

VIDEO 1: WHY IS SOCIAL MEDIA IMPORTANT TO INBOUND MARKETING?

Hi There. I'm Markiesha, from HubSpot Academy, and welcome to the social media class.

This class will cover why social media is a key component of inbound and how to go about amplifying your content. For a while, businesses questioned the value social media could have for their business.

Could it really help them connect with prospects and build meaningful relationships, or would it be a trending topic of the past?

Well, today, there are more than 2 billion active social media users worldwide and this number is projected to grow at a rate of 25% year over year.

And if that number isn't telling enough, 9 out of 10 U.S. businesses maintain an active presence on social media.

So what does this mean for you?

It means it's time to get social!

Social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and more, help to get your content in front of the right people and spread the word about your business. It can help increase the number of people who view your content and visit your website, by optimizing your reach and awareness. After all, it can be easy for users to get distracted. So it's important for you to engage your audience by sharing remarkable content that is relevant and adds value. Keep in mind that consistency is key to retaining an active audience. You want an audience that can't stay away and is eager to invite their network of friends and colleagues to the engaging activities taking place on your social media accounts.

In 2015, it was reported that 66% of businesses believed that social media marketing is a core strategy for their business. Social media is a powerful inbound tool that can help you build a strong foundation for your business. And content is an essential component that will help you use social media to work your way through the inbound methodology. You can promote content across your social platforms to attract new visitors to your website or generate new leads for your sales team. Once these new customers are members of your online community, you can to engage with them and share delightful content that will turn them into life-long promoters of your company, product, service, or brand.

Today, businesses are using social media to drive traffic, generate leads, and build community relationships more than ever before, but this could lead you to wonder, where does social media fit into the Inbound Methodology? This one is simple.

Social media can be used at every stage of the inbound methodology. Use it to attract visitors by sharing remarkable content across channels. Convert new visitors into leads by offering opportunities for visitors to subscribe and receive updates or special offers. Close by acting on insights that you gather through social monitoring and provide value to prospects online. Delight customers by being a warm personality and creating unique ways to engage with audience members.

In the next video we'll take a look at how you can use social media to amplify your content by effectively implementing a handful of best practices.

VIDEO 2: HOW DO YOU AMPLIFY YOUR CONTENT WITH SOCIAL MEDIA?

Social media is a powerful tool for many reasons. Not only does it enable businesses to grow, but it also helps them see results when combined with other marketing tactics. Now that you know why social media is important and how it fits into inbound, there's a few things to keep in mind before you start building out your social profiles and sharing all of your remarkable content. These are the best practices you need to know in order to successfully amplify your content on social media.

The first it to Set SMART Goals. Next, you'll want to create a remarkable social media content plan that includes the content you'll amplify to your audience. Then you'll want to be sure that you meet your audience where they are, and move on to use optimization often. Lastly, always be sure to tie your social media efforts back to return on investment or ROI.

So what does it take to maximize the reach of your content with social? Well, it starts with understanding the goal of your overall social media strategy. Setting goals will help you determine a clear direction for your social media efforts and tie your results back to Return On Investment.

When setting goals for social media, start by asking yourself, "what would I like to achieve through social media?"

You may want to increase traffic to your blog or increase the number of newsletter subscribers or even increase the number of online purchases.

No matter what you are seeking to achieve be sure that your goal can help push your social media efforts forward.

A way to evaluate if your goal makes sense for social media is to do the SMART goal check. To do this you have to assess your goal based on 5 important criteria.

Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely.

For example, let's say a company set the following SMART goal for social media, increase overall website traffic from social media by 30 percent from 100,000 visitors to 130,000 visitors by November 30th, 2016.

This goal is specific because it clearly defines the type of growth that is expected from social media efforts. In this example, this company would like to see visitor growth.

It is measurable because there are numbers that will help to quantify results. This goal is attainable if the company has achieved similar results in the past and has decided to allocate resources to help achieve this new goal.

This goal is relevant to the social media team and the entire company because increased site traffic is a primary focus for everyone and this goal is timely because it has an end date, meaning that there will be a finished line for them to cross! When this company does reach this goal they can pat themselves on the back, evaluate how their efforts performed, and come up with ways to improve for next time.

This brings you to the next best practice, which is to Create a Remarkable Social Media Content Plan.

You may have already learned that content is a fundamental part of inbound, which makes it a fundamental piece of social media marketing. Without content, social media wouldn't be as dynamic and engaging as it is today.

From videos about cats to captivating images of landscapes, and compelling stories that you can't help but share, content is the reason the social community keeps coming back in search of the next click, like, or share.

A social media content plan outlines the pieces of content you will promote and the social media channels you will promote them on. For example, your content plan may include blog posts, ebooks, webinars, and videos that you would like to amplify on platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn, or Twitter. But a remarkable content plan takes into consideration more than the promoted pieces of content and the platforms that will be used. It also seeks to make a lasting impression on audience members to keep them engaged.

A remarkable social media content plan will leverage content that clearly communicates your company's brand and values in efforts to connect with the audience and create an identity on that channel. It also executes on delivering helpful content that adds value to audience members. This can be done in a variety of ways. Provide a blog post on the most frequently asked questions of community members or invite members to attend an educational webinar on an industry-wide topic. One of the most important ways to provide helpful content is to use a link to direct audience members to the right place, such as a link to a blog post or landing page.

One of the final components of a remarkable social media content plan, is to share various types of content that are relevant to each channel or platform. For example, YouTube is a video-sharing platform that allows users to upload videos to its site or watch videos on-demand. LinkedIn, on the other hand, is a social networking site, that is used for professional networking. Because of the differences between these two networks, a 30-minute video would be better suited for YouTube than LinkedIn, but a blog post that summarizes the key takeaways from the video could be good piece of content for LinkedIn. Understanding the types of content that perform well across each network will help you understand the best way to amplify each piece of content on social.

There are numerous social media platforms that have a growing number of users.

Facebook has 1.59 Billion users, beating out YouTube for the top slot. While LinkedIn Inches past Instagram with 414 million users, leaving platforms like Twitter, SnapChat and Pinterest room to grow, And the list could go on.

As a result, this is where social media can become overwhelming. Your mind might be racing. You're wondering how your business can get active on all of these networks, and most importantly, should you be active on all of these networks? Don't worry. Take a deep breath, because we've arrived at the next best practice, which is to Meet your audience where they are.
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There are over 3.9 Billion active users on social media. In fact, if you take a look at the social media giant, Facebook, that social platform sees more than 1.5 Billion daily search inquires from millions of users who are actively searching for information about the next company they'll do business with. Your company could be exactly what they're looking for.

But, the truth is you don't have to be everywhere on social media as long as you are somewhere on social media.

The best way to discover the social media platforms that your company should be active on is to identify the platforms that your personas are active on.

You can do this by surveying your audience members or doing research on how your industry is currently using a specific platform. Another way is to run an experiment by creating a profile on a network and testing how well your audience engages with your company through that channel.

Consistent publishing is a key factor when identifying the platforms that your audience is most active on. By sharing content and updates regularly your audience will feel confident engaging with you because you've established a strong and active presence. You can discover the best times to publish updates and promote content by experimenting with different publishing times. By varying the times that you post on social, you'll be able to discover the times when your audience is most active and continue to share content during those times. You can work to increase engagement by monitoring keywords that your audience uses on social media that are relevant to your business. Consider monitoring brand terms like your company or product name or brand adjacent terms used by buyer to describe your business. Also monitor for customer needs, pain points, or challenges. This will enable you to respond to customers quickly and delight them publicly for everyone to see.

After you meet your audience members where they're at on social media, you'll want to be sure that you are doing all that you can to maximize your results. This brings you to the next best practice.

Use Optimization Often. Optimization is not a new word for inbound marketers. Think about it, there's Search Engine optimization, Conversion rate optimization, Keyword optimization, and even content optimization. In the world of social media, there are four key ways to use optimization to achieve the best outcome.

The first is Platform. Next is Message. Then Visuals. And finally Results.

The social media platform. Each social media network was created in order to deliver a different type of social experience for audience members, which means each social media channel should be treated differently. Take a minute to think about your favorite social media platform, maybe it's Twitter or Facebook. Now think about your least favorite social media platform. Consider the differences between the two. The differences may be subtle but they are distinct enough to cause you to interact with each platform differently, which is why marketers must use each platform in a different manner.

When you optimize content for a social media platform, you must consider how a user is going to engage with your content on that platform. Will they be using that platform to read? To watch? Or simply to download and save for another time? Will they be scrolling through your content on their desktop or on their phone? Do they engage by leaving a comment or by favoriting or liking what you post? With information like this, you can go on to optimize for the message.

The message that is delivered is another way to optimize on social. It's not always what you say, but how you say it.

Most social media platforms have character limits, which push marketers to be creative and concise. With this in mind you'll want to be sure to create a clear message that may be witty, compelling, or even contain a strong call-to-action. This will help peak the interest of audience members and result in increased engagement.

Using visuals to capture the attention of audience members on social media has become increasingly important. In early 2016, it was reported that content with relevant images gets 94% more views than content without relevant images.

Additionally, social messages that contain video are shared 1200% more than text and links combined! This means that whether it's an image or a video, visuals drive audiences to act. When optimizing visuals for social media, pay close attention to the recommended dimensions for each platform.

Stay away from images that are pixelated or grainy and instead use clear photos that are easy to distinguish.

You can even get creative and make your own unique social images on platforms such as Canva or Pablo. Or if you're searching for beautiful and free stock images you can try sites such as PhoType or Kaboompics.

Lastly, you want to always optimize for results.

Optimizing for results requires you to revisit the SMART goals that you set for social media and ensure that your content promotion strategy is tailored to help you achieve that goal. For example, earlier in this video this SMART goal was shown:

increase overall website traffic from social media by 30 percent from 100,000 visitors to 130,000 visitors by November 30th, 2016. In order to see results in this scenario, this company will need to amplify content with social media that links directly to a page on it's website.

In turn, this will help to maximize the number of potential visitors who come from social media. Optimizing for results is not always about the number of visitors or leads that come from social media. It can also refer to gaining new audience members and establishing an engaging audience. No matter what your aim, always look for the best way to achieve the best outcome.

One thing to note, is that when you are seeking to optimize your social media efforts, it is important to test your ideas and discover the best optimization strategy for your content on social media.

This brings up the final best practice, Tie your efforts back to ROI, which is short for Return on Investment. This is where you get to see how your efforts on social media have paid off, quite literally. Calculating your ROI for social media is similar to how you would calculate ROI for other departments like marketing or sales. You first need to quantify how many resources, like time, effort, and money, you are investing in social media and then determine how much value you get in return by connecting the results back to the overall goals of the business.

Important social media metrics that can help you calculate the value of your efforts on social media are Reach, Engagement, and Audience Growth.

Reach is used to measure the size of your potential audience. This includes people who are directly and indirectly in your social network.

Engagement measures the number of interactions with your brand, such as likes and shares.

Audience growth refers to the number of new audience members you attract.

Each of these metrics can be used to help you tie your efforts back to ROI and prove the value that social media can have on your inbound marketing strategy.

Let's look at an example, let's say a social media manager spends 6 hours per week on social media. At the end of the week, he or she generates 1500 new visitors and 225 net new leads. The marketing team at this company has a lead-to-customer conversion rate of 4%, which means 9 of these leads will go on to become customers. Each customer has a lifetime value of \$1,000, which means that this week, social media helped earn \$9000 for the business in only 6 hours! Awesome job! There are many ways to calculate ROI that are unique to each business, so be sure to find the one that fits your company and then apply it to your efforts on social.

Time for a POP Quiz: "Which of the following is NOT considered a way to optimize your content for social media?"

- Delivering a powerful message
- Achieving successful results
- Including captivating visuals or
- Monitoring keywords and phrases.

It's not A because you always want to deliver a powerful message that entices audience members to click the link. You also always want to amplify your content to achieve successful results, so it's not B.

Including captivating visuals is a great way to optimize social media messages because visuals are proven to increase engagement, so the answer couldn't be C.

So that leaves D. If you guessed D, monitoring keywords and phrases, you are correct. While it is recommended to monitor what audience members say about your brand, this does not directly help with optimizing your content on social media.

So there you have it, everything you need to know about how to amplify your content on social media. We covered a bunch during this video, and so let's take a moment to recap the best practices.

Start by setting SMART goals for social media. This will help set a clear direction for how to amplify your content on social. Next, create a remarkable content plan. You can do this by showcasing your brand values, sharing content that is relevant and helpful to your personas and audience members. Third, meet your audience where they are. You don't have to be on every social media platform as long as you are on the right one. Next is to use optimization often. There are many ways to optimize on social media to ensure the best result, but still be sure to test your ideas to find the best way to get to achieve the best outcome. And lastly, always tie your efforts back to ROI to see how your efforts have performed.

In the next video, we'll discuss an example of what these best practices look like in action!

VIDEO 3: WHAT DOES AN INBOUND SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY LOOK LIKE?

Now that you've learned how to amplify your content on social media and the best practices that will help you be successful. It's time to take a look at a real life example.

YouEarnedIt is an award winning flexible employee engagement software platform that is used by companies to recognize people, foster happiness at work, and reward employees for being great. When they first started, they had two major hurdles to overcome.

The first, was brand awareness. While they had a product that they believed in and a wonderful company story, along with a company culture that's hard to beat, YouEarnedIt struggled to build awareness and get traffic to their website.

In addition to this problem, they needed to build a lead generation machine that would help convert these new visitors into qualified leads.

Let's take a look at how they leveraged social media to overcome these challenges.

Content serves as a major piece of their social media strategy. From behind the scenes photos to blog content that served their buyer personas, and messages that showcased some of the many ways they've delighted their customers, YouEarnedIt has created a remarkable content plan that incorporates brand values, provides helpful content, and is unique to each platform.

They also manage to publish content consistently. There's hardly a day that goes by when a message isn't shared from one of their social media accounts. By publishing frequently, YouEarnedIt has established a strong and active presence which makes it easy for audience members to engage with them.

For example, they shared this blog article on LinkedIn titled, *Creating Connections for a Millennial-Friendly Company Culture - a blog article about Recruiting Trends*. As you may know, LinkedIn is a professional network where users go to seek jobs, find new recruits, or learn about the skills that are needed in an industry. This blog post was a great fit for LinkedIn because it details trends in recruiting, perfect for LinkedIn's audience. Another example is this video that was shared to their Facebook page.

Facebook is a great platform for companies to use to build a community around their company culture. YouEarnedIt does this with a video about employee appreciation as well as fun photos of employees and happy customers. These types of posts are exactly what can help to build a strong brand on social media and demonstrate company culture.

In another social message shared on LinkedIn, YouEarnedIt has created a compelling message that starts with a question about employee retention and goes on to encourage audience members to think critically about their own employee retention strategies. While this message doesn't include a strong call to action, the final line of the message uses the term "research" to entice audience members to engage with the message.

Facebook and LinkedIn are not the only platforms they're on. They also leverage audiences on Twitter and Google Plus to share content and updates. This is excellent execution of how YouEarnedIt has met their audience where they're at. Rather than being on every social media platform, they maintain an active presence across the four channels their buyer personas engage in the most. They have also done a great job at optimizing each post by including links that direct audiences to blog posts and landing pages, which are proven ways to increase site traffic and generate new leads.

After nine months of effectively managing these social media channels and combining these efforts with other inbound tactics, YouEarnedIt was able to achieve a 250% increase in organic site traffic, which is an incredible return on investment! What an amazing way to see how social media can impact a company and produce real results.

So what are you waiting for? Go ahead and get social!