

# A Quick Guide to: Social Media

START HERE!!!

NOW GO HERE.

## B. FOCUS who are you talking with?

**Not a target.** Do not think of these people as passive recipients of a marketing message. They are people who choose to engage you in a dialogue and you should approach them as peers and equals.

**Kind of like a target.** You should value each of these people as individuals and avoid reductive group identities. But you should also remember who you'd ideally like to be talking to and tailor your approach accordingly. For example, people have different priorities in their professional and private lives. Different age groups and peer groups have different ways of interacting.

**Look first to your business goals.** Depending on the goal you have for your social media presence, you would naturally look to engage different individuals in dialogue. The quality of your interactions are more important than the quantity of "followers".

## BUSINESS GOALS

WHICH LEADS TO...

## E. CONTENT providing value

**Focus on your unique value.** People will expect your company to talk about your area of expertise, be it a product or service. Don't get distracted. Your social media identity should be a natural outgrowth of your brand identity.

**Keep it timely.** The conversation is happening right now. The topics are trending right now. Coming up with a comment next week to last weeks hot topic provides no value.

**Never broadcast.** Subject everything you do on social media to the "headline test." If your comment sounds like a headline to an advertisement, don't post it. This isn't an advertising medium.

**The Perfect Dinner Party Guest.** Would you like to sit next to your social media identity at a dinner party. Does it listen carefully to your points before replying? Does it introduce you to interesting ideas you didn't know? Does it have a sense of humor and a sense of purpose?

BUT THAT'S NOT AN  
EXCUSE NOT TO...

## F. REACH OUT making new friends

**LISTEN.** When you are entering a new conversation, listen carefully to what everyone is saying and make sure you have something to add before speaking.

**FOLLOW.** Don't look for followers, instead look for interesting people to follow. They may tell you about something about your brand and the market you wouldn't learn otherwise and it doesn't matter who follows first, as long as there's a dialogue

**RETWEET.** It's not all about you. Find interesting content from others and retweet it. This adds to your value and makes you a source of information, not just a PR feed.

**CONVERT.** Social media offers a tremendous opportunity to turn critics into advocates. Find your biggest critics and engage them in dialogue. Ask for their feedback and act on their suggestions. Everyone wants to be heard.

**"THANK YOU".** The two most important words in social media. Anyone who engages you, whether as a follower or a critic, is doing you a favor. Thank them every time.

## BUSINESS GOALS

AND ONE LAST TIME, SO YOU DON'T FORGET...

## A. BUSINESS GOALS not a popularity contest

**NOT COMPETITIVE.** "Get as many Facebook followers as our competition" is not a business goal. It reflects ego, not focus.

**RESEARCH.** Your customers are using social media to talk about your products and your competitors' products. They are discussing unmet needs and hidden preferences. Social media should serve as the primary inspiration for all your research and development efforts.

**SELL.** Whether or not your business model allows for direct-selling through social media, you can increase the market for your products through effective outreach and by providing useful information to customers.

**BRAND.** Customers perceptions about your brand are driven, in part, by what they hear from their peers in social media. By engaging in conversations you can present your perspective and create a different, more sympathetic impression of the brand.

**SUPPORT.** All too often a company's sales team is walking into meetings where they are required to introduce the product to the customers for the first time. Using social media you can provide some "air cover" so that they aren't walking in cold.

**LEADERSHIP.** In this changing media landscape "thought leadership" is an important concept for businesses. By providing useful, engaging, thoughtful content, you can establish your company on the cutting edge of technology and innovation.

THEN THINK ABOUT...

## C. IDENTITY finding your voice

**MATCH YOUR VOICE TO YOUR GOALS.**

A leader speaks with authority, whereas a peer shares sympathetically. Make sure you cast yourself in the role that you would like to play in the market.

**INDIVIDUAL VS. CORPORATE.** Different companies have found success with different approaches to social media identity. Some companies feature recognizable individuals like a CEO or a PR person. Others use a general voice for the whole company. Both can work, but keep in mind we all like to think we're talking to an actual person.

**ONE VOICE OR MANY.** Some companies encourage loads of different people to get involved in social media. Others strictly control official "voices." While a multiplicity of people can add to the conversation, sometimes people can go "off message" in a way that damages the brand.

**AUTHENTICITY AND RESPECT.** These are not optional. This is a totally transparent medium. There are so many ways to get in trouble. But there is one effective way to get past any difficulty: always tell the truth, always respect the people. Don't go back and edit. Don't delete. Acknowledge error and move on.

ALSO...

## D. MEDIA choosing your outlets

**MATCH:** Different social media appeal to different audiences and feature different types of conversation. Start by reviewing your business goals and then match outlets to goals.

**TYPES.** Facebook is chatty. Twitter is dishy. LinkedIn is ambitious. YouTube is entertaining. If you try to work against type your point will be lost. (A boring YouTube video is a waste of time and resources.)

**GO OLD SCHOOL.** Don't chase the flavor of the month in terms of outlets. Go where the conversations are actually happening – the incredibly unsexy, but deeply useful world of discussion forums and comments sections.

**CHOICES.** When it comes to outlets, keep an open mind but don't waste your time. The new thing might be as awesome as they claim. But experience teaches that it probably isn't.

**LINK.** Create links between all your communication outlets. Not only can you repurpose content across multiple conversations, but you can draw people into your social media ecosystem from diverse sources.

BECAUSE, AT THE  
END OF THE DAY, THE  
BOTTOM LINE IS...

## G. SUCCESS sticking with it

**Allocate Resources.** Social media is only free if your time is valueless. In truth, this is a different type of cost. To successfully engage in conversation requires more time and commitment than traditional marketing.

**Assign Responsibility.** If Social media is something that "everybody" does, then no one is responsible. If you don't build this into someone's job description, then you are leaving your social media presence to your "least busy" co-worker.

**Authority to speak.** No interns! Social media is the face and voice of your company in the marketplace. The people who manage this core function must be able to answer questions and critics immediately without going off-message