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Social Media Content as a Form of Art

Your Ultimate Guide from Idea Creation to Publishing

Would Shakespeare have been as famous of a playwright if his masterpieces were limited to 140 characters? Or Leonardo da Vinci if his paintings had to have certain dimensions? While that is something we'll probably never find out lest we go back in time and impose such restrictions upon them, it's rather clear that times have changed. We are now in an age where haikus and carefully structured visuals make better social media content than lengthy plays or gigantic paintings ever could.

To be masters of their trade, social media managers should be able to build an engaged and enthusiastic community, prove that social media supports the company's or brand's goals, balance self-promotion with content marketing, maintain a strong presence on the relevant networks, and incorporate outbound efforts. Some brands even have global audiences and launch campaigns that span over several years. Being a social company implies more than one person doing the job. It's a team effort and every department has a role to play in it.

Tweets and live video hosted directly on social networks have the potential to complement text messages and TV broadcasts. It turns out

that you, the social media manager are the true heroes of the Information Age, the ones carrying out the meaningful messages directly from brands to the ones wanting to read or watch them.

Since not only the social media profiles, but also the updates themselves need to leave the impression that your brand is likeable, trustworthy and competent, you need to focus on several aspects. Who would you like to read, hear or watch your message? Do you know how often to send out messages on each social network? How could you continuously come up with new ideas? Are you using the most appealing content format for your audience?

You will find the answers to all of these challenges in the following chapters, along with content performance tracking methods and tools that can facilitate the process. To reveal the practical side of social media content planning and publishing, we've also included 5 interviews with experts who deal with this topic on a daily basis.

Enjoy the read and consider all aspects detailed below when planning and publishing your social media content!

Researching Your Social Media Buyer Personas

First things first, social media managers should consider the recipients of the messages they convey. The desirable outcome of any social media marketing campaign is to increase brand awareness, determine people that your brand's product or service is a viable solution for their problem, or to hit business goals consistently. For that, you'd have to make sure that the message gets to the right audience. In this day and age, when it's getting more and more difficult to cluster people, you can draw an image of your potential customers with buyer personas.

Defined as a fictional, yet realistic representation of your ideal customer, buyer persona profiles are based on market research that's correlated with real information coming from your current

customers, or types of customers you are thinking of to sell your product or service to.. Buyer personas not only give insights as to who would use your product or service, but also provide your marketing efforts with a sturdy backbone. Having a buyer persona in mind, the person you are talking or writing to becomes a bit more real in front of your eyes. You will know at all times where to focus your marketing and sales efforts, how to further develop your products and how to align social media marketing goals with your brand's objectives. But what if you've just launched your startup and don't have any existent customers to gather info from? Then you should consider demographics, behaviour patterns, motivations and goals, as seen below.



Sample Sally

BACKGROUND

- Head of Human Resources
- Worked at the same company for 10 years; worked her way up from HR Associate
- Married with 2 children (10 and 8)



DEMOGRAPHICS

- Skews female
- Age 30-45
- Dual HH Income: \$140,000
- Suburban

IDENTIFIERS

- Calm demeanor
- Probably has an assistant screening calls
- Asks to receive collateral mailed/printed

If you're thinking of creating and publishing social media content, chances are that you already have an idea of who would ideally read it. In this context, your buyer persona or ideal customer is someone who:

- Reads your content
- Reacts by sharing or engaging with it
- Visits your website
- Converts by purchasing your product or by subscribing to your service

Still, do you know who these people are, where they live and how many of them are there? [If not, we have several recommendations for you.](#)

Buyer Personas Are the Common Denominator of Your Target Audience

The wide range of preferences nowadays makes bringing all potential customers under the same roof seem impossible. Fortunately, the buyer persona concept brings together people with common goal-oriented behaviors, experiences and points of view. Start out by creating buyer personas based on the answers to the following questions:

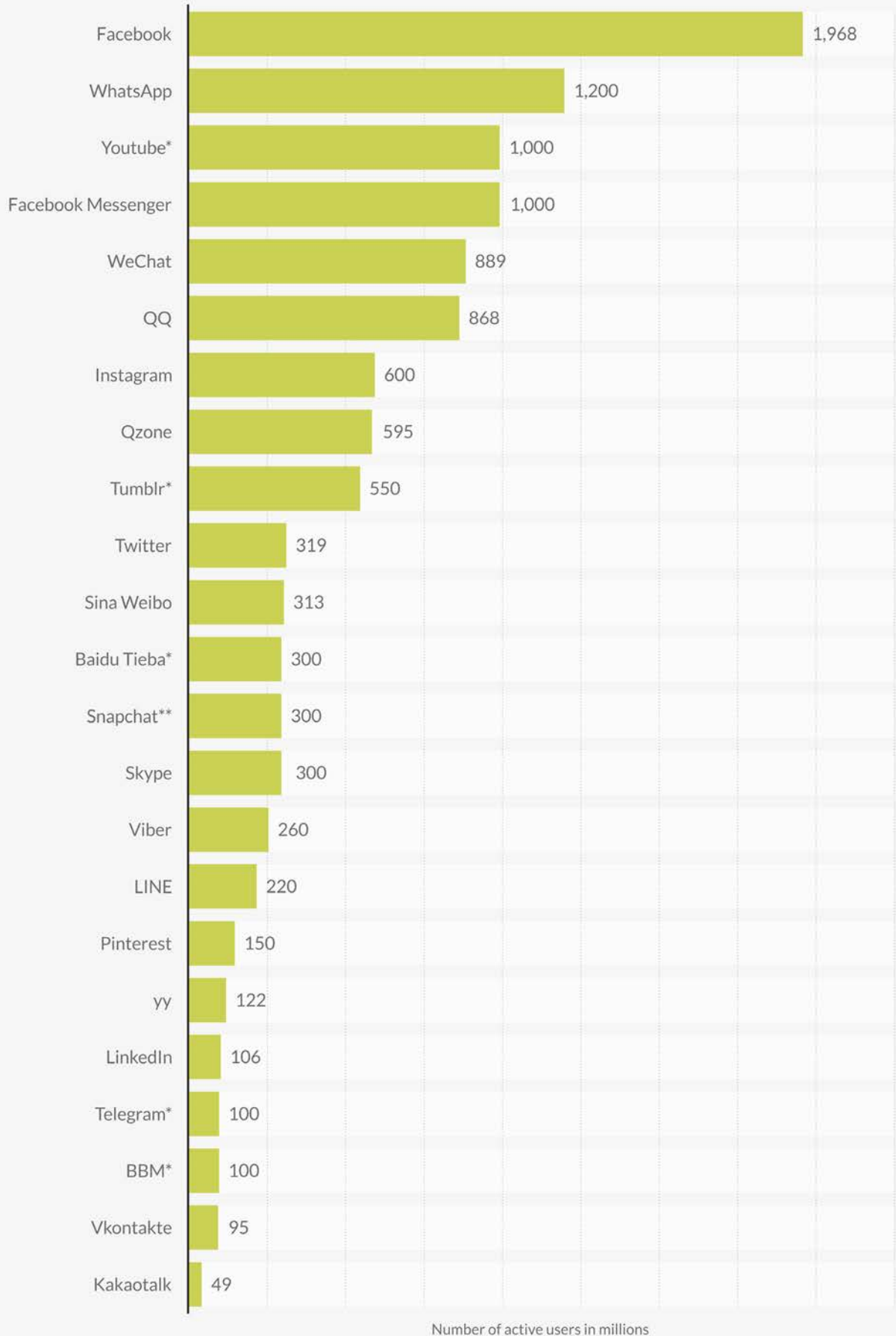
- Where do they live?
- How old are they?
- What position do they have and how much experience?
- How does a typical day in their life look?
- What pain points can your products or services address?
- Are they aware of the problem to be solved?
- Is your solution the first they're trying?
- Would they invest in your suggested solution?
- What are their values and what goals are based on that?
- What is their ideal experience when using your product?
- What are their objections on your solution?

The above socio-demographic details, along with the relationship they have with your product will help you set your marketing goals with greater ease. Still, there are two burning question for social media marketers: "What social network does my buyer persona use?" and "How many potential customers does my brand have?". We're exploring the answers up next.

What Platform Is Your Buyer Persona Most Likely Using?

Posting content randomly, hoping that your audience would see it, is far from the right approach. In fact, you need to go the other way around. Find out what social network your buyer persona is most likely to use and build up from there.

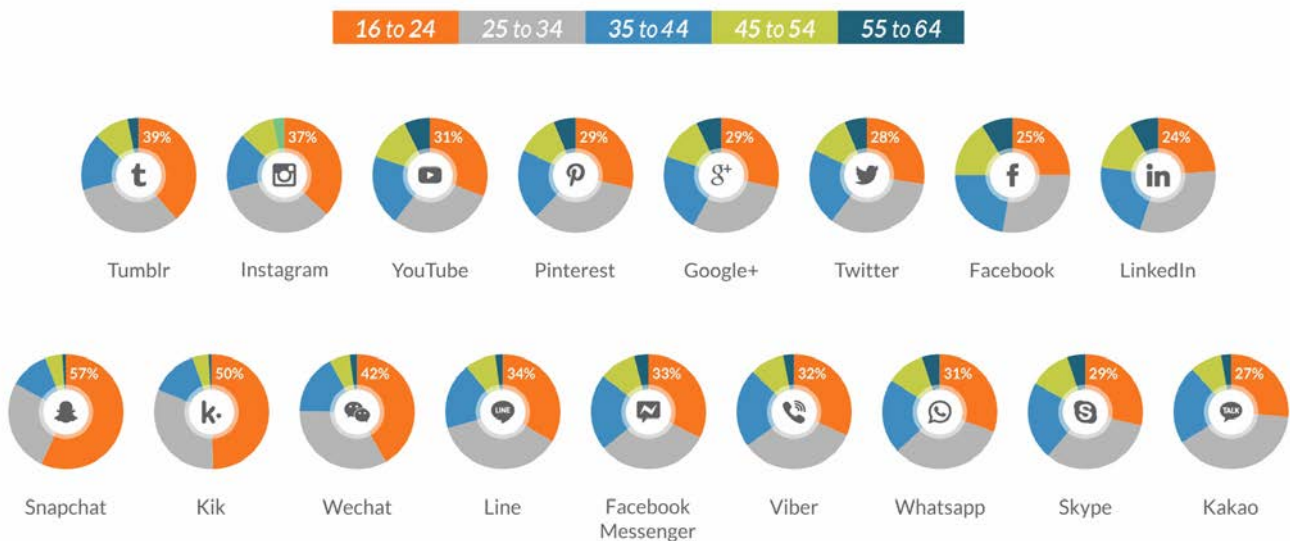
Leading social networks worldwide as of April 2017, ranked by number of active users (in millions)



Source:
Facebook; We Are Social; WhatsApp;
Twitter; Tumblr; LinkedIn; Google
© Statista 2017

Being the largest social media platform by far, dominating in most regions of the world, it's no surprise that Facebook has become a one-stop shop. Still, you shouldn't start focusing on any platform without conducting some proper research. You are recommended to identify and focus only on the platforms that make sense to you and your audience. Other aspects to be considered are the resources you can invest in ongoing editorial content and campaigns. You should also conduct some research to identify the most popular social media platform in the geographical area that you're targeting. Age and gender are additional criteria that might be relevant when choosing what social network to focus on.

ACTIVE USERS OF THE TOP SOCIAL PLATFORMS AND MESSAGING TOOLS, BY AGE



Source: <http://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/>

Why these demographic details? Because age, gender and location influence a lot how people across the globe live and how they consume social media content. Moreover, different genders have different interests that change furthermore from one period of life to another. This can be taken further by considering education, profession and income. After all, you want to make sure that the ones reading your updates and reacting to them are also capable of purchasing your products or services. To provide the most enticing social media content to your audience, you first have to understand how it thinks, how it behaves, and where it would feel at its most natural.

[Pew Research Center](#) revealed in a 2016 study that 79% of internet users (68% of all US adults) are on Facebook. Only 32% of internet users (28% of all US adults) are on Instagram, which suggests that this social network is far more popular among teenagers. As far as the gender is concerned, 38% of all online women use this visual content platform, as opposed to the 26% of all online men.

79% of online adults (68% of all Americans) use Facebook

% of online adults who use Facebook

All online adults	79%
Men	75
Women	83
18-29	88
30-49	84
50-64	72
65+	62
High school degree or less	77
Some college	82
College+	79
Less than \$30K/year	84
\$30K - \$49,999	80
\$50K - \$74,999	75
\$75,000+	77
Urban	81
Suburban	77
Rural	81

Note: Race/ethnicity breaks not shown due to sample size.
Source: Survey conducted March 7 - April 4, 2016
"Social Media Update 2016"

PEW RESEARCH CENTER

32% of online adults (28% of all Americans) use Instagram

% of online adults who use Instagram

All online adults	32%
Men	26
Women	38
18-29	59
30-49	33
50-64	18
65+	8
High school degree or less	27
Some college	37
College+	33
Less than \$30K/year	38
\$30K - \$49,999	32
\$50K - \$74,999	32
\$75,000+	31
Urban	39
Suburban	28
Rural	31

Note: Race/ethnicity breaks not shown due to sample size.
Source: Survey conducted March 7 - April 4, 2016
"Social Media Update 2016"

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It's clear from the outset why LinkedIn is preferred by high-income earners and college graduates, as these represent 50% of the network's users. LinkedIn accounts for 29% of internet users, 25% of all US adults and 45% of all online adults, Keep these statistics in mind if you're targeting professionals.

29% of online adults (25% of all Americans) use LinkedIn

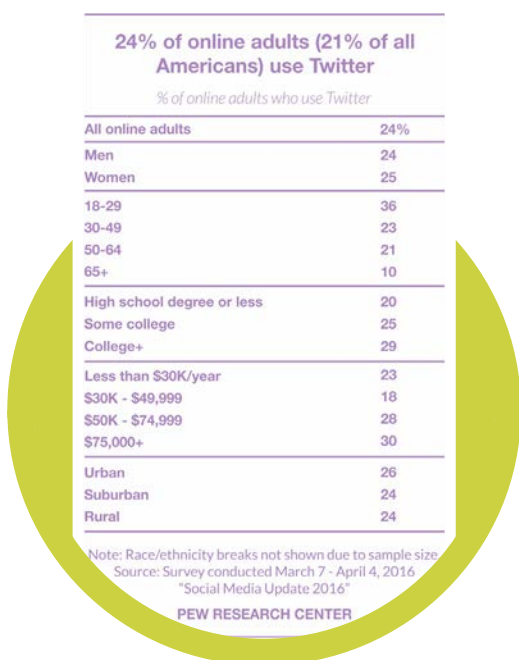
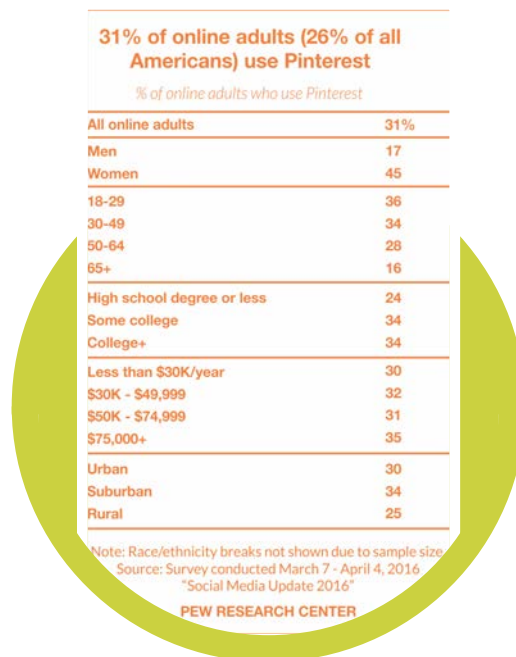
% of online adults who use LinkedIn

All online adults	29%
Men	31
Women	27
18-29	34
30-49	33
50-64	24
65+	20
High school degree or less	12
Some college	27
College+	50
Less than \$30K/year	21
\$30K - \$49,999	13
\$50K - \$74,999	32
\$75,000+	45
Urban	34
Suburban	30
Rural	18
Employed	35
Not employed*	17

Note: Race/ethnicity breaks not shown due to sample size.
*Not employed includes those who are retired, notemployed for pay, disabled or students.
Source: Survey conducted March 7 - April 4, 2016
"Social Media Update 2016"

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Next, Pinterest is used by 31% of internet users and 26% of all US adults, but these numbers have been the same since 2015. This visual content platform is preferred by 45% of women and 17% of men.



Twitter doesn't enjoy the same popularity, as only 24% of internet users and 21% of all US adults have an account on it. Even though 36% of people aged 18-29 use Twitter, brands targeting younger demographics should first look into Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat. On those networks the percentage of young adults is much higher. Since 29% of internet users with a college degree are on this microblogging platform, it seems to be more popular among highly educated people.

If your brand focuses on a different country than the U.S., you might think that the above statistics are completely irrelevant. That is not the case, however. As the most advanced major market for the 5 social platforms detailed above, the U.S. is the main trendsetter on social media. However, if you would like to find out more about your specific market, research platforms such as [Statista](#) or [Forrester](#) could come in handy.



Sizing Up Your Buyer Persona

Now that you've sketched your buyer persona profile and know at least in theory why they'd need your solution, it's time to figure out how many people fit this profile. Here's one of the situations when the paid advertising platforms of each social network could come in handy. It suffices to simulate a campaign in order to get an estimation of how many people match certain criteria.

In terms of general filters, advertising platforms tend to have similar approaches. You first need to select the area that you will target. You should resume to countries or states, but can also choose specific cities, if you want to pinpoint your audience. While you will be able to pick cities on Facebook Ads and LinkedIn, Twitter's list of targetable cities still misses such big names as Frankfurt.

Next, select the gender and the age range of your buyer persona. Now, you could stop here or you could go further, depending on all of the characteristics of your buyer persona. You also need to take into account the specifics of each social network. For example, LinkedIn allows you to target people working in companies of a certain size, while Facebook goes into more detail regarding your relationships. In fact, you can find all of Facebook Ad targeting options in this [infographic](#) by WordStream.

However, narrowing people down is a double-edged sword. Select too many criteria and there won't be that many people left to target. On the contrary, too broad of a match will make it difficult for you to select the ones truly interested in what you have to offer. Stick to a number of interests and ad targeting options that provides enough potential customers to sustain your business.

How to Sketch Your Buyer Persona

Provided that you've located and sized your buyer personas, move on to creating their profiles. Using [buyer persona templates](#) available on the internet might be a good starting point, but these don't always cover all the details that are relevant to your product or business. As such, in most cases you're better off creating custom buyer persona profiles.

In terms of tools, you might need Powerpoint or Keynote for organizing buyer persona information in a visually appealing way. As for the roles, you might require a professional designer to create any background images and illustrations of the persona. The details are usually refined by a business analyst, but that role isn't mandatory, if you know what to look for.

Organize related details in groups, so that you describe the persona's:

- Background (job title, experience, education, marital status)
- Demographics (gender, age range, income)
- Behaviour (preferred social networks, communication channels and use frequency)
- Pain points (how your product or service could improve their personal/professional life)
- Objections to your solution
- Types of content s/he would react to

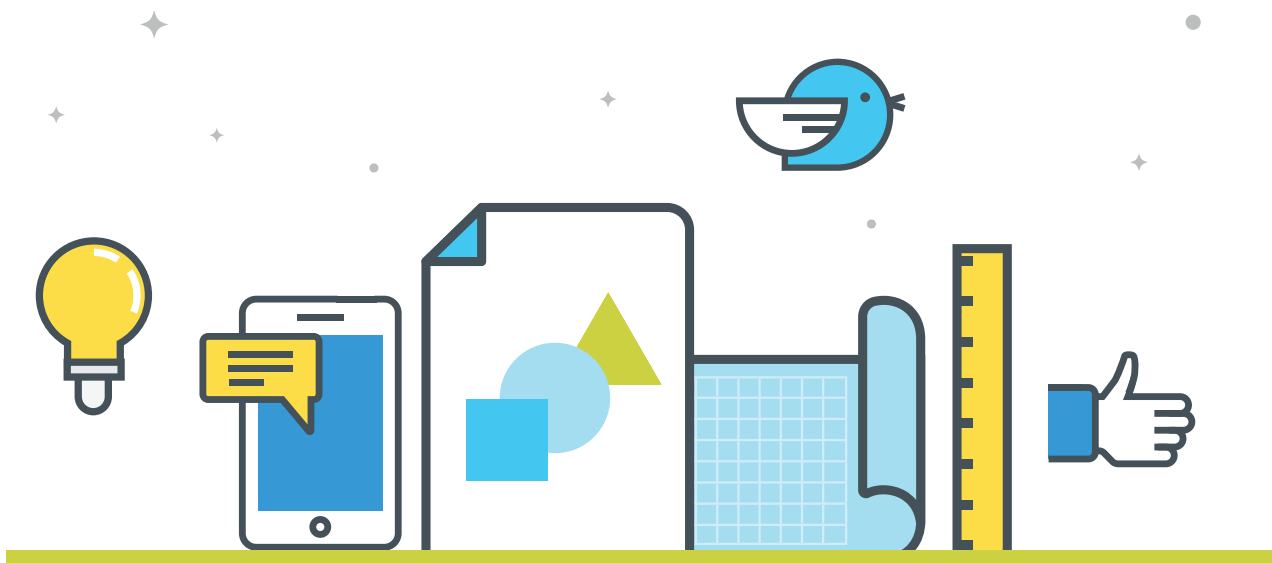
Now that you know the demographic and behavioral characteristics of your potential audience, as well as its size and location, it's time to start generating ideas. Upon being published, the social media updates based on these ideas will help you engage this audience, provided that the content is enticing enough. Not to get ahead of ourselves, let's first take a look at how these ideas can be generated.



Pro Tip

Print your Persona profiles and hang them up in your office to face your personas every day or make the information available online like [in this example of paysafecard.](#)

Brainstorm and Manage Your Ideas for the Social Media Content Plan



In micro, small and medium-sized enterprises, social media content creation and publishing is often handled by one or two people, rather than an entire department. Company size apart, there will most likely be a need for a weekly social media calendar about the current highlights. The ones responsible with generating the ideas shouldn't have a problem finding sources of inspiration. The challenge lies elsewhere, specifically in trying to envelop these ideas in enticing messages that will get audiences to interact with the

brands. If you got stuck with your content planning routine, gathering more people and giving the following brainstorming techniques a try might be the best solution you've got.

Mind you, not all brainstorming techniques are the same. You need to find the one that best suits your context. In other words, you have to consider your team's size, geographical distribution and members' personal traits. That being said, we've listed below 7 of the most popular brainstorming techniques.



Brainwriting

Brainwriting is a brainstorming technique focused on creativity that sets apart idea generation from discussion. As the team's leader, you need to make the topic public. What happens next is that the members of the team write their ideas down, exchange them, add to other people's ideas and exchange them once again. After 10 or 15 minutes, the team will discuss all of the ideas, as well as the contributions. As you might have imagined, this brainstorming technique is ideal for small teams. Taking this approach in a big company would take a lot of time, not to mention that centralizing the ideas to find the best ones would require a lot of effort.



Rapid ideation

Rapid ideation brings time constraints into play and deals away with overthinking, at the same time. You should share with the team details such as the budget, scope and deadline of the project. Only then you can set up a time limit for the brainstorming session. From here on, there's a certain degree of freedom, at least as far as the medium is concerned. Participants can write down their ideas using pen and paper, white boards, Post-Its, tablets, smartphones and anything in-between. Teams shouldn't spend more than 45 minutes on this, and should always correlate the time limit with the topic's complexity. This is definitely a brainstorming technique you should try if your team's brainstorming sessions are typically taking a lot of time.



Online brainstorming or brain-netting

Online brainstorming or brain-netting is an ideal solution for team members working from different countries. There are certain details you should take into account, such as the time zones and the medium used for gathering ideas. Working on the same project from different parts of the world could prove challenging, but there are ways to facilitate this. Emails won't cut it, as they're both time-consuming and difficult to centralize. Cloud-based document storage such as Google's G Suite and online collaboration tools can yield much better results.



Figuring storming

Figuring storming starts from the premises that someone famous is handling the problem brought up for discussion. Of course, important people have access to different types of resources, but it's still good to think about it. How would a renowned musician solve this problem? How about a head of state? You should give this brainstorming technique a try if you want to look at a topic with new eyes. Figuring storming seems to work particularly when if you're doing repetitive projects and the team can't escape a loop of idea repetition.



Round Robin brainstorming

Round Robin brainstorming even implies a particular spatial organization. The team stands in a circle and the team leader makes the topic public. Next, each participant discusses his or her idea, until the whole team has done so. You can then proceed to evaluating the ideas, in order to get the best ones to surface. Try out this brainstorming technique if you're running a small team including some members that keep quiet through usual meetings.



Starbursting

Starbursting is a rather unusual brainstorming technique, as it doesn't focus on generating ideas. Instead, the goal is to generate questions. Make sure that your team knows each and every aspect of your project before starting to work on it. Starbursting should bring to surface the kind of details that could get overlooked in typical conditions. This is the brainstorming technique to use if your team has the tendency to expedite things.



Stepladder Technique

The Stepladder Technique is a brainstorming method developed by Steven Rogelberg, Janet Barnes-Farrell and Charles Lowe. Its particularity is that it manages the way team members enter the decision-making group. All participants but two exit the room, and the remaining ones get to discuss their ideas uninfluenced. The next participant to enter the room will have to share his or her ideas before the initial members share theirs. Repeat this process until all participants are back inside the room. Choose this brainstorming technique if some of the team members are reluctant to sharing their ideas in large groups.

You can proceed to carrying the brainstorming sessions once you've identified a technique that matches your context. Using the ideas generated here you can create an outstanding social media content plan to entice your audience.

Pro Tip

Setup a fixed timeframe each week or bi-weekly for your content planning where you are focussing alone, in the team or with an agency consultant on your editorial calendar for the next period. If you recognise that you are lacking of new ideas after a time try to onboard colleagues from other departments in the company to brainstorm together.

Different Content Formats Involve Different Possibilities

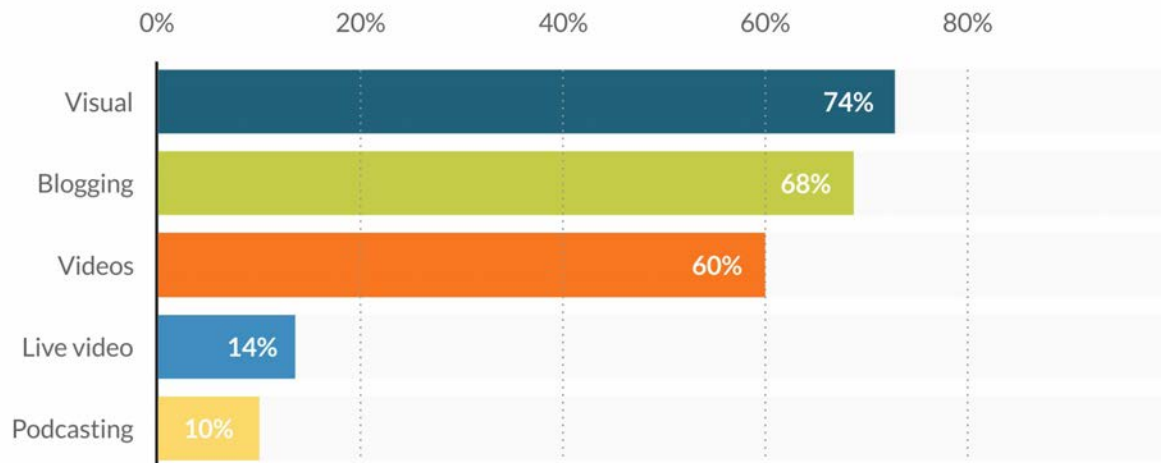
What's the best type of content for buyer persona engagement? Text, image, video, live streaming, podcasts? There's no single answer to this question, as studies have shown that we react differently to various stimuli. American educationalist Edgar Dale's Cone of Learning should give you a hint on the types of content you should focus on.

**People generally remember...
(learning activities)**

**People are able to...
(learning outcomes)**



Posting updates that contain only text is not unheard of, especially on Twitter, but this type of content is merely the foundation. Copy provides context and might even contain calls to action, but adding images or video enhances it immensely. As many as 74% of marketers rely on visual content (images, infographics, GIFs) for the social media updates of their brands.



Source: Social Media Examiner's [2016 Social Media Marketing Industry Report](#)

Because there is no universal recipe for appealing content, you might want to look into the specifics of your context. Reach and engagement metrics, something that we'll detail in an upcoming chapter, could pinpoint the content your audience reacts to. Each social media platform has analytics tools that enable you to analyze what content worked best. Was it photos, text updates, videos or something else?

That being said, industry statistics can act as guidelines. Between January and June 2016, the amount of [live videos streamed by businesses on Facebook Pages](#) increased sixfold. As for regular videos, the network has long since passed [8 billion views daily](#). That means that photos, the post type that accounted for [54% of Facebook updates](#) in 2013 must have lost some importance, while still remaining a prominent content type. Image posts still get 179% more interaction than the average Facebook update. Images also have a great impact on Twitter,

where updates containing them have a Click Through Rate higher by 18%.

It is estimated that [98% of LinkedIn updates containing images](#) lead to more engagement in the form of comments. On this platform, it's also possible to increase engagement by up to 200% by including links in the updates.

On social networks such as Instagram and Snapchat, it's impossible to post updates lacking visual content. The difference here is in the tone, as Instagram is intended for picture-perfect moments, while on Snapchat ad-hoc pictures fare better. Common features such as Stories or Live Video have thinned the line between these two in the recent past.

There are, again, many differences from one network to another, including the best time to publish on each.

Pro Tip

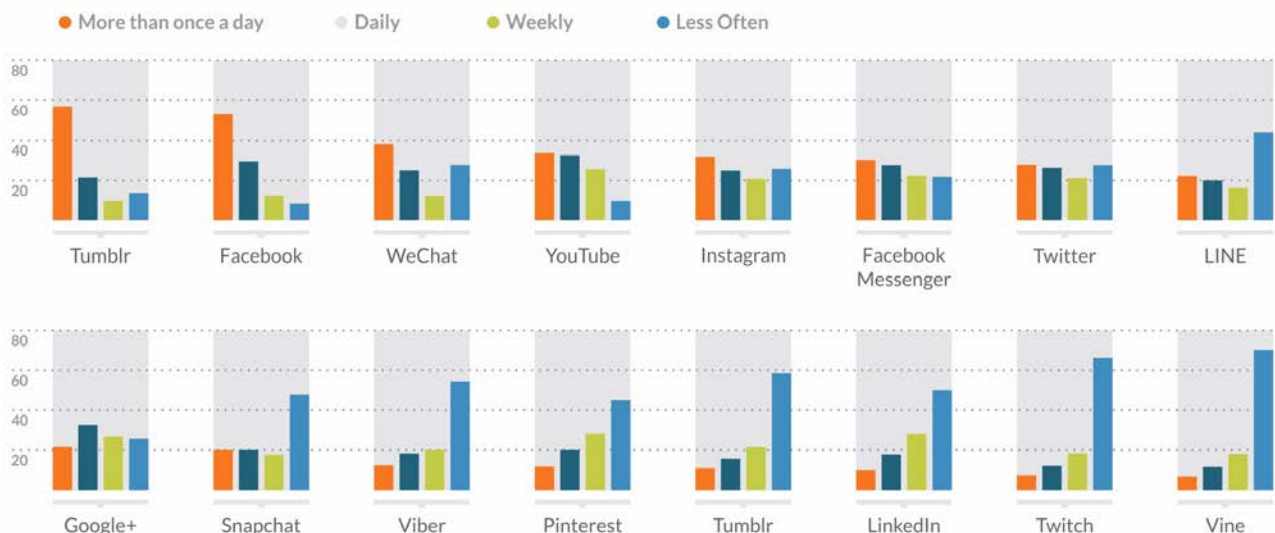
Plan your content formats within your possibilities and available resources. Try to find a good content mix by testing on which types your audience is receptive and engaging.

How to Pick the Best Time for Publishing Social Media Content

You might know what type of content works best on the social network your audience visits most frequently. Do you also know when and how often to deliver your message so that it's heard? Industry statistics indicate not only how often people visit each social network, but also on which days.

Frequency of usage

% who use each service on the following basis

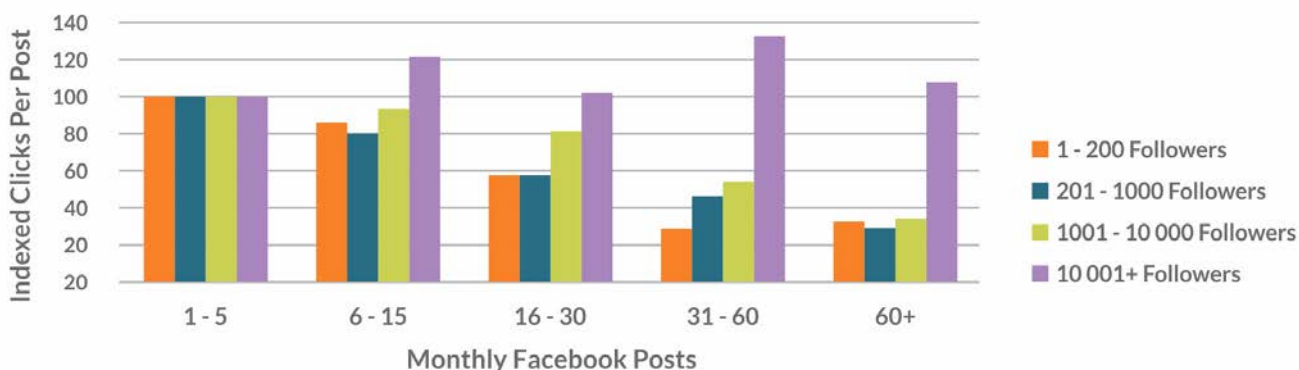


Source: [Global Web Index Social Summary Q4 2016](#)

Facebook Posting Frequency Recommendations

Neil Patel's recent contribution on [Forbes](#) suggests that this recommended posting frequency for Facebook Business Pages is once or twice a day. However, there is a catch. Posting once or twice a day maximizes engagement and the number of clicks for brands having upwards of 10,000 followers.

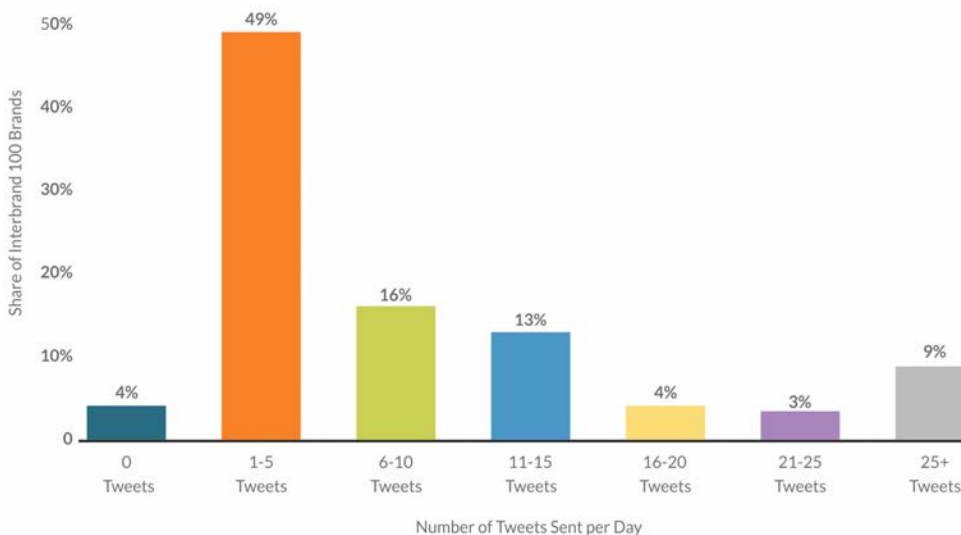
Impact of Monthly Facebook Posts on Clicks per Post



Businesses with a smaller following are recommended to set their priorities in terms of engagement or clicks. Updates posted twice per day can reduce clicks per post by 50%. On the contrary, posting 1-5 times per month could double the number of clicks, while also increasing site traffic. As for the best time to post, Hubspot claims that all days yield the same results, so long as the posts are published between 9AM and 3PM.

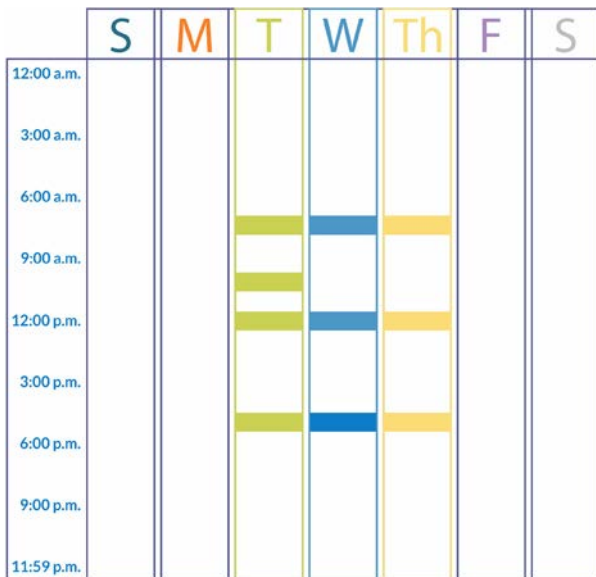
Twitter Posting Frequency Recommendations

Posting 1-5 tweets a day should optimize engagement, especially for the younger, highly-educated demographic. Simply Measured have carried out a research that suggests that the following numbers yield the best results.



A higher frequency won't have any adverse reactions, but can increase the number of responses. If you don't wish to spend a lot of time tweeting, you can always schedule the same tweet to go out multiple times using a social media management platform. Workdays bring the best results in most scenarios, provided that you publish your content between 12-3 PM and around 5 PM.

in LinkedIn Posting Frequency Recommendations



When it comes to the social network for professionals, the suggested days are Tuesday to Thursday, with a focus on 7-8 AM, 5-6 PM and at noon. Since this is a work-related social media platform, your brand should post mainly on workdays.

As such, the recommended number of monthly updates is a minimum of 20. Reaching this number will maintain audience engagement and awareness, two aspects that shape your social media content's performance.

Instagram Posting Frequency Recommendations

[Union Metrics](#) suggests in a recent study that the key to mastering visual content updates on Instagram is consistency. This network is not subject to any frequency rules, but once you start posting here, you're recommended to maintain the same pace for as long as possible. Doing so will maximize engagement, especially if your posts go out on Mondays at 7 AM.

🕒 Monday at 7am is the best time for you to post.

Content posted on Mondays at 7am receives 30% more engagement than your average post. Consider posting more during this and other shaded areas for more engagement with future posts.



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Pro Tip

As you can see, the recommended posting times rarely match between social networks, so finding ways to manage them all from a single place can help you deal with the clutter. Social media management platforms could help you stay organized, while also providing you a bird's-eye view of your activity and performance.

Creating Your Social Media Content Plan



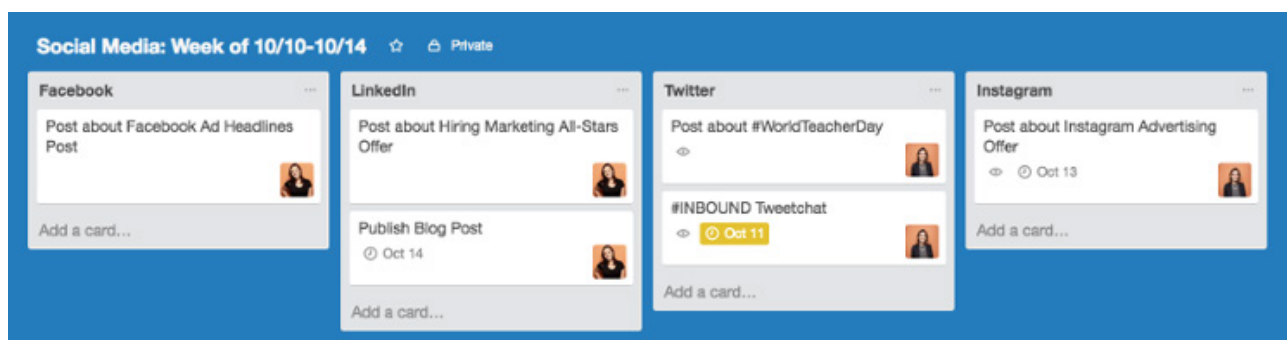
Before getting started, your social media content plan needs to be aligned with your business goals. That way, you will make sure that every message that you send out there is perceived as being yours, regardless of the tone. You should acknowledge the fact that each social network serves a different purpose and, as such, is characterized by a different tone of voice. Here are some questions you should answer before getting started:

- What are you trying to achieve on social media?
- Are your social media goals aligned with your core business objectives?
- What stories would your audience like to see?
- What type of content do they react best to?
- How do your competitors perform socially?
- What type of content works best for them?
- Who should be involved in social media content production and publishing?
- How will you measure the performance of your social media content?
- How will you improve the outcome of your social media campaigns?

The answers will enable you to draw up a social media content plan that's based on your audience's needs, as well as on the marketing context. Armed with this knowledge, you can proceed to organizing the social media content using different tools. There are, of course, certain details you should keep track of regardless of the used tools. These include:

- Campaign
- Publishing date
- Topic
- Copy
- URL to be included in the copy
- Visuals
- Status (Scheduled, Postponed,)

To choose a tool, you first need to keep track the amount of details you want to keep track of. For a rudimentary approach that takes only the date, copy and channel into account, you can use Trello. Switching to full calendar view will provide you with a better image of what's planned.



Bear in mind that Trello can only handle the planning part, so if you also mean to schedule the social media content, you will have to look elsewhere. Evernote, the note-taking app, also has a minimalistic approach. Using the [Daily Calendar](#) template, you can only enter the time, channel and topic.

Daily Calendar

Time	Schedule
06:00-07:00	Facebook: 25 Blogging Mistakes You Need to Stop Making
07:00-08:00	Twitter: 12 Productivity Tips for Busy Managers
08:00-09:00	Twitter: 42 Motivational Quotes
09:00-10:00	Twitter: How to Start a Newsletter
10:00-11:00	Twitter: Email Design Templates
11:00-12:00	Twitter: Font Selection 101
12:00-13:00	Twitter: How to Find a Mentor Pinterest: Email Marketing Infographic
13:00-14:00	Facebook: Sales & Marketing Tips
14:00-15:00	Twitter: Snapchat Guide
15:00-16:00	Twitter: How to Prepare for a Facebook Live Event
16:00-17:00	Twitter: Marketing Campaign Examples
17:00-18:00	Instagram: Company Outing
18:00-19:00	Twitter: Webinar Promo

HubSpot has created a customizable [Social Media Content Calendar](#) that will allow you to organize your social media activities far in advance in order to make your social marketing more manageable.

Google Sheets seems to be a flexible, yet less visually appealing solution. You can create separate files or separate sheets for each channel and keep track of most planning aspects listed above.

The screenshot shows a Google Sheet interface with the title "Twitter Posts for October". The menu bar includes File, Edit, View, Insert, Format, Data, Tools, Add-ons, and Help. The toolbar shows various icons for undo, redo, and text formatting. The spreadsheet data is as follows:

	A	B	C	D
1	Date	Topic	Link	Status
2	10/4/2016	Excel	http://offers.hubs	Posted
3	10/5/2016	Instagram Ads	http://offers.hubs	Scheduled
4	10/6/2016	SEO Guide	http://offers.hubs	Scheduled
5	10/7/2016	Snapchat for Business	http://offers.hubs	Not Started

For an all-in-one solution, give Swat.io, the social media management tool for teams a try. This platform can provide a lot of structure to the entire process. Swat.io helps you to plan and publish scheduled posts on your preferred social media channels, to keep track of customer request in one ticket inbox and analyse the statistics of your social media marketing efforts for each channel.

The image displays two overlapping screenshots of the Swat.io interface. The top screenshot shows the 'Calendar' view, which is a grid of days from Monday to Sunday for the month of March 2017. Each day contains a grid of scheduled posts with thumbnails and titles. The bottom screenshot shows the 'Tickets' view, which is a list of customer requests. Each ticket entry includes a ticket ID, the sender's name and profile picture, the sender's role or company, the message content, the assigned team, the number of replies, and the date of the ticket.

Once your planned content gets published, you should learn how to track its performance. For that, you'll need to mind several factors.

How to Measure the Effectiveness of Your Content



To be able to determine whether your content performs well, you first need to figure out what the current business objectives are. For your brand to evolve, you will have to assess the situation continuously. You will soon discover that business goals and key performance indicators (KPIs) may require adjustments after a quarter or half-year review. The KPIs that are relevant to you now might thus not be as relevant in the near future.

It's essential to remember that tracking all KPIs at all times will get you nowhere, as some of them won't be correlated at all with the actual objectives. That being said, you should know

what the main KPIs are and when to track each of them. For the best results, connect these KPIs with the current stage that your buyer persona is in the marketing funnel:

- Reach and engagement
- Site traffic coming from social media
- Social media return on investment (ROI)

Decide which ones you should focus in the near future and prepare regular reports. These will help you keep an eye on the things that work and the ones that don't. With such reports at hand, you will be able to make adjustments while negative outcomes can still be avoided.

Reach and Engagement Metrics

Despite also playing a role in the conversion phase, social media platforms are mostly used for awareness, reach and engagement are an excellent metric for that. While the reach is the actual number of people who have seen your updates, engagement refers to the total number of interactions people have had with your social media content. In other words, the clicks, likes, shares and comments, even though these might be known under a different name on

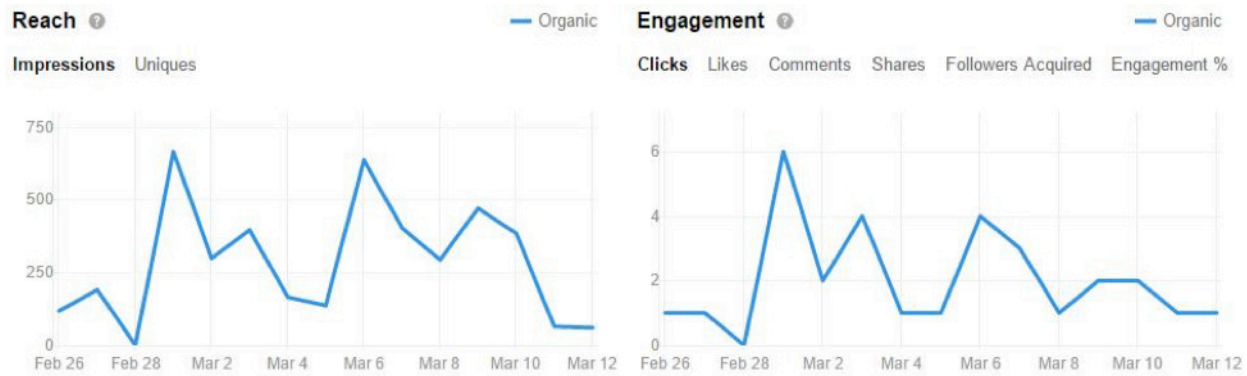
each platform. Unless the analytics platforms of the social networks you're using don't provide the engagement rate directly, you can use the following formula to determine it:

Engagement Rate = # of people who have engaged with the content / # of people who saw your post

While it might not always be the main KPIs to look at, engagement and reach should be monitored continuously. The reason is that they indicate how relevant your brand is and how easy your message gets to your intended audience. Some of the metrics to keep an eye on include:

- Post Reach / Total Reach
- Fans or followers gained/lost
- Active followers
- Engagement or Interaction Rate (Content Likes, Shares/Retweets and Comments)
- Mentions

For example, admins of LinkedIn page can see an overview of the brand’s reach and engagement over the past 15 days right after clicking on the Manage Page button. Keep in mind that this is the default period, but you can easily change it to the timeframe that interests you.



Similarly, Facebook Insights features a breakdown of reach and engagement for each of the published posts over the selected period of time. Once you identify the posts with high reach and/or engagement, try to figure out what made them work based on topic, language and wording, targeted audience and timing. Use high-performing posts as a standard for upcoming organic and paid social media campaigns.

All Posts Published						
Reach: Organic/Paid Post Clicks Reactions, comments & shares						
Published	Post	Type	Targeting	Reach	Engagement	Promote
13/02/2017 10:25				33.8K	2K 192	Boost post
04/02/2017 18:57				4.7K	80 13	Boost post
26/01/2017 09:44				29K	961 160	Boost post
24/01/2017 10:27				9.4K	278 320	Boost post
16/01/2017 19:44				5.8K	40 8	Boost post

By default, Twitter provides info regarding reach and engagement for a 28 day period. Known as “Tweet impressions,” the reach is defined here by the number of people who have viewed your Twitter updates over the defined period of time.

such as Piwik, where you can find inbound social traffic under Referrers - Websites and Social.

Website traffic coming from social media can act as an indicator of your content’s appeal in the Consideration phase of the sales funnel. This KPI can be found using traffic analysis tools

With a market share of [83.3%](#), [Google Analytics](#) is a far more popular traffic analysis tool. Inbound social traffic is available under Acquisition - All Traffic - Referrers.

Source	Acquisition			Behavior		
	Sessions	% New Sessions	New Users	Bounce Rate	Pages / Session	Avg. Session Duration
	6,842 % of Total: 29.77% (22,982)	73.02% Avg for View: 74.36% (-1.81%)	4,996 % of Total: 29.23% (17,090)	53.81% Avg for View: 70.45% (-23.61%)	1.68 Avg for View: 1.47 (13.84%)	00:01:49 Avg for View: 00:01:17 (41.30%)
1. [Source]	1,000 (14.62%)	85.30%	853 (17.07%)	65.70%	1.70	00:01:31
2. reddit.com	952 (13.91%)	78.36%	746 (14.93%)	0.95%	2.05	00:01:07
3. facebook.com	626 (9.15%)	61.50%	385 (7.71%)	72.20%	1.53	00:01:17
4. lm.facebook.com	547 (7.99%)	64.53%	353 (7.07%)	90.86%	1.11	00:00:51
5. [Source]	350 (5.12%)	81.14%	284 (5.68%)	0.57%	2.10	00:01:16
6. [Source]	312 (4.56%)	94.87%	296 (5.92%)	0.64%	1.99	00:00:56
7. m.facebook.com	287 (4.19%)	83.62%	240 (4.80%)	82.23%	1.33	00:00:38
8. [Source]	224 (3.27%)	78.12%	175 (3.50%)	77.68%	1.30	00:00:59
9. [Source]	194 (2.84%)	89.69%	174 (3.48%)	69.07%	1.68	00:00:55
10. [Source]	163 (2.38%)	82.21%	134 (2.68%)	84.05%	1.26	00:00:13

Going to Behaviour / All Pages and typing part of the landing page’s URL in the search box next to the Advanced link can help you determine the visits a page got from social media. For that, you will have to select Social Media as a secondary dimension, just like in the following image:

Page	Social Network	Pageviews	Unique Pageviews
		305 % of Total: 12.80% (2,382)	205 % of Total: 10.86% (1,888)
1. /get-in-touch/	(not set)	299 (98.03%)	199 (97.07%)
2. /get-in-touch/	LinkedIn	3 (0.98%)	3 (1.46%)
3. /get-in-touch/	Facebook	2 (0.66%)	2 (0.98%)
4. /get-in-touch/	Twitter	1 (0.33%)	1 (0.49%)

Observe the social media platforms bringing in the most traffic and focus your efforts in that direction. Website traffic from a specific network is a clear indicator that your audience is there and that it is receptive to your messages.

Social Media Return on Investment Indicators

A recent DMA report reveals that 48% percent of marketers believe that social media gives them any return on investment. That's because the return doesn't have a standard monetary value. As you might have guessed, social media ROI metrics are relevant for all phases of the marketing funnel. In this case, the profitability ratio is calculated like this:

$$\text{ROI} = (\text{return} - \text{investment}) / \text{investment}$$

In this case, the investment refers to:

- Wages paid to the people handling the social media content creation and publishing process
- Paid advertising costs
- Social media management tools

The return refers to such social media ROI indicators as:

- Traffic
- Sign-ups, inquiries, downloads
- Qualified Leads/Customers
- Customer Lifetime
- Sales and Revenue

Since the investment carries a monetary value and the indicators are just numbers, calculating the ROI could seem impossible, at first. However, things get clearer when you start attributing a monetary value to your brand's business goals (e.g. customer lifetime value, average basket value, etc.).



A positive ROI suggests that your current social media content not only reaches the intended audience, but also that it determines it to convert. On the contrary, a negative ROI indicates that a change in direction is mandatory. Paid social marketing might be the boost your brand needs, especially since reach and engagement are virtually non-existent for organic campaigns without paid support. That's particularly the case on Facebook, but other social platforms are also joining this trend.

Paid Social Marketing Metrics

If you've identified the social network your audience uses most often, but still didn't get it to engage with your content, paid social marketing is a good approach for getting the ball rolling. In that respect, you should keep an eye on the following metrics, once you start doing paid social media campaigns:

- Cost per Lead
- Cost per Sale
- Revenue Ratio
- Cost per Thousand Impressions (CPM)
- Cost per Click (CPC)
- Cost per Download
- Cost per View for video ads

You will notice that each platform offers several ad formats that can each be used in any of the phases of the marketing funnel. As a matter of fact, that's the first thing that Facebook and Twitter ask you when setting up a new campaign: are you looking for awareness, engagement that can be treated as a form of consideration, or clicks? Answer this whenever starting a new campaign, and then check out the ads manager of each social media platform to monitor the above metrics



Pro Tip

Build your own Social Media Marketing dashboard in Excel or Google Spreadsheet to make your efforts and results visible and visually appealing for your stakeholders.

Bear in mind that you will require more than just ads managers and traffic analysis tools throughout the entire content creation and publishing process. To give you a head start, we've listed below some of the most popular choices for each phase.

Tools for Professional Content Planning and Distribution of Your Content

Now that you know what KPIs to keep track of, you can focus on the tools you'll need for both planning and distributing the content. Depending on your experience and budget, there are free, freemium as well as premium solutions out there for each of the tasks. Despite implying an additional cost, the latter can often help you reduce the time and human resources required for social media content creation and publishing, thus improving the social ROI.



Tools for Brainstorming, Curating and Planning Content

[Pocket](#), the read-it-later browser extension that has been recently [acquired by Mozilla](#). This tool will come in handy both during brainstorming and ideation, as well as for collecting sources of inspiration. Bear in mind that it can be used on all sorts of platforms and browsers, from smartphones and tablets to PCs and Macs, so there are no restrictions to gathering your ideas.

Project management applications such as [Trello](#) or [Zenkit](#) can help you approach this from a different angle. Both of these are excellent tools both during and after brainstorming sessions, especially if your team is scattered across the globe. They facilitate collaboration and enable your whole team to keep track of the social media campaign's specifics anytime, from anywhere.

Grammar and Editing Tools

Wording also matters, as visuals with misspelled words or social media updates with grammatical errors might push your audience away. For lengthier updates, [Grammarly](#) works wonders. You're still recommended to double check the posts before scheduling or publishing them, as this tool isn't 100% accurate. [Microsoft Word](#) is also picking up speed in this department, as the new, machine learning-powered Editor feature acts as a grammar nanny, to quote VentureBeat's

John Brandon. [Headlinecapitalization.com](#), as its intuitive name suggests, is a website that can help you capitalize your headlines according to various styles including MLA, Associated Press and APA. And just to make sure you never run out of synonyms, there's [Thesaurus.com](#). After all, you want your social media content to resemble art and not be a repetition of words that will never convert.

Graphic Design Tools

[Canva](#) is a free graphic design tool that you should keep an eye on if you're focusing on visual content. While the goal is to create perfect social media images, Canva is capable of such much more, as it enables you to combine:

- Text
- Background
- Grids
- Frames
- Shapes
- Lines
- Illustrations
- Free stock photos

This all might sound rather generic, but there are cases of companies using [Canva to increase social media engagement by 1100%](#). We'll let you be the judge of whether this tool is efficient or not.

Social Media Management and Publishing Tools

If you've just gotten started with this, applications such as [Excel](#) or [Google Sheets](#) might be more up your alley. Using any of these two, you will be able to keep track of the ideas to be used for the social media content plan. More than that, you could even keep an eye on when the content was published. However, if you're looking to measure any of the aforementioned KPIs, the effort is simply not worth it. For starters, there's too much time-consuming manual work

involved. Next, there's only planning, without direct scheduling, not to mention that you don't have access to any relevant statistics this way. To take things even further, you can give [Swat.io - The Social Media Platform for Teams](#) a try. Not only will you be able to collaboratively write your social media updates, but you will also be able to schedule them and even track the performance of each post.



“

The key is to try to understand the content trend from underneath each social media channel.

Marissa Emanuele

HubSpot

Buyer Personas are Everything on Social Media

1. Everyone is on social media nowadays. Getting the message across is becoming more and more difficult. If you could advise social media managers on some content strategies that have worked for you, what would they be?

Marissa Emanuele: The one big thing that jumped out at me was: as social media in general is getting more and more cluttered and the space is not nearly as wide open as it used to be, I think it's getting more and more important to be creating and sharing content

that really provides value to your audience first and foremost. Instead of asking for value from your audience or asking them to take an action, the best thing that you can do is give them content that they care about and that will help them in some way, or at the very least be entertaining to them. That way you don't add to that noise that is filling pretty much every social channel now. As everyone heard, it gets harder and harder to break through that clutter, and the best way to do that is not to be super self-promotional, and to instead focus on providing

value to your audience. There are always ways to bring your benefits and the value proposition of your company into these messages that shouldn't just be banging on the table and telling people how great you are, because you're not going to get much traction there.

2. We all see this hype around social media marketing, new platforms have emerged (Snapchat), others have added countless new features (Facebook, Instagram) but life has taught us that after a hype there's also a decline or a need to switch to something else. In your opinion, what would you see as the next step for social media? What should social media managers expect to see in the future? And what types of content shouldn't Social Media Managers miss in their strategy? (VR, wearables, on-demand content?)

Marissa Emanuele: The key here is not just chasing down a new channel, but trying to understand the content trend from underneath that channel. For example, it's not just about Snapchat or Instagram Stories, it's about this idea of ephemeral content. Content that is in a moment, light, and disappears quickly. So it's less about mastering Snapchat and more about recognizing: "OK, this is a content trend that's here to stay - ephemeral content is going to continue to be an important element of social networks, so as a social media manager, I need to learn how to do that well, whether that means to get behind the camera myself."

It's the same thing with live. It's not just about Facebook Live or Periscope or Instagram, it's about the concept of live content. So instead of trying to be everywhere, just learn how to do that skill and learn how to make that type of content work for your audience. You don't have to learn the ins and outs of Instagram Live vs. Twitter vs. Periscope vs. Facebook Live. It's more about learning the principles

that could be applied to all of them. Those things are changing, as we're moving away from just posting a text and an image. We're really moving into a world where, as marketers, we need to be on board with this new type of content.

In terms of paid social media, it's harder if you're not investing any money into paid advertising. You're not going to see much traction on platforms like Facebook. That being said, you can still get some traction on Twitter or Instagram. Some channels are becoming increasingly difficult to make any movement on without paying. I think it's about finding that channel that works for you organically. Facebook is obviously the big guy for a reason, everybody is on there, so you can also make your dollar go a long way. You can get a really small budget and go very-very targeted and get good results from not that much money. It's worth making the investment, for sure, as long as you're smart about it.



Set social media goals that tie back to business objectives.

3. HubSpot has taught us so much about Buyer Personas and the Buyer's Journey. Could you tell us how these can be applied to social media content?

Marissa Emanuele: I think Buyer Personas on social media are everything. That's where you


need to start. Before you do anything, before you do your first post, you need to understand who your Buyer Persona is. Who are you trying to reach? Where do they spend their time? What do they care about? You need to answer those questions before doing anything. You won't have any luck if you're just pushing out content without considering those three elements.

As for the Buyer's Journey, you really need to think about where your social audience is when they're interacting with your content. Most of the time, social media is at the Awareness stage, you're really just trying to get into people's brain space. It goes back to what we were talking about earlier, with not being too self-promotional. You really need to keep that in mind. There are principles that you would consider when you're thinking about blogging or creating content. There's this principle of answering questions that your audience has. What are the problems that your Buyer Persona has at this stage in the Buyer's Journey? How can we answer these questions and help solve those problems without being too salesy?

4. You at HubSpot are using multiple social media channels and you not only provide but also live the inbound marketing concept. What role does social media content play in your marketing funnel?

Marissa Emanuele: Up until last year, we were very much lead generation-focused. So we were top to bottom, but we were very much focused on getting people to fill out a standard lead form. We've now shifted our focus a little bit. There's the top of the funnel and social is a bit higher than the traditional top of the funnel. Instead of focusing on just leads, we're trying to grow our audience and our reach. I think we're doing that because we're a brand of a certain size at this point. I don't think that changes

anything for the traditional SMB. Across the board, the answer is top of the funnel. We're just thinking about things a little bit deeper than that, so we can consider ourselves a little higher than top of the funnel.



It's about finding that channel that works for you organically.

5. We all know the importance of all strategies being directed towards reaching business goals. What aspects should one take into account when aligning social media goals with overall marketing and sales goals?

Marissa Emanuele: As we talk about the Buyer's Journey, this ties into it. If you're in a place where you have great brand awareness, but your struggle is in the middle of the funnel, maybe you should focus your social efforts more on the middle of the funnel and on educating people on your brand. It's just important to align your social content with what your end goal is. Whether that goal is leads, whether it's some sort of more qualified leads, I think that's the best way to do it. There are also some people who do a lot of social selling, where they use social media as a sales tool to really directly sell to their audience. The very general answer is making sure that, as a social media manager, you can look at your goal and say "this directly contributes to this business goal." That's how you are going to prove your value in the long term.

6. If you search for “social media KPIs,” you will find hundreds of articles. What are the KPIs that we should monitor?

Marissa Emanuele: It ties back to whatever your business goals are. If you’re trying to grow your audience, look at growth numbers. If you have a good size audience, but want to increase engagement, focus on engagement numbers. That being said, you’ll always have to look at engagement numbers, because those are directly correlated to your reach and to your audience growth. Everything is tied into that, so the best thing you can do so that you don’t get metrics fatigue is to pick two or three things that you track on a regular basis, have a record on those, say “This is what we’re optimizing for, commit to that.” Otherwise, you end up chasing squirrels.

The answer is: pick the KPIs that are important to you, focus on those and tune up the other stuff. You’re not going to keep the same KPIs forever. You have to adjust based on what your business goals are.

About Marissa Emanuele

Marissa is a social media manager, living & geeking out over new social tools in Boston, Massachusetts. Follow [@hithisismarissa](#) on Twitter for more.

About HubSpot

[HubSpot](#) is an inbound marketing and sales platform that helps companies attract visitors, convert leads, and close customers.

SWAT.IO

Discuss, Draft And Approve Social Media
Posts Collaboratively With [Swat.io](#)

START YOUR FREE TRIAL



“

Original content works best. Being creative and writing your own messages is a lot better for engagement.

Becky Shindell



Originality - A Core Attribute of Social Media Content

1. If you search for “social media content that works best” on Google, you’ll find plenty of articles on the topic. Some bet on videos, others on creative images, and so on. What type of content would work best from your experience and why?

Becky Shindell: For us, original content works best. If we’re tweeting out an external article for another publication, instead of using the copy and image that come up when hitting the tweet button, we try to create our own image and our own copy to put out there. Being creative

and writing your own copy is a lot better for engagement. Something else that’s working well for us that we’re just getting started and hope to do a lot more of, is video. Obviously, it’s a huge thing now on social media and we’re lucky enough to have a great content team that takes a lot of our crazy ideas and turns them into incredible work. Recently we did a 360-degree video that got an incredible amount of engagement. We’re still testing what works and what doesn’t, but these are the two things that are working really well for us.

We don't have a dedicated video budget or anything like that, but for Instagram or Facebook Live, recording with your smartphone is OK, too. You just need to be different from how others are.

2. As a social media manager, one needs to always be one step ahead of the game - and things are changing pretty fast in the social media space. What's the next frontier in social media? What should social media managers expect to see in the future in terms of social media content?

Becky Shindell: I think that chatbots are the next big thing. They're super helpful for customer service and for communicating with your users. If brands aren't already doing this, it's definitely something they should look into.

[Download the CHATBOTS - Conversational UI and the Future of Online Interaction eBook](#)

3. How can social media support other marketing channels with content and what's your advice on creating a cohesive content strategy across all channels?

Becky Shindell: Social media is a big marketing channel of ours. We use it to support our customer success (customer service) team, plus the e-mail marketing team, the webinar team, basically all of our teams. Social media acts as a core channel for us and it's a great way for people to communicate with us in a quick way. We're using it to get in touch with our users, and it's really important to make sure that you're using it in the right way.

Our goals change periodically. Sometimes, our main goal is to generate more leads, at other times we want more brand awareness, so we constantly need to change our social media

strategy to be aligned with our business goals. We meet weekly to talk about everything. It's definitely different, with us being an international team, as things that work in the US might not work in other countries. We try to keep everything in brand.

4. What social media KPIs do you monitor at SEMrush and how do you ensure that social media goals are aligned with marketing and overall company goals?

Becky Shindell: A lot of our KPIs are focused on measuring conversations and making sure that we answer people in a timely manner. It's really important to us and obviously, to our users to make known that we really are here and we're not just robots, but real people. Shares, likes, and retweets obviously matter, and the leads also matter, but the most important thing for us is to ensure community engagement and answer people in a timely fashion.



Social media acts as a core channel for us and it's a great way for people to communicate with us in a quick way.

Since we're an international team, there's always somebody there to ensure this. There's only an hour or two when there's nobody in the office. Also, on Facebook Messenger, we have an automated message that shows up on and says something along the lines of "Thanks for contacting us! We've seen this and we'll get

back to you as soon as possible.” We want to make sure that the customer knows that they’re being heard.

I’ve seen chatbots used in a couple of different ways, but I don’t think I’d use a chatbot as our main communication tool. Still, it’s a different way of making people spend time on your social media page. Since people are starting to buy things on social media now, and Facebook is turning into a one-stop shop, I think that chatbots will help, but they won’t replace people. I don’t want them to replace people, because then I’d be out of a job :)

5. What 3 pieces of advice would you give a Junior Social Media Manager to succeed in the long run?

Becky Shindell: I think that my #1 piece of advice is not to let people take advantage of you. A lot of people look at social media managers as if it’s a job that anybody could do, and that they’re not a real asset to a company. It’s important to show your worth to your company. Read everything you can, listen to everything you can.

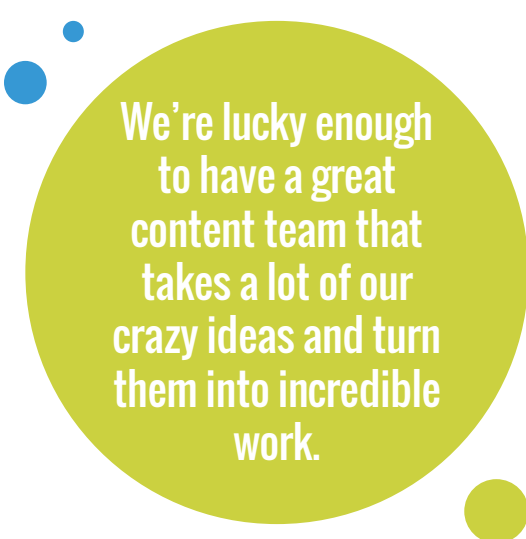
Another thing to note is that Social Media is not a 9-5 job. Most social media people don’t get days off because they have to be online, responding to people for hours, so it’s definitely a different job. Giving someone a manual when they’re just getting started is a good idea. Some brands are very casual, others are very serious, so you definitely have to make sure your future social media managers learn the brand’s voice before they send out any messages.

About Becky Shindell

Becky Shindell is the Social Media Manager, US for SEMrush. Her main focus is the companies’ Facebook and Twitter accounts and she also hosts SEMrush’s weekly #SEMrushchat on Twitter. You can find Becky at many digital marketing conferences around the country spreading SEMrush awareness.

About SEMrush

[SEMrush](#) is one of the world’s leading competitive intelligence suites and an all-in-one platform for digital marketing professionals that provides data and analysis on websites’ SEO, paid search, social media and link-building activities worldwide. On top of being a powerful competitive analysis toolkit, SEMrush offers necessary features to help companies optimize their own online presence such as site audit, brand monitoring and content tools.



We’re lucky enough to have a great content team that takes a lot of our crazy ideas and turn them into incredible work.



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Things should become more personal again. With emphasis on honesty and reliability.

Paul Kubalek,
Tourismusverband Saalbach



Building Authenticity through Social Media Storytelling

1. What's your advice on how companies should market their products/services on social media without being salesy or spammy? Maybe you could tell us what's been working for you at Tourismusverband Saalbach Hinterglemm and what hasn't.

Paul Kubalek: We have been using Social Media as a communication channel for the destination since 2008. Up to now, we have followed a quite simple strategy. No dumpy sales messages. No sender/recipient thinking,

but dialogue instead. We try to tell stories as a part of the community. The most important thing is to be authentic in what you do and how you do it, at all times.

2. What social media channels do you use for Tourismusverband Saalbach Hinterglemm and what can you tell us about the content that works best on those channels?

Paul Kubalek: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Youtube and Snapchat are mainly used for

digital communication, as well as WhatsApp for direct support. Things like good pictures of fresh snow, a summer sunrise or videos work out best. No matter where we post it, our main focus is on interaction, so we're always keen on getting in touch personally with our followers/guests.

3. In your opinion, in what direction could social media content evolve so that it continues to satisfy both marketers and audiences' needs in the future?

Paul Kubalek: My opinion is that things should become more personal again. With emphasis on honesty and reliability. Things such as bots on Instagram or rude behaviour on Facebook will slowly reduce the fun levels of using social media. If you feel uneasy using social media, you will reduce the amount of time you spend on it, which will in turn make it more difficult for brands to come through. We are all human and no matter which technologies or devices we use to communicate – at the end of the day, humans communicate with other humans.

4. We really liked the “Story Base 2017” campaign. What are the steps one needs to undertake when planning a similar influencer marketing campaign and what role would such a campaign have in the social media marketing strategy? Also how would you measure its results and tie them back to the social media goals?

Paul Kubalek: Thank you. We're really happy with how it worked out. The group of 16 influencers we hosted in January 2017 was perfectly assembled. It is a wonderful way for us to build up personal relationships with those who have influence. At the end of the week, strangers became friends. The planning period was quite short (six weeks from the idea to the arrival) – I'd guess the most important things are

creativity and flexibility. We aren't finished with the results yet, but we can definitely say that the project was successful. For this reason we will repeat the project again this summer, between June 30th to July 10th and again next winter. Story formats such as Snapchat or Instagram Stories make it more and more difficult to figure out one single KPI, so at the end of the day it's a mixture of reach, engagement, views on blog articles and personal feedback that we compare with the expenses.

5. Some believe that video content is expensive and hard to produce and don't venture into that direction. However, it's what seems to be working best on social media. Could you elaborate a bit on your video production process and share some dos and don'ts in that direction?

Paul Kubalek: We started to produce several story clips on different topics last winter, with the publication of the Skicircus Stories episodes (<http://skicircusstories.saalbach.com>) started this winter. We adopted this concept for summer (<http://saalbachstories.saalbach.com>) and have already published ten episodes in 2016.



The most important thing is to be authentic in what you do and how you do it, at all times.

Two authentic locals introduce several activities, tips, locations and stories to the community. More to come. In these stories too, the goal is to DO entertain the community in an authentic and sympathetic way, the biggest DON'T is to bore people and try selling our product, or to get attention in a dumpy way.

6. Nowadays, there's a tool for almost anything marketing-related. Could you please share with our readers some of the marketing and social media tools you couldn't live without so to speak?

Paul Kubalek: I mostly use the on-site channel functions on the different networks. I mostly tweet on Twitter, plan postings directly on Facebook etc. without using a third party tool, but since Dec. 2015 we use [swat.io](#) for community management and to handle direct messages that reach us mostly via Facebook & WhatsApp. I'm quite happy with this. Using [swat.io](#) pushed the quality of our community management and the reaction time to a higher level. Further useful tools are [SocialBlade](#) or [InfluencerDB](#) to evaluate Influencer cooperations.

About Paul Kubalek

Paul Kubalek has been working for the Tourist Board in Saalbach back in 1998. He is responsible for all [Saalbach Hinterglemm's](#) Digital Media matters.



The key is to try to understand the content trend from underneath each social media channel.



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Influencer marketing is the culmination of the promise that social media initially brought us.

Joe Sinkwitz



Influencer Marketing as part of Brands' Social Content Strategies

1. There's so much good social media content out there, which makes it difficult for new pieces to break through all the noise. Sometimes it even feels that creating great content is not enough anymore... what would you advise social media marketers do so that their content still reaches the audience and converts?

Joe Sinkwitz: It's a good question. We dogfood at Intellifluence; I don't know if it translates well in the European market, but what I mean by this is we use our own system. When we are putting out what we believe to be great content, we ensure that we go to great lengths to ensure it's seen by establishing relationships PRIOR to publication,

and doing what we can to reference those relationships in the content if possible. By doing this, most of our higher level content receives social sharing and links on day one of publishing.

2. Lately, the focus has been on influencer marketing and Intellifluence is a great tool in that sense. In your opinion, why should companies consider influencer marketing in their overall social content strategy? And how do you see this evolve in the future?

Joe Sinkwitz: Whether a marketer chooses to use Intellifluence or another tool, I think it is absolutely vital to get into influencer marketing. Now. If you look at Google trends on the phrase it shows a

very steep climb in terms of popularity. But for more important reasons, influencer marketing is the culmination of the promise that social media initially brought us. Most of us in digital marketing were excited when social media first started to take off, but it was still too early for it to drive meaningful sales, much like the Internet in the late 1990s. However, now with persistent cookies, specialized dynamically created coupon codes, and UTM campaigns, it is possible to not only use social as a sales channel, but to attribute back to the channel, down to individual levels. This is what excites me, because we can see who is truly influencing a consumer. As a hint, for most businesses it isn't the celebrities, it is a person's peer group.

This is the evolution I see. There will come a time when public relations more or less conceptually merges with SEO -- obviously there's a lot of nuance to both specialties but for the sake of content and outreach they are getting more similar. Along the same lines I see a similar merger between affiliate marketing and influencer marketing. We're going to see less and less obvious affiliate sites ranking in search over time; with that shift I would expect to see the more aggressive and intelligent affiliates shifting into creating cults of personality, building followings where they can share their expertise and profit from having done so.

3. Online reputation management is one of your specialties and an exciting field. We'd be curious to know how social media content can be used in this regard? Maybe you could give us an example of a crisis you had to deal with that you solved or turned around through the right social media content strategy.

Joe Sinkwitz: It is no coincidence that I own an ORM agency and an influencer marketing network. haha.

There's a few different popular angles within ORM: 1) promote positive and benign news in an attempt to drown out negative news. 2) attack negative news -- I'll be light on the details here, but this can be via technical and non-technical attack vectors. 3) Change people's focus.

With social you can essentially accomplish all three. As I mentioned before, when we have great pieces of content, we can generally get them promoted. Of course, we use our network for some of this. When attacking negative news over social, some of that can be done by discrediting the source of the information [just look at the previous election cycle here in the U.S. and the constant misuse of 'fake news' -- my co-founder on Intellifluence, Terry Godier, and I presented at the Ungagged conference this past November on the concept of dark influence...while we predicted some of what's occurring, we had no idea it'd play out as closely as it has].



There will come
a time when
Public Relations
conceptually
merges with
SEO.

In terms of examples, our clients are very confidential for obvious reasons, but I can provide a somewhat generic example. Many of our clients are large public figures of public companies. Sometimes by the very nature of that publicity a journalist may author a hit piece -- the problem with hit pieces is they tend to get a better click-through-rate than regular articles. Scandals

sell newspapers. So one thing we've had to do in the past is work with a different journalist at a competing publication to create an even more interesting story and headline; then pushing out w/ Twitter bots and the like, anytime the original story is referenced, this story is pushed. Well, this helps it to get more traffic but also more organic G queries. That with a couple other tricks and this story hopefully becomes the more appropriate source when querying the client's name.

4. What influencer content KPIs would you recommend be monitored constantly and how can an influencer marketing campaign contribute to a company's marketing and overall business goals?

Joe Sinkwitz: My favorite influencer marketing KPI is sales. For me, everything starts with that and then works backwards. Depending on the product or service, it could either be leads or landing page entries or triggering a certain level in a sales funnel. At the top of the funnel I would rather have a smaller overall visibility on the right audience than a big visibility for people that aren't relevant buyers. That's actually a pet peeve of mine; social isn't just about a million people seeing a piece of content -- that's like advertising a product during the halftime at the superbowl when the product is only relevant to 0.01% of the viewing audience.

5. Regarding influencer content campaigns via social media – is there a one-size-fits-all approach, like a foundation upon which customized content strategies can be built? If yes, what is that?

Joe Sinkwitz: I don't think there's so much a one-size-fits-all, but there is definitely some questions that need to be answered at the onset of any influencer campaign: 1) establish a buyer persona -- if a brand doesn't know who they are targeting to buy the product, it is a wasted

effort. 2) where does the buyer persona engage -- even if your product is perfect for YouTube, if your buyer persona is only on LinkedIn, then that shifts where you need to be focusing. 3) who influences your buyer persona? Is it aspirational influence? authoritative? or peer? After those are determined, a brand can then put together an offer devised to get in front of that key buyer.

6. What's one of the most important things you've learned so far that would improve social media managers' content strategies and turn them into successful endeavours?

Joe Sinkwitz: Plan. Then do. It's a common refrain from me, but I don't like performing any marketing activity without a clear goal. Too many social media managers have a goal of "going viral" without any understanding of what that means or how that will help their company; by concretely establishing goals and stepping through the process they need to execute in order to reach those goals, success ratios will be much higher.

About Joe Sinkwitz

Joe has 20 years of digital marketing experience. He worked as the Chief of Revenue for CopyPress and is currently holding dual roles, Principal of Digital Heretix, an online reputation management and special search agency and CEO of Intellifluence, an influencer marketing network.

About Intellifluence

[Intellifluence](#) is a simple, yet powerful marketing platform that helps brands partner with key influencers to achieve better results.



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The main objective of your content should be to catch the attention of your target audience.

Susanna Gebauer

The Social
Ms

Social Media Content is All About Learning by Doing

1. In one of your blog articles, you explain why sales in social media marketing should not taste like sales (great article by the way!). How should social media content be and what should it convey so that it converts without being salesy? Would you have some best practices in that direction?

Susanna Gebauer: Sure! Being in social media marketing, you have to get people to listen to you first. Nobody likes listening to sales messages, so people won't listen to you if you talk about your own products and try to

promote your products all the time. The way to go to build an audience and have people want to listen to you is to provide information that they really want to have. Selling is only the second step. The best converting content for sales is closely related to your products but not trying to sell them. Your products should be like an upsell to the content and information you provide. For example, when you have a Twitter tool to offer, you can have a lot of content on how Twitter marketing works. People wanting to do Twitter marketing will then see your

product as a way of getting Twitter marketing to work.

If you have an attentive audience and they like what you provide, then they will listen to you when you talk about your products and do a little bit of sales in-between. However, you will lose a lot of attention if you talk too much about your products. It should be balanced.

2. When it comes to social media, marketers sometimes have the drive to be everywhere, on every channel, follow as many KPIs as possible and try all the new platforms. Would you say this is a good approach or should they be highly focused on 2-3 channels, 2-3 KPIs for a determined period of time and then switch to others?

Susanna Gebauer: The thing with social media marketing is that you can be present on hundreds of channels and not see any results at all. On the other hand, you can have one channel where you are really getting it right and that brings you huge success. I would strongly recommend to start with a couple of channels (it can be one, two or three, if you have enough time) and really focus on getting those right.

When it comes to the KPIs for those channels, they may change. In the beginning you're looking for more followers. The second step would be to look for more engagement. In the end, you're looking for more website traffic from Twitter, so KPIs have to develop as your marketing develops. When you have one, two or three channels, you can use them to help you start the next ones. You can transfer some Twitter followers to your Facebook fan page, and that will give you a headstart in the next channel you want to start with. You should never try too many channels at once if you don't have time to do them right.

3. In your opinion, what are the core attributes of great social media content that converts? Is there any special recipe that you follow here?

Susanna Gebauer: The first would be to think of your target audience. The main objective of your content should be to catch the attention of your target audience, have them listen to you. Usually, that's achieved by providing value with your content for your target audience.

The second thing is that you also need to keep in mind your own topics, so that they're close enough to your products. Then you have to choose a format that also matches your target audience. For example, if you target elderly people, I'm not sure that infographics or videos are always the best choice.

The content you provide should also be really easy to access. Every additional step required for accessing your content can diminish the size of the audience. It should be easy to consume and share, because you want people to spread the word about it.



**Social media KPIs
have to develop
as your marketing
develops.**

Another aspect is that it should be engaging, because you don't want to just speak at people, but talk to them. Building relationships is one step closer to converting. One thing about great content that a lot of people forget or underestimate are headlines. The problem with most social media channels is that people originally only see the headline. They don't know that there's great content behind that headline. Of course, the content should deliver what the headline promises, because that's what really makes people visit your content.


If you share content, share it with a headline that people would be interested in, especially for your own content. You should be able to test headlines. If you have a great article that doesn't get the attention that you expected from social media, just try another headline. It may not be the article at all. It might be that the headline doesn't work on the social network you're using or doesn't speak to your target audience. Headlines are all about testing and learning.

4. Could you tell us what social media channels are the best fit for a B2B context and elaborate a bit on the B2B content strategies that you see as successful on these channels?

Susanna Gebauer: The B2B marketing should focus a lot on getting information to the target audience. The best channels for B2B marketing are still the ones focused on information spreading. That could be YouTube, which as the world's second largest search engine is used by a lot of people for searches, but also Slideshare, where a lot of people search for information. That's probably why LinkedIn acquired Slideshare in the first place, because business-based networks put a lot of focus on information spreading. One social network that doesn't really spread the information itself, but

links to information, is Twitter. This is a great place to start for B2B marketing.

Twitter was the key to success for us when we had the B2B publishing platform. You can really target on Twitter, people like getting information from there, and any niche can be found on this social network. After that, you really have to research and see where your target group is. It could be something totally different like Quora. Many people have a lot of success on Quora where they ask and answer questions, and connect to other people. You also have to build followers and an audience there, so you need to spend some time on Quora to really be successful. As for LinkedIn, it is for B2B, but it is more for the networking part. You can go for LinkedIn Pulse that won't give you a large audience, but will give you a very targeted one.



One thing about great content that a lot of people forget or underestimate are headlines

5. Social media evolves and changes quite rapidly. What are some blogs/ online publications/ books that you could recommend to social media managers out there so that they stay one step ahead of the game? (maybe some that you also read on a daily/ weekly basis)

Susanna Gebauer: Of course we recommend [The Social Ms blog](#). We really try to answer a lot of marketing questions. We also still read

a lot of other blogs, but there isn't one blog that we would recommend for every marketing question. For marketers overall, I'd go with Neil Patel, who writes on several blogs: [QuickSprout](#), [neilpatel.com](#), and he's also guest posting. He really knows what he's doing!

For Facebook marketing and advertising, there's [Jon Loomer](#). I don't think there's anybody around who knows more about advertising on Facebook than Jon Loomer. As for corporate marketers, there's Mark Schaefer's [{grow}](#) and Jay Baer's [Convince and Convert](#). For content and inbound marketing, there's the [Content Marketing Institute](#), [Copyblogger](#), the [Hubspot blog](#). For lonepreneurs, one-person businesses, there's this podcast from Pat Flynn from [Smart Passive Income](#). That's awesome! We talked a lot about converting and sales, and [SumoMe](#) provide share buttons and a lot of conversion optimization for blogs, and they have an awesome blog. Once you read these, you will find other blogs, because they're guest posting on each other's blogs. What we like and what we read always changes!

About Susanna Gebauer

Susanna is a mathematician, turned consultant, turned entrepreneur and marketer. She had to learn marketing from necessity when building her first startup together with her brother Jonathan. She now provides marketing expertise to other entrepreneurs and marketers. In her spare time she is a (trail) runner and loves everything outdoors. She loves huge dogs and is a rescue dog handler. You can follow her on [Twitter](#) or [Instagram](#).

About The Social Ms

[The Social Ms](#) at its core is a marketing blog that Susanna runs together with her brother and business partner Jonathan. They publish information on social media, content marketing, growth hacking and SEO. The Social Ms' Mission is to provide marketing knowledge that can make a difference to all those who cannot pay for full blown marketing consulting projects. They provide marketing online courses, consulting calls and information products that anyone can afford. You can follow The Social Ms on [Twitter](#).



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The Big Picture

Social media content creation and publishing are based on ever-changing topics that fall subject to cultural and technological changes. Brands providing fresh and relevant content often enjoy greater reach and engagement. Thus, the ability to identify such topics and to create enticing content based on it is crucial. As a social media manager, you should always be able to correlate the global context with your brand's particularities. Understand your company's products or services and try to figure out who would need them.

Much like living organisms, social media platforms have evolved a lot since they were first invented. From mere channels for message distribution, they have turned into networks that can inform, educate, entertain and even drive sales. It all depends on your strategy and defined business goals, which later influence the voice and tone you're adopting, and what your audience expects to see on each social network. With proper content that's scheduled at the right times and with the right frequency, you'll ensure a frictionless transition from awareness to consideration and then conversion.

As the experts we've interviewed pointed out, there are many aspects to take into account when creating and publishing social media content. Influencer marketing, storytelling, originality, and learning by doing are all puzzle pieces that, when placed together around the core, create the big picture of social media content. The core is yet again represented by buyer personas, without whom all social media efforts would be in vain.

We would like to believe that after reading this eBook you are equipped with the necessary tools and knowledge for effective social media content creation and publishing. The tips we've shared here should first of all shorten the distance between you and your audience, while also giving you a competitive advantage.

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