



CLICK.CO.UK®

STREAMLINING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY





INTRODUCTION

The buzz created by regular social media activity is important in boosting your brand's online reach and credibility. Amplifying your content through these channels is a powerful way of spreading your message, connecting with your target audience and increasing brand awareness. It offers the opportunity for your content to be reshared: the higher the relevance and quality of those shares, the greater the chance your content gets seen by the right audience, and attracts the right kind of traffic.

Like a [good quality, natural back link profile](#), social engagement represents a public endorsement of your website and, as it's user-generated and authentic, it's considered trustworthy by users (known as ['social proof'](#)).

So maintaining an up-to-date social profile and regularly engaging with your audience on these platforms will certainly help to improve your online visibility, influence and reputation.

WHAT IS A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY?

Your social media strategy outlines your specific goals and objectives, how you plan to achieve them, assess progress and measure success. It can be as detailed or concise as it needs to be – the most important thing is that adapts to your continually changing objectives and priorities.

WHY DO I NEED A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY FOR MY BRAND?

As with any aspect of marketing, the way you portray your brand on social deserves to be taken seriously and requires more than a scattergun approach.

If you don't have one, or if you've been using the same social media marketing strategy for a while, it might be time to revisit your approach.

HAVE A PROPER PLAN IN PLACE

A schedule allows you to plan in advance what you're going to post where and when, and ensures your 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 responsive and spontaneous. Our [Social Media Toolkit](#) contains a social media calendar template that you can tailor to your own needs.

		Social Media Planner					
Content type		New blog	Curation (3rd party content)	Blog reshare	Informational	Engagement (to encourage comments, replies & shares)	Download
Recommended frequency				5 + per day, 7 days a week	10 per week, 7 days a week	2/3x a day, 5 days a week	Once a day, 5 days a week
		twitter	facebook	Google+	Linked in		
Monday	4/4/2016			Blog post Engagement (comments, replies & shares) Curation (3rd party content)	Blog post Engagement (comments, replies & shares)	Blog post Engagement (comments, replies & shares)	Blog post
Tuesday	4/5/2016			eBook download Informational Curation (3rd party content)	eBook download Informational	eBook download Informational	eBook download
Wednesday	4/6/2016			Blog reshare Engagement (comments, replies & shares) Curation (3rd party content)	Blog reshare Engagement (comments, replies & shares)	Blog reshare Engagement (comments, replies & shares)	Blog reshare
Thursday	4/7/2016			Blog post Engagement (comments, replies & shares) Curation (3rd party content)	Blog post Engagement (comments, replies & shares)	Blog post Engagement (comments, replies & shares)	Blog post
Friday	4/8/2016			eBook download Informational Curation (3rd party content)	eBook download Informational		
Saturday	4/9/2016			Blog reshare Engagement (comments, replies & shares) Curation (3rd party content)	Blog reshare Engagement (comments, replies & shares)		
Sunday	4/10/2016						

CHOOSE THE RIGHT PLATFORMS

Old faithfuls Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn are only the tip of the social iceberg. The social media channels are always adding new bells and whistles to offer to marketers and differentiate themselves, so explore the other platforms available which might offer opportunities to grow your audience - compare the pros and cons of each channel with this [infographic](#).

To achieve the best results with your campaigns, you need to target the platforms most suited to your audience, your industry and your goals. Our infographic compares the strengths and weaknesses of each social channel to help you decide where your brand belongs.

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](#).



Facebook

Perhaps the best known social network, Facebook has the largest potential audience of any social media platform.



Pros

- Easy to set up, use and control from a variety of devices
- Allows you to communicate publicly or privately, in real time
- Allows organic tracking
- It's integrated with Instagram allowing you to share striking images
- Allows you to tell your brand story without the constraints of character limit



Cons

- Privacy issues
- Marketing campaigns can be time consuming
- Especially strict rules on running contests
- Has become very ad-focused
- Algorithm hides business' content unless promoted



Twitter

Micro-blogging service that allows people to post and read short messages, with more than 300 million users



Pros

- Easy to set up and use
- 140 character limit keeps messages to the point
- Easy to search the network for content using hashtags
- Tweets appear in Google results
- Can be used as a sales platform



Cons

- Volume of messages can lead to information overlaps/loss of message
 - Not the best platform for showcasing visual content
 - Twitter metrics no longer display on share counters
 - Short messages can be limiting
-



LinkedIn

As a B2B networking platform, LinkedIn demands greater transparency than the other social networks: you must have a personal profile before you can create and manage a company page



Pros

- Allows networking opportunities and prompts direct business relationships
- Enables sharing of knowledge and expertise
- Ability to post blog-length articles to showcase knowledge



Cons

- Not effective for B2C business
- Large volume of spam dilutes meaningful content
- Very time consuming for new users to build an audience/connections



Google+

The search engine giant's own platform



Pros

- Having a profile has SEO benefits (ie, will help your site's visibility in search engines)
- Easy to use and integrates with Gmail and Google Docs
- Easy to find people and discover people to follow



Cons

- Very similar to Facebook
 - Lack of market share
 - Limited audience size
-



Instagram

Photo and video sharing platform owned by Facebook and originally designed for mobile



Pros

- Simple to use
- One of the fastest-growing social networks
- UCG on Instagram is very powerful
- Appeals to a wide audience
- Can be used as a sales platform
- The best platform for sharing high quality imagery
- Highly engaged audience



Cons

- Links don't work in captions
- Limited integration capabilities
- 'Shadow banning' on business accounts can reduce visibility



YouTube

The largest video sharing site on the internet and second largest search engine; owned by Google



Pros

- Allows you to connect more directly with your audience
- Can be used to explain complicated concepts more easily than using text
- Users don't need to follow you to discover your content
- Can be found in search engine results



Cons

- Quality and editing need to be top notch; the results can be embarrassing if done badly
- Requires greater planning and time investment than other channels



Pinterest

Photo-sharing platform where users group together pictures (known as Pins)



Pros

- As users are encouraged to discover content for themselves, there's not so much emphasis on actively engaging your audience
- Images are hyperlinked to source
- Good way to drive relevant traffic to your site
- Selective following adds appeal to audience



Cons

- You need to ensure your imagery is well chosen, optimised and that the design is sharp
- Audience demographics can be limited

For more detailed guidance to marketing the main social platforms, download our eBooks:

[A marketer's guide to Twitter](#)

[A marketer's guide to Facebook](#)

[A marketer's guide to LinkedIn](#)

[A marketer's guide to YouTube](#)



CREATE ENGAGING, UNIQUE AND SHAREABLE CONTENT

Whether it's blog posts, video, infographics, or whatever else is relevant to your industry and business, social media is the ideal platform to showcase the kind of content people want to read and share. Take a look at the assets you're linking to, and review your content calendar and overall marketing objectives to ensure your social strategy's aligned.



Produce high-quality content

This almost goes without saying, so we 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.

Impart nuggets of wisdom

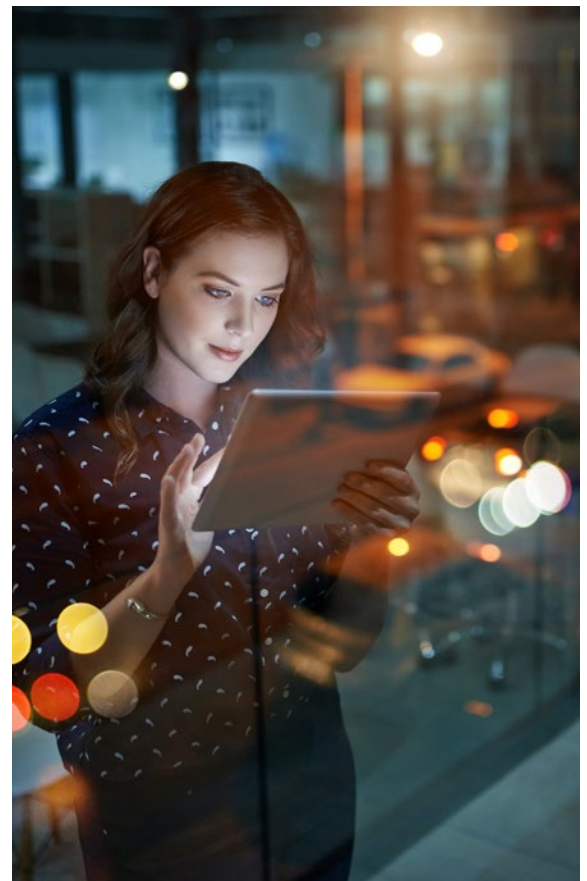
Post tips and advice that will help make your audience's life easier - if you can demonstrate them using photos or video, all the better. People love to share this type of post as it allows them to bask in reflected glory.

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.

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?



Maximise visibility

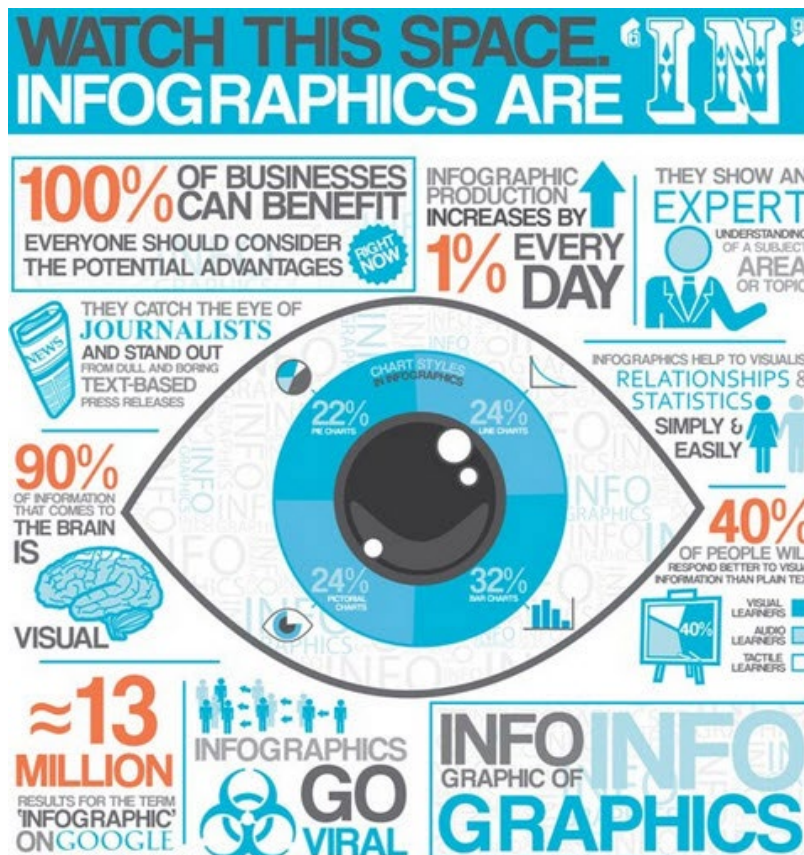
Don't be afraid to share content several times on a platform to maximise its reach, as long as it's retained its relevance and value. Avoid sounding repetitive by tweaking your headline, imagery and/or timing for reshares.

Also, ensure you're making the most of visuals: 40% of people respond better to imagery than to text alone. Read our latest blogs on [content and content marketing here](#).



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: www.zabisco.com

MAKE IT EASY ENOUGH TO SHARE YOUR CONTENT

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. Ensure your social channels are prominent on your website; research and use relevant hashtags.



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.

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.

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.

Make a point of sharing others' content

Regularly curate and 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.

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](#).

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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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INTERACT WITH YOUR AUDIENCE

Social media isn't designed for one-way communication. Participate in discussions, start conversations and comment on others' posts. This is a powerful way to reach out to current and potential customers, clients and influencers and develop and grow relationships.

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.

Interact meaningfully and authentically

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.

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.

Read [this blog](#) by Click's social media expert Faye Lambert for more suggestions on how to grow your social media audience.



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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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CONSIDER SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING OR SOCIAL COMMERCE

[Social media advertising](#) is a big deal at the moment as it allows you to create engaging and shareable micro-targeted ads. With sites such as Facebook and Pinterest featuring ‘buy now’ buttons, it’s even possible to use social media as an additional sales platform.

Measure, test and adapt

As with any strategy, your social media strategy needs to be flexible enough to adapt to your continually changing objectives and priorities.

Regularly analyse performance

There’s a wealth of analytical information available at your disposal that allows you to track your performance metrics. Each platform has its own native analytics or insights function (some better than others) that you should be monitoring regularly.

If you want to get even more granular and customise what you track (for example, identifying which shares are leading to the most downloads or conversions), you can use [Google’s custom URL builder](#) to give you this visibility in Google Analytics, and allow you to make data-driven decisions about future social media strategy.



Keep an eye on competitors

This should be an ongoing activity. Competitors with high social activity are likely to be reaching a wider audience and have higher customer satisfaction levels. A comparison of top level activity across popular social networks could look like this, depending on your target market.

A detailed guide to competitor analysis and benchmarking for all aspects of SEO as well as social media can be downloaded [here](#).

Other easy ways to keep an ongoing eye on competitor activity:

- Sign up to their newsletter/blog alerts (perhaps using a generic address, such as Gmail or Hotmail).
- Like, follow and connect with them on social media so that you receive their updates in your news feeds. You can then study who they follow, who is following them and how they use this space to talk to your shared target market. Maybe they are initiating successful social marketing campaigns.
- Set up a Google Alert to keep tabs on your online business rivals and send alerts to your email inbox. You can use it to receive notifications each time your rival gets a mention.

Are you 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.

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 clickthroughs, will depend on the objectives of your social media strategy.

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.



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



EXPERTS IN SEARCH. SIMPLE.

ABOUT US

Located in North West England, Click Consult is a multi-award-winning search marketing agency with a focus on organic (SEO) and paid search (PPC), with over 70 professionals employed and with a portfolio of over 60 clients from across the UK, Europe, Americas and Australia.

Click was named Best Digital Agency in 2017, adding to its long list of other awards and accolades, and also ranks within both RAR's and Econsultancy's 'Top 100 Digital Agencies', and Prolific North's 'Top 50 Digital Agencies'.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Blog

Click Consult regularly posts actionable insights on its blog – dealing with all aspects of search marketing. From technical SEO to PPC, content marketing and Analytics advice, the Click Consult blog has something for everyone of any ability.

eBooks

Click Consult produces in depth eBooks on aspects of search marketing on a regular basis, dealing with the latest best practices, changes to standard practices, methods of improvement and more.

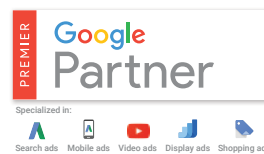
Infographics

Sometimes what you need is a quick point of reference about complex subjects. Thanks to its team of highly talented designers, Click Consult is also able to distil its vast experience into easy to understand visual content.

Follow us on [Google+](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#) or [LinkedIn](#), or to find out what Click Consult can do for you, call:

0845 205 0292

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