

GOALS

STRATEGY

PLAN

7 STEPS TO A STELLAR SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY



From goal setting to metrics monitoring, these 7 steps are guaranteed to help you up your social media game.

BY NAREN ARULRAJAH

A good social media strategy is comprehensive, detailed, documented, and goal-oriented. It should include all of your social accounts and define how those accounts will help achieve your broader marketing objectives. Here's how to create a social media strategy that gets results.

STEP ONE: AUDIT YOURSELF

A social media audit should include a list of all of your social accounts. List details such as whether the accounts are active, what tactics are and are not currently working, engagement rates, audience size, comparative analysis against competitors, and accuracy

of profile details. Also, list any social accounts you plan to open.

STEP TWO: SET SMART GOALS

The best marketing goals are SMART:

- **Specific.** Before you create a strategy, you need to know precisely what you hope to achieve.
- **Measurable.** There is no way to determine success without quantifiable metrics.
- **Attainable.** Set goals you can actually achieve.
- **Relevant.** Focus on meaningful metrics, such as lead acquisition and conversions.
- **Time-bound.** Set a deadline for

when you expect to accomplish the goal.

Define and document goals and objectives for each network using the above criteria. For example: "We will use Instagram to increase brand awareness to grow our followers by 5,000 in the next 6 months."

STEP THREE: GET TO KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

The key to social media success is understanding your audience, knowing what content they want, and delivering it. Begin by gathering as much data as possible about your current social media followers and your target audience. Once you have devel-

oped audience personas, collect data to determine the best way to reach those people.

STEP FOUR: GET TO KNOW YOUR COMPETITION

Competitive analysis is a crucial step in any marketing activity. Review the social media accounts of your top competitors. Identify their strengths and weaknesses. Look for opportunities to dominate where they are lacking and determine where they might pose a threat to your plans. Also, don't hesitate to look for inspiration on other aesthetic practice social accounts.

STEP FIVE: CREATE YOUR TO-DO LIST

Update existing social accounts with current information and high-quality images. Similarly, you will need to create any planned accounts and complete the profiles. It is important that the profiles be complete and optimized before you begin drawing additional attention to your page.

STEP SIX: CREATE A CONTENT CALENDAR

The final step is planning what will be posted and where and when it will be posted. That is arguably the most crucial component of your social media strategy. It prevents gaps in

activity, off-topic posts, and randomness in social tactics. For each network, you will need to decide:

- Average frequency of posts (example: 3 posts weekly on Facebook)
- Formats and how often each should be used (example: 50 percent links, 10 percent text, 20 percent video, 10 percent polls/quizzes, and 10 percent images on Twitter)
- Purpose of content (example: 20 percent promotional, 60 percent educational, and 20 percent entertaining for Instagram)

At minimum, for each post, describe the ideal format, topic/category, marketing purpose, intended social network, and planned publication date. Many content calendars also include reference links, image sizes, deadlines for editing, and other details.

A content calendar is generally too complex for a simple written list of deadlines. In most cases, a spreadsheet is the best choice. It enables a good overview of the planned content while allowing for many types of details. Alternately, some organizations use standard digital calendars or specialized content-planning software. The method of documentation is far

less important than the dedication to following through.

STEP SEVEN: ANALYZE AND REVISE

Your planned strategy is nothing more than a starting point. For each piece of content, there should be a record of what it was intended to accomplish and why it was chosen. Periodically review your analytics and determine which items were most and least effective and look for commonalities. Try adjusting times, days, or frequencies and record the results. Introduce new content types and see how they perform in comparison. Improving and refining your strategy is never done: this step is perpetual. ■

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- President and CEO of Ekwa Marketing, has been a leader in medical marketing for over a decade.
- Ekwa provides comprehensive marketing solutions for busy doctors, with a team of more than 180 full-time professionals, providing web design, hosting, content creation, social media, reputation management, SEO, and more.
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