

The Five Minute Guide to Social Media Marketing

- Special Report –

If you have a brand that has an online presence – whether that is a purely online business or a high street store with a website – then you absolutely need to have a social media presence.

In the digital age this is one of the most important and powerful tools available for businesses that want to extend their reach but also improve their relationships with their audience.

The problem?

A lot of us have very little idea about social media marketing, what it entails or what it involves. When we hear about it, a lot of it has a tendency to sound like hollow ‘business speak’ and it also tends to be laced with jargon and terms we don’t really understand.

So, if you’ve been putting it off for now, then it is understandable. And likewise, if you have made a somewhat half-assed attempt then I can’t say I blame you either. A lot of companies are in a kind of ‘social media limbo’ – they have a social account or two but they are stuck with a paltry number of followers and all they ever do is make occasional posts about how great their brand is.

It’s clear to all and sundry that they have no idea what they’re doing!

This report is here to change all that. This will teach you everything you need to know about social media marketing in just five minutes (dependent on your reading speed).

We’ll start by looking at the basics and the fundamentals, then we’ll end on some advanced techniques to put you ahead of the pack.

The Basics: What is Social Media Marketing Really?

Okay, so let’s start with the very basics. **Just what *is* social media marketing?**

On the most basic level, this is marketing using the social media networks. And your mind will probably instantly be cast to the biggest and most successful platforms first – those being Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

These are platforms that allow you to reach a huge number of people – 2 billion users in Facebook’s case – and that give you numerous tools to encourage the content you create here to go viral.

Your job then, is to post content very regularly and then hope that more people follow you and like you.

But this is the first place where people start going wrong.

For starters, social media is not just those three platforms. It also includes Google Plus, Tumblr, Pinterest, Periscope and more.

You should be on as many social media platforms as possible, if you want to get the word out to as large an audience as possible (makes sense, right?).

Your attempts to promote yourself across these platforms should be synergistic, in that there should be consistent branding across all those channels and there should links between the different accounts.

Most importantly, there will be synergy with aspects of your marketing that *aren’t* on social media. This includes video, it includes your own blog or website and it even includes real-world networking. This should be considered to be a kind of amplifier for the rest of your work, not something that exists on its own in a vacuum.

The other mistake that is inherent to these initial assumptions is that social media acts like a speakerphone – a way to get your message across. But the clue is in the name: *social media*.

That is to say that social media is social, it is two way, and it is about relationships. If you want to succeed, then you need to put these elements at the forefront of your campaign in order to grow rapidly and also build stronger connections with your audience. It is not just about breadth but depth. We are more interested here in the *quality* of your followers than we are in the *quantity*. We are aiming to create *true fans* in this way.

Finally, the other question is what precisely you should be ‘posting’.

And the answer here is that it doesn’t honestly matter, or at least this can be very varied. All that *does* matter is that what you are posting is high quality. It is crucial that you are posting things that people really want to read and really want to see. And that you are doing this consistently. This is crucial because it is the only way that people are

going to want to share your content and it is the only way that people are going to want to keep coming back to your page!

How to Deliver Value

So, your aim is deliver value. That means that someone should be better off for having read your post than they were before they saw it.

Sometimes this can mean that your post is witty and amusing, that it contains a useful kernel of wisdom or that it is inspirational as might be the case if you post a beautiful image to Instagram.

But more often than not it will mean that you are posting content from your blog. And this is where the importance of synergy starts to come in.

You need to have a great blog filled with excellent content that people want to read and this will then give you ‘fodder’ that you can use to publish to your social media feeds. That in turn is going to help your channel to grow and develop.

Your site should have the precise same branding as your social media – meaning the same logo and the same name – and it should have the same tone and consistency.

A good blog post should be between 800 and 1,800 words and it should go in depth on a subject that your audience *hasn't* read a thousand times. Sure, you will have a target niche, but it is absolutely crucial that you are bringing something *new* to that niche and not just rehashing old ground that has been covered before.

Ideally, you should aim to do this daily or even several times a day. That means outputting a lot of content. But just look at something like IFL Science. This is a fantastic Facebook page that puts out content on a highly regular basis and *each post* is something amazing that you haven't seen before.

That might mean news about a new planet, it might mean images of an incredible creature that washed up on the beach somewhere, or it might be a little known fact or recent study that will affect everyone.

All these things are highly engaging and exciting because they are genuine examples of *new* content and content that has an emotional hook.

In this regard, it is similar to what we know as clickbait but the fundamental difference is that while clickbait can't deliver on its promises with well-researched content, IFL science and other great sites that work well on social media (Buzzfeed would be another one) really do have the content to back this up.

Make sure that whenever someone reads your content, they come away feeling as though it was worth their time. That's what will make them likely to read next time and it is what will make the likely to share the content on social media.

You then post these links to your account and as mentioned the more you can do this the better. Only something like 17% of your followers for a Facebook page will see each individual post, which means that even if you have 1,000 people following you, only 170 of them will see an individual post. So posting three times doesn't mean inundating those followers with content, it means reaching a bigger cross section of that audience.

Synergy With Your Site

Also important is to tie your social media efforts into your site. One way you can do this for instance is by allowing people to share your content directly from your site itself.

There are sharing plugins for WordPress such as Shareaholic that will allow you to do this and if you install these, then people will be able to share your content with their own platforms, which in turn will mean more people come to your site.

Also important is to have buttons on your homepage that allow people to follow through to your social media. That means a big button saying 'Click Here to Follow Me on Facebook!' (or just the log will do). Don't forget to add call-to-actions within your content, so that means asking people to follow you on social media.

Something that has always worked particularly well for me, is to have feeds of my social media on my site. This is something that you don't see a huge number of people doing but it makes a big difference.

Now, when someone lands on my website, they will be greeted by my feed on the right and that way they'll see the kind of content I'm sharing and they can decide whether or not they want to visit and follow.

Remember: it's always better to have a few followers who are dedicated and who genuinely want to be there than it is to have hundreds of thousands of followers who aren't really interested in your brand and are just annoyed by your posts!

Finally, another tip you can use is to add Facebook comments to your posts. This way, when people comment on your site, their comments will also be shared on social media. And in fact, Disqus (a competing comments system) also has advantages of its own, being a tool that has its own built-in social network of sorts.

The aim ultimately is that people will see your content on social media one way or another. Perhaps a friend likes it or leaves a comment, or maybe a friend sends it to them. Maybe they find it through Google instead by searching a relevant term (which is to do with SEO – a whole different subject!).

Then that person reads your content and enjoys it and follows you on social media. They see more of your posts and one day *they* share or like your content, helping even more people to see even more of your content.

And that is how your content can grow through social media over time!

How to Grow Your Accounts

As well as posting high quality content regularly, you also need to keep growing and that also means engaging in other marketing effort where possible. There are a few things you can do here.

Being more active in the community is one. Know your target audience and share your content with people that are likely to be interested (find fan pages and Google Plus communities for instance).

Another trick is to try teaming up with other influencers and brands. If you can find a brand in a similar niche with a large following, then you can discuss posting something of theirs in exchange for them doing the same for you – or you can simply try recommending each other's pages.

Either way, you then gain access to the audience they built and get a referral from them too! This can be enough to lead to hundreds of thousands more views and just as many new subscribers and new shares.

Then there is Facebook Ads. For those with the budget, Facebook Ads is a powerful tool for generating more likes on your page (if you use CPA in particular) and also allows you to precisely target the right type of person for your content.

Ultimately though, there are few things that will result in overnight success.

What's more critical is that you are consistent and that you don't give up. This is as much a matter of knowing what to do as it is knowing *how* to do it.

And more specifically, it means you need to come up with a routine that works for you and you need to find strategies that can help you to save time and to fit your social marketing routine into your workflow.

It is more than worth all the effort though...