



Build an Effective **SOCIAL MARKETING STRATEGY**

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Social Media is big and only getting bigger. If you are not marketing on it, you are likely missing a large chunk of your target audiences. For marketers, the potential to grow their business via social media channels is endless. Every company, big or small, young or established, needs to have an active presence on social media. It is now inexcusable for any business that wants to thrive to not be socializing!

We are being exposed to more and more social advertisements. But, before diving into paid ads, it is important to build out your social media channels with quality content, eye-catching visuals and prompt customer response. Once you optimize your social media channels for success, you will not only establish and grow brand recognition, but, improve customer relationships and gain qualified leads (ideally all three).

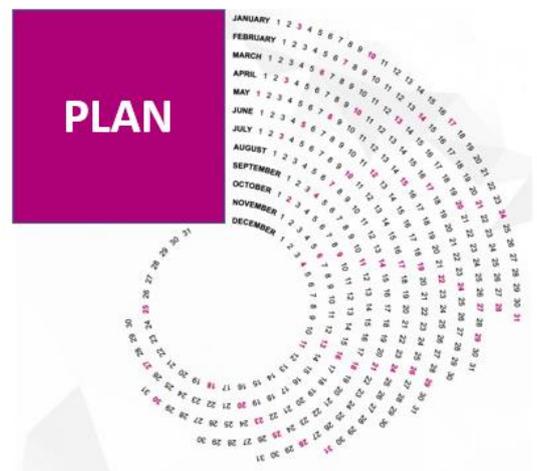
Here are **eleven** social media strategies to take control of your social media channels and give them a much needed facelift.

Social Media Marketing Strategy #1: Create a plan & stick to it

If you have no execution strategy, your content is likely going to fall through the cracks. Set a limit on how many posts you have to publish per day. This number can be adjusted as needed, but having a number you have to hit, even something as small as 1 post per day, gives you a benchmark and a goal at the very least.

Here is a suggestion: Investigate how often your competitors are posting and conduct industry research to see the ideal amount of content to publish per day on each channel. You want to be active, but not overly active.

Compile all content in an easy-to-read editorial calendar. Google Excel Docs is a good place to start. Plan ahead, but continue making additions as necessary, for example if a great PR hit is published cover this in a timely manner even it was not on your original posting schedule. Look into social media management platforms, like TweetDeck, Hootsuite, Buffer, and Sprout Social, to help schedule posts ahead of time, monitor and manage your social feeds, and access performance analytics.



Social Media Marketing Strategy #2: Treat each channel as an individual entity

Each social media channel needs to be treated as a separate entity. There can be content that is spread across all channels. For example, if your business was recently acquired by a global company, this is likely news you want to share across the board, but, you should adjust your strategy depending on the audience for the particular channel.



- Do not ignore any comment posted to your account on social, whether stellar or critical. No need to create brand detractors!

Social Media Marketing Strategy #4: Embrace mishaps

We are humans, so mistakes are unavoidable. This is especially true when it comes to the fast-paced world of social media. Rather than flat out ignoring these hiccups, embrace them. Do not delete the post, as it has already been published and followers are more likely to notice if you are continuously re-posting. For mistakes like product error, link error etc. you'll want to proactively respond in an apologetic, actionable manner, and send out content from your social accounts, so your target audience are aware.

Social Media Marketing Strategy #5: Track & Talk!



Set aside time to review metrics that are important to your business on a monthly basis (preferably the first day of the month). Here are some stats to focus on: number of posts, follower growth, clicks to your site/products, page views, post likes or shares, impressions, etc. Look at each channel separately, and compare to your largest competitors to get a sense on how you're matching up (or how you're **crushing** them!).

A lot can be tracked using free social media tools like bit.ly, Google Analytics, and Hootsuite. Diving in to see which content received the most clicks, shares, etc. will show you what to repurpose in the future. Various teams like client services and sales might have stellar ideas for social since they are the people who communicate with prospects and customers on a daily basis. Taking a step back to brainstorm and re-evaluate your strategy can drastically improve your social efforts.

Follow the Social Media Rule of Thirds.

- 1/3 of your social content promotes your business, converts readers, and generates profit.
- 1/3 of your social content should surface and share ideas, stories or insights from thought leaders in your industry or like-minded businesses.
- 1/3 of your social content should be based on personal interactions and build your personal brand.

Social Media Marketing Strategy #6: Build a Community rather than a number of Followers

Having 10,000+ followers is noteworthy, but, at the end of the day it does not matter how many followers you have if they are not interacting and paying attention to your content. What can be done to build a community and increase engagement with your current and potential followers?

- **Insert some personality, humor, and spunk into your brand**
Social Media has the word "social" in it for a reason. Yes, some use platforms like LinkedIn and Twitter to gather industry-related or world news, but, often it's used for entertainment. Your marketing messages need to adjust accordingly where business message should go hand in hand with some catchy humorous tags. The posts should be adorable, humorous and relatable. This will





not only generate massive amount of interactions and shares, but at the same time, establishes brand authority gaining brand awareness, followers, leads, and customers.

- **Converse directly with your followers**

Literally have a conversation with them, retweet them, like, share and comment on their posts, and directly ask them to interact with your content. To conclude, when posting to your social channels think outside of the box and devise clever ways to get your audience to interact with your brand.

Social Media Marketing Strategy #7: Create powerful social media movements across all social channels



If you want your audience to stay engaged, you need to be engaging. One great way to do this is to create social campaigns that run across all your social platforms. The important thing to note here is that anyone can run a contest or create a social campaign, so you need to make yours stand out by adding a charitable, inspirational, or emotional component. Any element that pulls at the heart strings works well. If your company already is involved with volunteer work, which many are, then this is one great way to inspire and engage your followers.

- **Telling a powerful story**

A story in an inspirational and intriguing way, which encourages the viewer to click. After following the link the viewer is then directed to the full story.

Think of ways you can use your social channels to tell motivational stories to your viewers. For example, if you are selling a software, product or service, you could share stories from your happiest clients on your blog and then create a social campaign with a unique slogan and hashtag to promote and create a movement around their stories.

- **Brand your movement with a unique name and hashtags**

Branding your movement will make it memorable and stick out in the mind of your followers. Take time to brainstorm actionable ideas that will get followers involved, whether that be by posting photos and using your hashtag to group them, running a contest, or throwing events run by your company. Use the inspirational aspect of stay connected, new year's resolutions, healthy living, or whichever angle you believe your customers would gravitate towards. Test out a few hashtags, find the one that resonates best, and brand your movement by announcing it on your blog and social channels.

Social Media Marketing Strategy #8: Experiment with Facebook Advertisements

There are several unique targeting methods giving you options to find your niche audience and advertise. **Retargeting** has become commonplace in the world of digital advertising. Retargeting is also an important key to the content marketing mix. You can drive traffic to editorial content, cookie and then, retarget with relevant yet actionable marketing messages.





Take the following four steps to socially connect with your influencers.

Make a thorough list of influencers and organize them into a spreadsheet with columns linking to each of their social profiles.

Favorite, like, comment, and re-share their content: Don't favorite/like everything they post – that's too obvious. You need to play somewhat hard to get to show that your likes are genuine rather than spammy. Try to like and favorite a few times per week and comment when you have something educational and valuable to say.

Tweet at them: This strategy works very well especially when asking industry related questions. They'll be flattered that you thought of them and consider them to be a valuable resource.

Use the same hashtags: This way when they're reviewing their hashtag feeds they'll see your content, which will hopefully spark their interest.

Social Media Marketing Strategy #11: Share Trending Content



There needs to be a balance between marketing your brand, sharing stories and news from other valuable resources. Focus on a balance between sharing promotional content, interacting with your followers and influencers, and sharing other useful and entertaining content. The key word here is "other," and not everything.

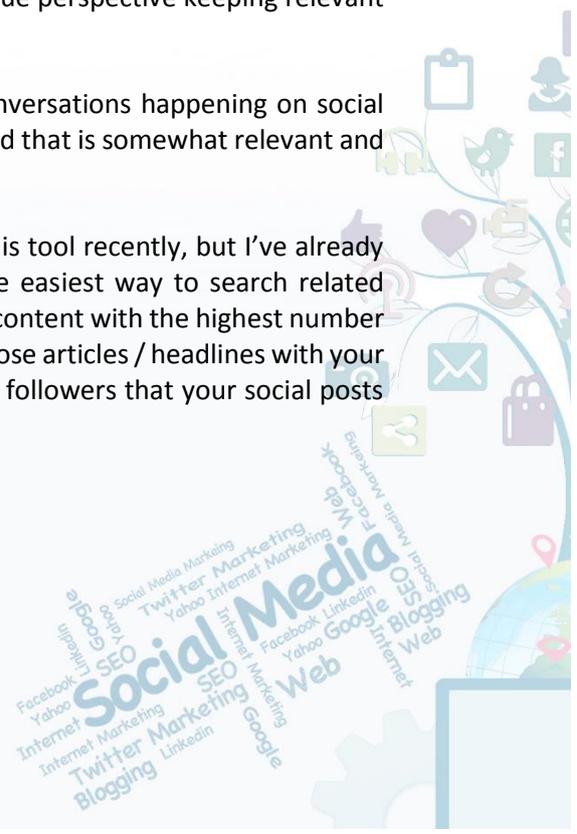
Follow these suggestions to easily determine what content is share-worthy.

Look for viral videos on YouTube: Funny marketing talks, inspirational moments and re-share with your own unique spin.

Scan the news for the highest covered media stories and add a unique perspective keeping relevant to your brand and post it.

Follow & use trending hashtags to add your voice to the larger conversations happening on social media. For example, on Twitter you can see "#Trends". Choose a trend that is somewhat relevant and join the conversation like the social commerce website.

Use Buzzsumo to find content that resonates, I just started using this tool recently, but I've already added it to my bookmark bar and am completely addicted. It's the easiest way to search related industry news sites and blogs, keywords, influencers, etc. to find the content with the highest number of social shares. Study the headlines that were shared and re-share those articles / headlines with your followers. This will continue the train of sharing, but also show your followers that your social posts are intriguing and follow-worthy.



Key Takeaways

- Create a plan and treat each channel as an individual entity
- Go above & beyond in customer service, embrace mishaps
- Build a community and inspire action
- Experiment with Facebook ads and Twitter chats
- Join the conversation, bond with your influencers
- Track and talk, post quality content



How did you develop your social media strategy? I'd love to keep the conversation going in the comments.



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