



How to Create Your Very Own Perfect Social Media Strategy



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A step by step guide to help you create a custom social media marketing strategy

Using social media to promote your business needs to have a purpose or an aim. You need to plan to use the right social media to help you reach your desired goals. These could be to generate leads, drive traffic, build awareness, etc. You shouldn't be using a certain social network or technique because a recent article said that this is the in thing and every business in every corner of the world should try it out. You should only use it if it fits into your overall plan.

The key to using social media in order to reach the customer in order to get the desired result, all comes down to a well written social media strategy. Every business looking to achieve success through social media needs to have one. The strategy needs to contain everything from what the goals are, who the target audience is, what do they want, what social media can be used to reach them and several other steps.

Everyone from business owners to marketers who are building a social media strategy for themselves or their clients will find this guide with all its detailed steps, helpful. So **read through the steps below and use it to build your very own perfect social media strategy...**

Set Goals:

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Goals are an important component to a good social media strategy. Having clear well defined goals will help you achieve the results you are looking for. Many people usually make the mistake of choosing immeasurable goals like getting more Facebook 'Likes' or more Twitter retweets, when they should actually set more measurable goals like getting more sales, leads, traffic, building credibility or spreading the brand image.

Getting more 'Likes', followers and retweets can be a smaller component of the main goal. For e.g. one of your aims could be to build online credibility. For this you could go with blogging, as providing free content can be a great way to build trust. One way to get more people to see your content is by driving traffic through social media, SEO, email, etc. You can do this with social media by gaining more social media

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followers, building relationships with influencers and optimizing your blog for social media. As you can see gaining more followers can be a tiny ingredient of a larger goal.

So choose more measurable goals and work towards achieving them. For best results begin with only two or three goals. Having too many goals and aims can just affect your focus and confuse you. It will also make it hard for you to completely accomplish a goal. Once you have accomplished your first goals, you can take on more. Remember to be realistic when setting your goals. You don't want to set goals that are impossible to achieve and end up disappointed.

Find Your Target Audience and Figure Out What they want:

The basis of every marketing strategy is the target audience.

Now that you have a list of goal(s) it's important to figure out who your target audience is if you already don't know who they are. It is also important to figure out what they want. The basis of every marketing strategy is the target audience. You need to know who they are, how to reach them and please them. If you can't please them and give them what they want they won't interact with your social media updates, buy your products or give way to forming any relationship with you.

So before you go any step further, find out who your target audience is. Once you do this, you can find out what they want, through the help of surveys and social media tools. Knowing who your target audience are and what they want will help you choose the right social media, create relevant content and write the perfect social media updates. Be very careful with this step as you want to get extremely accurate results that could very well define the success of your social media strategy.

Some very important details to look for while doing the research are age, location, gender, interests, devices used and job description. List these factors in a spreadsheet and group them together as percentages wherever possible to make it easy to reference.

Choose Your Social Media:

Once you know who your target audience are choosing your social media will be simplified. You want to choose social media that are frequented by your target audience (so ensure that you perform this step while learning more about them). Looking at social media demographics can also help you with this. For e.g. if you find that your

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audience are mostly female and are between the ages of 30 and 40, then a good social network for this demographic would be Pinterest. But if most of your audience are male, then the right social media to use could be Twitter and Google+.

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You want to first start out with four social media. After you get a good grip on them you could begin adding more. Ensure that you also experiment with the latest and most relevant social media. If they work for you, you can continue using them, but if they don't, you can discard them. Never choose a social network based on a whim because someone somewhere wrote a blog post on why everyone needs to use it. If the social network looks interesting find out more about it and its target audience. If your target audience are similar to its users you can give it a go, otherwise the best option is to ignore it. There are several other social media that will help you reach your ideal target audience.

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Perform a Social Media Audit:

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A social media audit is where you inspect your current social media activities to determine where you are, what you are doing right and what you are doing wrong.

Begin your social media audit by analysing the social media you chose in the previous step i.e. accounts and pages you have already been using on the chosen social media to promote yourself. Look at everything from what you have posted, what types of posts worked best, what posting time was most effective, who are your key influencers, etc. You can do all this manually or through the use of special social media audit tools. Using tools meant for this can help you look at more detailed analytics and can quicken the process. Also take a look at how well your social media performance compares to the industry standard. For e.g. if you were analysing Facebook, take a look at how well your reach compares to that of other pages owned by your competitors.

You can use the results you get from this audit to continue doing more of the effective things and to discard the ineffective ones. If you are new to social media and don't have any business social accounts to perform an audit on, the best option would be to move on to the next step directly.

Analyse Your Competitors:

This step is a lot like performing an audit on your competitors to see what they are doing right and what they aren't so that you can apply the effective techniques to your social media strategy and stay clear of the ineffective ones.

Begin this step by creating a spreadsheet which consists a list of all your competitors and their social media accounts. Once you do this you can begin analysing them one by one and adding the results to the same spreadsheet. You want to do the same things you did in your own social media audit here. Look at what they have posted on their accounts, what types of posts are working for them, what posting time drove the highest engagement, who their key influencers are, etc. Also take a look at what social media are working best for them and what aren't and why: is it because they are doing something wrong on them or is it just that their audience isn't active on those networks or if there is another reason.

Again, you can carry on this whole process manually or with the help of tools. Usually it is best to use a combination of both. First, begin the process by observing whatever you can manually. After that is done, you can look at more important details (with the help of tools) and compare the results of all the competitors.

Prepare a Content Strategy:

Your content strategy should be based on your goals, your audience, the social media you are using, what has worked for you in the past and what is working for your competitors. You want to use all this together to help you achieve your desired results.

A content strategy can include everything from blog posts, Ebooks, white papers, well written social media updates, photos, comics, quotes, infographics, etc. The first thing you have to remember while creating your social media strategy is that every social media is different, what works on one network might not work on another. So don't make the mistake of scheduling the same update on all social media. Share different things on different social media and craft unique updates for each. Use the data you collect from your audit and other analyses to see what your audience wants and give it to them.

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Make sure you have a blog where you create and provide fresh original content. People on social media don't want to be sold to, they want to be engaged and there's no better way to do this than with content. You want it to be a combination of both, your content and others content. So make sure you create your own content in the form of written articles, case studies, infographics, Ebooks, white papers, etc. and have a proper promotion plan to get it to reach as many readers as you can.

Content will help you drive traffic, build trust and a better social media presence and generate sales. Use all the data you have collected from the previous steps and get inside your readers heads and create the content they want to read and share.

Regularly Perform Audits and Performance Updates:

You shouldn't use the same social media strategy forever.

You shouldn't use the same social media strategy forever. As time goes by your audience preferences will evolve. They will use social media at different times, for different purposes and the content they engage with will also change. Some of them will also discard their current social media and begin using new ones or they could just be spending more time on these new social media than the old ones.

This will make it extremely important for you to perform social media audits. You will then be able to see if the techniques you have used at the beginning are still functioning to their full effect or if there has been a reduction in their effectiveness or if they aren't working at all. You can then use this new information to make modifications to your social media strategy and improve it. The optimum time to wait before you perform a new social media audit is a 30 to 60 days. This should be sufficient time to check if something is working or not. If you perform a social media audit too often, it might not give you accurate results as there won't be enough data to analyse properly.

Also take a look at your competitors' strategies to see if they have made any modifications and how this is working out for them. Again, these new techniques can be implemented in your strategy.

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Use data released by others too, to get better results.

Keep Up to Date with The Latest Research:

It isn't just enough if you use only the data you have gathered yourself. There are a lot of companies and social networks themselves releasing data on what the social media trend is at the moment. It will help you understand what relevant social media you need to try out, how your target audience is changing, what social media updates are working currently, etc.

Use this data in your strategy too, to get better results.

Be Patient:

Social media success takes time. It doesn't happen instantly. You might notice some positive changes at the beginning, especially if you take the right steps by collecting data and giving your audience what they want instead of assuming. But achieving the goals you have set can take 3 to 6 months. So plan accordingly and be patient.

Social Marketing Writing

Social Marketing Writing is an online magazine that publishes articles, reports, infographics, guides, and white papers on the topic of social media for small businesses. The aim of the site is to make it easy for businesses and individuals to find quality help using social media like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Google+, Blogs, etc. They also offer social media marketing services. You can learn more about them by visiting their website <http://socialmarketingwriting.com/>

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