



**THE WAFFLE-FREE GUIDE TO
SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING**

**Attract, Grow and Convert a Long-Lasting
Loyal Customer Base Using Social Media**

FREE EBOOK

WHAT'S TO COME?

#1: WHY GO SOCIAL?

#2: GETTING SERIOUSLY STRATEGIC

#3: SOME NITTY GRITTY TACTICS

#4: TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

#5: INFLUENCER MARKETING

#6: CREATION AND CURATION

WHY GO SOCIAL?

Unless you've been living under a rock for the past 10 years, you'll know what social media is and probably have a personal profile on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter or all of the above.

How do I know? Well, according to [Statista](#), about a third of the world's population is currently active on social networks.

Yes, A THIRD OF THE POPULATION. In 2016, for example, 62% of Americans and 40% of Europeans enjoyed the banterous realm of Facebook alone.

“OK, so an oceanload of people like to muck around in social media from time to time. What does this have to do with our company's business and marketing plans?”

I'm glad you asked!

It's pretty simple, really. A portion of that user-base will be your target audience. And with a dash of strategy and a splash of creativity, social media can be a powerful tool for converting that audience into clients, customers, supporters and/or advocates.

In other words, the first and main appeal of harnessing social media as part of your business, marketing or outreach plans is:

It allows you to reach out and connect with your target audience without leaving the comfort of your office and without splashing out on expensive PR campaigns and other marketing efforts.

By using social media strategically, you can attract new business leads, convert old ones, expand awareness of and trust in your brand (and its reach), obtain real (and real time) audience insights, run super-targeted ads, provide better customer service to your clients, transform public perceptions regarding your industry or area of work, better manage your company's reputation and so much more.

And if that's not enough to fill your boots with, check out this Forbes article, listing the [The Top 10 Benefits Of Social Media Marketing](#).

But what if your business isn't based on online sales (like local shops or restaurants) or is geared towards generating and nurturing leads through networking or referrals (like many companies in the legal and accounting sectors)?

Well, then the key phrase here is MODERN DAY RESEARCH.

In today's world, with so much knowledge at our fingertips, people tend to conduct thorough and in-

depth online research before making any sort of purchasing or business decision.

Today, Google is the very first step for any due diligence process.

I mean...heck, I even spent half an hour researching toothbrushes the other day.

And if your company or organisation has no presence (or very limited presence) on social media, potential clients WILL start making assumptions about your business.

If you have no LinkedIn company page, they may jump to the conclusion that your brand is a tad old-fashioned, unsavvy, or out of touch with the digital age we now live in. If you have no Facebook page, or one with posts that are few and far between, they may wonder if you are even still in business at all. If they contact you with a Tweet or Facebook message and get no immediate response, they may fall into frustration, unhappy with your customer service and start spreading negative reviews about your company.

So, other than providing you with a pool of potential customers to cast your hook into, a social media presence lets the world (and your target audience) know that you are well and truly alive and kicking. That business is flourishing. That you have your finger on the pulse of the digital age. That you're open for business, care about your customers' queries and will respond to them in real-time.

These are crucial signs for anyone making a purchasing decision, from choosing a toothbrush or restaurant to implementing a whole new CRM system for their sales team.

In fact, for 'high-consideration B2B decisions' like the latter example there, social media can be the perfect wingman in your lead-nurturing seduction process. It allows your sales people to continuously keep in touch and cultivate relationships with your prospects, without having to irritate them every odd day with phone calls.

And while your company may not currently be active on social media, it's safe to say that (at least some of) your customers are. As are your potential clients.

By ignoring the fact that this is where plenty of industry conversations are and will be taking place, you will be actively leaving yourself out of the discussion. And out of the equation. And unable to influence this rapidly growing realm.

So no matter what your company or organisation offers - a social media presence is crucial.

We've established that much.

But presence alone simply won't cut it. To get the most out of your social media efforts, you must power forward with a proper strategy in place. And familiarise yourself with the best tactics required to succeed in every platform you want to harness. And think long and hard about your content and influencer marketing efforts. And so much more.

Sound complicated?

Well, it can be. But luckily, this eBook will break down the essentials for you. Piece by piece.

By the time you've finished reading, you'll have the mindset, knowledge and tools needed to kick start your social media marketing campaign - in a smart, strategic and successful way. You'll:

- understand the importance of implementing a strategy for your social media efforts, and how to create an overarching one.
- have learnt the best practices to employ in **Facebook, Twitter** and **LinkedIn** - and how to choose the best platforms for your brand.
- know some of the greatest online social media tools to make your marketing team members' lives a whole lot easier.
- grasp the meaning and importance of influencer marketing and how to reap the rewards of this strategy to take your social media efforts to the next level.
- have learnt how to fill up your daily publishing schedule with top-notch, value-driven original and curated content.

So... let's get social!

GETTING SERIOUSLY STRATEGIC

One of the most common ways for companies to drop the ball when it comes to social media, is just by 'going for it', without thinking things through strategically.

"How hard can it be?", they say. "I've been on Facebook for years, I know how it works" or, even worse; "I'm too old for this Instagram mumbo-jumbo, my young intern can run our accounts. After all, he is on SnapChat all day long and must know everything about social media, right?".

Wrong... Oh, so wrong.

Jumping on the social media bandwagon without thinking about what it is you want to achieve, who you want to target and how (and what) you will communicate to your audience is, at best, a waste of time and money and, at worst, completely counterproductive.

Without a strategy in place, you are that much more likely to generate the wrong kind of following, confuse your audience with unrelated, irrelevant or boring

messaging, use the wrong social media platforms for your target audience and simply get lost amongst the myriad of tweets, statuses and messages which flood your potential clients' feeds every day.

Overall, joining social media on a whim, without a plan in place, may end up harming your reputation and business, rather than improving it. And that, my friend, is a fact.

But worry not! We have you covered with a concise but comprehensive social media strategy template below.

By following it, you will be able to reap the many aforementioned fruits that social has to offer, from gaining new leads and nurturing relationships with existing clients to immensely expanding your brand's reach.

Such a strategy doesn't have to take yonks to create. Or be overly complex.

Simply follow the questions and steps below and voila! You'll have a comprehensive social media strategy, guaranteed to gear you towards success.

DEFINING OBJECTIVES AND AIMS:

Like with any other business or marketing strategy, you must start by thinking about your goals and objectives. The bigger picture stuff, as we like to call it.

Why do you want to use social media, and how do you think it can benefit your business?

This is extremely important. Especially when it comes to measuring the success of your social media efforts in future.

Consider these:

- What are you intending to achieve?
- Think about defining SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Timely) objectives.
- Start with the strategic business or policy aims and develop communication objectives that will support the delivery of these.
- Focus on outcomes, not outputs. What will it look like if you succeed?

Then:

1. Define up to five overarching strategic objectives.

2. What is it you want to achieve with social media on the strategic level? (E.g. generating new leads, improving customer service etc.)
3. Use these strategic objectives to create some tangible, measurable social media objectives.

For example, if your strategic objective is to generate new leads, a tangible objective may be to generate ten new leads through Facebook every month. Or if your strategic objective is to raise awareness of your brand, your tangible objective may be to reach 2000 Twitter followers within five months.

Got it?

TARGET AUDIENCE

One of the many beauties of social media is that it allows you to target and connect with the very people you want to get on board and attract to your business.

Remember: your target audience doesn't have to *exclusively* include potential clients.

Say what?

Allow me to illustrate.

Let's say you're a BI service provider with products tailor-made specifically for IT experts who specialise in complex data.

It's a very specific, narrow target audience.

And you might find, for example, that these technical IT guys and girls may not be all that social. They may barely interact with your company profiles and content at all. In fact, there might not even be enough of them in your target destinations to build up any kind of decent following in the first place.

So what's a marketer to do?

In cases like this you may need to get your creative cap on and expand your social media audience beyond those very specific buyers. Maybe you can attract and engage their team members, for example, who will then act as referrers and advocates when the time is right. Or perhaps the heads of other departments will be the social butterflies who can influence your target buyers. Or maybe you need to hone in on your target prospects' mothers when it comes to reaching the right people who can influence their decisions.

Probably not. But maybe.

Look back at your goals. If a key one is becoming a thought-leader in your sphere, then again you might not want to make your audience base too narrow. Who else would you like to get the attention of, within your sector and other related, relevant sectors?

Take a moment, or ten, to think about the best target audience for your social media efforts.

You can choose as many categories as you like but do try to prioritise them. Think age, location and interests.

This will be very beneficial when moving forward. Especially when it comes to mushroom-picking the right social media channels, defining your tone of voice and setting up paid social media ad campaigns in future (if you have the budget and expertise to go down that route).

CONTENT BUCKETS

Here's a rule of thumb when it comes to all the content you create and curate in social:

Make it interesting. Make it valuable. Make it relevant.

(Although in some B2C cases, you might want to swap out 'valuable' for 'entertaining'.)

1. Start by thinking about your company's USPs (Unique Selling Points). What is it that's really special about your business and offering? What unique perspective do you bring to the table? What's your angle? What's your edge? What do you know more about or do better than all of your so-called competitors.

2. Then it's time to create your content buckets.

Content buckets are overall themes or categories which all of the content you create and curate on social media will fall into. Defining content buckets is a great way to focus, organise and manage all of your content for all content channels, not only social media, moving forward.

In a nutshell; they are overarching topics you think your target audience will love, that align with what your company has to offer them.

For example?

- a) Copywriting, Content Marketing, Branding and Social Media (these are ours).
- b) Streetwear, Eveningwear, Shoes and Future Trends (which might belong to a fashion brand).

In general, it makes a ton of sense to hone in on four content buckets (or thereabouts), to keep your content relevant, focused and valuable, yet not too narrow or repetitive in topic choice. Once you've made your pick, aim to divide your content topics up equally between the four buckets.

For a deeper dive into how and why to create your buckets, get your hands on our content strategy eBook [here](#).

Then take a deep breath and when you're ready, fill in the table below:

Content bucket 1	Content bucket 2	Content bucket 3	Content bucket 4

TONE OF VOICE:

Now that you have a crystal clear picture of **WHY** you want to harness the powers of social media (your defined objectives), **WHO** you will be reaching out to (your target audience) and **WHAT** you will be talking about (your content buckets), it's time to think about **HOW** you're going to communicate.

In other words, what's your tone of voice?

Should your brand voice be whimsical and flirtatious? Professional and polished? Young and hip? Male? female? Formal? Informal?

Defining your voice is key for maintaining business continuity and brand longevity. And, of course, it is crucial that all your social media managers and contributors stick to these rock solid brand voice guidelines in order to see this through. No exceptions.

Throughout the exercises below, make sure you keep your target audience glued to mind. All branding decisions like this need to sync perfectly with your target audience's desires, needs and pain points. Remember the 'target audience' section we just filled out? Flick back and look at your answers for guidance.

If you've already worked on your tone of voice guidelines in our Content Strategy or Brand Strategy eBooks, then skip right ahead to the Nitty Gritty tactics - where things are going to start getting...well, nitty gritty.

1. Using 5 adjectives, describe the style and tone of voice you want to sound like on social media.
2. Situate your company's tone of voice on the axis below:

Formal-----chatty
Serious-----humours
Detached-----warm
Professional-----casual
Tasteful-----unrefined
Wordy-----concise

3. Keeping the above in mind, let's now think of what your company should or should not say on social media (make sure you keep your objectives in mind here).

OK	NOT OK

4. Think of different celebrities/ characters/ public figures. Who do you think your brand should sound like?

5. If your company were a person, how would you describe them?

Age:

Sex:

Profession:

Personality traits:

Now, with all of these in mind, fill in your company's tone of voice matrix.

<p>Character/ persona</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Friendly Warm Inspiring Playful Authoritative Professional</p>	<p>Tone</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Personal Humble Clinical Honest Direct Scientific</p>
<p>Language</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Complex Savvy Insider Serious Simple Jargon-filled Fun</p>	<p>Purpose</p> <p><i>For example:</i> Engage Educate Inform Enable Entertain Delight Sell</p>

Answered all the questions above?

Awesome sauce. You now have your very own social media strategy doc. Congratulations, *you*.

Now copy all your answers into a branded document and circulate it around your stakeholders and everyone involved. Make sure they're on the same page moving forward, to avoid any hostile situations further down the line.

But wait. This was just the beginning...

Next up you'll discover the secrets to putting your strategy into action.

It's time delve into some of the nitty-gritty tactics that'll help you succeed; and some further online reading materials to quench that thirst.

THE NITTY GRITTY TACTICS

OK. You have your objectives, target audience, content buckets and tone of voice in place, but what do you do with them now?

To become a social media marketing master, try reading everything there is to read on the Social Media Examiner blog.

For a quicker, solid, no-nonsense understanding of the essentials, keep reading. You'll be all the more wiser with every paragraph.

CHOOSING THE RIGHT SOCIAL MEDIA CHANNELS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

There are dozens of social media platforms out there in the webosphere. Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, SnapChat, Tumblr and oh so many more.

They each offer unique experiences and different ways of curating content to their users.

Having a presence on ALL of these platforms is not just unrealistic for most of y'all, it can also be a major waste of time and resources. It's unlikely that your target buyers are alive and kicking on *all of these* platforms. And even if they are, it's unlikely that you can achieve a decent ROI on them all.

So, step one of your social media platform selecting journey is:

Think about your target audience and the social media platforms they are most likely to use regularly.

To find out more on how to research your target audience's social media usage, [this Social Media Examiner article digs deeper](#).

Step two?

Think about your objectives and which social media network is most likely to help you attain these goals.

If you're in the product design industry, for example, and want to gain more exposure for your products and brand, then visual platforms like Instagram or Pinterest may be your weapons of choice..

But if you're in the finance industry, and want to connect with new leads and nourish relationships with prospective clients and collaborators, a more professional, B2B-focused platform, such as LinkedIn, might be the way to go.

Done mulling these questions over?

You should now have a short list of the best social media channels for your business, ready to rumble.

Now it's time to get realistic about your resources and budget.

How many platforms can you *actually afford* to have a presence on?

You want to make sure you have both the time and the resources to make the best of each platform, so try to stick to two or three channels to start with or you'll find yourself in an uphill battle. Trust me.

[This top drawer article by WpCurve](#) will give you further insights into the ins and outs of selecting the right social media channels.

The remainder of this chapter will focus on the three most common platforms used by most businesses and organisations.

Tons of useful, exciting tips for **Twitter**, **Facebook** and **LinkedIn**, coming right up.

But before we start exploring each, here are a few simple rules you should follow religiously, no matter which platforms you opt for:

- To do well on social media, you should offer your audience relevant, interesting and valuable content (both original and curated), which fits into your 'content buckets', in order to meet the objectives you've defined beforehand. I simply can't stress enough how important this is. People are on social media to find things they are interested in and which feed them value and/or entertainment. Don't provide them with that and you'll miss the mark, big time (and

have nothing but tumbleweed blowing through your social profile home feeds).

- As a rule of thumb, only one in six social media updates should be self-promotional – for example, a campaign message or a tweet with a link to your Facebook account. You don't want to spam your target audience or they'll click that 'unfollow' button quicker than you can say 'Pinterest'. Again, make sure you provide your audience mainly with relevant, interesting and valuable content. And no, company news and pictures of your team having banter on that away day don't count.
- Remember: social media should be first and foremost 'social'. So try to engage your audience as you would your friends and colleagues. Ask questions, answer other people's questions, comment and be active. It's time to become that social butterfly you always knew you could be.

Phew... ok, we made it.

On to those juicy tips I promised earlier.

(I'm a woman of my word, see?)

TWITTER

Twitter is a fast-paced, cut-to-the-chase type of network which allows very short snippets of content (up to 140 characters) to be re-tweeted, clicked on and followed.

It's one of the most popular social media platforms, with about 317 million users worldwide (and counting).

Unlike Facebook, it allows you to target your specific audience and grow your following organically and quickly, without spending a penny. Or at least not as many pennies as you'd need in Facebook.

(Hold your horses, I'll explain exactly how to do that in a second).

And maybe even more importantly, Twitter is known as the main network used by thought leaders across the board. So if you want to build relationships with top experts in your field and drive yourself up that highway to industry stardom - Twitter can be the fastest vehicle to ride in.

Hints, Tips and Tricks:

- As Twitter is such a fast-flowing beast, in noisy industries, you can achieve optimum results by posting as much as twice an hour. But for some brands and industries, 5 tweets a day may be best. According to [this proven research from 10 studies though](#), the optimum amount of tweets per day across all industries is 15. But do your homework, to see if your industry is any different. And of course, test, analyse and tweak.
- Make sure your cover and profile photos are clear, well positioned, uniquely branded and top quality. Your profile image has to be consistent across all digital media channels, and of course, perfectly in tune with your core brand identity. If you're not a well-known brand already, it's arguably more effective to choose a figurehead for your company profile; i.e. a key staff member's face rather than your logo. Why? Because social media is *social*. People are more likely to communicate and engage with a person, than a faceless brand. Comprene?
- One hot trick for fast growth in Twitter is called the 'follow, unfollow' game. It's a ruthless strategy, but an effective one. The rules of the game are simple: follow people daily and about half of them will follow you back (especially if your home feed is jam-packed full of valuable,

interesting, relevant content). And for those who don't follow you back within a few days? Unfollow them; they are dead to you! (It's harsh, but effective). Make sure you focus on following people who are within your defined target audience and focus on the quality of followers rather than just the quantity.

- Always try to have more followers than people you follow. Otherwise, it looks spammy. You want to present your company as a fountain of wisdom and thought-leadership; not some cheap trickster who buys followers.
- Visual imagery is the lifeblood of Twitter. Share it as much as possible. Always make sure they are optimised for Twitter (in terms of dimensions). This [social media image cheat sheet](#) will help.
- Engage with your audience and influencers: engage them in discussions, ask them questions and answer any questions they might have in a timely manner.
- Reference and engage as much as you can using the @ (handle) function. E.g. when sharing content that includes quotes from influencers, you can add @ to tag your influencers (for example, @konradsanders), and if you've created good enough relations with them (or the

staff members who run their Twitter accounts), they will eventually, hopefully, share your content with their large eager follower bases. Make sense?

This is part of what is often referred to as **'Influencer Marketing'** which, put simply, means building relationships with influencers in your field (by engaging them, complimenting them and sharing their tweets/blogs etc) with the ultimate goal of getting them to share your content. We will delve into Influencer Marketing in more depth later. Just make sure not to use a handle at the beginning of a tweet as this will count as you tweeting 'at' someone and will not be seen by your followers.

- You can also use the 'private message' function to tell influencers and others about events, campaigns and content that their audience would be interested in. But the relationship-building comes first.
- Twitter lists are an incredibly helpful function. Whenever you follow a new influencer, add them to a labelled list. Check out [this article](#) to understand more about how to reap the benefits of Twitter lists for your business.
- You could also include a campaign hashtag which would be used at the end of all tweets related to that campaign. If you engage users in

discussions using this hashtag, then anyone and everyone can then use the hashtag to see and get involved in discussions about that topic. And with a little extra magic, it may even start trending. A hashtag is like the 'search' function of Twitter.

- Make sure to test all content to ensure that it looks good on mobile phones as well.
- Follow the news carefully, take timing into consideration and double check all content tweeted to avoid a social media fail. Check out [these hilarious social media faux pas](#) to learn more about what you absolutely SHOULD NOT DO.

Daily-plan:

As mentioned above, it is (most often) advisable to tweet every hour or two (if not more frequently), between 10:00am and 10:00pm. A strong daily tweet plan might look something like this (the ratio of original content and curated content can change once you have more original content to share:

10:00am	Retweet	04:00pm	Promotional tweet
11:00am	Curated content	05:00pm	Retweet
12:00pm	Original content	06:00pm	curated content
01:00pm	Promotional tweet	07:00pm	Original content
02:00pm	Original content	08:00pm	Promotional tweet
03:00pm	Influencer retweet	09:00pm	Curated content

Note that you don't have to post at round hours, it is even preferable to post at random times of the hour, for example, 05:24, as long as you do so regularly.

In general, the best hours to tweet are between 12 and 4 pm. Those are the hours in which people are most active on Twitter. You can also use tools such as [FollowerWonk](#) to get further insights into this.

Remember: assumptions are your enemy. The only way to truly succeed in social media, and marketing in general, is by testing, analysing and tweaking. Then testing, analysing and tweaking some more.

Take tweeting seriously and really think about what YOUR audience wants to get/read/see and when they are likely to do so. You want to get people to consider your Twitter account as a prime source of knowledge and/or entertainment. You want them to be engaged by and be *social* with your profile.

Types of Tweets:

RTs: Re-tweeting (sharing) tweets of influencers and other industry connections is extremely important because it allows you to connect and build relations with influencers and other industry peers alike, while still providing your audience with valuable, interesting, relevant content.

Curated content: content created *by others* that you share (see chapter on content).

Original content: That juicy, valuable content that *your brand* has created (see chapter on content).

Promotional tweets: These are the all-important self-serving ones. The tweets you use to promote new offers, send traffic to landing pages, create buzz for an upcoming event or book launch etc. Here's your chance to use tried and trusted copywriting formulas to really entice your audience. These [14 Ways to Write a Customer-Gripping Tweet](#) written by our CEO and content strategist, Konrad, will help.

FACEBOOK

Good old Facebook. Many a man, woman and child will find themselves sucked in by its mighty gravitational field...hour in, hour out.

But how much do you actually know about how to make Facebook work for your business?

Let's kick off with some context.

Facebook is the biggest social network online with more than 1.86 billion users worldwide. That's over one quarter of the world's population. So, naturally, it's a great starting point for connecting your organisation with large audiences.

Facebook isn't just the biggest network, it's also the most versatile one, audience-wise. Starting out as a platform aimed at US college students just over ten years ago, today it's become a multifaceted social network where people of all ages and origins can connect not only with friends and family but with organisations, public figures, businesses and much more.

So in a nutshell: it's a big deal.

Hints, Tips and Tricks:

- In general terms, your Facebook update mix shouldn't be too dissimilar to that of Twitter. It should include a similar ratio of curated content, original content, follower engagement and promotional messages.
- Unlike Twitter, however, it is advisable to only post once or twice a day, so that you don't rub people up the wrong way (i.e. spam them). It's also an opportunity to post visual and video content, which has a much higher chance of achieving virality. The more comments, likes and shares your posts get, the higher the EdgeRank score will be, and the more eyeballs it will get in front of. Learn [all about Edgerank and its mysterious ways here](#).
- People are generally most active on Facebook between 9am and 4pm. The best times to post are on the whole between 1-4 pm on working days. But just like with Twitter, do your own research and run your own tests. The audience your brand is targeting may well be a different breed to the norm, and behave differently online. No two target audiences are born equal.
- The golden ratio applies here too. Roughly one in five or six posts can and should be promotional. Don't spam your followers with

“me, me, me” messages all the time. It’s anti-*social*.

- Also try to use the ‘share’ function at least once a day, sharing interesting, relevant and valuable content posted by industry peers and influencers.
- Facebook allows you to write a whole lot more than Twitter. So take advantage of this. While short discussion questions and posts can really stand out in your followers’ feeds and have been proven to get more shares, also take the time to write longer, more in-depth messages which dig a little deeper into the subject matter. Mini-blog posts if you will. Surveys and competitions work wonders too when it comes to engagement and virality.
- And what if nobody’s engaging with your Facebook content, thus sending its Edgerank to an early grave? Ask your team members to pitch in and get the ball rolling. This is where a good employee advocacy strategy comes into play, which we’ll touch on later.
- Growing your brand’s Facebook following organically is a toughie. With stricter rules than Twitter, the follow/unfollow tactic just doesn’t fly here. What this really boils down to is: you’ve *gotta pay to play*. Learn how to promote your

company's Facebook page [here](#). And these [7 Ways To Promote Your Facebook Page Without Spending A Dime](#) will give your marketing team some food for thought too.

- As well as using the Facebook advertising feature to promote pages and boost posts, it is of course widely-used (very successfully in fact) for creating ultra-targeted sponsored ads to channel target prospects to external landing pages and websites. The benefit of advertising in Facebook? It knows a heapload of things about a heckload of people; so you can hone in on very specific audiences based on their behaviour, likes, age, location and so much more. And then craft tailor-made ads with super high conversion rates. [These 11 Examples of Facebook Ads That Actually Work \(And Why\)](#) will help you get to grips with it all.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is known for being THE B2B social network. And for good reason. Just take a look at these staggering statistics:

- About [1 in every three professionals worldwide has a linkedin account](#).
- LinkedIn currently has [around 467 million users](#).
- [40% of them check their account DAILY](#).

And if that's not enough to get your juices flowing...

- [HALF off all key decision makers](#) say they use LinkedIn regularly.

In more practical terms, LinkedIn allows you to connect directly with potential clients in your target industries. It allows you to keep in touch with other professionals in your field, grow your network and keep up to date with developments in your industry. It also allows you to publish job postings and make sure you attract the right kind of talent your company needs. And that's just scratching the surface of its many benefits.

So, as a B2B brand; the LinkedIn party is one you simply can't afford to miss.

But how do you make the most of your company's LinkedIn efforts?

Follow the tips below and you'll be half way there.

Hints, Tips and Tricks:

#1: First up, build yourself a Linked Company Page

- LinkedIn tells you how to do so [here](#).
- Like with a Facebook page, this will give other LinkedIn users the opportunity to learn more about your business, brand, products, services and job opportunities.
- As with all other platforms, make sure your page is branded up beautifully, consistent with your core brand identity, and shouting your USPs in every sentence.
- Optimise the content on your company page with keyword phrases that draw target prospects to you like moths to a lightbulb. This [post on the KissMetrics blog](#) will give you some guidance.
- Just like on Twitter and Facebook, make sure you share interesting, valuable and relevant content. But as LinkedIn is a business-oriented network, make sure to post more professionally-focused info about your industry and offerings – and less videos of cats playing pianos (as hilarious as they might be).

- [Here are some tips by LinkedIn](#) on how to optimise your company page. And 7 More by the Social Media Examiner Gurus.

#2: Optimize all your personal LinkedIn accounts too

- While LinkedIn is more business oriented than Facebook or Twitter, it is still, first and foremost, a SOCIAL network. This means: users tend to engage more with and respond better to friendly smiley people, rather than company logos. You know, like in real life. This doesn't mean that you can't promote your business within LinkedIn. You can and you should. But you should also pay close attention to the profiles of you and all your team members. There's power in numbers on social.
- Your profile pics and backgrounds should again be consistent with your core company brand identity. And with your company page of course. There's a big opportunity to differentiate here and to demonstrate the powerful art of consistency in branding.
- Use some killer copy in your profile summaries, not the bog-standard, resume-like dribble you see on most peoples'. Focus on your clients' pains and how you can soothe them, or their

desires and how you can help them achieve them. [Konrad's LinkedIn profile](#) may give you a splash of inspiration.

- Get rid of all those bartending roles your staff members had when they were 18, and keep the experience section focused and relevant.
- Make sure to add skills and interests – the more these accounts have to offer, the better.
- Social proof is one of the MOST POWERFUL ways to convince your prospects. So reach out to current and past clients to ask them to give your staff members LinkedIn recommendations (just make sure they have a LinkedIn account first, and that they know how to provide a LinkedIn recommendation). These recommendations will appear on your account's page and will give it that much more authority. It can help to draft a little example for them, to help them touch on the points you want to show. If they're happy clients, they'll likely comply.

#3: Post, post, post (and connect)

- Yes, yes. You know the rules by now. Post **interesting, engaging and valuable content**.

- One post a day is enough for LinkedIn.
- Don't forget to engage (and then connect) with people. Use LinkedIn polls. Post discussion questions. Answer other people's questions. Be social and active.

#4: Reap the Rewards of LinkedIn Groups

- LinkedIn groups provide a place for professionals to share content, network, post questions and establish themselves as thought leaders in their fields. LinkedIn also allows you to connect with fellow group members, even though you haven't met them in person. It's a great way to grow your connections (reach out to new users daily).
- First and foremost, identify and join groups where your prospective clients are likely to hangout in. You'll have to do this using one or more of your **personal profiles**, as you can't join a group as a company page. If you are in the AV or catering business, for example, an event planning group, [such as this one here](#), might work best for you, as this is where many potential leads are likely to socialise. Once you've joined, start posting interesting (and relevant) articles, join discussions and answer questions – but only after you've read and understood the group rules

- Don't be stingy with your professional expertise. The more you share, and the more comprehensive your answers are, the more likely people are to want to connect with you. Do it well enough, and you may become a known industry expert. Once you've engaged someone of interest on the group (by answering their question, commenting on their posts or vice versa), send that person a request to connect. And voila, now you have a brand new lead just waiting to be nurtured and converted.
- In addition to the above, you can also create your own LinkedIn groups. This will allow you to truly create a community around those people and prospects you are hoping to engage. Just be careful, administrating LinkedIn groups can be quite time consuming, and if LinkedIn gets a whiff of spammy, promotional materials or mismanaged groups - you are likely to be shut down.
- As always – never spam! If you try to post promotional materials or unrelated content on a group you are very likely to get the boot and never be able to join that group again. If you are too salesy with your 'request to connect' messages, people simply won't accept your request, and you might even develop a reputation of being a 'spammer'. So make sure you respect the rules of each group and the fact that people are on LinkedIn to connect with

other professionals, not to hear your sales pitch.

- Once you have some new juicy, group-related content to share (e.g. on your blog, or as a guest post on an other publication), go ahead and share it in the groups. To make this more impactful, try turning your blog post title into a discussion question, with the post linked to underneath (or even later on in the conversation). That way, you're more likely to get engagement, than if you simply drop a link in there hoping people will click on it. The subtler approach always works better in inbound marketing.
- Follow Neal Schaffer and Melonie Dodaro to keep your finger in the pulse of LinkedIn marketing. They know their onions.

TEST, ANALYSE AND TWEAK

I've said it before, and I'll say it again.

Test, analyse and tweak.

When it comes to social media, it is **CRUCIAL** to consistently evaluate the effectiveness of tactics used across all platforms and measure results against your defined objectives.

[Twitter analytics](#) is incredibly useful for understanding and checking what works and what doesn't. For example, you can check which kind of tweets received the most clicks or engagement and replicate those tweets.

[Hootsuite](#), which we'll talk about in the next chapter, also has an inbuilt analytics tool with which you can check which promotional tweets and updates have had the highest click-through rates and at which times of the day etc. Based on these findings, you can then tailor your campaigns to make them more effective.

You should also check [Google Analytics](#) to monitor the traffic flow and conversion rates on your site itself. How much of your website's traffic flow has come from Twitter? And LinkedIn? And Google+?

Work out what's working and what isn't.

TOOLS TO MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

I know what you're thinking.

“With all of these different platforms, actions, tactics and strategies, we'll have to be on social media 24/7 to get it all right!”

Au contraire.

The internet is chock-full of tools which can you're your lives a whole lot easier when it comes to social.

Social media is half science and half art. The below tools will help you nail the science part. You'll need your noggins for the creative part.

Hootsuite

[Hootsuite](#) is one of the best social media management tools out there. And it's FREE.

It's easy to learn (check out their tutorials [here](#)) and it is absolutely essential if you're using more than one social media platform and planning to post regularly.

It has many features that will allow you to manage all of your social media accounts in a smooth, efficient way.

These include:

- Scheduling all of your social media engagement (tweets, Facebook statuses etc.) in advance.
- Managing all of your social media outlets through one single platform.
- Creating different 'streams' with the dashboard which can include your Twitter lists, engagement and RSS feeds. This makes re-tweeting, engaging and finding content to share a piece of cake.
- Evaluating your performance through insights and analytics.
- A huge selection of free and paid apps to help you with everything from analytics and branding to video marketing. One app we're a fan of is [Right Relevance](#) which helps you to easily and quickly find influencers and relevant content for your specific needs.

Followerwonk

[This](#) is one of my personal faves. Followerwonk allows you to really dig deep into your twitter analytics and easily discover who your followers are, where they are located and when they are most active on social media.

It is also great for finding influencers and creating in-depth, sharable reports that your CEO or CMO will love.

Canva/ Pablo

[Canva](#) and [Pablo](#) are two online design tools which make creating and designing branded images, memes, event invites and much more super easy. And so much fun to use too!

Warning: you may get addicted.

Quora

[Quora](#) is a question-and-answer website where questions are asked, answered, edited and organized by its community of users. It can be used to see what the most common questions people have about your industry are (which will give you a whole plateful of food for thought when it comes to creating content), find influencers and of course, ask any question you may have about social media.

Buzzsumo

[Buzzsumo](#) allows you to analyse the most popular content on any specific topic. This is great for understanding what kind of content your followers want to read, and also for finding relevant, interesting and

valuable content for you to curate across your various channels.

QUUU

[Quuu](#) is another amazing tool for content curation. Find quality, hand-curated content according to specific, pre-defined, categories. Another handy instrument to help you fill up your Hootsuite publisher with an abundance of relevant, interesting, valuable, industry-specific content.

Rocketium

[Rocketium](#) is a cute new tool for creating awesome short videos from text and images.

Keyhole

[Keyhole](#) is one of the smartest social media analytics tools out there, allowing you to measure, in detail, a brand or trend's impact on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. It is great for analysing campaigns which utilise hashtags and for finding new influencers.

Oh – and here are the [20 best new social media tools to try in 2017](#).

You're welcome.

INFLUENCER MARKETING

I've harped on about it before. Many times, in fact.

So what exactly is this 'influencer marketing' and why's it such a huge deal?

Influencer marketing is perhaps the most powerful way to fast track your social media efforts to success.

It involves building relationships with, and helping out, other influential thought leaders and bloggers in your realm, so that they will then reciprocate by sharing your content, thus sending large amounts of traffic your way and exposing your content and brand to MUCH larger audiences than you could do otherwise.

In the world of social media, there is certainly power in numbers. And if you get influencers on your side (each with tens and hundreds of thousands of followers), there is a shedload of potential.

Type of influencers:

Your influencers will usually fall into a few different categories, which will differ according to your industry and offerings.

But, in general, most influencers will come under these categories:

Public	Private	Civic
Governments and governmental departments	Thought leaders and well known experts in different fields	Think tanks and academics
Politicians and high-ranking civil servants	Companies (and their high ranking personnel)	NGOs and charities
International organisations and their top personnel	Business groups	Faith groups
	Media organisations	Student and youth groups
	Individuals: celebrities, well known bloggers, Youtubers etc.	

While not all of these ‘influence categories’ will work or be useful for all types of companies and organisations, it is good to keep the table above in mind when researching and creating your influencer lists.

Researching Influencers

Before cracking on with researching and locating your influencers, it is crucial that you keep these four pointers in mind:

- Research influencers according to the content buckets you defined in your social media or content strategy. Ultimately, you should have a list of influencers for each bucket, which you can add to an ‘influencer spreadsheet’ and turn into Twitter lists.
- Think of influential people with a connection to your field and industry, i.e., thought leaders, journalists, politicians, celebrities, governmental departments and anyone else who is interested in your industry and that you can harness to help you in your social media efforts. Remember, **all influencers MUST have an online presence.**

- Not all influencers HAVE to be a part of your industry. They can also be individuals and organisations with influence over your specific target audience.
- You can identify influencers according to their [Klout](#) and [Kred](#) scores, as well as according to their number of social media followers and blog readerships (which you can generally tell by the amount of shares and comments their posts get, and the fact that they're at the top of the SERPs).

Ok, time to get down to business and start creating these influencers lists.

1. **Start with a 'off the top of your head' brainstorming session.** Think about individuals, organisations and companies you already know of that may fit the bill. Look them up online, and add their social media profiles and blog URLs to your 'influencer spreadsheet' (according to the content bucket they fit into).
2. **Crack on with an online 'influencer hunt'.** To find the right influencers for you online you can use tools like [Keyhole](#), [FollowerWonk](#), [LittleBird](#) and [Kerd](#). You can also research influencers on Hootsuite by using apps like [InsightPool](#) and [Right Relevance](#).

- 3. Use your existing influencers to find more influencers.** Once you've built your first list, use it to find even more relevant influencers. Check out your influencers' Twitter lists. Anyone there worth adding to yours? Who do your influencers engage with online? Who are their followers? This is a solid way to beef up that influencer spreadsheet.

- 4. Colour-coordinate all of the influencers in your influencer spreadsheet according to their level of influence and how likely they are to be interested in your business or share your content.** This will help you to figure out which influencers you should be spending more time building relationships with. Let's say you own an online clothes brand, for example. Beyoncé, who is somewhat of a fashion icon, may have plenty of influence in your sphere and over your target audience. However, the likelihood of Queen B sharing your content is very low, and therefore, you might want to spend less time trying to build an online relationship with her. Don't get me wrong, we're not saying that you shouldn't try connecting with her. You should go for it. Katy Perry, for example, is known for re-tweeting products and designs that she likes. It just might be worthwhile focusing your efforts elsewhere.

Harnessing your influencers:

In some industries you may need to pay influencers to endorse your products, or collaborate on content etc. In others, you can build relationships with them adopting the “I scratch your back, you scratch mine” approach.

How can you engage with influencers and start to build relationships with them?

Try out some of these tried and trusted tactics:

- Do one daily/weekly ‘shoutout’ tweet/Facebook status, (e.g. ‘Follow These Amazing experts →@JillKonrath @JohnSmith, @JamesDean’)
- Tag influencers into conversation starters (e.g. ‘Question to the Masters: What Is the Best Social Media Tool To Use in 2017 and Why? @JillKonrath @JohnSmith, @JamesDean’)
- Having *real* conversations with influencers whenever you spot an opportunity.
- Use all social media channels to interact with your influencers daily (re-tweets, mentions, comments etc.). Help them out by sharing their content, continuously.
- Invite influencers to guest post on your blog (if you have one) and collaborate in various other content efforts. It will do wonders for your audience, and when the influencers involved

share your content, it'll expose it to mass audiences.

- Interview influencers on topics related to your content buckets for a podcast/ video/ blog post.

[This article](#), written by our very own Konrad, reveals the secret to nailing this influencer marketing strategy.

CREATION AND CURATION

Well done you.

You've taken the time to get seriously strategic and have put together a rock solid social media strategy. You've also carefully chosen the right platforms for your audience and picked up some handy tactics and tools. Oh – and your 'influencer spreadsheet' brimming with industry thought-leaders, just ready for the picking.

But one question still lingers. WHAT is it that you're going to share online? What will fill up your Hootsuite publisher and Twitter daily calendar?

Let's talk content.

Original content

Social media marketing goes hand in hand with **content marketing** (download our advanced content strategy guide [here](#)). Social platforms are effective instruments for promoting your content and for

channelling that much needed traffic to your website and blog in the first place.

Once your followers start to devour your content, and see how valuable it is, they will then share it with their own fans and followers, driving even more traffic (and prospects) your way.

The more this happens, the more followers you get. Google will also pick up on the social signals and backlinks from other sites, deeming your content as valuable and a worthy fit for those searching for relevant search terms.

Different people interact with and respond to different kinds of content. Some people like to gain insights from an engaging YouTube clip, others listen to their favourite podcasts on their morning commute, while others like to sink their teeth into a good old fashioned blog post.

And, of course, there are plenty of your target prospects who interact with all of these content channels (and more) every day. Which is why the most effective content marketing strategy will involve a combination of all of them.

A powerful and cost effective way to make the most out of your content is by repurposing it. E.g. turning an already written blog post on [insert your topic] into a more extensive eBook, a vlog episode, a podcast AND an infographic.

Here's a list of ideas for original content to engage your followers with (and some tips on how to create them):

- Create a bank of discussion questions, tips, famous quotes, conversation starters etc. that fit into each content bucket and which you can share at any time on your social media channels.
- You can then also turn the above into branded captioned images (or memes) using [canva](#) , or even turn them into small GIFs using [Giphy](#). These images will all have the same (or a few different) branded backgrounds and your company logo at the bottom. Creating such a bank of branded images is probably one of the most cost and time effective ways to generate compelling original content. Such captioned images can also include promotional content (but remember the rules, in this case you will only share such an image one in every 4, 5 or 6 posts). Check our [Twitter profile](#) to see some examples of those.
- Company updates that are personal and relatable.
- Infographics with valuable, interesting facts and figures about your industry.

- Your own blog posts. Make sure you check out this [Essential Guide to Writing Blog Posts](#) before you begin your blogging campaign.
- Youtube videos
- Podcasts
- Time lapse and GIF/ VINE videos
- [Twitter Quizzes](#) and Facebook polls (which is better? Trivia questions etc.)

Curated Content:

Curated content should be a hefty portion of the content you deliver across your social channels. As much as 50% of it, in fact.

By sharing other interesting, valuable, niche-focused content you will:

- Feed your audience with an endless supply of value, wisdom and entertainment – without having to create it all in-house.
- Support other industry peers, thought-leaders and publications – thereby increasing the

- chances of reciprocation with the influencer marketing gambit we discussed earlier.
- Position yourselves as the non-salesy, selfless go-to brand for anything and everything related to industry topics.
- Have the kind of social profiles that *real* people will actually want to follow and engage with.

And how do you find relevant content to curate?

- Set your Hootsuite streams so that they include your Twitter lists, followers and your Twitter/Facebook feed. That way, when it comes to setting up your weekly or daily scheduled tweets and posts, you can rifle through those streams to see what valuable content is ripe for the sharing.
- Use other content-finding apps like Right Relevance.
- Create a list of online blogs and publications that frequently publish interesting and valuable content which fits into your content buckets. [Find the URL of those site's RSS feed](#) and add them to [Hootsuite's RSS syndicator](#).

- After following the three steps above, your Hootsuite dashboard will become a library of awesome content to share.
- But if that's not enough, and you are still looking for content to curate, you can always use one of these online tools to help you scout for some more: [Buzzsumo](#), [Scoop.it](#), [Quora](#) or [ContentGems](#) . You should note, however, that not all tools will work for all industries. You may well need to conduct some research to find the best tool to fit your content buckets.

Remember: no audience or industry is born equal.

EMPLOYEE ADVOCACY

Last but certainly not least, I want to touch on employee advocacy. And I say 'touch on' because, for starters, it's a very simple (yet powerful) concept – and secondly, I can tell you're eager to go put all this new-found knowledge into action.

So...

Employee advocacy is a term used to describe the exposure that employees generate for brands using their own online assets.

In other words: your company employees are most probably all active on social media – so use them to share and engage with your content!

The larger the company, the better.

Of course, this is easier said than done. And that's where gamification comes into play. Use an employee advocacy tool like GaggleAmp, in which you can incentivise your team members to get stuck in by rewarding top sharers and contributors each month with prizes and rewards.

WHAT NOW?

Now you can pat yourself on the back.

Now you're armed with the knowledge needed to make social media work wonders for your brand.

Now you know the ins and outs of LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook when it comes to growing a follower base and converting prospects.

And now you can reap the benefits of one of our other free invaluable, in-depth eBooks by clicking one of these three links:

- [The Fluff-Free Guide to Content Strategy](#)
- [25 Customer-Converting Copywriting Secrets](#)
- [The Bull-Free Guide to Brand Strategy](#)

Or...

If you want your social strategy to be on point, and your profiles to be managed by a bunch of bottom-line focused experts, then...

GET IN TOUCH