest platforms. Those are:

- Facebook
- Instagram
- Twitter

If you have those three covered, then you should be able to reach the biggest cross section of your audience possible. Facebook alone covers 2 billion people, which is a huge proportion of the population!

You'll need to post to each of these accounts at least once a day. But where possible, it is *highly* advisable that you post more frequently and aim for twice a day if possible. Three times a day? That's even better.

As for what you'll be posting, you'll of course run out of content fairly quickly if you try to post things from your own site each time.

So, you might want to consider making your posts a mixture of:

- Humorous/useful observations
- Insights from your day (while staying relevant as possible)
- Niche/industry news
- Links to other articles or posts that you found interesting – especially if these are channels you'd like to work with in future
- Promotions regarding partners
- Occasional promos for your own content
- Old posts that you published previously
- Images or posts about topical hashtags
- Responses to questions or comments
- Questions or comments of your own, for other people
- Polls, questionnaires etc.
- Opinion
- Tips and tricks

As you can see, you should have plenty to be dealing with.

But also keep in mind this little rule:

Only one in second of your posts should be purely promotional. We've talked about this in several of these reports, but the key is to offer value and then to market under the radar.

To offer enough value that your audience feels that their time spent on your site has been worthwhile, you need to make sure that you are posting regularly about things that interest them.

They *don't* want to be inundated with ham-fisted marketing attempts!

Note that this is easier for people selling their own products versus affiliate marketers. Your followers will be significantly more forgiving if the product is your own!

So thus far you have 1-3 posts across three social media platforms a day. These will each be just a couple of sentences long. Let's say that's an average of 6 posts daily, several of which can be the same post across different channels.

So, let's say 4 posts daily. Not too bad. And that's about 10 sentences daily, which should equate to around 150-200 words. Minimum.

One of the hardest parts of this is going to be sharing your own content. This means you need to *make* your own content and that is going to take significantly more time than posing a humorous aside.

How often should you share your own content? That depends on the nature of your brand and your blog and how you intend on getting the majority of your traffic.

Note that content marketing is crucial for your SEO and also for building brand loyalty and authority.

The best scenario though for most people will be that they post a minimum of twice per week. If you can only manage once, then that is okay too, but your channel will grow significantly more quickly if you post twice a week.

And those posts need to be SEO optimized, well-written, engaging and genuinely interesting and valuable to your readers. That's a tall order for sure.

The ideal *length* for each post? I'm sorry to say that that is a rather large 1,800 words according to most estimates. But seeing as we're going with the minimum here, that minimum is 800 words.

The least you are going to get away with then and still see significant growth, is one post of 800 words per week and 3 social media posts daily on the three big platforms.

The 'ideal minimum' is closer to 4 unique posts daily, shared out over the three big social media platforms, with one 1,800 word post per week.

Now, if you want extra bonus credit – and trust me you do – then one of the *very best things* you can do for your marketing is to add a video component.

There are countless advantages to video marketing when it comes to making yourself known online, which we won't go into in depth here.

Suffice to say that video will:

- Raise your profile by looking like something that an amateur could not create. A video with high production values takes skill, it takes time and it takes software and equipment. Suddenly, you

organization becomes something that couldn't possibly be run by a kid in their Mum's basement.

- Massively enhance engagement. One of the awesome things about video is that it instantly captures our attention. There is movement, there is music, there is spoken word and all of this is very difficult to turn away from even compared with good writing.
- Increase conversions. Not only is video incredibly effective at getting people to watch, it is also very good at getting those same people to go and click 'buy'. That's because video has the potential to emote and persuade face-to-face, which written content just can't do. They can see you right there on the screen appealing to them, which is very different from reading some statically written persuasive writing.

Video lets your visitors get to know you, it stands out in a sea of social media and it is powerfully persuasive and trust building. You can also share video either through social media directly by posting to your pages, or you can

So now that's an ideal minimum of 4 unique posts daily, shared out over the three big social media platforms, with one 1,800 word post per week. On top of that, one video per fortnight and one live event per fortnight.

This is a small amount of work but it has still added up rather! And that means you're looking at spending the best part of a working day per week on all this, or slightly less if you're fast. And ideally you'd do more!

So, what is the solution?

Optimizing Your Schedule

Our goal then is to optimize this schedule, to find ways to get more done in less time and to outsource etc. where possible.

I will say, as a rule of thumb, be wary of outsourcing your writing and content. If you *do*, then make certain that the writer you hire is someone who knows the subject matter intimately and is genuinely passionate about it.

It is not enough to simply find someone who is good at writing. If you are going to have people coming back to your site and reading it because they're getting great information, then the information you offer needs to be new, it needs to be unique and it needs to really stand out.

It is *not* enough to simply post 'well written' posts that anyone could research themselves.

So, writing is something that will cost you one way or another. But we can speed up and optimize the rest.

For instance, if you are going to make a video, then there is nothing to say this has to be expertly produced. In fact, if you film something on a smartphone or a cheaper mirrorless camera, you can aim for an intentional 'vlogging' effect.

Use a lapel mic for low-cost, high-quality audio and then, if you want some added flourish, hire a professional editor to put it all together and get it to look great.

Keep videos short – 4 minutes is suggested to be the optimum length by YouTube and in this case, there is no real advantage to going longer.

Run over your time? Then consider splitting your content into several shorter videos.

As for social media posts, you should make sure that it is as easy as possible to share things through all the major platforms.

That means that you should have the apps ready and signed into your business accounts on your smartphone – so sharing something to Instagram is as easy as pointing and shooting the camera. Then find times during the day when you know you'll have the opportunity to do that.

You will naturally gravitate to one social platform more than the others depending on your personal preferences and workflow. Any of these can work wonders – Arnold Schwarzenegger for instance is highly successful on Snapchat. Don't fight this – as long as the audience is there – and then make this your 'primary' social media platform.

Post to this one most regularly, put the most work in here and let the others follow.

Fortunately, there are some easy tools to help you do this. Most social media platforms for instance now allow you to easily share to other channels relatively easily. You only have to tick a button on Instagram for instance and your posts will be shared on Twitter as well.

And for those accounts that don't offer this privilege, try using additional tools such as IFTTT. IFTTT stands for 'If This, Then That' and allows you to set up triggers and responses across your social media.

For instance, you can make it so that any content you share with a *specific hashtag* on Twitter, ends up on Facebook.

One last tip: use a tool like buffer. Buffer is an app that allows you to schedule posts. This means you can set up a large number of social media posts that aren't 'time sensitive' and then have them post automatically and intermittently.

As for sharing content – keep in mind that the links you post don't all need to be new! There's nothing wrong with sharing an old post from your site.

And actually, you can schedule WordPress posts as well. One of the best tips I can give you is to take a week off of everything and to spend this developing some excellent content that you can then drip feed for weeks and months to come.

One last thing? Love your subject matter and love what you do. It's the only way you'll be able to keep up this kind of output.

— SOCIAL MARKETING —

ADVANTAGE



GUIDE 8:

TRACK, TEST AND IMPROVE

Track, Test and Improve

So, you've spent some time thinking about how you can create the perfect brand to promote on social media. You've made a logo and come up with your tagline and your mission statement, you've set up your social media accounts and you've come up with a schedule for posting new content that seems to be working.

And no you haven't forgotten! You're even remembering to interact with your audience, to comment on their posts and to respond to their messages. You're seeing growth and improvement and you're pretty happy with how it's all going.

Is that it?

Not quite. There's just *one more* aspect to consider if you want to have the very best social media marketing campaign and if you want to accelerate your growth as much as possible. And that's the data. The analytics. Or as Facebook calls it, the 'Insights'.

These are powerful tools that these social accounts give you to help grow your accounts even more efficiently and if you miss out on using them, it will be at your own peril. Read on then and we'll look at some of the ways that you can use this to grow your account.

Why Analytics Matter

Analytics basically give you some actionable data regarding your content and some feedback regarding what is working and what's not working and that in turn allows you to do more of what *is* successful and less of what isn't.

This is powerful because it means that if you carefully watch your stats and look at how your posts perform, you can effectively evolve to meet what your audience wants. Over time, your posts will improve in quality and effectiveness and you'll do less of what isn't working.

That means that gradually, you should be moving to a point where *all* your posts are immensely successful. Or at least that's the idea.

If you've never looked at your analytics before, then you might be in a position where 95% of your posts have had no real interaction but *one* thing you did blew up and was massive. You *could* be emulating that one thing every single time and thus growing your account at twice the rate... and yet you're not.

And this isn't just hypothetical: I speak from experience here!

I actually was using IFTTT – a very powerful and certainly very useful tool – in order to automatically share my content from YouTube to my Facebook page.

Problem is that it was never getting any real response. One time I shared the link myself and it had 10x the amount of engagement. Why? Because the way the video was presented in the feed was much different and was inherently more engaging.

For ages I never bothered to log into my analytics so I was none the wiser. The one day I saw this was the case and recognized the error of my ways! The moral of this story? Check your analytics!

How to Get Started

There are a plethora of apps and tools you can find online or download that will provide you with extra details and analytics and frankly, the more data you can collect the better.

However, for the sake of just illustrating the point, we'll look at the two most popular analytics tools for social media: the two built in options.

Facebook Page Insights

The first is Facebook Page Insights. To get started, head on over to your Facebook page and then look at the tabs along the top. You'll see Page, Inbox, Notifications and *Insights* (the last one on the list is Publishing Tools).

Insights is what we're interested in here of course, so click on that and you'll be greeted initially by your page summary. Here you can see the number of actions on the page, the number of page views, the number of page previews, the page likes, the reach, the post engagements, the videos and the page followers.

This is mainly useful for tracking growth more than anything else and if you click on any of these elements, then you'll be greeted by a line chart that will chart the growth or decline of your page.

Another useful aspect though, is that you can look at who viewed your page by gender, by section, by country, by city and by device. This is all useful information, as it will allow you to see where the most of your traffic is coming from.

Perhaps most of your audience are male, perhaps most of them are female. Perhaps they largely come from Google, or perhaps they mostly come from your website.

This is all useful information because it allows you to gain more insight (hence the name!) regarding your traffic, what they're interested in and how you're acquiring them.

From there, you can then make sure you do more of what is working and that you cater your content for the audience actually viewing it.

While tracking the number of page views or likes might be an interesting way to track your improvement over time, what would actually be a more useful statistic to follow would be your post engagement and your reach.

The reach tells you how many people have *seen* your posts. That is important because it gives you an idea of just how many people you're capable of promoting to or interacting with in a given week.

Post engagement meanwhile tells you how many people have liked, commented or reacted to your posts. This is far *more* useful because it allows you to see whether your posts are actually having any impact on the audience.

It's not enough that your content simply be seen – you need people to click on it, to share it or to make comments.

Not only can you see whether or not this is happening but you can also see whether it is increasing or decreasing over time.

While this is all very useful though, it ultimately leaves you guessing. You are left to look at the spikes and troughs in your traffic and to try and identify what could have occurred at the same time to make those occur.

Better yet then, is to scroll down slightly and to look at your posts themselves. You can see your five most recent posts at a glance and then you can click to get more information from other posts.

Next to each, you'll be able to see the reach and you'll be able to see the engagement. Engagement in this case tells you about the comments, the clicks and the likes.

So, this now helps you to get a little more granular. No longer are you looking at a general increase in numbers over time but you're looking at how people reacted to *specific* posts that you made and you're looking at where all that growth and improvement has come from. This is where you can really see what is working and what's not.

What kind of content is your audience hungry for?

What is getting the most engagement?

What *hasn't* worked?

And finally, head down the bottom of the page to find the 'pages to watch'. This will give you a selection of great pages to keep your eye on that are similar to yours.

This is a very useful tool indeed, as it allows you to see what is working for other brands and then perhaps emulate them if appropriate.

Twitter Analytics

Twitter Analytics has many of the same features but dressed up somewhat differently and with different additional tools and elements to look out for.

This is a summary for the month rather than the week. Along the top, you can see how many tweets you posted and how many impressions these tweets got.

'Impressions' tells you how many times the tweets were shown on a page or screen and that in turn means that they're gaining exposure.

Profile visits does what it says on the tin and tells you how many people have been to your profile page. Mentions tells you how many times someone used '@' to tag you in a post. And your followers here is your total number rather than a change.

Next to all these stats though, you'll be able to see how this compares with what happened one month ago and that lets you see which way things are moving.

What's more interesting is the 'Tweet Highlights'. For instance, the 'Top Tweet' will be the Tweet with the most impressions. And if you click on 'Tweet Activity' you can actually see how many Tweets each of your posts got.

What you'll find is that a post being liked or shared by a bigger brand can make a massive impact to your Tweet's success and these will be the Tweets that do the best.

You can also see here the number of engagements and the engagement rate. This tells you a little bit more about how people are actually interacting with each Tweet.

Back to the main analytics page, you'll also see your top media Tweet and you'll see your top follower. Top follower is a *very* useful thing to know.

This tells you who is following your account who has a big following themselves and that in turn lets you know who you can potentially approach for a shoutout.

This is powerful because very often, creators will try to reach big influencers and approach them to ask if they can get promoted. What happens, is that they tend to get ignored!

But as this section of your analytics will show you, you actually have influencers among your followers! They have the reach *and* they're already a fan... so reach out to them or target them with your future messages!

You can also click here to see 'audience insights' which will tell you the interests, the age range, the gender and more of your followers.

You can see the region too and again, all this will help you to identify the best kind of content in terms of what will get the best responses from people.

Running Tests

This is all good and well and simply knowing how to use these dashboards will help you get a much better idea of what's working and what isn't in your campaign.

However, if you want even more benefit from this section, then you also need to run tests. In other words, don't just passively watch data but instead try changing things up to see what works and what doesn't.

In fact, you can try using something called a 'split test'. This means you're going to release one version of a post written in a certain way or presented in a certain way, then you're going to release another that is formed slightly different.

You then look to see which gets the best engagement, the most impressions etc. and this will tell you which style you would do well to adopt moving forward!

Do be wary of this though, as a sample of one is not really enough. In other words, you need to run many more experiments to be confident that this wasn't just a coincidence.

That means that before you draw conclusions you should post a few more and see if the trend holds true. You can still never be certain but it will definitely be *more* likely that this is the case with each successful test.

And this is something to be wary of in general. Consider the fact that your engagement can't entirely be whittled down to numbers. There is qualitative difference looking at one social media comment versus another.

Not only that, but if you only concentrate on chasing numbers, it can be easy to forget the human element and to forget the most important thing: creating quality content that adds value and that you're passionate about.

Data in itself is great but it's important that it doesn't dictate your entire campaign. As with everything we've looked at here, this is just one part of a highly intricate puzzle.