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SUCCESS WITH SOCIAL SHARING



The power of sharing is what sets social media apart from other marketing channels. When someone shares your post, they're not only giving your content a stamp of approval, but publicly recommending it to their network, increasing your reach and potential engagement. It's word of mouth marketing with bells on and sugar on top.

The theory seems simple enough, but encouraging others to share your posts isn't necessarily so straightforward. So here we cover sharing best practices to put you in the social limelight, including:

- How to create engaging content
- Building a rapport with your audience
- Maximising your impact
- Sharpening your sharing strategy

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Appeal to consumers' motivation to connect with each other — not just with your brand.

The New York Times' Psychology of Sharing study

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CREATE CONTENT THAT'S SHAREABLE

Understand why people share

People share content that [engages them emotionally](#), reinforces how they want to be perceived (helpful, insightful, edgy or funny, for example), reflects their values and beliefs, and, ultimately, helps to strengthen their own relationships.

As with everything in marketing: understand what's important to your audience and tailor your approach to tap into it.

Produce high-quality content

This almost goes without saying, so I won't labour the point (more insights on content and [content marketing here](#)). Don't aim to create good content: aim to create remarkable content that impresses people enough to make them want to show it to their friends and colleagues.

Make it easy to take action

Ensure social share buttons are prominent on your blog and any other pages you want people to share. Consider using a 'floating' share bar that readers can't miss, or adding a 'click to tweet' button that allows readers to instantly share predefined quotes from your content.



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Focus on how to be social, not how to do social.

Jay Baer, president of Convince & Convert

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ENGAGE, PERSUADE & INFLUENCE

Ditch the hard sell

A rule of thumb is that only a third of your posts should overtly market your company, with the rest focusing on adding value and building relationships. Besides, why limit yourself to self-promotion when there are so many other ways to create a buzz?

Ask questions

This is a great way to spark interaction if you can tap into a topic or interest that's important to your audience. Encourage people to get involved by voting, submitting their own ideas and suggestions, or posting photos, for example.

Show your human side

Put some personality into your posts. Share a video of your staff happily doing daft things for charity. Throw in some humour if it's appropriate. Authenticity is what differentiates your brand and creates trust.



Our CEO Matt braved 31 buckets of freezing water to raise money for charity during last year's Ice Bucket Challenge

Impart nuggets of wisdom

Post tips and advice that will help make your audience's life easier. If you can demonstrate them using photos or video, all the better. People love to share this type of post as it allows them to bask in reflected glory.

Make a point of sharing others' content

Regularly circulate stories and ideas from thought leaders and like-minded businesses in your industry; add your own comments for a personal twist. Don't be held back by a reluctance to promote other companies: focus on sharing content that your audience will find valuable and interesting.

Interact meaningfully

Always respond promptly to comments and questions, whether on social or in your blog's comments section. Meaningful, personalised interaction – the building of rapport and trust – is the holy grail of [social media marketing](#).



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You need to spend 50% of your time on the idea and 50% on how you spread it.

Jonah Peretti, founder of BuzzFeed

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MAXIMISE YOUR IMPACT

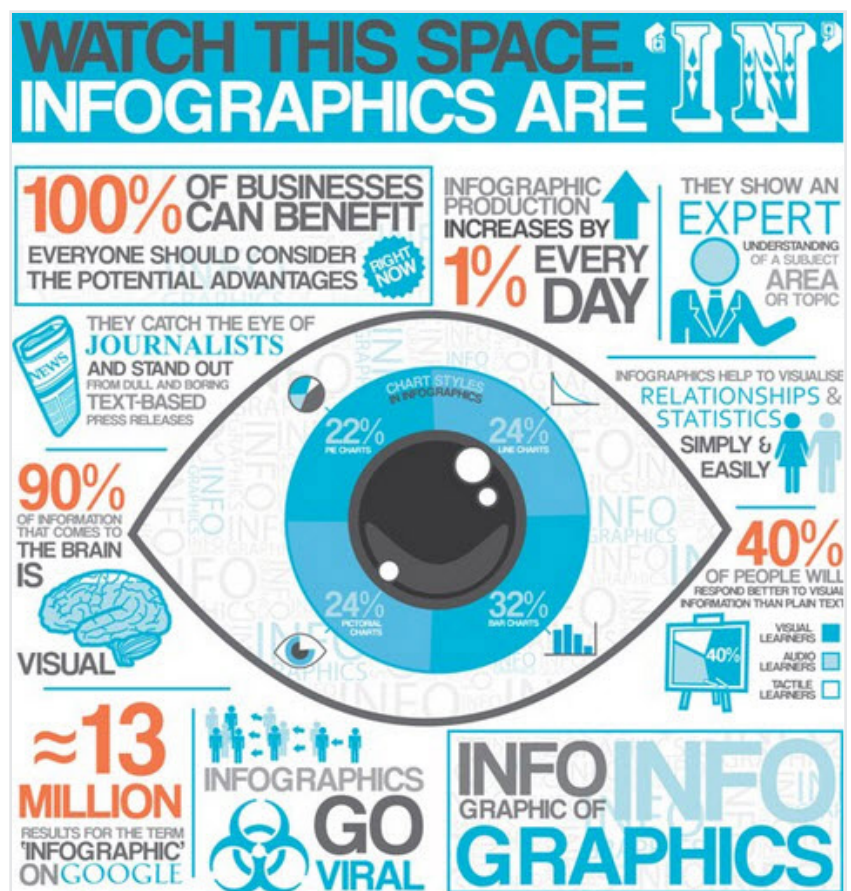
Use hashtags effectively

Overuse has given hashtags a bad press but, but a few well-chosen hashtags can be the key for being discovered on social media. As always though, know your audience: hashtagging is generally frowned-upon on LinkedIn, for example.

Take a cue from the hashtags industry influencers and competitors are using and research trends using tools such as [hashtagify.me](https://www.hashtagify.me)

Grab attention with visuals

It's well established that posting visual content such as photos, GIFs, infographics and slideshows boosts engagement, and this is backed up by science: our brains process imagery much more efficiently than words alone. But it's short videos that are really getting those fingers clicking (or tapping, for mobile users). Fortune magazine reports that video posts on Facebook reach 35% of their audience, compared with 14% for photo posts, since Facebook launched video posting in early 2015, and just 4% for text-only updates.



Source: Jeff Bullas

Get involved in communities

Becoming an active member of relevant communities, such as LinkedIn groups or Twitter chats, will give you the chance to engage with a very targeted audience. Contribute to discussions and share your own content sparingly to avoid being seen as spammy.

Customise for each platform

Tailor your posts to play to the strengths of each one, particularly if you're linking back to the same content across different platforms.

Grab yourself a platform-by-platform guide to optimising your posts by downloading our [social media cheat sheet](#).

Craft strong headlines & calls to action

Put as much thought into crafting each social post as you would a blog post. Your headlines need to grab attention, demonstrate relevancy and pique your audience's interest.

Be explicit about how you want people to react to your post. Actually asking people to share can be surprisingly effective: according to Socially Stacked, tweets including 'please retweet' are more likely to be shared.

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It's hard work. I'm not going to lie. But if you're willing to roll up your sleeves and get dirty, and are willing to constantly analyse what you're doing and scrap what doesn't work and continue what does work, and keep at it, you can be very, very successful.

Michael Stelzner, founder of Social Media Examiner

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SHARPEN YOUR SOCIAL STRATEGY

Plan ahead

A schedule allows you to plan in advance what you're going to post where and when, and ensures you social media activity is harmonised with your content plan and significant dates in your marketing calendar.

Your plan doesn't need to be set in stone: one of the best things about social media is the ability to be quickly responsive and spontaneous.



[Click here](#) to download our social media planner

Keep testing

Use Google Analytics or each platform's native analytics tool to gauge which posts are getting the most engagement. How you measure success, whether it's the number of reshares, likes or click-throughs, will depend on the objectives of your social media strategy.

Be active when your audience is

Keeping an eye on your performance metrics allows you to form a picture of the times and days when your posts get the most traction.

There's a lot of research into the [best times to post](#) and apps to help you maximise your scheduling but, while some general rules may apply, the formula for getting this right will depend on knowing your audience, monitoring engagement and a degree of trial and error.

Concentrate on the platforms where you have the highest chance of engagement

Few brands find equal success on every channel. Identify where your messages resonate the most, and focus your efforts here. We've created an infographic '[The Pros and Cons of Social Media](#)' which can help you compare each platform at a glance.

Share posts more than once

Don't be afraid to share content several times on a platform to maximise its reach, as long as it's retained its relevance and value. Avoid sounding repetitive by tweaking your headline, imagery and/or timing for reshares.

Encourage employees to share your content

Employee advocacy is a powerful and cost effective tactic. Read our Knowledge Base article for step-by-step advice on [creating brand ambassadors](#).

Manage your time effectively

Tools such as BuzzSumo, Hootsuite, Sprout Social and Buffer can help you to plan, automate and analyse the performance of your posts. Take advantage of the free trials on offer to identify which best suit your needs.



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WHAT OUR CLIENTS SAY

"From the outset of the project, Click Consult clearly understood our business objectives and formulated a search strategy that would help to deliver commercial results across key product areas. They have been professional in their approach, shown great attention to detail and the results achieved to date have been thoroughly impressive. We are looking forward to a successful future partnership."
LloydsPharmacy Online Doctor

"Click have really stepped up to the plate when it comes to performance marketing, their tenacity and desire to help us as a company improve is second to none. They're always offering up the best in cost per lead performance, which is seeing our ROI on digital marketing grow exponentially as our relationship goes on. Brilliant project planners, superb project delivery and results to boot, what more could you ask for?"
Adjustamatic Beds

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