



Social Media Strategy

Today, you have just 140 characters to give your target audience the gist of what you want to say. It's the social media equivalent of ten seconds to make a good first impression. While you might not want to spend considerable time or dollars on a social media campaign, there are immediate benefits that can be realized with very little of either.

Getting started:

1. Define your purpose and goals
 - a. Why do you want to participate in social media?
 - i. This may be a tangible thing such as revenue generation, attendance at or to events, etc. Or, this may be more intangible, leaning toward better market awareness, brand building, or even "just because everyone else is doing it." Keep in mind that not getting left behind can be a valid reason for participation.
2. Identify internal resources
 - a. Depending on your goals and the purpose behind social media participation, different people, departments or functional areas may need to be involved.
 - i. Decide early on how much time and effort you are willing and able to invest in social media. There are many benefits to participating in social media, but the point at which individuals or organizations reach terminal velocity varies widely. Thought leadership and content drive social media, and developing these things in a quantity and/or a format worthy and appropriate for sharing can be wildly time-consuming. Keep in mind, it really is true that "if you build it, they will come." Unfortunately, in a strange twist, if it's not useful, interesting and impactful once they get there, they will leave again just as quickly.
3. Collaboratively set strategy
 - a. What vehicles will you use?
 - b. Which social media tools will be most effective in helping you achieve your goals?
 - i. Social Media (Umbrella)
 1. Social Networking
 2. Social Bookmarking
 3. Instant Messaging
 4. Others?
 - c. Which available tools best meet your organization's needs?
4. Messaging
 - a. Make it consistent
 - b. Take an outside in approach
 - c. Deconstruct long complicated messages
 - i. Out of one long whitepaper length rant, you can easily create:



1. Ten to twelve blog posts
 2. A single 750-800 word article
 3. A newsletter article linking back to your website
 4. A top ten list of something relating to your whitepaper/big idea
- d. Repurpose content
- i. If it was worth doing the first time, it's worth re-using.
 - ii. Tailor general content to a specific segment within your target audience.
5. Implement an integrated plan
- a. Once you have decided on your goals and the vehicles you will use to achieve those goals, go back and map the social media tools you will be using to existing tools, departments, individuals and channels.
6. ROI
- a. How will you know when your efforts are really paying off? You need to track this to make certain your efforts are not costing you more than you are getting back. It doesn't help you to have 400,000 Twitter followers or 10,000 Facebook friends if your phone isn't ringing and new business is not knocking on your door.
 - b. Common measurements:
 - i. Positive review
 - ii. Friend recommendations
 - iii. Number of followers
 - iv. Constructive feedback/submitted ideas
 - v. Other??
7. Analyze Your Measurements
- a. Test new strategies and ideas against benchmarks
 - b. Set new goals on a regular basis. This keeps your campaign fresh and keeps you and your team motivated to continue producing content.
 - c. Keep adding to your mix. New social media tools are launched almost every day. Keep your eye on the horizon for new tools that may work for you.
8. Take a Walk on the Wild Side: The Dangers of Social Media
- a. Privacy
 - b. Unwanted Friends or Followers
 - c. Negative Comments or Feedback
 - d. Other???
9. Other Considerations
- a. Are you really ready for a public, two-way conversation about your company, your products and your service(s)?
 - i. How will you potentially deal with negative feedback, comments, blog posts and the like?
 - b. How can you enhance your existing staff and social media capabilities?
 - i. Ask partners, user group community leaders, and even industry consultants/analysts to contribute? These constituencies have strong opinions they can share and they are knowledgeable about your subject



matter, products, services and industry. Just make certain you let them know the angle you are looking for them to take (obviously it must be beneficial to both you and them...) and that you have final approval on all content before a post is made.

10. Conclusion

- a. Social media puts you in the hot seat. From the first moment you dip your toe into the social media “pool,” you must be ready to act. Not react, but act. You must be aware of the response you want to create, the interactions you may generate, and you must be prepared to respond and to continue pushing the right buttons to generate interactions. If done correctly, social media is not a one way street, it’s a superhighway. Your posts, tweets, pings, and status updates will generate opinions in the minds of your readers and target audience. They will (or at least you hope they will) respond. If you expect them to invest time and thought power into giving you feedback about your products and services, you must also be aware that continued lack of response will irritate a motivated audience. If they are providing you ideas, they will expect you to take some action. Even if you only manage to say “thanks for your response,” at least it’s something. It’s not concrete action, and it won’t hold them for long, but it’s a way to stall for time if you need it. Be prepared to eventually take action on some of the items your friends and followers suggest.