

Social Media Best Practices: Guidelines, Cheat Sheet, & Rules of Engagement

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01 Content

In the marketing world, you will be hard-pressed to find a buzzier word than “Content”. “Content is king”, “everything the light touches is content”, etc. These statements are mostly true, but in our opinion, Attention is King – and content drives attention when done right. To create relevant content, you have to get the formula right and there are multiple iterations of the same formula. Here’s how we formulate relevant content:

$$R(M+P+PI+T)=A$$

Relevancy equals Right Message + Right Person + Right Place + Right Time. And relevancy equals attention.

1. 70/20/10 Rule

Let’s start easy! The 70/20/10 Rule is the ratio by which you can share the content of different types.

- 70% of the time you will share your own content that adds value to your audience. No sales pitch, no hard sell, just content that adds value.
- 20% of the time you will share content within your industry that adds value for your audience, again – no sales pitch. By sharing content within your industry you may find that you are able to grow your network and have your content shared by others.
- 10% of the time you will make the sale.

2. Pattern Interrupting

Social media has conditioned us to think and act in a certain way. In Neuro-Linguistic Programming or NLP, this certain way is called a pattern. The pattern that most social media users fall into when they are engaging in social networking can be described as an unconscious scrolling through the newsfeeds. This strolling pattern continues until and unless they see something that interrupts their behavior.

As a brand and/or business, you need to learn to help your users snap out of their self-induced social media hypnosis and pay attention to you – the Pattern Interrupt.

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3. Person-to-Person (P2P)

Think Humans Over Logos. Even the world's largest brands hire spokespeople to represent their brands. And that's because the best way to connect with human beings is through another human being.

The time of faceless social media accounts is coming to an end. The pandemic of 2020 has only accelerated this outcome.

People want to do business with people they know, like, and trust. The quickest way to get people to like and trust you is to put yourself front and center, over and over again.

By doing so, you can take advantage of Familiarity Bias. Familiarity Bias is a psychological phenomenon whereby you tend to develop a preference for things merely because you are familiar with them. In other words, the more people see you, the more people like and trust you.

4. Post with Intention

A call to action is an explicit instruction asking your followers and viewers to execute an action such as: like this post, share this post, tag a friend, visit our website, etc.

According to AdRoll, asking your followers to perform an action can increase your click-through rate by 285%. If a Facebook post is seen to have high engagement rates it will get more visibility and potentially generate increased interest in your page. Be specific with the instructions you would like your fans to follow.

** It is important to call out that certain social media platforms, such as Facebook, will deprioritize your post if you include a link that takes the user off of Facebook. So let's say you post a picture of a project you worked on - the natural thing to do would be to include a link to the portfolio item on your website. If you do that, Facebook will be less likely to show your post in the feed.





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5. Image Specifications

Unfortunately, the various social networks didn't band together to make life easier for users, designers, and marketers. Each network has specific sizes to stick to, including safe areas and parts of images that disappear, or are covered, when displayed on different platforms.

There is no 'one-size-fits-all' solution. If you're putting together one post to put on multiple platforms, chances are you will need to create multiple sizes of your visual or resize the photo you're trying to post.

To make the most of your post, make sure to stay within these rules for images in order to make each post look its best:

Social Media Image Sizing Cheat Sheet				
				
Profile photo:	320 x 320	170 x 170	400 x 400	400 x 400
Landscape:	1080 x 568	1200 x 630	1200 x 627	1024 x 512
Portrait:	1080 x 1350	630 x 1200	627 x 1200	N/A
Square:	1080 x 1080	1200 x 1200	N/A	N/A
Stories:	1080 x 1920	1080 x 1920	1080 x 1920	1080 x 1920
Cover photo:	N/A	851 x 851	1128 x 1500	1500 x 1500



For more image sizing info, visit this resource: <https://blog.hootsuite.com/social-media-image-sizes-guide/>

Strategy 02

6. Open vs. Closed Networks

An Open Network is a social media network or internet website that provides access to its content without making you log in. For example, YouTube and Pinterest.

A Closed Network is a social media network or internet website that requires you to log in to see content posted on the network. For example, Facebook and Instagram.

When you think about the distribution of social media content, you have to consider whether the network you are posting on is open or closed.

If it's closed, then you shouldn't post third-party links, i.e. any link that takes the user away from the network. Just because it's your Facebook page doesn't mean that it's okay to post a link to your website. The more content you distribute that people don't engage with, the less likely your future content will be shown to your visitors.

7. Be Specific to Each Network

Each network is very different, so be sure to have a different strategy for each one. Various networks are each suited to different types of content and how you approach them.

That being said, we recommend maintaining a consistent brand identity across all networks. Having a brand identity across all social networks is very important that you need to pay heed to when sharing content on different networks.

You should try to establish a clear vision of your brand and then translate the same via different posts on all the networks. You can opt for the same profile picture, color scheme or business name to make your business easily recognizable.

Strategy 02

8. Be Frugal and Strategic with your “Boost”

Just because a post is performing well doesn't mean you should give it a “boost”. In fact, those may be wasted marketing dollars. The boosted post feature doesn't let you optimize for your marketing goals. Boosted posts are only optimized for engagement. They'll get you likes, comments, and shares. And that's an ok marketing goal sometimes – but if your post already attracting those engagements then your spending unnecessary marketing dough.

The way we like to think about it is that organic social media posting (traditional posting) is the perfect testing ground for paid ads and boosted posts. In other words, you're using organic reach to determine what posts you should put money behind.

The best part is that you can target specific users within many of the social platform ad managers.

For example, let's say your goal is traffic to your website and you've identified a top-performing post. You can create an audience that is most likely to also enjoy that post. That could be a Lookalike Audience that is similar to your website visitors. Or maybe it's an audience who has shown interest in your competitors. It also could be an audience based on demographics like location, age, or mobile device type.

[Click to Learn How to
Create a Custom Audience](#)

[Click to Learn How to
Create a Lookalike Audience](#)

You can then exclude traffic to your website in order to eliminate people who are already familiar with your brand.

Strategy 02

9. Work With the Algorithms

Don't try to work against or around the algorithms. And don't try to beat the algorithms. 2021 is the year to start working with the algorithms.

This is actually quite simple if you understand what the social media algorithms are designed to do.

Hint: They actually want the same things you want. To make more money.

Algorithms are designed to keep social media users engaged on their platforms. The more attention they capture and keep, the more money they make. Come to think about it, the more attention you capture and keep, the more money you can make too.

You see, no one is going to buy your product or service unless you first have their attention. So if you create content that captures and keeps your potential customers' attention, then you win (and so do the algorithms).

10. Invest in social media management software

Investing in a good social media management tool is a life saver when it comes to managing multiple social media accounts. The right software - such as Hootsuite or Buffer - will allow you to enhance your social media planning and schedule posts ahead of time, monitor your social mentions so you never miss out on the people that engage with you, and analyze your results so you can begin to know what your audience engages with.

03

Dos & Don'ts



DO have an active social media presence - but it's okay to prioritize your networks. If a certain platform isn't a fit, it's better to leave that one out of the media mix.



DON'T post too frequently without gaining engagement on your posts or you will be classified as "noise" and your posts will be deprioritized in the feed.



DO engage with your audience (respond to comments, messages, and requests) and share content from industry partners



DON'T include links to websites away from Facebook in your Facebook posts.



DO share and post entertaining content. Social media is inherently fun - when your content is authentic and entertaining your audience will enjoy it more.



DON'T go for quantity over quality when it comes to Followers. A smaller number of engaged followers is far better than a million purchases or disengaged users.



DO tag others and give credit. Attributing authors or photographers or designers if you're using one of their pieces will boost your credibility and help make a new connection.



DON'T use negative language in your posts. Social media is and should be entertaining, aspirational, and positive!



DO use Insights and Analytics to determine when the best posting time is for your target audience. For example, oftentimes posting before lunch is a great time because people tend to eat and scroll during their break!



DON'T excessively use hashtags. Hashtags are meant to be used as a way to categorize and share content with those searching for the type of content you're sharing. Keep the hashtags relevant to the post and to a minimum.