

Make social media work for you

Let a professional advise you

SOCIAL Media has changed the way we do business with clients. Gone are the days that conversation ends after a sale.

The "Connected Generation" spend the better part of their day online, sharing, tagging photos and watching videos. It's time your business understands these networks and engages with your clients beyond the classic advertising mediums.

Businesses have always looked at means and methods to get their products and services across to the consumer in a new light, while many are still only figuring out the power the social world has to offer.

I often turn to a smile when I speak about the power of social media to a group of people, unsure, yet hungry to learn. For the first time in our planet's history, mankind is connected far greater than any civilisation before us.

We live in a time where we can learn from our customers beyond their purchase. A time where a single message transferred over a video can be seen by millions with little to no budget of a film studio.

There are several ways for a brand to get their message across using social media. I'm going to highlight three that you should embrace to target your business audience, grow your community



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and generate brand ambassadors while you're sleeping.

We all have Facebook, but as a business you should create a "Page". What's the difference? A profile allows you to share your life and great moments around you. A page gives you the ability to post updates and view real time analytic reports on the audience that follow you.

For example, if you have more women on your page than men

between 25-35 you can target specific adverts to the targeted audience.

That's just the tip of the iceberg with amazing things you can do with Facebook Pages.

Twitter is essential in being part of the global conversation. I was once told: "There's so much talk happening on Twitter - I just stayed away."

You shouldn't fear the streams of conversations, I suggest you drop in, say what you have to and go your way.

Learn about Hashtags and what's trending in your community and business environment and take advantage of those opportunities. Throw in a tweet or two - don't be a robot and use cheesy sales lines - be yourself.

If you ever come across a negative posting on your socials, DO NOT DELETE IT - this is your moment of glory to turn an angry customer into a brand ambassador.

Give great customer service and watch how your brand is mentioned to social circles without you being there.

Start a YouTube Channel, capture a video about your business, just like MTV Cribs but for your brand. Add humour and be unique - throw in music to suit the scene to create an ambience, keep it under two minutes.



Creating a pro Twitter profile

THE way you use Twitter for personal use is going to vary greatly from using Twitter for business.

Everything in this checklist is meant for those using Twitter for business. There is a lot of conflicting advice about Twitter (and all social networks), but what doesn't vary is that Twitter is just another way to connect with friends, clients, acquaintances and even strangers.

In this Twitter Profile Checklist, Hashtag South Africa arms you with the essentials for creating a great Twitter Profile that looks professional and produces results. Follow these steps and you will have a Twitter Profile that impresses all those who view it, most importantly your ideal client. It is important to take steps to really make your Twitter Profile STAND OUT!

HOW TO CREATE A PROFESSIONAL TWITTER PROFILE

Display Name:

Choose the name that you want to appear as your display name on your Twitter profile. It is recommended that you use your real name unless you are a large company, then it is appropriate to use your company name.

User Name:

This will be your Twitter ID. For this choose your company name, words that describe what you do, or you can even use your real name. You are limited to 16 characters.

Picture:

The spot that you put your picture in is called your avatar (icon). Use a nice headshot of yourself rather than a logo (unless you are a large brand). People relate to people so that's why it's important to have your personal picture here.

Profile Bio:

Go to settings, click on profile and then upload your bio. You are limited to 160 characters in this space. Share a little about what you do, whom you help and also share a little personal information.

Location:

Be specific and detailed. The more complete your profile, the more comfortable people feel interacting with you.

Website:

Under the profile section you can also enter your website. If you don't have a website or blog then you can use this field for your Facebook page or your LinkedIn profile.

Customised Twitter Background:

If you are using Twitter for business you should invest in a professional custom Twitter background. Make sure that you include on your background your logo, web site and an email address.

Create Great Tweets:

Before you start following people and trying to get people to follow you have about 20-25 really

good tweets already posted so that people do not go to your profile and see an empty Twitter stream.

Twitter Directories:

Register in the most popular twitter directories such as Twel- low.com, WeFollow.com, TweetFollow.com and Twibs.com.

Follow People:

Find people to follow using various Twitter directories including the ones above. If you are using Twitter for business you may want to see who is following your competitors. If you have a business that services a specific region you may want to focus on people who live in that area.

Create Lists:

Use Twitter strategically by creating lists of people that you want to watch. You may have people on lists for any of the following reasons: they are competitors, potential clients, current clients, industry leaders, news sites, people in your area, potential referral partners and sources of great content that you want to share.

Share Valuable Content:

Create content of your own and also share other people's content that would be of value to your target audience.

Engage With People:

Social media is meant to be a two-way conversation. Monitor conversations of people you have in your lists, people you want to connect with and people who are talking about things related to your industry. Jump in and participate in the conversations.

Retweet:

By retweeting other people's content you can start to build relationships with people on Twitter. Often those people will start to retweet your content too which exposes you to their audience also. This will help grow your followers.

Schedule Tweets:

Use something like Hootsuite to schedule tweets throughout the day so that you don't have to be in front of your computer doing this all day. Be sure to spread your tweets out through the day. The ideal number of tweets per day is 5-12 tweets.

Reply and Respond:

Reply to all @mentions and thank people for retweeting and sharing your content.

Consistency:

Be consistent with Twitter. Be sure to check in at least one time per day, tweeting daily and engaging in conversations.

Monitor Keywords and Competitors:

This is a great opportunity for you to see what your competitors are doing right and wrong. You may also find an opportunity to save the day and help out a customer who is unhappy with one of your competitors. Twitter is also a great tool to stay up-to-date on your industry and trends.



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