Creating a Social Media Strategy

Setting Goals, Plans, Designing, Executing, Measuring and Systemizing your Social Media Strategy

by Jo Barnes

2nd Edition
Design Your Social Media Strategy

If you have been a regular user of one of or some of the Social Media platforms, you will know how easy it is to get distracted and whittle away the hours chatting with friends / colleagues!

Be honest, how often do you turn Facebook on to do one job and find yourself still there 3 hours later wondering where the time went?!

Now it’s very easy to call this ‘networking’, but unless you have very specific outcomes that you’re constantly measuring it becomes very difficult to justify the time spent. After a while you may find even yourself saying – Social Media is a waste of time!

The only way to know whether Social Media is working for you and / or your business is to know what you want to achieve and measure your results against those desired outcomes.

In comes a Social Media Strategy!

As many have said before me, the better you plan the more efficiently you execute.

So, to help you create a Social Media Strategy of your own, I have devised this document to lead you by the hand through the key steps and to hopefully inspire you to create a realistic and enjoyable journey as you watch your business grow using the most powerful marketing tools available today!

Before you even begin to put a strategy together though, your first task is to DIVE IN!

You don’t have a hope of trying to strategise about something you know nothing about. So, if you’re new to this side of the marketing spectrum, create an account in Facebook or Twitter, start exploring, make some friends, have some conversations and begin to build yourself a basic understanding as to how this all works. (Yes even you Mr CEO!).

Social Media Marketing is a very different animal to traditional marketing and you may have to make some mind-set shifts to be able to utilize it, to it’s full potential!

Once you feel you have a good grasp of the general concepts, then please follow the steps below!
STEP 1 - What’s Your Goal?

It’s simple really. “You can’t measure what you don’t know”. And one of the most important elements in Social Media is measuring your results against your objectives. Therefore, you’ve got to know what your objectives are. Now, at this stage, you don’t need to be too detailed you just need to know what it is you want to achieve by using Social Media.

Here are some examples;

1. Your goal is to generate new leads, which will in turn result in paying customers. So your social media strategy will be centered around targeting new prospects and directing people through to your landing page or your offer in order to pull those people into your email lists, etc. This would include some very targeted campaigns and maybe some paid advertising.

2. Another objective might be customer service. You want to use Social Media to be able to communicate with your customers much better and to be able to dynamically interact with them on a daily basis in order to really build those relationships. Your strategy here then would be much more about manning your page, instant responses to questions & queries and ensuring the message function is switched on!

3. Perhaps you’re a public figure and you want to increase your profile or increase your brand, therefore how you use your personal profile in conjunction with a business page comes into play, usage of the subscribe button, the type of content you produce.

4. You may simply want to network or connect.

I think you can see from these examples, the very different ways you may approach Social Media depending on your overall objective.

Therefore you need to know what your main objectives are before you start out.

I have listed three lines below, for you to list your main objectives. It is not set in stone at three. You may have one main objective, you may have five, but I would try to drill them down as much as you can because the more objectives you have the less targeted and focused you can become.
List below your three (3 or more) main objectives;

1.  

2.  

3.  

**STEP 2 – Research the Market / Listen!**

Who are your most important stakeholders? (Those that are interested / could influence your business)

What’s happening in your industry, what are people talking about?

What are your competitors doing, who’s talking about them?

What are people saying about You and how can you stand out from the crowd?

Below you’ll find an exercise that you can do to really start to research what’s going on with your competitors and your industry.

I urge you to take the time to do the exercise as it really will give you such a good indication of what’s being offered right now and what your customers are looking for.

**Your Industry**

**Describe your perception of the industry you are in**
How do you think the industry has changed in the last 5 years?

What changes do you expect to see in the next 12 – 18 months?

What are the industry ‘Hot Topics’ right now?
Your Competitors

List your 3 biggest competitors to base this research on;

1. __________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________

What catches your eye first?

1. __________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________

What do they do particularly well?

1. __________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________

What do they do poorly? (Here’s your opportunity!)

1. __________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________

List Some Special Offers or Unique Services they are promoting

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Have they got any guarantees? If so what are they?
1. 
2. 
3. 

What can they guarantee that you can’t?
1. 
2. 
3. 

What MUST businesses in this industry guarantee?
1. 
2. 
3. 

What else catches your eye?
1. 
2. 
3. 
You!

What are people saying about you / your brand?

Here are some tools to help you with your research;

http://www.google.com/alerts

http://www.socialmention.com

http://www.Kurrently.com/

http://www.brandseye.com/

http://www.trackur.com/

http://tweetbeep.com/

The Markets Opinion

What 3 things would you like the market to be saying about you?

1. __________________________________________________________

2. __________________________________________________________

3. __________________________________________________________

This takes us neatly on to Step 3 and an in depth look at your potential customers.
STEP 3 – Who Are Your Ideal Customers / Clients?

The key here is, the more you know about your market, the more specific you can be with your marketing.

So you really need to give some thought to exactly who your customers are.

This exercise starts by you intimately knowing who your ideal customer is. Be as specific as you can.

Here’s an example from internet software company Hubspot (www.hubspot.com)

They have two primary personas that they target;

1. Owner Ollie. A small business owner with fewer than 25 employees. Ollie is busy managing human resources, marketing, sales, operations and finance for his company, and has little time left for executing new ideas. He lacks on-staff marketing resources and does most of his company’s marketing himself. He’s curious about inbound marketing, but hasn’t made any significant investments. His top priority is generating new leads for his business.

2. Marketer Mary works as a marketer for a small business, with 26 – 100 employees. A marketing team supports Mary and the programs she oversees. She is familiar with newer inbound marketing techniques and is actively seeking help with running, evaluating, and justifying her marketing investments to upper management. Mary wants sophisticated measurement tools, and has money to spend on her marketing programs.

As you can see, they are very clear who their target markets are and this will allow them to be very specific with their marketing campaigns.

Your turn!
Your Market
Describe the profile of the average customer for your business
(include type / age range / sex / status / location / hobbies etc)

List 10 values / services that you think would be most important to your customer – ie, price, customer service, speed, quality etc. Then rank in order of priority 1 - 10

1. ________________________________________________________________
2. ________________________________________________________________
3. ________________________________________________________________
4. ________________________________________________________________
5. ________________________________________________________________
6. ________________________________________________________________
7. ________________________________________________________________
8. ________________________________________________________________
9. ________________________________________________________________
10. ________________________________________________________________
List 10 ways of reaching your average customer

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
9. ______________________________
10. ______________________________

List 10 ways you could convert competitor customers to your customers

1. ______________________________
2. ______________________________
3. ______________________________
4. ______________________________
5. ______________________________
6. ______________________________
7. ______________________________
8. ______________________________
9. ______________________________
10. ______________________________
STEP 4 – Who Do You Need to Know?

It’s not what you know, it’s who you know! Have you heard that saying before? I’m sure you have many times, but is it an old wives tale or an absolute truism?

You’re going to need a mix of both of course, but who you know will determine the speed at which your business propels forward.

I’m talking about influencers of course. People who have already made it, they already have a tribe of followers and fans, a legion of subscribers, a stellar reputation and a rolodex to die for!

It’s these guys and gals you need to be connecting and networking with. The beauty is, with Social Media, that old 6 degrees of separation has been reduced to only 1 or 2 in many cases!

All you have to do, is be very clear about who are the influencers in your industry and which are the ones you want to get to know!

Once you become specific, you will begin to gravitate towards these people, your paths will cross, conversations will ensue and before you know it, you will be connected!

So, sit down, do some research, think about the key people in your industry, those that are synonymous with honesty and integrity, the type of people that you would like to be associated with, the type of people who have a great reputation and the type of people who you would absolutely love to present to your audience.

List down your Top 10, 20, 50, it’s up to you how many you include. Even grab their photos and make a picture board, of all those that you simply MUST know.

1. __________________________________________________________________________
2. __________________________________________________________________________
3. __________________________________________________________________________
4. __________________________________________________________________________
5. __________________________________________________________________________
6. __________________________________________________________________________
7. __________________________________________________________________________
8. __________________________________________________________________________
9. __________________________________________________________________________
10. __________________________________________________________________________
STEP 5 – Where Are Your Customers / Competitors & Influencers?

You should by now have a pretty good idea of exactly who your competitors, customers and influencers are, so this step is relatively easy.

Where do they hangout?

What I mean of course is what platform are they on? Are they on Facebook? Are they on Twitter? Are they on Linkedin? It’s really important that you know exactly where these guys are. If the bulk of your customers are over on Facebook, you don’t want to be spending all your time on Linkedin. And conversely if the bulk of your customers are over on Linkedin, you don’t want to be spending all your time on Facebook.

The chances are, they’re all going to be in the same places because wherever your customers are, that’s where your competitors will be and where your influencers will be.

You will probably also find they split their time across a couple of the platforms but are predominantly present on one.

By determining where they spend most of their time, you will be able to create very specific marketing campaigns and at the same time you’ll limit your own distractions and feelings that you have to master every social network!

So under Part 1, you need to list where each stakeholder is spending his or her time in priority order.

Part 1 - Research the Social Media platforms

- to find out where you should be spending the most of your time!

1. Customers ______________________________________________
2. Competitors ______________________________________________
3. Influencers ______________________________________________

Part 2 of Step 5 explores what they’re talking about?

Having knowledge of what your ideal market is interested in will ensure that you are providing interesting and relevant content, which gets their attention!

As an example, one of the big Facebook subjects at the moment is advertising. Is it effective, what are some companies pulling their budgets, how will FB utilize mobile, what’s the new FB Exchange etc.

So for us at The SNA that’s a big topic, it’s something that’s going to be around for the next few months and therefore, something we want to be talking about and offering information on.
What I’ve suggested here is that you come up with 5 key discussion topics, again, it might be 1, it might be 3, it might be 10 but I am just giving you a guide here to list the top 5 discussion topics.

**Part 2 - What are they talking about?**

List the Top 5 Discussion Topics;

1. ______________________________________________________________________
2. ______________________________________________________________________
3. ______________________________________________________________________
4. ______________________________________________________________________
5. ______________________________________________________________________

**STEP 6 – Design Your Conversion Funnels**

On researching other Social Media strategies published, I discovered that something was missing from all the reports I read.

Something I get asked a lot.

**How do you monetize Social Media?**

The key is actually quite simple: Don’t focus on physically monetizing the platform itself.

By far the best use of Social Media is to generate leads through the various platforms and encourage your potential customers to become fans / followers and subscribers of your content.

This gives you the opportunity to create a direct and trusted relationship and notify your customers of any products or services that may be of interest to them.

So the question is, how do you take people from a conversation on Facebook to a sale?

This is an important part of the process as by doing this you will laser target how you approach everything you do within the social media platforms. You’re going to know exactly where it is you want to send people and why? For example, if your content is going to take them to a landing page, everything you do is going to guide them towards that landing page, if your content is leading people through to a contest or promotion, everything you do is going to guide people through to that contest or promotion. You really will get ultra-focused on exactly what it is that you’re trying to achieve.
Below I have given some examples of customer flows. Your exercise is to design and create your own customer flow(s).

Please note these are just some basic examples, you can make your flows as complicated or as easy, as long or as short as you like. I’ve named it ‘Content’ in this example, but really it’s simply the first point of contact a customer may have with you and how they then flow from there.

**STEP 7 – Create Your Content Strategy**

Yippee! You now know who your competitors and influencers are. You have an exact description of the market(s) you’re targeting. You know where everyone spends the bulk of their time and therefore where you should be and, you have a clear diagram of how to move a prospect through to a customer!

Phew! Time for a cuppa I think!

OK, refreshed? Now the really hard work begins! You got to make all this happen!

You will have heard the term ‘Authority’ a lot I’m sure in your journey so far and certainly if you listen to any of my training, you’ll know I talk a lot about becoming the ‘go to’ person in your niche.

The way to get in front of your prospective customers, to get their attention and to build a relationship is through providing valuable content, consistently.

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To help you achieve this you need to design a ‘Content Strategy’.

This is simply a spreadsheet charting what content you will release, when and where. (The spreadsheet will also be an invaluable resource for Steps 8, 9 & 10)

So, for example, what blog posts will you publish on what day, how many photo posts, status updates, videos, links etc will you post across your platforms, daily, weekly, monthly.

Will you hold webinars? What subjects, when? Will you add ‘Nuclear Fuel’ (from Mike Stelzner – Launch – excellent book, please read!) from time to time, such as an industry survey or a Top 10 Competition.

Now, it’s entirely up to you how far ahead that you want to go with this. You may simply decide on a weekly basis to plan the type of content you’re going to produce that week.

But I have attached a link to an excel spreadsheet for you to download which includes sections for you to add in yearly content, 6-monthly content, quarterly content, monthly content, weekly content and daily content.

(please note the spreadsheet contains information pertaining to Steps 8 & 9 also, so please read on to fully utilize).

Click Here to Download the Spreadsheet - https://the-sna.com/s/spreadsheet

STEP 8 – Create KPI’s (Key Performance Indicators)

The next thing we need to do is measure our content to see if it’s working!

It’s no good publishing loads of links and videos and photos, if no-one is seeing or responding to them!

There are four parts to a solid KPI plan;

1. Set the Benchmark by testing and measuring
2. Create Forecasts
3. Continue to measure results vs forecasts
4. Strive to improve!

So, what are the most important metrics?

In the spreadsheet you downloaded in Step 7, you’ll see there is a section specifically for metrics and I have added the ones I currently track and those I deem to be important.

On top of the individual platform metrics I also urge you to measure the following;

• Daily Visitors to your main landing page
• No Optins
• No Sales

Calculate the conversion % to see if and where you need to make changes to your sales funnel.

Click Here to Download the Spreadsheet - https://the-sna.com/s/spreadsheet

**STEP 9 – List & Chunk Tasks / Create a Default Diary**

Wouldn’t it be great if producing & distributing content was the only thing we had to do in our day!

Unfortunately this is not the case, we have a gazillion other things that fill our days including getting very distracted and ‘networking’ on Facebook!

All of a sudden all the content strategies and competitor analysis in the world haven’t helped when another week has slipped by and we haven’t achieved any of our goals!

One of the keys to generating a lot of leads and building solid relationships is consistency. You have to be consistently present, consistent with your message, consistent with your engagement and with everything else in life knocking at your door, consistency can be the hardest thing to achieve.

Best laid plans and all that....

So you need to put in place a daily and weekly calendar of the things you need to do habitually. Essentially the things you must do by default no matter what else pops up to distract you!

For example, you wouldn’t leave the house without cleaning your teeth would you?

Well that’s how committed you need to become about daily tasks that must be completed in order for you to achieve your weekly KPI’s.

For instance, creating and publishing blog posts, researching industry updates and sharing on your page / profile, creating engaging status updates or tweets, responding and engaging with customers, networking and raising your profile etc.

As part of the spreadsheet you downloaded in Step 7, I have included a Default Diary section and an example as per the image below.

You need to decide what you can realistically achieve on a daily and weekly basis within the timescales you have and then reset your KPI forecasts accordingly as you produce more content and create a greater presence.

The great thing about a default diary is that you start each day knowing what you MUST do and then work everything else around it. I urge you to include personal ‘MUSTS’ also, so you know exactly how much time each day you have to complete tasks.
To accompany your default diary I highly recommend a kitchen timer or an online stopwatch, so that as you begin tasks, you can set the timer for a specific period and when it rings (which will jolt you out of concentration by the way – sometimes I jump so high I make myself laugh!) you stop what you’re doing and move on to the next task.

This is absolutely fantastic for when you have set times to go and ‘network’ online!

Please note though, a Default Diary isn’t a shining Fairy Godmother in the land of better productivity. It is a tool like anything else and requires habitual and disciplined use to work.

In other words, pin it somewhere you can look at it every day and STICK TO IT!

Click Here to Download the Spreadsheet - https://the-sna.com/s/spreadsheet

Step 10 – Systemize / Automate

Please do not thing for one second I am talking about ‘Set & Forget’ here. It’s just not possible in the transparent and social world we live in today.

What I’m talking about is systemization, creating systems within your business to give you the time to work on what is most important!

The more your business grows, the more you will be able to systemize & automate elements of your daily & weekly tasks. As you bring in more revenue, so you will invest in more tools to make your job / life easier.

Unfortunately to begin with you will need to do the bulk of it yourself, however we are living in the land of the free online right now and there are a multitude of free and low cost tools that will save you lots of time!

Here are some suggestions;

http://www.sproutsocial.com
http://www.postling.com
http://www.hootsuite.com
http://www.pagelever.com
http://www.edgerankchecker.com
http://www.socialbakers.com
http://www.twitsprout.com
http://www.postplanner.com

At some point, you may also want to think about outsourcing.

This is a scary prospect if you have never employed anyone before and can be very overwhelming, especially when it comes down to selecting the right skill set, location etc.

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If you follow this strategy for a few weeks / months, you will have generated a list of times and posts that create the most engagement, a system for delivering content consistently, an intimate knowledge of your customers’ needs and desires, and a detailed description of exactly what you don’t need to do yourself each day anymore!

You will be in an incredibly strong position from which to find the perfect person and to give them a step by step job description of exactly what it is you need doing and when!

**Conclusion**

So there you have it, I do hope that you have found this document useful and that it is going to help you in planning your social media strategy.

I also hope it will act as a guide for you to achieve better results from all of the time and energy that you are putting into the social media platforms on a daily basis.

The goal here is to help you to become more efficient and get the maximum results in the least amount of time possible.

Enjoy and Make It Happen!!!

Stay Social

Jo 😊
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