

Article Writing Sample

TOPIC: Social Media Strategy



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Seriously Strategic Social Media

Intro

Does the idea of selling on social media really interest you? Maybe you've already launched a social media campaign. Or maybe you're doing your due diligence now before taking the plunge.

With so much happening on Facebook in particular at all times, you may wonder how to create a viable strategy for your business. Plenty of detail goes into this. Your particular plan of action will depend on the type of business that you run, and the specific audience you're trying to reach.

Let's jump in right now with a set of questions to help you set goals. Use these as a starting point for your social media marketing effort.

What is your purpose in using social media?

There are many different answers to this question. Yours won't be the same as another person's or another company's answer. In business, most people would answer "to generate sales..." but in order to do that we need to go deeper.

Take a look at your company values and mission to get clear on your purpose. Your purpose will be the underlying reason for why you choose to share certain messages in certain ways, on your social media pages and in your groups.

What is your timeline for achieving your projected social media goals?

A timeline is a good jumping point because making a goal timely means you're more likely to set mini goals and take forward steps to achieve what you want to do. Don't get caught up in a pass-or-fail mindset. If you project that it will take you 12 months to reach a goal but you end up only halfway there, then extend the goal.

The point of this is to set and track your forward momentum. Later, you'll know how much time it takes to accomplish a certain thing using social media. So the next goal you set will be more accurately timed.

Seriously Strategic Social Media

Content sourcing: develop a plan

What type of content will you post, and from where will you source it?

You will definitely need content if you're going to be posting on social media. Right from the beginning, you should have a good idea of where that content will come from. Having a source of content will ensure that you don't tap out within a few weeks or months of getting started.

Content publishing on the social media networks is quite time-consuming. You'll have more success, and be more consistent about content publishing, if you plan ahead. Think about the following:

- What messages will you share and when?
- What types of media will you choose to communicate from?
- How often will you post? How detailed will your post be?
- What will your SEO (search engine optimization) strategy consist of?

What will your strategy be for building a following?

Most people want to generate funds on social media. But you have a few preliminary steps to reach before you can do that. One of the first steps is to build a following. To be successful at that, you need to offer something of value that people will want to share.

How to figure out what your audience values?

- You could research other businesses in your industry and see what they offer.
- You could join relevant social media groups, observe the conversations and ask questions.
- You could send out a survey.

Getting Thousands (Millions?) of Eyes on Your Social Media

There is a short way and a long way to get a lot of views on a particular social media post.

- The short way is by joining a lot of relevant groups, and posting to these.
- The long way is by building a following slowly over time.

The short way begets the long way. It's a snowball momentum effect. In the beginning, you'll have to work hard to be seen. Once you've reached a substantial number of followers, your reach will grow with less work.

Joining social media groups is a way to build your authority in a niche.

The types of social media groups that you join should ideally join will be determined by what you offer and where your audience is typically found.

Local groups are very different from special interest groups.

If you intend to do business locally, and you want to have an immediate impact, join a whole bunch of local groups in neighboring towns.

How will you know which groups are important to join? It depends on the area you serve. If you serve a wide range, then join all of the groups where you would hope to attract clients.

If you only serve a small area, your impact will be within a shorter radius. Worried that you only serve a small area? Don't be. Just because your target is more refined doesn't mean you can't hit hard with a message and reach the people that want what you have. You could be a company serving a small number of clients spread out all over the map. Or you could be a company serving many clients within a small area.

The more people who like and follow your page who are also relevant as potential customers, the bigger reach and stronger impact you'll have with your perfect target audience.

Timing Your Social Media for Maximum Impact

Timing is key in the world of social media. It is true that anybody could be looking at anything you share online from anywhere in the world at any time of day or night. However, if your business or organization is location-specific, then time applies to the relevance of what you share because exposure will be greatest during peak hours for your physical area.

A local business who seeks to reach a local audience should post during the normal business hours when people would be looking and clicking.

It's also helpful to think of social media as experiencing surges of activity over the course of the day. Ideas for how to use this to your advantage:

Show up first thing in the morning to reach the early risers.

Lots of people check in on social media at the start of their day. To catch the morning crew's attention, prepare your posts in advance. Then make a quick task of logging in, posting and getting out.

Most morning users won't act on your posts. But that's okay because your morning posts will plant seeds of interest. Later, they'll have more time to follow up and take action on your content.

Show up around the mid-day lunch break.

The next surge of social media check-ins could be close to lunch time. (You'll get eyes on your posts and visitors to your page at any time of day... but there are definite surges and midday is one of them.) At this time, people might be doing things like finishing up work projects and tasks; chauffeuring kids around after school, or commuting home from jobs.

Check in on social after sup.

Post-dinner is probably the next-best time for people to see your posts and either perform an action that you want them to do (like sign up); or make a plan to engage with your company on another day.

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Time is Wonky on Social Media. That's Why Lead Capture Proves Critical to Your Success.

Timing is tricky on social media. You've probably experienced the common issue of seeing an announcement from a local business about a day or two after the event has concluded.

This is due to some kind of time-lapse phenomenon on social media which doesn't lend itself well to running time-sensitive events and promotions.

It could be that the news isn't showing in your feed in a timely fashion based on what you're normally reading and what the site thinks you want to see.

It could be that you're not logging on and checking in to social media at the time when these updates are broadcast.

If other companies' posts aren't reaching you in a timely fashion, your own social media followers might not be getting the news on time, either.

What to do about this? Start collecting email addresses.

Step 1: Sign up for an email list manager such as Aweber, Mail Chimp or ConvertKit

Step 2: Log in, set up and create your list.

Step 3: Add a sign-up form.

Some social media sites like Facebook give the option to copy and paste form code onto your page. Or, they give you button code to configure with your own link to a page where people can sign up and get on your list.

Another way to get sign-ups via social media:

Post relevant content to your social media page. Add a call to action and link to your landing page with email signup, in the body of the post.

The Ultimate Goal of Social Media Posting No Matter What Your Business

There is an ultimate goal for posting on social media that applies to every business, every organization and every individual that posts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and all the other networks with a purpose.

Every time you post new info or share something on your page or in your social media group, you want to have an action in mind for users to take after reading your message.

Remember the goal EACH time you prepare to post on social media. Newbies to social media marketing assume that the simple act of posting SOMETHING on your business page is enough. They think that if they post a meme with a funny or compelling caption and hashtag, that will work to bring action from their perfect customer.

It is true that some people might see what you shared on social media, keep you in mind, and then seek you out later of their own accord. But you really must remember that social media is a very busy place and full of distractions. People are only partially paying attention while surfing around. Someone could mentally be only halfway focused on your carefully crafted post.

To understand your social media followers, step into their user experience...

Let's try to imagine what the user experience is really like for those who may seek you out as a business.

A person could have a specific need to research whatever it is that you offer. They could seek and find you, deem you worthy of paying attention to... and then get distracted and completely forget the name of your business.

For this reason, it is really important to drive traffic on every single post with the goal of leading the visitor SOMEPLACE. You MUST direct traffic each time you post.

The Ultimate Goal of Social Media Posting No Matter What Your Business (cont'd)

Even if they don't take the step now... even if they don't take action, you want to tell them what to do and then you want to give them a destination. Because later, they might come back if they were impressed enough at what they saw. Call them to action at an opportune moment.

When they come back and find your post, that means they're READY. So you must have an action in mind that you want them to take.

- Tell them what to do (issue the call to action).
- Give them a destination (your link or contact info to call/email.)

Social Media Through the Eyes of Your Followers

Social media can get pretty complicated. It is not enough when you are posting on social media, to just say that you have an event going on. Why not?

You might think that your information is obvious to everyone.

You might think that because you posted something on a different day to your website or because you posted it in a group, or because you shared it on your personal page, that everyone saw it.

They didn't.

Why not? Many reasons... people are distracted. People have lives. People are using their phones on the go.

So what you want to always do is look at what you share do the eyes of someone who is only half paying attention. Think of what that social media follower's experience will be if they look at your post, space out, leave and come back later.

Maybe they liked your message, but now they can't remember the name of your company. Maybe they're not good at using the web. Maybe they are elderly and have trouble with their phone.

For this reason, you want to be VERY SPECIFIC and spell out all details, each and every time you post.

The challenge of posting multiple links in one social media post
Linking on social media can often present problems that you wouldn't realize. The problem is that every time you post something new on social media, the space where you posted wants to serve up only one web page.

Maybe today you have a goal of sharing TWO links in your social media post. One is a link to your general contact page. The other is a link to a form.

Social Media Through the Eyes of Your Followers (cont'd)

If this happens, you're going to want to utilize the comment section. There's no guarantee that people will even see the comments. So you want to tell them IN THE POST that you have published a link to the application in the comments.

So now we've covered several spots where you have shared a link that you would like people to visit if they want to obtain contact information, apply, or whatever it is that you would like them to do.

In the end of your post you must actually tell them:

"Check the first comment for our signup page."; Or,

"Check the comments section for our contact info and our sign-up form." (Or whatever the case may be.)

Social Media Targeting: Local Versus Global

If you're having a conflict between global and local marketing on social media, it may be time to reassess. Refine your target audience.

If yours is a global audience, meaning if you offer remote services for people anywhere in the world, then you're really going to want to target special interest groups that match what you offer.

The challenge with this is that you will have lots of competition on these groups. How you handle this really can factor in to your success. Some tips: Focus on the most commonly used keywords

Create online business friendly products that can either be shipped as physical products, or emailed as digital products (information and advice).

Localize your approach

If your purpose is to capture business from local clients, then you should localize in your approach. That means that if you have one website that you reach the world with, you might want to actually have another website and social media page that shares local information and targets local business.

Your local page could look very different from the page or the website where you target for a global reach. And that is okay.

Niche down.

True success on the web is based on the ability to niche down. Hard targeting converts bigger percentage of sales to a smaller audience.

A generic approach attracts a wider audience with more diverse interests, but you'll get smaller percentage of sales from that slice of the market.

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