

Social Media Class – McBride Research Laboratories

Introduction to the Major Social Media Networks

Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Google+, Pinterest, Instagram, and YouTube

Before diving into a particular social media network, it is important to understand the purpose of said network. Some will naturally meet your needs better than others.

Facebook (www.facebook.com) – The Humanizer

Facebook as a social tool will help a business become more likeable. By engaging like you naturally would with friends, your fans will respond and interact with you and your content in the way they feel most comfortable on that network -- colloquially. Use this to build a loyal fanbase who will view, click, and share your content so your reach continues to grow

Twitter (www.twitter.com) - The Buzz Generator

Twitter brings a viral, buzz-generating component to your marketing. For example, when a business has a massive group of people either sharing content or using a hashtag all at once, that has a big, very visible impact.

LinkedIn (www.linkedin.com) – The Professional

Use LinkedIn to target other businesses. Use your content to provide solutions to business-related problems, and people will naturally share your content in an attempt to boost their own clout, not to mention click your content so you can generate more leads.

Google+ (www.google.com/+) - The Search Optimizer

When you post your content to Google+, you're making it more likely your company's content will rank well in Google's SERPs. Google also started to index and feature Google+ status updates, author names, and 'Add to Circles' buttons in search results, making your activity on Google+ even more important for a strong organic search presence.

Pinterest (www.pinterest.com) – The Artist

Pinterest is easy to maintain and grow if you're more reliant on visuals than text in your industry. Be sure to write descriptions for every image you pin to provide further explanation for those looking to learn more about your pin. Remember that your visuals could include anything from photos, to graphs, to infographics! The key with Pinterest is, when someone clicks your image to see the source, you're directing them to your website so you can convert all that Pinterest traffic with a solid call-to-action.

Instagram (www.instagram.com) – The Road Tripper

Instagram is a photo sharing application that lets users take photos, apply filters to their images, and share the photos instantly on the Instagram network and other social networks like Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, and Foursquare. The app is targeted toward mobile social sharing. Instagram drives audience engagement and helps you expand your social reach, while Pinterest is more about reaching people who are ready to buy.

You Tube (www.youtube.com) – The Story Teller

Use YouTube to tell important stories about your company, to entertain your audience, and even to educate them. How-to videos are great! Sometimes it's easier to get your message across with something a bit more interactive. You can also embed your videos in your blog or on other social networks so the videos can get more reach. Plus, YouTube is owned by Google ... you can bet those videos will be indexed in organic search!

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How to Set Up Your Social Media Accounts

Setting up personal social media accounts is slightly different from setting up merchant accounts. Still, the basic functionality is the same.

Facebook:

- ✓ Register for an account at www.facebook.com.
- ✓ Enter your profile information.
- ✓ Set privacy settings for your profile, newsfeed, and wall.
- ✓ Upload photos.
- ✓ *For personal accounts*, search for friends, request that friends add you, and accept friend requests.
- ✓ *For merchant accounts*, LIKES replace friends and the invitation process is more multi-faceted.
- ✓ Start posting statuses, photos and/or videos.
- ✓ Use your Inbox to send private messages, or chat if your friend or fan is online.
- ✓ Create or join groups and networks.
- ✓ Send gifts, poke, and share links with friends.
- ✓ Tag friends or write directly on their wall if you want your post to appear on their page.

Twitter:

- ✓ Join Twitter at www.twitter.com.
- ✓ Find your friends using email contact information.
- ✓ Set your privacy settings to protect your tweets.
- ✓ Choose the option of posting, finding friends, or turning on your mobile phone.
- ✓ Post and reply to tweets.
- ✓ Find friends (or celebrities) you want to follow or invite friends to join Twitter.
- ✓ Adjust your account with additional profile information, an image, design preferences, and devices you want to use to access Twitter.
- ✓ Set your notification preferences.

HootSuite (optional):

- ✓ Sign Up for an account at www.hootsuite.com.
- ✓ Add and connect to your social network accounts (Facebook and Twitter).
- ✓ Add third-party apps (like Instagram) to your dashboard.
- ✓ Get the mobile app if you plan to use it.
- ✓ Compose and send messages instantly to the network of your choice.
- ✓ Or, schedule the message(s) to be sent at specific times to the networks of your choice.

Connect Your Facebook and Twitter Accounts (optional):

- ✓ Create an account at www.ping.fm.
- ✓ Add the social networks you wish to join together.
- ✓ Create a short message and click, "Ping It!" to test the setup.
- ✓ Set up network sub-groups you will use when you don't want content shared universally.

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The Do's and Don'ts of Social Media

There is definitely and right way and a wrong way to do social media. Fortunately, there are some pretty universal rules to the process.

1. Respond to Input Quickly

Whether someone comments on something you have posted or instead sends a message, it is essential to show that the comments and information you field are responded to efficiently. This will show customers that they are important to you and your brand.

2. Focus on Representation (Be Mindful of Your Online Footprint!)

Every single moment you spend on a social network is an opportunity to grow your brand and show what you are all about. If you comment on something in an inappropriate manner or say something that isn't polite, you shoot yourself in the foot. Instead, focus on censoring yourself and filtering anything your post. Remember, customers will be seeing this information, and it could be viewed again and again.

3. Respect Ownership of Digital Content

Digital content may not be a tangible thing, but it is nevertheless owned by someone. Don't steal content on social media. Not only is it unethical, but it could cause countless problems if identified by the owner. Stealing doesn't simply mean posting something as your own, but it can also refer to content that has been repurposed from other bloggers and social media users.

4. Don't Push Sales Nonstop (And Be Genuine!)

Of course, social media is a great place to get the word out about your product and services, but you can't simply sell, sell, sell. If you do this, you risk turning off all of your acquaintances and followers. Focus instead, on creating content and sharing it in a meaningful manner. If you do this effectively, you should convince others to interact with you. Show a genuine interest in what people are doing and saying and take the time to build relationships just as you would with any face-to-face interaction.

5. Pay Attention to the Bad

On social media, only paying attention to the good comments and input can be a problematic approach. Don't simply act like nobody has made a negative comment or criticized your brand. Try to counter in a respectful, yet direct manner.

6. Interact with Competitors

You don't have to shy away from the competition. Feel free to follow your competition and see what they are doing, and be open to competitors looking at your approaches. Do not, however, attack competitors. This is disrespectful and can have serious repercussions.

7. Engage in Meaningful and Respectful Conversations across the Board

Some social media users mistakenly interact solely with users who they feel can benefit them in some way. Consider engaging in conversations in a multitude of different places. Not only is it a thoughtful thing to do, but it can help expand one's sphere of influence. Be respectful in everything you say.

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8. Promote Others with Yourself

Don't focus solely on shrilling your own content or services constantly. You will make a stronger impression on your followers if you share information about other companies and organizations. Intersperse your brand's content and products from time to time, and you will make a bigger impact.

9. Don't Overuse the Same Responses

If someone comments on your content, it can be tempting to respond with a generic "thank you!" While it is nice to see a response, the same answers to every person interacting with you can be distasteful to those reading your conversation. Try to keep things personal and you will likely find that people are more likely to continue interacting with your brand.

10. Disclose, Disclose, Disclose (And Be Honest in General!)

If you are promoting yourself or your brand, you need to be honest about that. You also need to disclose partnerships and personal business involvements, or you could find yourself operating in an ethical nightmare. Ensure that you manage all your business dealings with the highest of integrity, service and honor, and that your customers have a good reason to recommend you to their extended network.

11. Keep Things Concise

When using networks like Facebook and Twitter, you want to be certain to get your point across quickly. This makes it more likely that others will share your content with others. If you get too wordy, you risk having people shut off.

12. Stay Active

Posting once or twice a week simply isn't enough to keep your brand visible. Treat social media seriously by interacting with others multiples times a day if possible. This will help keep your profile fresh and constantly at the forefront of your follower's minds.

13. Participate and Cooperate

Try to share links and information from others whenever possible. This will develop good will amongst these individuals, in turn increasing the odds that your content will be shared down the road.

14. Keep Things Visually Appealing

The meat of your social media interactions is the textual elements of your presence, but you need to keep the visual things in mind. Don't neglect a great profile picture or the creation of dynamic visual content that can be shared. These little steps can go a long way towards making a serious impression.

15. Don't Overemphasize Your Praise

When you receive praise for a product or content your brand has developed, take caution not to try to shout it from the rooftops. Retweeting every positive thing someone says about you comes off incredibly poorly. Instead, simply focus on thanking those who are kind towards you. In this way, you will make certain you don't accidentally offend someone or make a bad impression.