

5 STEPS TO A WINNING SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING PLAN

<http://www.melissabarker.com/5StepSocialMediaMarketingPlan.pdf>

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What is the single most important action you can take to improve your chances of success in implementing a social media campaign? Create a well-researched and carefully thought out **social media marketing plan**, which lays the foundation for executing a winning social media campaign. Although there is no concrete roadmap to crafting an effective social media marketing plan, there are guideposts that can direct you along the way. The following 5 Steps provide the guidance you will need to develop a successful social media marketing plan.

Step 1: Establish Definitive and Measurable Goals. Social media marketing goals include, improving brand awareness, search engine rankings, relevant site traffic, and conversions performance (e.g., sales for a product or service), as well as reputation management and engaging with consumers.

The challenge for some of these goals, such as engaging with consumers, is to make them specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and timely (**SMART**). In addition, objectives must be established for each type of social media platform in order to maximize results. The following are examples of SMART goals for four popular social media platforms: blogs, microblogs (Twitter), social networking sites, as well as image and video sharing sites:

Blogs:

- 20% improvement in the ratio of posts to comments (i.e., visitor's comments/posts=conversions) within six months
- 30% increase in total number of unique visitors within six months
- 20% increase in average number of unique visitors within six months
- 40% growth in total number of views within six months
- 10% growth of RSS subscribers within six months
- 5% growth of RSS feed requests within six months

Microblogs (Twitter):

- 20% growth in number of followers within 30 days
- 30% growth in the number of retweets (message amplification) within 30 days
- 10% increase in click-through-rate (CTR) of the links posted in tweets within 30 days (Hint: Observing which types of links garner the highest CTRs can help you tune your tweets to provide what your consumers with links they are interested in and, hence, further improve your CTR.)

- 15% increase in visits to Web site from tweet links within 30 days
- 10% growth in time on Web site from tweet links within 30 days
- 5% increase in Web site conversions (e.g., sales) from tweet links within 30 days

Social Networking Sites:

- 20% growth in the number of friends within five months
- 30% growth in the number of comments within five months
- 40% growth in the number of posts and comments in discussion groups within five months
- 20% increase in the ratio of comments on uploaded videos to number of videos uploaded within five months
- 20% increase in the ratio of comments on photos uploaded to number of photos uploaded within five months
- 30% growth in the number of comments left on profiles within five months
- 50% growth in the number of questions answered or asked within five months

Image and Video Sharing Sites:

- 30% growth in the number of images or videos viewed within four months
- 20% growth in the number of unique visitors within four months
- 10% increase in the number of subscribers to your channel or stream within four months

- 30% increase in the ratio of comments on images or videos to the number of images or videos uploaded within four months
- 15% growth in the number of embedded links to your images or videos (i.e., links from other sites to your images or videos) within four months
- 30% increase in average rankings of images or videos by viewers within four months

Step 2: Identify Your Target Market.

Who is your intended audience (target market)? Where do they hangout on the social Web? How do they participating on these social media platforms? Forrester Research's [Social Technographics Profile](#) enables you to use age, location, and gender to identify the type of activity people are engaged in on the social Web, such as create content, critique, collect, spectate, and so on. Depending on what they do, you can determine which social media platform they are likely to frequent. As an example, spectators are not likely to participate in social network like Facebook or LinkedIn, while they might watch YouTube videos and read blogs, but not comment on the posts.

Step 3: Conduct a Competitive

Analysis. What are the trends in social media (i.e., which platforms are growing, which are declining?). What needs are not being meet by your competitors? Who will be your main competitors? What are the best practices in social media marketing? Conduct a SWOT Analysis, identifying your company's strengths, weaknesses, along with the

opportunities and threats in the marketplace and economy.

Step 4: Design innovative strategies.

Select the optimal social media platforms to reach your target market. Then, construct a specialized strategy for each social media platform to achieve the tailored goals for each platform. Each social media medium has distinctive features and means of communication. For example, a corporate blog strategy will differ markedly from the strategy you use to achieve your goals on social network like LinkedIn. In other words, a one-sized strategy doesn't fit all.

Hence, you must adjust the following 8 C's of the Social Media Marketing Mix for each social media platform. Here are some suggestions on how to accomplish this feat:

- **Categorize** social media platforms by target market relevancy (i.e., the ones where your target audience resides)
- **Comprehend** the “rules of the road” on the platform by listening and learning how to behave, successfully spark conversation, and engage and energize the participants
- **Converse** by acknowledging and responding to other users of the platform, always remembering to be a contributor, not a promoter
- **Collaborate** with platform members as a means of establishing a mutually beneficial

relationships with the platform participants

- **Contribute** content to build your reputation and become a valued member, helping to build the community
- **Connect** with the influencers, so you can enlist them to help shape opinions about your product or service
- **Community** creation enables you to build discussion forums where consumers suggest ideas and receive customer support
- **Conversion** of strategy execution into desired outcomes (e.g., increased brand awareness, website traffic, sales, etc.)

Step 5: Monitor, Measure, and

Tune. Accessing your progress, then tune your marketing plan based on the feedback to optimize goal achievement. **Reevaluate and adjust** your social media marketing plan to account for the ever changing nature of consumer tastes and the social Web. For example, if the number of viewers and subscribers to your blog are declining, you can adjust your content to more closely match your target market's interests. If the number of comments on your blog posts is declining, you can adjust your strategy by asking a question at the end of each post that inspires people to respond. In short, planning and executing a social media marketing campaign is a never ending cycle. You should constantly monitor and tune your strategies to maximize the impact of your campaign.