

# HOW TO DEVELOP AND USE A SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

BC Ministry of Agriculture Marketing Guide Series



## Social Media is More Than Marketing

### WHY SOCIAL MEDIA IS IMPORTANT?

The world of social media has introduced an entirely new way of advertising. Traditional newspaper ads, magazines articles, brochures, radio ads and TV spots are no longer the media channels of choice. Increasingly consumers seek engagement, conversation and opportunities to share information with others. Retailers and foodservice operators are recognizing the power of social media and buyers are starting to request Social Media Marketing Plans from their vendors.

Your social media goal as an organization is to cultivate a culture of engagement, innovation, and collaboration. Creating and nurturing relationships with customers and employees are top priorities for social success. As with most things worth doing, social media is hard work: there are no short cuts to success. It is also not free. There is time and effort required and the social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, etc.) are becoming increasingly more 'pay to play' oriented. Done well, social media can have a very positive effect on your business.

Social media is a key player in more than just marketing. It is an opportunity to go above and beyond with customer service. It is the tool used in online reputation management and the communication medium of choice for many current buyers. This makes managing social media a top priority.



### WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM(S) SHOULD YOU USE?

Keep in mind that every social media platform you choose to have a presence on is going to cost time and money. It is important to start with a realistic strategy that focuses on engaging with your target audience.

When evaluating platforms consider the size of the active user base, the level of engagement amongst the users and their demographic profile. As these networks can experience meteoritic growth, you will want to conduct an online search to find the most current platform statistics available for these criteria. Below is a snapshot of active users by platform as of April 2016.

### PLATFORM SIZE COMPARISON

Social Media Network	Active Users Worldwide as of April 2016 (in millions)
Facebook	1,590
QQ (Communication App in China)	853
WeChat (Communication App in China)	697
Instagram	400
Twitter	320
Pinterest	100

Source: Statista.com

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## Social Media Requires Time and Effort

### DEMOGRAPHICS AND ENGAGEMENT

Most social media networks provide opportunity to reach almost all audiences across all channels. However, there are still a few channels that are dominated by a particular demographic such as Instagram by the 16-24 year old group.

Engagement or interaction rates across social networks also vary. You may find that Snapchat is best for engaging Millennials or that Facebook is better suited to interacting with 35-55 year old females. The key is to find the network where your target audience spends their time.

A few of things to consider:

#### 1. 'Hang out' where your audience is hanging out.

Evaluate your current social media accounts and keep what is working. Review your top competitor's social media profiles. Who are they talking to? Are they getting the engagement that you wish your company had?

Ask your customers. Which social media channels would they prefer you to use?

#### 2. Do what you love.

Pick a social media channel you like to 'hang out' on and for which you find it relatively easy to produce content. Do not make YouTube the main company social media presence if making videos is not something you love to do and do well. You are going to be spending a lot of time in the channel(s) you choose, so choose wisely.

#### 3. Delegate.

What can you delegate? Social media is hard work. Daily posts, weekly blogs and other activities require time and effort that you may not have. Consider who on the team can assist with managing the company's social media voice or if necessary hire a social media consultant.

A solid marketing plan with clear definitions around your target audience and goals is fundamental to successfully hiring out your social media. Remember, they will be acting as the voice of the company online.

**Tip** "Hang out" where your audience is hanging out.

### GETTING STARTED

Developing a social media marketing plan provides a company with the process needed to align the social media goals with the overall business goals. Before beginning, review the current business strategy to be clear on: what the company goals are; who the audience is; and what success looks like. Knowing the overall company vision will ensure that the social media marketing plan stays focused and on track.

The following four step process outlines how to develop a social media marketing plan:

1. Define Your Goals.
2. Conduct an Audit.
3. Build a Calendar.
4. Measure, Adjust, Repeat.

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## Tip Align Social Media with Business Goals

### 1. DEFINE YOUR GOALS

Social media goals should follow the S.M.A.R.T. approach and be SPECIFIC, MEASURABLE, ACHIEVABLE, RELEVANT and TIMELY.

**SPECIFIC** - What do you hope to accomplish?

Every company approaches social media differently. The goal might be to build followers or drive traffic to a website. Ensure your social media goals are aligned with core business goals and base them around traffic, leads and sales not just metrics such as 'Likes' and 'Retweets'.

Some examples are:

- Increase engagement on Facebook by 5%
- Convert 25% of prospects into sales
- Grow Twitter followers by 20%
- Increase conversion rates by 5%

**MEASURABLE** - What does success look like? How is it measured?

Examples of quantifiable goals are: 'shares' (# of times a post is shared by another individual), 'post reach' (# of unique people who saw your content) and 'page impressions' (# of times a post from your page is displayed) in Facebook; or 'mentions' (anytime a Tweet contains your @username in the body of the Tweet) or 'followers' (# of people who receive your Tweets) in Twitter.

Begin by writing down the steps needed to achieve the desired goal.

For example: If your objective is to get 1,000 new Facebook followers in six months, a milestone might be to achieve 166 new followers a month. Evaluate your progress at the end of each month. If after two months, you have only achieved 50 new followers, re-evaluate and make adjustments to your tactics. Be careful not to make hasty decisions. A reasonable rule of thumb to follow is to evaluate weekly but only take tactical action once a month.

If your Facebook followers have not grown at the desired rate, then evaluate the current plan. Right now you have your team posting one photo 5 days/week between 9am - 11am, following two new Facebook pages and sharing two posts each day.

What can you do? Given that the goal is to grow followers, it makes sense to increase the number of people or pages followed from two per day to 5-10 per day. Share at least two posts from each new follower and focus on building relationships by searching for Facebook people and pages that are interested in like-minded topics and are likely to follow you back.

This is an example of just one tactical change that could be made to get you closer to achieving 1,000 new followers.



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## Social Media is the Company's Voice

**ACHIEVABLE** - Is the goal possible?

Keep your objectives within the realm of the possible. It might be a company dream to have 100,000+ followers on Facebook by the end of the year, but is it attainable?

Checking your past performance will quickly reveal recent growth rates and indicate if achieving 100,000+ followers is possible or if perhaps a target of 10,000+ followers is more feasible.



**RELEVANT AND REALISTIC** - Is the goal realistic?

Does the company have the time and resources necessary? Does the goal fit the current company situation? This is a good place to note any possible obstacles that might come up and prevent you from achieving the goal.

**TIMELY** - What is the time frame for this goal?

Determine when success metrics will be measured right from the start. This will enable regular and timely decisions to be made.

Give your team enough time to achieve the goal by setting a date and not working towards 'someday'.

S.M.A.R.T. Example	
Assume that you want to increase your brand awareness on Facebook because you have identified it as an excellent channel to connect with your target audience.	
<b>SPECIFIC</b>	Ask the right questions. Who? What? Why? "We will grow our Facebook followers to inspire our target audience with lifestyle and recipe options that promote GoWild salmon jerky."
<b>MEASURABLE</b>	Our target follower base is 5,000.
<b>ATTAINABLE</b>	Based on our current growth rate of 200 followers per month, this is achievable.
<b>RELEVANT</b>	Facebook is an active community of 35-55 year old females interested in lifestyle, travel and food. GoWild salmon jerky is a healthy (lifestyle), travel friendly food.
<b>TIMELY</b>	Deadline is December 2017.
<b>GOAL</b>	"We will grow the GoWild Facebook page from 1,000 followers to 5,000 followers by December 31, 2017."

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## Baseline Data is Key to Measuring Success

### 2. CONDUCT AN AUDIT

Establishing a baseline of where your company currently is in social media is fundamental to measuring future success. Review all company profiles. Get to know the audiences on each, the engagement levels, and the posts that worked. Here's how:

#### Create A Template

Build a simple spreadsheet, or use an online template to track the following:

- Profile information (name and URL);
- Posting frequency;
- Follower count;
- Referral traffic; and
- Channel specific metrics.

#### Compare Percentage Change

You will want to have a column to measure the percentage change month over month and year over year. Comparing December data to November data is less meaningful than comparing December of the current year to December of the previous year.

Not all social media channels use the same metrics so you will likely require a different template for each. For example, there is no point in tracking 'Retweets' in Facebook.

#### Identify Top Performers

After reviewing all of the company's social media channels, it should be obvious which are performing better than others. Once you have found the top channels, dig deeper and find the posts that receive the most engagement.

When you know what type of posts consistently generate impact with your followers, look for any patterns around the timing of those top posts. This will give you a clear picture of the type of post that works best for each social media channel. Then it is a matter of creating more of that type of content for your content calendar which is discussed in a following section.

**Tip** Measure year over year not just month over month.



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**Tip** Keep Company Goals Front and Centre

## 3. BUILD A CONTENT CALENDAR

A content calendar is a tool to organize various forms of content such as videos, blogs, infographics and apply a schedule to the delivery of these media forms. It is a planning document that helps your team act deliberately and intentionally when connecting with your audience.

When thinking about how to organize your content calendar ask yourself what your business is trying to achieve. The answer to this question will lay the groundwork for your content calendar. Your goal may be to increase leads, build brand awareness or improve your search engine rankings. The content calendar will help you organize what needs to be done every month to achieve your goals.

Content calendars are an excellent tool for collaboration. Invite your team to brainstorm ideas, contribute articles and assign tasks.

When you have your content planned, it gives you an opportunity to review what was done in the past, analyze how successful it was and identify new content ideas for the future.

It is a single focus point for the entire team that works to keep everyone up to date and on message.



## SAMPLE CALENDAR LAYOUT

Title	Author	Topic	Deadline	Time	Images	Channels
<b>Monday</b>						
Easy Weekday	Joan S.	5 ways to use GoWild	12/8/2016	6:00	Screenshot A	Blog, Facebook, Twit-
Increased Produc-	Joan S.	Press Release - New	12/8/2016	9:00	new-facility.jpg	Twitter, LinkedIn
<b>Tuesday</b>						

Calendar template courtesy of Hootsuite

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**Tip** Measure Sales, Influence, Momentum

## THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND

- Keep the company goals front and centre. It is easy to get side tracked in social media.
- Understand what your customer wants and give it to them in manageable pieces. Think about your popular posts and build variations. Allow room to experiment with new styles of posts as you grow your audience. You never know what might resonate.
- Know your audience profile.
- Determine how often you will post.
- Decide who on your team will be responsible.
- Evaluate the company's assets of images and graphics. Social media is a visual medium. Having a strong repository of top quality images, graphics and/or video will go a long way towards a successful social media presence. If images, graphics and videos are not currently part of the company asset list, build in time and budget to make it happen.



## RESEARCH WHICH HASHTAGS TO USE

Hashtags are part of almost every social media channel. Learning how to use them effectively can boost your social media efforts significantly. They categorize your content, offer an opportunity to brand your company and specific campaigns, as well as make your content more easily discoverable by people interested in like-minded topics.

Keep an eye on which hashtags are part of your most popular posts and note which ones your competitors are using successfully.

### *Sample Tweet:*

14g of protein, 12g of carbs, Mother Nature's candy - #GoWild #SalmonJerky #BuyLocal



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## Measure Tip Sales, Influence, Momentum

### 4. MEASURE, ADJUST, REPEAT

Measuring the impact of social media is not as simple as measuring a direct sale although that can be one aspect of it. Depending on the goals you started with, you might also be measuring indirect sales such as influence as well as momentum.

You might choose to use a combination of free and paid tools. Google Analytics is a free tool that does a good job of identifying traffic sources and tracking conversions. You will have to install some tracking code in your social links to do this but it is worth the effort, and can be done with Google's URL Builder.



Each social media platform will have its own form of analytics or tracking just as it will have its own metrics. Compare the data with what you expected. Look at industry benchmarks, other campaigns and competitors. How are you doing? The key is to measure regularly and to review your data in context. Look for trends, not just absolute numbers so that as the company's influence grows and you see evidence in increased indirect conversions and momentum, you can adjust tactics accordingly.

If you are not sure which analytics to use to measure which social media channel, do a quick Google search, read the reviews or ask around. There are plenty of options available. Be aware that not all measurement options keep data forever or have the same reporting capabilities.

Some examples are:

**Google Analytics** – Free tool that tracks website, social media and other marketing initiatives with the use of tracking code.

**Facebook Insights** – Free analytics built into every Facebook account. You must have 30 likes to access it.

**Twitter Analytics** – Sign up for Twitter cards or become an advertiser.

**Pinterest Analytics** – Available with a business account.

**Instagram Analytics** – Available with business profile.

### MORE INFORMATION

See the Ministry of Agriculture's Marketing Guide Series for more information and additional topics by visiting <http://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/industry/agriculture-seafood/statistics/market-analysis-and-trade-statistics>

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