

Post Responsibly: *Social Media Do's and Don'ts for Businesses*



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There is no doubt that maintaining a valid presence on social media is essential to businesses in all industries. Although this is an essential part of business, very few business owners, especially those who are in businesses that are not related directly to the tech industry, have little time to truly learn how to navigate the treacherous waters of social media. There are all kinds of unwritten rules that are being changed constantly which affect the durability of a social media campaign. In short, if you do not know what you are doing, you are better off completely leaving social media alone then you are trying to simply throw up a Facebook or Twitter page and begin posting random things.

Fortunately, there are many resources that are made specifically for businesses and business owners who are not technically savvy. This document will attempt to coalesce the most effective of those tips and tricks into a single place. Below are some of the ways in which you can create an effective social media campaign for yourself by posting effectively.

Tip one – Make sure that all of your social media networks are connected.

One of the most effective tips for people who are not technically savvy is to let the silent networks that are already in place automate your posting for you. All of the major social media networks have the ability to connect to each other so that you only have to post one time on one network. The post will then show up over multiple networks and you will be able to access all of your followers at once.

The easiest way to access this hidden network inside of social media is to. This is a typical process for the sign-ups in all of the major social networks, including Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, MySpace and others.

Tip two – understand the definition of "spam."

You may have heard of the term "spam" before. There are many definitions of spam; however, the only definition that you need to remember is that spam is defined by the recipient. If someone does not like your content or the posts that you are making, they will interpret it as spam.

All of the major social media networks have feedback mechanisms which allow users to block spam. This is bad enough, but what is even worse is that your entire account can be blocked if enough people interpret your postings as spam. One of the main aspects of creating an effective social media presence is to make sure that your content is not viewed as spam. There is no way to ensure this for 100% of the people that you will touch online; however, there is a way to minimize the damage from people who are actively looking to create trouble for you and your online marketing campaign.

First of all, you must realize that there are individuals known as "trolls" online. Trolls are individuals who simply look to make trouble, no matter what. These are the people who will report you to the major social media networks and attempt to get your account blocked for no other reason than it is funny to them. For this reason, you should not try to reach the maximum number of people with your posts. You should make sure that your targeting individuals and social leaders with an interest in your product or service. This will limit the number of trolls that you invite into your social networks.

The way that you keep out random users who will try to get your accounts blocked on the major social media networks is to limit the keywords that you use. Localize those keywords so that in your posts, you are always commenting on something that is relevant to your industry as well as your local market. This way, even if you are brought up on charges of spam by a troll or by a business competitor, you will have plenty of evidence that you are creating relevant content. Your accounts should be restored if they are blocked if this is the case.

Tip three – Lookout for business competitors who are working online trolls.

It is in the best interests of your competitors to mark all of your content as spam and try to get your accounts blocked online. Understand that this behavior occurs and is simply a part of doing business online. In order to avoid this, you should make sure that you have an eye on all of your editors. There are many tools online that will allow you to monitor the activity on your social media accounts. You should be able to locate the IP addresses and the identities, in some cases, of people who are reporting you and commenting on your posts. In this way, you will be able to block IP addresses that are giving you trouble.

This leads directly into tip four – you should not rely completely on social media networks if they are not connected to your own website.

Keep in mind that the major social media networks are not there for your benefit. They are there to collect information for themselves so that they can provide that information to their advertisers. You must connect all of your social media networks to a website of your own so that you can do the same type of information collection.

Part of posting responsibly is making sure that at least one in every 10 posts draws readers back to your website. You should have an email capture or some other kind of tool to get their information so that you can create your own lists outside of social media.

Tip five – Make sure that you are not overselling on social media.

Because you must constantly be aware of people and business competitors who will try to identify your content as spam, you cannot give a link back to your website or make a direct sale in every post that you place on social media. You must provide relevant information about your industry so that people see you as an expert. This is especially important during the critical first few months that you have your new social media pages online. During these first few critical months, the automated systems of the major social media networks will have you under a sort of probation: This means that your pages can be much more easily blocked for spam. You will also not receive the same type of credibility in search engine rankings as you will when your page gains a few years.

Because of all of these factors, make sure that you are providing relevant information for your audience in each and every post. This includes the posts in which you direct users back to your website. You must give them a reason to go there – make sure that you are having a special sale or discount for people who sign up for your website so that there is always a value added that cannot be interpreted as spam.

Tip six – Have fun with your social media audience.

Not everything should be all business, although you definitely want to make sure to keep all of your posts relevant. One of the best ways in which businesses have been able to increase their social media presence is to combine relevant information with humor. Many businesses will link their Facebook pages to YouTube videos that they have placed comedic videos on with an advertisement to their services, for instance. These types of videos are great advertisements for a business, as they can be re-blogged because of their comedic value as well. As a matter of fact, it is this type of viral activity that will expand your social media audience faster than any paid advertising that you can do.

Tip seven – Understand the constantly changing rules of social media platforms.

Part of posting responsibly is understanding that you are facing a constantly dwindling rate of effectiveness on the major social media platforms. As the larger platform such as Facebook and Twitter attempt to go public (or in the case of Facebook, have already gone public), they have a vested incentive to make sure that your posts reach less people unless you pay them to reach the maximum number of social media. For instance, an unpaid post on Facebook will only reach 10% of your likes at the time of this writing. In order for your post to reach anything higher than 10%, you will either need to pay Facebook or find a way to increase your likes. There are many programs online that can help you do this.

Other rules that you should be careful of include certain formatting rules on Twitter. If you place direct links in more than 50% of your twitter posts, you face the possibility of having your account banned, especially if the account is new. Make sure that you are using keywords to target individuals on Twitter when your account is new, not tweeting them directly using the @ symbol.

All social media websites have these types of unwritten rules that you must find out by either making the mistakes yourself or going on message boards that are dedicated to observing these rules and identifying them for new businesses.

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