

SHOW DON'T TELL:

**CREATING AN
ENGAGING
ONLINE
PRESENCE**

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
Chapter One: What is social media and why is it important?.....	4
Chapter Two: How do I create an online strategy?.....	7
Chapter Three: Which social media platforms should I be on?.....	10
Chapter Four: How do I create engaging content?.....	13
Chapter Five: How do I organize and schedule my content?.....	16
Bonus: Resources for creating the best social media content.....	19
Thank you.....	21

INTRODUCTION

You recently finished my presentation *Show Don't Tell: Creating An Engaging Online Presence* and hopefully left feeling excited and energized about your online potential. If it's been a few days or maybe even weeks since the conference, I'm sure some of that energy is now dispersed among the paperwork that's piling up on your desk but don't worry, this guide has all the information to get you back on track!

We will walk through the five steps to creating an engaging social media presence focusing on the key takeaways from my presentation. Feel free to skip around to focus on topics where you feel you need the most guidance. For those of you who need a refresher, the 5 steps discussed are as follows: define social media, create an online marketing strategy, choose your social media channels, create content, and organize and schedule your content.

In this ebook, you will find the steps we discussed to understanding and growing your online presence, suggestions for creating content that engages your audience, and tested tactics to make sure you never forget to post on your social media accounts. As you dive into this information, remember to go at your own pace! No one benefits from you trying to take on too much too quickly. Steady growth with solid content production is the most meaningful and engaging way to connect with your audience.

Ready to get started?

CHAPTER ONE:

WHAT IS SOCIAL MEDIA AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

DEFINE SOCIAL MEDIA

When I say social media, I bet the first thing that comes to mind is Facebook, Twitter, and maybe Instagram. We think of social media in a very limited capacity but actually, social media is much broader. The actual definition of social media is “websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.” It might just be a little bigger than we initially thought!

If you remember anything from my presentation or from this ebook let it be this: ***Your website is the single most important form of social media you have.*** Yes, you read that correctly, your website is social media! Your website should ‘enable users to create and share content or participate in social networking.’ A great website should be producing content regularly (a blog), should have space where users can participate or connect with you (commenting or a contact form), and enable users to share content (a link to tweet a recent posting). A great website is the very definition of social media!

So why is this important? All social media channels come and go (RIP vine) but that should not affect your organization’s ability to connect with your audience. If Snapchat becomes less popular but all of your resources are wrapped into that one platform, how will your digital marketing efforts survive? By primarily focusing on your website as social media, you are controlling the fate of your online presence. You know your website is here to stay and only you can dictate how and when you interact.

So now you know that you need to start prioritizing your website but what does that mean for all our ‘traditional’ social media? It means that everything you post on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, etc. should lead back to your website. Your website is your content’s home. How do you grow meaningful followers who will keep coming to your website even if that social media platform dissipates?

Let’s talk about six steps to social media success...

1 LISTEN AND LEARN.

Figure out how and why people are communicating on a specific platform. Is it mostly political talk, do people use hashtags, can you communicate using memes...

2 CREATE VALUE.

Next, decide how you can create value in this space. Don't follow along with what everyone else is saying and doing - add something unique to the platform!

3 BE READY TO ENGAGE.

Get ready to start making connections with key people in this space. Comment on profiles, like different pictures, it's called *social* media for a reason - don't be shy!

4 COMMUNICATE.

Tell your audience why you are here and start testing different ways to post. Remember that you want these followers to become a dedicated audience for your website.

5 EVALUATE.

This is the piece that we often forget! Step back and look at your platform - What is your audience attracted to? What can you get rid of? Check your analytics!

6 REPEAT.

Don't get stuck in the same routine of posting the same things. Repeat these steps to make sure you are growing with your audience and adapting to the platform's changes.

CHAPTER TWO:

HOW DO I CREATE AN ONLINE STRATEGY?

CREATE A STRATEGY

Social media is not spaghetti at the wall - please do not keep tossing ideas at it to find out what sticks! Have a plan, create a strategy!

With all things in life, when you have concrete goals you are more likely to feel motivated to create an action plan in order to achieve them. Social media is no different! Creating a strategy will help you easily identify which platforms you should use, what your message is, how you communicate online, and what your ultimate goal is for doing all this work.

I highly recommend creating your strategy with a team of people from your organization. This should include coworkers who work outside of communication, marketing, and design fields. It's important to have access to a variety of opinions when creating this strategy because different departments will have different, and often strong, opinions on what the priority should be on social media. Your development team will see it as a clear way to raise funds, your sales team will want you to gather as much contact information as possible, and so on. Giving people a space (whether a meeting or a Google form) to voice their thoughts and opinions is critical to getting buy-in from all members of your organization. Strategy only works if you're all committed to it!

One of the most important parts of creating this strategy is setting specific goals. These goals will not only help you track growth, but also show value to leadership of why social media is an integral part of the marketing plan. So how do you know what goals to set? I typically work from the standard that your followers should grow on any given platform by a minimum of 20% yearly, organic views on your website should grow by 12%, and your Google AdWords should have a minimum of a 5% click-through-rate. From there you can factor in if you are spending money on growth advertising or if the platforms brand new - anything that might affect these percentages positively or negatively.

1 WHAT IS YOUR ORGANIZATION'S MESSAGE?

Determine what it is you want to say online. Consider your mission or about us statement to determine what you want your audience to know about you.

2 HOW WILL YOU CRAFT YOUR STORY? (ANTAGONIST V. PROTAGONIST)

The best messages have a story behind them (TOMS Shoes is a great example of this!). Remember, all great stories have an antagonist and a protagonist so start from here!

3 WHO IS YOUR AUDIENCE?

Think demographics specifically. What age group, gender, religion, country, etc. does your ideal audience belong to? How can you make this broader or more specific?

4 HOW CAN YOU CONNECT WITH OTHERS ONLINE?

As an organization, consider what resources you have to connect with others. If you don't have a video editor, YouTube might not be a feasible platform for you!

5 WHAT ARE YOUR SPECIFIC GOALS?

Use the information provided on the left to determine specific goals. How many followers will you gain? What's your CTR? What about likes, comments, and shares?

6 WHO WILL DECIDE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S RESPONSE?

This is key information to know in the event of a tragedy or if you work in a specific space. Will you take a side in a political election? Will you support the Catholic church?

CHAPTER THREE:

WHICH SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS SHOULD I BE ON?

“WHATEVER YOU DO, DO IT WELL”

There are so many different social media platforms so I know this can be extremely overwhelming. You already know that your website should be your main focus so from there let's start looking at how to choose a few platforms that will enhance and bring value to that space.

First, I want to drive this home: “whatever you do, do it well.” Truly, choose the number of platforms you know you can do well! If you only have time and resources to work on two platforms, that's great! If you can work with six, that's great too! The point is, know your boundaries, start where you're comfortable, and grow from there.

The big piece in deciding which platforms you should be on will be decided by the content strategy you just created. Pay attention to the sections about your message and your audience in particular. The chart on the next page provides some demographic information for popular household name social media channels to help decide if these meet your guidelines for audience. When considering messaging try to determine the best way to distribute your message to others. Is it a video? Then YouTube might be the way to go. Do you have mostly visual content? Consider Instagram. Weigh your options between your target audience and the type of content you are producing for your message.

It's important to note there are many additional social media platforms than the six listed on the next page! Messaging apps like WhatsApp are used internationally and threads like reddit and Discord are becoming increasingly more popular. Make sure to stay actively involved in the social media community to find out what's coming and what's going. In addition, don't forget about media like email marketing!



1 FACEBOOK

2.1 billion monthly active users. Slightly more women than men. Popular active age range is 35-55 years old.



2 TWITTER

330 million monthly active users. 24% of men and 25% of women, and 36% of 18-29-year-olds have an account.



3 INSTAGRAM

800 million monthly active users. Mostly ages 18-29 (data doesn't show under 18). Split evenly between men and women.



4 LINKEDIN

106 million monthly active users. Users are mostly college graduates with an income of \$75k+. More men than women.



5 YOUTUBE

1.5 billion monthly active users. More men than women. 21.8 million are ages 18-24 and 19.4 million are 65+.



6 PINTEREST

200 million monthly active users. Significantly more women than men. Popular age range is 18-64.

CHAPTER FOUR:

HOW DO
I CREATE
ENGAGING
CONTENT?

CREATE CONTENT

Creating content is one of the most critical pieces to this social media puzzle. Social media is an extremely saturated market. Every account seems to want you to sign up to volunteer, sign a petition, go their website - it can be overwhelming! So how do you create content that stands out and engages your audience? Diversify!

The six types of content to your right walk you through how to create diverse material. By distributing different types of content you will quickly learn what your target audience is attracted to (remember those six steps from Chapter 1? This is the evaluate piece!). When creating different types of content remember how short your audience's attention span is on social media. (Think 6 second vines and 140 character tweets - those were the days!). You need to work to add value to this space by engaging your audience quickly. Once they know you produce quality content, you can start experimenting with longer posts.

Once you've created a variety of content using these categories, consider how often you can use these pieces. It's definitely ok to use content on multiple platforms but be mindful of how you can use the same content to fit the space. Instagram will require a different size photo than Twitter but using the same caption is fair game! Small tweaks can go a long way. Once you've posted, don't simply toss the content to the side. Save the text, images, and links to use again in the future. Reposting content in a few days, weeks, or months allows you to get the most out of it. New followers will be seeing this for the first time and your existing audience might just rediscover an old favorite!

Lastly, remember to cross-advertise your platforms! Make sure you let your Twitter followers know you've started an Instagram and ask your Facebook followers to subscribe to your blog. Having your audience on multiple platforms allows you connect in new ways and grow your base of followers!

1 THE FLUFF: BE VISUAL!

A quote of the day (#qotd) graphic, a staff photo, or a funny meme all go a long way in getting your audience to interact. Once they like the fluff, they'll read the blog!

2 RAINY DAY FOLDER

Don't let your social media down because your having a hectic week, got the flu, or are out of office. Always have a folder of graphics, photos, and text ready to go.

3 SAY 'THANK YOU'

Being a consumer is difficult - we're always asked to click this and go here. It's nice to hear thank you every once and awhile. For being a customer and just being awesome!

4 PROFILE IMAGES

Update your profile and header images every few months. Don't let your tired logo sit for too long. Maybe a few jingle bells for Christmas or balloons for your anniversary.

5 BLOGS AND EBOOKS

The meat! This is how all roads lead back to your website. Write new and engaging pieces and own your voice. Your audience wants to hear your unique perspective.

6 ADVOCACY DAYS

A simple yet effective way to engage in what's trending. Is it #HumanRightsDay or maybe just #DonutDay - get involved with the online community!

CHAPTER FIVE:

HOW DO I ORGANIZE AND SCHEDULE MY CONTENT?

ORGANIZE AND SCHEDULE.

You defined your strategy, choose your platforms, and created your content, now you're ready to set it all in motion! There are three parts to this: get organized, queue your content, and track your results.

Once you have content, it's critical to create a content calendar. There are tons of free templates for this online but essentially this calendar will tell you when you are posting what on which platform and who is responsible. Did you get all that? There's a lot going on with social media and that's why it's important to write it down! If you're working on a team it ensures you are communicating about what you are distributing. It would be a little awkward if you're telling Facebook doors are open Thanksgiving and your coworker is telling Twitter they're closed. A calendar eliminates the problem before it's publicly posted. Are you solely responsible for social media? The calendar helps your coworkers keep the ship afloat when you just need some PTO!

Next up, queue your content. Your calendar is telling you when and where to post things so let's make sure it's really happening. Using a social media management platform (or the scheduler already built-in to the platform) queue your posts up to two weeks in advance. This makes sure things are going out regularly. Be mindful to check what's trending that day. If an unplanned major event happens, make sure your scheduled post for that day is still appropriate. If not you may need to change it!

Finally, once your posts have been successfully published to their designated social media platforms make sure you check-in to engage with your audience. Like or respond to any comments and answer any questions you are asked. From here, go back to your social media management tool or the platform's built-in analytics and track your numbers. Find out if your recent post was well received by your audience and make sure to record these in your goals spreadsheet where necessary. Use this information to help plan your upcoming content!

1 BUFFER

I'm a big fan of Buffer. It's simple and easy to use with multiple team members. They have tools for designing, publishing, engagement, and analytics! Free - \$399/month.

2 HOOTSUITE

This is the most comprehensive scheduler. You can track ROI, create advertisements on social, and connect over 35 platforms (including Instagram!). Free- \$499/month.

3 OTHER OPTIONS

HubSpot, Sprout Social, Meet Edgar, Tailwind, Crowdfire... there are plenty of options for social media management software. A little research goes a long way!

4 WORDPRESS

Schedule your blogs right from your WordPress dashboard. Simply curate your new post and on the top right select the date and time you would like it to publish.

5 GOOGLE ANALYTICS

Find out who is visiting your website, how long they're staying, and what they're interacting with all in one place! This is quite simply the most important tool.

6 GOOGLE ADWORDS

This isn't exactly social media but definitely worth a mention. Don't forget to advertise on search platforms! AdWords gives you all the details about what people are searching.

BONUS:

RESOURCES FOR CREATING THE BEST SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

1 CANVA.COM

If you're not a graphic designer and do not have access to one regularly, Canva is a great place to start. It is a really easy, intuitive way to create visual graphics.

2 INFOGR.AM

Who doesn't love a good infographic? This platform will take your neatly organized Excel data and convert it into a beautifully designed infographic!

3 NPTECHFORGOOD.COM

If you are looking for templates this website has everything from content calendars to goal tracking spreadsheets. They also post a yearly awareness days calendar!

4 UNSPLASH.COM

If you are in need of high-quality stock photos that are free please check out this website! Photographers upload their photos without any strings (even for businesses!).

5 PEXELS.COM

Another free stock photo website! Seriously, you can use these for personal or commercial use without attribution. Creative Commons Zero license is amazing!

6 PABLO.BUFFER.COM

If you choose Buffer as your social media management tool then you can take advantage of this free visual creator! Create perfectly sized visuals for every social platform.

THANK YOU.

A massive thank you to everyone who came to this conference! I always love sharing my passion for social media with others and hope the presentation and this guide inspired you to dig a little deeper and engage your audience in new and intuitive ways! If anything, I hope you found practical steps forward to create an online presence that brings value and life to your organization.

If you ever need assistance, have questions, or just like a nice chat feel free to reach out. My email is ejmacneal@gmail.com and I'm always happy to help out with social media related inquiries. If you're hosting a future workshop day, conference, or meetup and are interested in having me speak at that event please reach out as well! I've truly enjoyed my time connecting with fellow social media professionals and am always eager to share my knowledge!

I hope this guide has helped challenge you to create more dynamic relationships with your audience. You truly do add value to the online space when you bring your authentic voice to the conversation. As you continue to do that, your audience will support you, engage with you, and encourage you to grow. Your followers are your strongest advocates and they can carry you to new growth! Stay true to your message and it will help create content that both inspires and ignites your audience. It is always so amazing to see the variety of content that is created when strong messaging is consistent across platforms.

Social media is an ever-changing world. It's won elections, gave life to new movements, and created friendships across the world. It truly does have the power to create a more engaged audience one piece of content at a time. So keep pushing and keep discovering because social media is the future!

THANK YOU!

ELIZABETH MACNEAL
EJMACNEAL@GMAIL.COM