

Step 5 Continued

When should you be posting?

There are many neat tools to show you the best time of day to post to Facebook, Twitter, and more. These tools look at your followers and your history of posts to see when your audience is online and when historically have been your best times to share.

Twitter – 1-3pm weekdays

Facebook – 1-4pm and 2-5pm weekdays

LinkedIn – 7-8:30am and 5-6pm Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday

Tumblr – 7-10pm weekdays and 4pm on Fridays

Instagram – 5-6pm weekdays and 8pm on Mondays with a sweetspot at 6pm

Pinterest – 2-4pm and 8-11pm weekdays with weekends being the best

Google+ – 9-11am weekdays

Step 6: Analyze, test, and iterate

The more you post, the more you'll discover which content, timing, and frequency is right for you.

How will you know? It's best to get a reporting tool, or use the analytics built into the social media site.

These tools can show you a breakdown of how each post performed in the important areas of views, clicks, shares, likes, and comments.

Set a benchmark. After two weeks or a month of sharing, go back through your stats and find the average number of clicks, shares, likes, and comments per post. This'll be your benchmark going forward. You can come back and update this number at any time as your following and influence grows.

Test something new. Try a different type of post, time of day, tone, or topic, and see how this post performs compared to your benchmark.

Did it work? If your test performed well, then you can implement the changes into your regular strategy. And once your test is over, test something new!

Step 7: Automate, engage, and listen

The final piece of a social media marketing plan involves having a system you can follow to help you stay on top of updates and engaged with your community.

To start with, automate your updates. Tools like Buffer and Hootsuite allow you to create all the content and updates that you want to, all at once, and then place everything into a queue to be sent out according to whatever schedule you choose. Automation is the secret weapon for consistently excellent sharing, day after day.

Social media requires engagement, too.

When people talk to you, talk back. Set aside time during your day to follow-up with conversations that are happening on social media. These are conversations with potential customers, references, friends, and colleagues.

Create a system for listening.

Tools like Mention will send you an alert every time you're mentioned online, and you can rely on custom searches and email alerts for mentions on specific networks, too.

Get social media inspiration from industry leaders, competitors, clients.

Turn to your competitors for inspiration when it comes to what content types and info gets the most social media engagement. Use social media listening to see how you could distinguish yourself from competitors and appeal to consumers they might be missing.

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300 Orchard Street
Fayetteville, NY 13066

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Keys to Starting Your Own Business in Onondaga County

Step 1: Develop a Business Concept

- What is my product/service?
- What does my product/service do?
- How is it different or better than other products/services?
- Who will buy the product/service?
- Why will they buy the product/service?
- How will the product/service be promoted and sold/offered?
- Who are my competitors?

Step 2: Forming a Legal Business Structure

There are many ways a business venture may be structured. The three general legal classifications are: sole proprietorship, partnership and corporation.

The Fayetteville Free Library has numerous books that review the various legal structures you may adopt to form an enterprise. Check the Library Catalog for legal guides to starting a small business.

A number of websites have helpful guides for selecting the form of your company:

Findlaw's Small Business site has a good explanation of "Incorporation, Legal Structures, and Business Formation."

Harbor Business Compliance provides a comprehensive guide on how to start a business in New York.

Business.gov is the U.S. government's site for legal and regulatory issues, as well as services just for businesses. This page offers information on choosing a structure for your business.

Step 3: Registering a Business Name

Once you have selected a legal structure for your business, you need to file papers with the right government entity. If you are incorporating, you might have a lawyer help you with this, or you could refer to one of the Fayetteville Free Library's books that guide you through the process. If you are registering as a sole proprietor or partnership, you are encouraged to consult a SCORE representative to review the steps involved.

Following are links straight to the government agencies that handle incorporations and registrations:

Empire State Development- <http://esd.ny.gov/SmallBusiness.html>

New York State's Corporation and Business Entity Database allows you to search for any business incorporated, currently or previously, in New York State. This is a good way to determine if your business name is already being used.

Even if you do not intend to incorporate, but still would like to do business using a name other than your own, you need to register your business. The form to file, Form X-201, is referred to as a "DBA" (doing

business as) and it must be filed with the county clerk located at 401 Montgomery St, Syracuse, NY 13202.

To create these images, consult a social media image size chart that will show you the exact breakdown of dimensions for each photo on each network. To make it easy, use a tool like Canva, which comes with prebuilt templates that set the proper sizes for you.

For text, make sure to customize the bio/info section of your profile. Creating a professional social media bio can be broken down into six simple rules.

1. Show, don't tell: "What have I done" often works better than "Who I am"
2. Tailor your keywords to your audience
3. Keep language fresh; avoid buzzwords
4. Answer the question of your potential followers: "What's in it for me?"
5. Be personal and personable
6. Revisit often

Step 4: Find your marketing voice and tone

Start with questions like these:

- If your brand was a person, what kind of personality would it have?
- If your brand was a person, what's their relationship to the consumer? (a coach, friend, teacher, dad, etc)
- Describe in adjectives what your company's personality is not.
- Are there any companies that have a similar personality to yours? Why are they similar?
- How do you want your customers to think about your company?

At the end of this exercise, you should end up with a handful of adjectives that describe the voice and tone of your marketing. Consider this to keep you on track: Voice is the mission statement; tone is the implementation of that mission.

Cultivate a voice that delights your customers, then your customers will be thrilled to spread the love about you.

Step 5: Pick your posting strategy

What's the ideal amount to post per day? How often should you post? When should you post? What should you post?

So much of the social media experience is about your individual audience and niche. What works for you might not work for me, and you never know until you try.

What should you be posting?

Images are ideal.

Image posts get more views, clicks, reshares, and likes than any other type of post.

When you know what works, place these different types of updates into a consistent strategy.

Start with the basic five types of updates:

- Links
- Images
- Quotes
- Reshares
- Plain-text updates

Choose a "staple" update, a single type that will make up the majority of your shares.

Create a 4:1 ratio of sharing: for every four "staple" updates, publish one different type for variety.

How often should you be posting?

Some of the factors that might impact your specific sharing frequency may include your industry, your reach, your resources, and the quality of your updates. The social network you're using will have its own best practices, too.

If people love your updates, you can typically always get away with posting more.