

Content + Consistency = Social Media Success

Harness the power of social media to grow your business

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These days when you have a question you “Google” it, and when you’re seeking input from others you take to the social networks. Make no mistake, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, YouTube and other sites have a valid place in an IT solution provider’s social media strategy. Increasing your company’s online presence will help your business “get found” when users are seeking information. But, where should you begin?

Your strategy should start with content. Decide what type of content will best engage your ideal customer, what channels you’ll use to provide this content, and how you can measure the results.

Start Blogging

You know your typical customer pain points. Social media can help you position your company as a resource – the first place customers turn to when they are seeking a solution. It all starts with a company blog and running a keyword analysis. Once you determine the keywords your ideal customers are searching, you can integrate them in your content and start popping up in search results. Integrate these keywords into a set of Frequently Asked Questions about your product, service and common industry hot topics. Then, take it a step further and create blog posts and videos based on each FAQ.

A company blog will act as the hub of your social media marketing – with all of your other activity as connected spokes. In addition, your blog provides excellent SEO (search engine optimization) opportunities. Each blog post becomes an additional Web page, and each Web page is another opportunity to rank well for a specific search term or questions your ideal customer is typing into Google right now. If you want to rank well for a specific search term, start blogging about it!

Spread the Word

Once you’ve created a company blog, you’ll need to find the best way to spread the word. Will you find your ideal customer on Facebook, or perhaps Twitter or LinkedIn? Although Facebook has the largest user base, IT solution providers may have better luck focusing their efforts on LinkedIn, where the power of social media lies in personal connections, or Twitter, where industry topics are searchable.

Make sure you and your staff have comprehensive LinkedIn profiles and start participating in industry groups inclusive of prospects and customers. This will help your company build relationships, establish credibility and provide a resource for some free market research – like that company blog you just created. Twitter is similarly a great platform for sharing links to blog posts, videos or other resources your company recommends.

Stay the Course

If the reason you’re using social media is to grow your business, then you need to determine the measureable steps to landing a new client. Using a tool like Google Analytics will allow you to track

where your site traffic is coming from, and whether a specific visitor took a step down the sales funnel. These steps might include signing up for a free email newsletter, downloading a white paper or online tool, or completing a contact form. Facebook and Twitter also provide rich reports on how users are responding to your content.

And, remember that Rome wasn't built in a day! Many businesses get frustrated when they discover that one blog post, video or status update didn't result in a noticeable uptick in sales. It's important to remember that social media requires a consistent level of commitment to see results. Stay the course and keep on top of your strategy by aiming to produce two or three blog posts and one video every week for six months before you really start to see significant results. This goal becomes even more achievable when you take the time to create an editorial calendar, thus mapping out the topics and correlating conversation starters you want to cover each week.

Succeed the First Time

When you do your social media homework, you'll see better results. Here's a list of tools and resources that will help you increase your understanding of social media and how it can help you grow your business:

Websites and Blogs

- [Social Media Examiner](#): great social marketing content delivered daily
- [flyte blog](#): web marketing and social media blog written for SMBs
- [Mashable](#): the CNN of social media, providing 24/7 coverage on the social media landscape

Tools

- [Google Alerts](#): get daily updates on your industry or targeted keywords
- [TweetDeck](#) or [Hootsuite](#): manage multiple accounts on Twitter, Facebook and other platforms
- [ScreenFlow](#) or [Camtasia](#): screen capture tools make it easy to create how-to videos
- [Google Analytics](#): track where your traffic is coming from and which posts generate interest

For those who are committed and ready to proceed, the complete [Quick Start Guide to Social Media for Marketing](#) is available for free to all CompTIA members. Want to learn more about CompTIA's channel training programs? Contact Blythe Girnus at bgirnus@comptia.org.

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