



10 Tips to Get Started with Social Media for Marketing

“I really have to get on the bandwagon!” is a common lament for business owners, artists or entrepreneurs who are “non-digital natives”—people of an age who didn’t grow up with technology but now need to rely on it to continue to evolve their business. And even when you are ready to dive in, it can be confusing, with new tools ([Squirrel!](#)) every day and legions of “experts” swearing that this or that “one trick” is the secret to becoming famous on the Internet.

These tips are designed for those wanting to try some things on their own, or to help those who have hired someone to help them not drive that someone crazy.

Which platforms should you use? That ones that support your real life strategy.

Start with your real life marketing strategy and then see which tools will support your work. It is not the other way around...you will not become rich and famous by simply by posting on Social Media ([unless that is your objective/job](#)). Think of your Social Media as a funnel to bring people to your point of sale (which could be your website or a real bricks and mortar location.)

Sure—building a following can help—for example if you are an author, having an established base of followers on Twitter and Facebook makes you more appealing to publishers—although back to the funnel model, getting those people’s email addresses and permission to market to them directly by email is even more valuable.

How many platforms should you use?

More platforms equal more time investment. Yes, you want to be “findable” on the internet. A strong presence, including your website, blogging and social media platforms can help. But be sure to measure and understand where your clients come from, and a lot your time investment accordingly.

No matter who talks about the demise of Facebook (wait, you just got on it!), it still has 1.86 billion active users. It also tends to span a larger age range, as opposed to Instagram and Snapchat which skew younger. Twitter is fantastic to find and connect to people, but it seems to be mostly robots talking to robots if you just want to build a following—anyone can have tens of thousands of followers now through paid automation now. LinkedIn is still a reliable source for lead generation and prospecting—particularly from your personal profile

(as opposed to a business profile.) Oh, and video continues to grow, with YouTube still a strong search engine, and many of the platforms offering live video options (that you film with your smart phone).

Bottom line: Just because you can, doesn't mean you should. Use the social media platforms that support your real life objective.

Okay—I'm set up on social media. Now what?

1. Temper expectations—simply posting on social media will not increase your sales

Wait, why are you doing this then? That may be a good question to start with. Whenever possible, ask your current clients how they heard about you? If they found you by surfing the Internet, then time invested in building your online presence is good. If they were referred by their child's teacher and that happens a lot, then reaching out to schools in real life may be a more direct marketing to sales strategy.

But, don't abandon an online presence entirely. Because even if their child's teacher referred them, the first thing they will do is Google to you to find out more—make sure you can be found and you like what people will see when they find you. And, long term, your online presence may be filling your sales pipeline for down the road.

Bottom line: there's not always a direct correlation between social media and sales. Think through your strategy and goals before you begin.

2. Promote others you admire or who inspire you (not just your own stuff)

You may think but I'm the one spending time and/or money to do the posting, why should I promote social media? Because the word "social" is in there for a reason. It's like walking into a party and announcing "I'm here, let's talk about me!" Take time to hear what others are saying, seeing where you fit, and create a mix of your original posts with sharing of others. Chris Brogan says promote others work 12 times as much as your own. Think of yourself not only as a creator but as a curator— if someone visits your social media, what is the sense they get about who you are, what you do.

Bottom line: It's actually not all about you. (Sorry!)

3. Don't get mad at your competitors...follow their followers

You know it happens...you find someone who is doing what you are doing. You clearly do it much better, but they have more followers...blast them. You could get mad and ignore them, or you could promote their content, follow their followers—i.e. connect with people who are interested in that topic.

The same tactic can work when you look at people to follow—if you find someone whose work and ideas you respect, see who they are following and follow them.

Bottom line: Someone else's success doesn't diminish yours. Build your own tribe and learn from others

4. Repurpose content

With competition for attention so high, and the window for others to see your content so fleeting (e.g. they will only see a post if they happen to be on that platform at the moment you post it), "repurposing" will help you better manage your time and help spread your message.

Start with your blog post as an anchor, and then create posts for the different media: 140 characters with 1-2 hashtags a photo and link for Twitter; shorter wording, a compelling image and more hashtags for Instagram; longer description for Facebook, etc. And, particularly for Twitter, don't be afraid to post the link to the same content (with a different teaser sentence) more than once within the first few days after the blog has gone live. Different people will see it each time.

Bottom line: Messages are fleeting and competition for attention is high. Re-use content, tailored to each platform, to get your message out.

5. Don't obsess about a single post

Assuming you are not going to write something mortally offensive (why would you even think that?) don't obsess about a single post—think of your posts as a story you are building over time.

Bottom line: The impact of a single post is not so big as to make or break you.

6. Try and try again (and then measure and see what works)

You won't break the Internet. Try different kinds of posts and see what kind of engagement (likes, shares, comments, etc.) you get.

Bottom line: Don't worry about getting it "wrong." There are many, many "rights."

7. Like to grow (or Pay to play)

An organic way to build followers is to 1.) Invite everyone you know in your personal networks to follow you; 2.) Like and share content from others like you, or 3.) Pay to target people who match your ideal customer's geography, interests, demographics. For Facebook in particular think about a budget, even small, to promote specific events or to build your community.

Bottom line: there's a time-money continuum when it comes to social media. You will invest in one or the other to achieve your goals.

8. Do not obsess about the "Perfect Hashtag" that will make you Famous on the Interwebs

Using a hashtag (the # formerly known as number sign) allows people to find you by topic... "[topic matches that help improve discoverability](#)." Create a list of popular hashtags that relate to you and your work (#artist #writer #fashion, etc.), but don't be afraid to use others that are trending or related to a specific post. You can also create one that is specific to you. As you are typing your hashtags, Instagram pops up with suggested tags and lets you know how popular they are, which can help in your decision.

Do you really need hashtags? Data says help increase your engagement. Check out this post on [Buffer about #Hashtags](#), particularly on how many to use them on the different platforms (highlight: max 2 on Twitter, 11 on Instagram, meh on Facebook, none on LinkedIn).

Bottom line: Still want to be famous on the Internet? Somebody will always tell you that you can. Just google "how to become famous on..." Here's one about [being famous on Instagram to get started](#).

9. The world will not end if you don't post.

You know those days when you are so stressed and busy you think you will explode? Focus on your priorities. Of course consistent posting (e.g. a minimum weekly blog post) is ideal, but remember that all of these tools are to support you, not own you. If your week looks overwhelming, alleviate those things that won't end the world (e.g. not posting on social media). Or, plan ahead, take an hour on Sunday and use Hootsuite to plan posts for the week. And then let it go.

Bottom line: Consistency is best to build a following, but if you miss a day or even a week on social media no one will spontaneously combust!

10. People first.

This is just my final PSA reminder not to let your phone become an obsession—having to check all the time if someone responded, new followers, likes, etc. Yes, you want to have regular check-ins to make sure that your strategy is working, but they don't need to be every five minutes. Love your family, friends, customers first.

And, for those in for the long-haul of building your business, get started, [get help where and when you need it](#) and have fun as you connect and grow.

