

Social Media Program

We do Juice & Smoothie Bar design and supply...that's what we do. We're the experts and if you have a question about those topics, we're the people to ask. When it comes to social media, Sprout Social is the expert. In "15 Tips to Help Build a Social Media Presence", they give you a foundation for how (and why) to get your business alive and thriving in the social media arena.

We've seen many of the Juice Bars that we serve use their social media programs to educate their members about nutrition and recovery, influence their pre and post-workout behaviors and reward their loyalty. We have additional programs that you can use in conjunction with your social media program once you get it up and running. The piece below will help you get there.

15 Tips to Build a Social Media Presence

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On the surface, social media marketing seems like a fairly simple concept. Just create your accounts on Facebook, Twitter and Google+, then post some links and you're done right? Not necessarily. Setting up profiles and tweeting links is easy. Building your brand to the point where you have significant reach and influence in your industry is an entirely different story. Brands like Etsy on Facebook, L.L. Bean on Pinterest or Starbucks on Twitter all have a dominating presence on social media. But how did they get to that point? And more importantly, what can your company do to achieve similar results? Follow these 15 tips to build your social media presence.

1. Set S.M.A.R.T Goals and Objectives

If you fail to plan, you plan to fail. The very first step in building your presence on social media is to set goals and objectives. If your answer to "why are you on social media?" is because everyone else is on it, that's a problem. Start by setting S.M.A.R.T goals. That means your goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound. An example of a good S.M.A.R.T goal for social media marketing would be: Increase our Twitter response rate by 25% by the end of the first quarter.

Specific: We've specifically identified the social channel (Twitter) and a metric (response rate).

Measurable: The response rate can be measured from the Sprout Social dashboard.

Achievable: We didn't make an outlandish goal of say, a 100% increase in 10 days.

Relevant: Our goal will have an impact on our overall social media presence, making it very relevant.

Time-bound: The goal has to be met by the end of the first quarter.

Give your social media marketing efforts a

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purpose and you'll be able to avoid wandering around aimlessly.

2. Identify Your Audience

Who are you looking to reach on social media? There are millions of consumers on Twitter, Facebook and Pinterest, but you have to narrow down your target customers to know where your focus will be. Identifying your audience is going to play a role in determining:

- Which social media sites you're active on
- Your posting schedule
- The type of content you publish
- Your "voice"
- The information in your profiles

Once you've segmented your audience, get to know what their challenges are, how they use social media and what other brands they engage with on social media. Looking at how your audience interacts with other brands they follow will give you an idea of what resonates the most with them. Then it's just a matter of mixing in those elements with your own style.

3. Be Human

One of the worst mistakes you can make on social media is coming off as the faceless corporation with zero personality. In today's age of transparency, people want to get to know your company on a more personal level.

A lot of companies have gotten into the practice of creating separate Twitter accounts specifically for handling customer support issues. This is an amazing opportunity to humanize your brand. A great example is the Toronto Transit Commission's TTCHelps Twitter account. Every response to a customer has the initials of the person who sent the Tweet. On top of that, it uses "I" when replying instead of "we," which really makes customers feel like they're having a more personal interaction.

4. Build Relationships

It's easy to neglect the social aspect of social media. But if you want to build your presence, you need to start interacting with customers, influencers and other people in your industry.

The beauty of social media is that it allows you to build relationships with people all over the globe within a matter of minutes.

Instead of focusing on getting as many followers as possible, focus on getting engaged followers. The difference is that engaged followers with whom you have established relationships with are more likely to Retweet, Like and +1 your content than someone who only followed you because you followed them first.

Here are a few tips for relationship building through social media:

- Always @mention people you reference in your social media posts.
- Answer questions people ask.
- Reply when people @mention you or share your content.
- Don't just Retweet and Like other people's content; reply with a comment to start a conversation.

5. Create an Editorial Calendar

It's true that each social media channel has its unique nuances and best practices. But that doesn't mean you shouldn't take an integrated approach for planning the content you publish to each one. Instead of having five different content calendars, you can create one and specify how you want to syndicate content on each channel. For example, if we were sharing a link to this article on Twitter, Facebook and Google+, each headline would look slightly different. A Tweet would be short and include a hashtag, a Facebook post would have an eye-catching headline and the Google+ update would include a summary preview of what the post is about. Editorial calendars allow you to plan what and when you want to publish content. That allows you to optimize every headline and send them out at the right time.

6. Automate the Right Way

Scheduling your social media posts ahead of time is a good way to automate your campaigns. On the other hand, sending out auto-replies to customer complaints is an entirely different story.

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Avoid automating any type of human interactions on social media. Automated responses come off as insincere to customers that are hoping to interact with your brand or express their concerns.

7. Help Instead of Selling

Social media is one of the best platforms to use for content marketing. One of the main concepts behind content marketing is providing value to your audience without always expecting something in return. Use that same approach when you're building your presence on social media.

For instance, if your company sells powder for itchy feet and someone Tweets "just came back from the beach and my feet won't stop itching!" don't just reply back with a link to buy your product. Share a link to a blog post about what to do when you're itchy after coming back from the beach. Or better yet, create a blog post with solutions and share that link with them.

By offering solutions to problems instead of just pitching your products all the time, you're proving your company is an authority and potentially earning a lifelong customer.

8. Optimize Your Social Media Accounts

Use social media optimization to help your brand stand out and be found by new people who aren't already connected with you. When people are searching Instagram, Facebook and Pinterest for keywords related to your industry, you want to make sure your account shows up. You can do that by:

- Adding relevant keywords in your profile
- Sharing content related to your industry—include keywords in your posts
- Connect with popular accounts in your industry

9. Get Visual

Social media and visuals go together extremely well. In fact, images were rated as the most important tactic for optimizing content for social media. They also get more engagement. So if you want to make a big impact on social media, start

posting more images.

What type of images should you post? Generic stock photos aren't going to do the trick. Some of the most shared types of images for social media are:

- Team photos
- Photos of customers
- Photos of events
- Behind-the-scenes photos
- Quote photos
- Infographics

The one thing that these types of visuals all have in common is that they're made by you. Don't forget to brand custom graphics with your logo or website name so people can trace them back to your company. There's always the potential for a selfie to go viral or an infographic to get shared by authorities in your industry. That's a quick way to add a boost to your social media presence.

10. Make Your Profiles Known

This is one of those tips that's so simple that it's easy to overlook. Use every opportunity possible to promote your social media profiles. That means:

- Adding social media icons to your website
- Adding links to your profiles in your email signatures
- Putting your social media usernames on printed materials
- Linking to your social profiles in guest blog posts

People shouldn't have to search endlessly in order to find out whether you have an Instagram account. Prominently showcase your profiles whenever you can.

11. Stay Active

How often do you publish content to social media? A lack of activity is a quick way to get overlooked. Nobody wants to follow the company that only posts once a month. Add the fact that content moves extremely quickly on sites like Twitter and Facebook, and it's easy to see how you can get lost in the mix if you're not active.

Using tips #5 and #6 to schedule your content in

advance is a good way to avoid stagnant periods of time without putting out content. But don't forget to keep interacting with your audience too.

12. Track What's Trending

Being on top of the latest trending topics on social media is a good way to land in the feeds of consumers who aren't following you already. On Twitter, when people look at what's trending, they're able to see the most popular Tweets related to that topic regardless of whether or not they're following the accounts.

Get innovative and come up with creative ways to take advantage of hot trending topics just like the notorious Oreo Tweet during the Superbowl XLVII blackout.

13. Don't Be Afraid To Pay

There's a huge myth that social media marketing is 100% free. It's true that social media levels the playing field for smaller companies bootstrapping on a shoestring budget, but that doesn't mean that you can't spend money. Running ads on Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn can give your company an added boost and more visibility quickly.

Advertising on social networking sites gives you the advantage to target on a much deeper level than you'd get by paying for a banner on a single site or even using Google AdWords. For example, Facebook lets you narrow down your demographic according to age, education, location, Pages they've Liked and a wide range of other criteria. You can get started on a minimal budget and get a great ROI.

14. Use Tools to Monitor Your Activities

If you want to get serious with your social media marketing campaigns then you need the right tools in place. You need social media management software like Sprout Social to give you reports on your engagement, follower growth, popularity of the content you're sharing and all of the other data that's going to fuel your campaigns. Unless you're running paid ads, most social media sites won't give you enough information to track

campaigns on a deep level. Use tools to get a full picture of the impact you're having across your different social media accounts.

15. Create & Share Amazing Content

We've saved the best tip for last. Above all else, you need to commit to creating and sharing the most high quality content possible. That means creating share-worthy blog posts and curating the best content related to your industry. Where a lot of companies fall short is they'll only share their own content to avoid sending traffic to other sites. That can end up doing more harm than good. Your followers want great content regardless of what site it's on. By being the source on Twitter, Facebook or Google+ to find that content, you're giving consumers a reason to follow you. Not only that, but you'll also have a much better chance of getting people to engage with you. An example of a company that does a great job of sharing not just their own content, but also curating other articles is HP. Its Google+ Page is a mixture of curated and original content.

Start Building Your Social Media Presence

Put these tips into action to make your presence known on social media. Prioritizing your audience and focusing on content is a winning formula for social media success.

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