

Five Steps to Creating an Effective Social Media Content Plan

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Creating a presence for your company on appropriate social media websites is the first step in utilizing social media marketing, but it's only the beginning. In order to benefit from this marketing strategy, it is critical to create - and use - an effective content plan that involves sharing engaging posts on a consistent, ongoing basis.

Five Tips for Creating a Content Plan That Works

1. Select Content Likely to Engage Users





The first thing that you need to realize is that you can't use your company's social media profiles like a catalog of available products and services. This means that you can't limit your content plan to sales-oriented messages. When choosing content, switch your focus away from deciding what to share based on what you think can get someone to buy to what you can do to inspire someone to want to invite your business into his or her hand-picked online community, allow you to stay, and encourage others to do the same.

While it's okay to mention new products occasionally, special offers, seasonal promotions and other sales-oriented messages, the majority of your content plan should focus on information that is likely to engage users so that they (a) want to hear more from you and (b) so that they will share it with their own contacts, further expanding your social presence.

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2. Create a Stockpile of Posts

Rather than let yourself get in the position of trying to come up with a new post every day, periodically sit down and map out a plan for specific items you'd like to post in the near term. If you can keep a selection of approximately 30 topics, links and blurbs, you'll always have something interesting to choose from, but you won't have to worry about the content that you've compiled becoming stale.

Use the following list of appropriate content types as a starting point to begin putting together a collection of posts, being sure that you comply with all guidelines for any site you are posting on:

- Upcoming company and community events
- Tips/expert advice that may interest your audience



- Relevant current events
- Developments in your industry
- Photographs of company leaders, trade show booths, products, etc.
- New product or service announcements (occasional)
- Links to relevant videos of interest to your followers
- Links to news stories about the company or related topics of interest
- Links to articles and/or websites of interest paired with engaging blurbs
- Links to informative [blog posts](#) paired with interesting text
- Results of employee recognition awards and programs

Remain flexible in your plan, making adjustments as needed based on what is going on in the world, with your target consumers and with your organization.

3. Centralize Posting Responsibility


Provide administrative-level access to company social media profiles with care, limiting posting capabilities to a small group of individuals. Clearly define [social networking](#) responsibility for the company, being sure to specify exactly who is responsible for making the final decision regarding what to share, who will actually make posts on behalf of the business, and who will respond to comments and private messages as well as monitor for SPAM.

4. Encourage Idea Contributions

The fact that posting responsibility needs to be centralized does not mean that individuals throughout the organization can't contribute ideas for your content plan. It's actually advisable to establish a system that makes it easy for personnel to submit ideas for the content plan, as well as a way for those assigned to post to gather information from co-workers that they might need.

You can implement a procedure as simple as providing a contact person for employees to send social media posting ideas to as they have them. If you're





looking for a more formal system, set up a shared document on your network, intranet or [GoogleDrive](#) that people can contribute to any time they want.

5. Tweak Content Based on Results

Pay close attention to the types of content that seem to generate the most chatter, realizing that content that generates user interaction represents information that appeals to your audience.

- Keep track of how many likes each Facebook post gets, as well as the number of comments.
- On Twitter, look to see which of your tweets are [being re-tweeted](#) the most.
- If you have a presence on [Pinterest](#), pay attention to pins that attract a significant number of re-pins.
- Use Google Analytics to determine how much website traffic is coming from social media posts, and which ones perform the best.

Use this information to identify new content to share, adding items similar to those that seem to perform the best.

Build Social Media Success

While these tips do not represent everything you need to know to implement social media marketing effectively, they do provide the information necessary for you to begin creating and implementing an effective content plan. Once you are comfortable selecting content for social sharing and are in the habit of doing so regularly, with positive results, you'll be ready to begin exploring new ways to expand the potential of [social media marketing](#) for your company.



