Social Media
A How-to Guide for Women Entrepreneurs for Facebook, Twitter and Blogs
INTRODUCTION

“Like” it or “Unlike” it...social media is now an important fact of your life. Most of us use it to connect with friends, tweet our opinions, update posts on our Facebook page, Instagram pictures of all the fun we are having with family and friends or pin photos of things that we love.

Wait! Are you using social media in your business the same way you use it in your personal life? Social media for your personal stuff and for your business purposes are worlds apart. They hardly meet.

Social media is no longer the “next big thing.” It is very much here and can help you immensely if you employ the right tools. In a survey, Social Media Examiner found that “nearly all marketers (93%+) who've been employing social media marketing for one year or longer report it generates exposure for their businesses.”

This guide book can help you:

• create a social media strategy for success
• create and complete your profile on Facebook and Twitter
• shine on Facebook and Twitter
• create a successful blog page
• navigate social media Do’s and Don’ts
WHY SOCIAL MEDIA IS A KEY MARKETING TOOL

The best thing about social media is it is mostly FREE. For small business owners, there are always so many overhead costs that working the budget is a fine balance of tight rope walking.

Social media offers you a way out by creating free tools for you to build your brand. Diverse businesses are finding out unique ways to use social media to

- increase Web traffic
- enhance market intelligence
- engage with customers
- generate leads

Below are a few benefits from skillful use of social media for your business.

BRAND RECOGNITION
If you build your brand consistently across different social media platforms, it builds up your brand loyalty. Your business can be easily spotted by your followers. People who follow you on social media are more loyal to your brand as they feel that they have access to you through these channels.

CONVERSION
Social media opens immense possibilities to convert the online talk into achieving one of your major business goals – SALES. Every post has the potential to influence a follower and create an opportunity for sales.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION
Search engines use complex algorithms to rank a website. Being active on social media will establish your authenticity and credibility. Your social engagement with your online community is the “Social proof” of your brand recognition and community connections.

CUSTOMER SERVICE
Social media connects you with your customers in real time. You can show that you care by your prompt responses to your clients’ queries. If you listen to your customers on these platforms, it will help you create content – whether it is a product or a service – in response to the virtual conversation. Social listening can make client care processes efficient.
START WITH A STRATEGY

While “if you build it they will come” is a catchy line, it does not work for social media. You may have cool graphics and posts but if you lack community engagement, your social media is of no help. Starting is easy. Building takes time. So, create a strategy.

When it comes to social media, your time commitment is the most important investment. It is important to find out which social media channels can create real business value for you and not waste time on those that won’t.

Failing to create a social media strategy can make you feel overwhelmed about what you need to know and how to make it work.

Before you create your social media strategy, you need to ask yourself:

- Why do you want to be active on social media?
- What are your social goals?
- Is the focus on sales or on client care?
- Can you create a budget for promoting content on social media platforms?

SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

Once you are clear about your social media goals, your social media plan should include information about:

Selecting and creating social channels
What social platforms are appropriate for your business? For example, if you have a service-based business, Twitter is more suitable than Instagram. If you have a product-based business, Facebook, Instagram and Pinterest are great for your business. Do not spread yourself thin by choosing random social channels.

Formulating a content strategy
How will you source content? Will you be creating your own content or will you outsource it? There are a lot of businesses that can take care of your social media content for you. You can also set up RSS feeds from your industry-related websites to stay updated.

As you share content, monitor your social media analytics and see which posts are getting maximum attention. It will help you understand what your audience is looking for so you can create and curate content that engages them.

Reaching your target audience
What will be your strategy to reach your target audience? How will you use hashtags to reach the relevant market (we will explore hashtags more in this resource).
Leveraging social media
A “like” or a “follower” does not mean anything financially unless you have a strategy to leverage your social interaction. What plans will you have in place? Think about coupons, events, contests, discounts to keep your social connections engaged with your business.

Scheduling posts
Social media is very time consuming and can be addictive if you do not have a plan in place. What scheduling apps will you use to ensure that you use your time wisely on social media?

Managing paid promotion
Social media is free but a paid promotion increases your chances of being more visible. A paid promotion on Facebook definitely reaches more people. Create a budget. How much will you spend on these paid promotions to get the word out about your business?

Analysing insights
Many social media platforms provide analytics about your page visitors. This will help you get information about what type of posts get the maximum engagement from your customers so you customise your content accordingly. Create a system to keep track of your analytics. If you are on Facebook and Twitter, you will get emails from them informing you about your post or tweet engagement.

Examining ROI on social media
Is your time on social media well invested? Can you tie it to the revenue generated for your business? It is important to find out which social media channels are creating real business value for you and not waste time on those that don’t.

Auditing social channels
Create a schedule to audit your social media channels from time to time. If you are not getting what you wanted out of your engagement on various social media platforms, it is time to redo your strategy.

Creating accountability
Keep a plan in place about accountability. Who will be the person in charge of your social media? Your HR plan must have a process in place about employees’ posts on their personal social media channels, password changes in case the social media employee leaves and a backup plan.
ARE YOU ON TWITTER?

A tweet packs a lot of information in 140 characters. You can use Twitter to connect with your community in an effective manner.

Creating an account is simple. If you already have an account, ensure that your profile is complete.

Go to [https://business.twitter.com/basics/create-a-profile-for-your-business](https://business.twitter.com/basics/create-a-profile-for-your-business) and create your business account in 5 simple steps. Below are a few tips:

**Username**  
Research usernames before you confirm it for your twitter account. Keep it simple and ensure it is related to your brand name.

**Profile photo**  
Create an image that is consistent with your brand image. It will be your signature image for Twitter as it will show up in all your posts. Always maintain the image size as specified by Twitter.

**Bio**  
Create your elevator pitch in 160 characters. When people get interested in your content, they will want to know more about you and your business. Keep your Twitter bio simple and focused.

**URL**  
Do not forget to put in your website address. One of the reasons you are on SM is to drive traffic to your website.

**Header image**  
Use an image that is common to all your social platforms but adjusted to the recommended size for each platform. Currently Twitter recommends 1500x500 pixels for the header image.
TIPS TO SHINE ON TWITTER

Pin the tweet  If you are creating a special event or if you want to convey a special message, pin it. The pinned tweet will stay on top of your twitter feed. Move your cursor to the “More” button (see red arrow below) and select “pin to your profile page” from the drop down menu.
Images

As they say, “A picture speaks a thousand words.” Try to use images, whenever possible, in your tweets. Attending a meeting, click a photo and tweet it. Featured in Media? Click a photo of the media coverage and use it in your tweet.

Tweet chats

Tweet chats are a great way of getting the word out about your business. Google hashtags related to your industry and check about upcoming chats. Review some previous chats to find out what people are talking about. Prepare for it beforehand so that you contribute meaningful content to the conversation. It is a great way to get the word out and drive traffic to your website. Do not sell directly in such forums. If your content is helpful, there will be more traffic to your website and your social presence. Tools such as Twubs can help with the hashtag search and chat flow.

Mobile

Twitter talk is in real time. It is a great tool for client care. You do not want to respond to a client after 2-3 days. Download the App on your mobile so that you can respond on time and not miss important conversation.

Listen

If you listen carefully, it can lead to great conversation. You can use tools like Hootsuite to see how and what are your potential clients talking about, what are the trends in your industry and other important issues.
Add Value  
Do not just tweet about yourself. Retweet, mention others and do not spam. You will start noticing more engagement with your followers when you retweet them.

Headline it  
With only 140 characters for a tweet, there is no space to waste. Craft your tweet thoughtfully. Ask a question. Provide a teaser. You can think of different ways to raise a reader’s curiosity about your business.

Be very brief  
If you want to be retweeted and mentioned by a Twitter user, keep your tweet strength to about 115 or 120 characters.

Lists  
To use your time productively on twitter, prepare lists. You can create your own lists or subscribe to lists. You can create a list from the drop down menu of your profile icon.
To learn more about managing lists, visit [this page](#) on Twitter.

**Repeat**

Though quite a few people disagree with it, it is perfectly OK to repeat a tweet. Space it. [Thousands of tweets](#) are posted every second. Repeating a tweet will keep it in the mindscape of your followers. Remember to change the words and headline it differently.

**Schedule**

Scheduling your tweet saves time. Hootsuite is a great tool for this. You can create a stream in your Hootsuite dashboard and auto schedule your tweets. You can pick the date and time when you want your tweet to go out. [Visit this page](#) to learn more about how to schedule your tweets.

**Best time**

The best time to tweet depends on your clients. If you have potential clients in different time zones, remember to post your tweets in their time zone.

**Be authentic**

People like to know that they are talking to real people and real businesses. Be the real you. Be consistent with your brand so that your business can easily be spotted.
FACEBOOK

Whether you ‘Like” or “Unlike”, Facebook is a great marketing tool for business owners. Setting up a business page is easy. If you have already set up your business page, revisit your Account settings to confirm that you have provided all the details.

For creating a page, click on “create a page” as shown in the screen shots below. You will need to have a Facebook account to create your page.
Fill in the details for your profile. If you already have a page, check to see that you have uploaded your logo and your banner. The “About” section is very important as it is a window to your business for your Facebook connections. Remember your elevator pitch? Tweak it to fit into your Facebook profile. DO NOT forget to put in your URL.
**Note:** When searching for a Facebook URL, look for one that is in tune with your business name. For example, Women’s Enterprise Centre (WEC) has the Facebook URL [https://www.facebook.com/wecbc](https://www.facebook.com/wecbc).

If you do not get what you are looking for as Facebook URL, try to stay as close to your business name as possible. This is important so that it is easy for your clients and connections to identify your brand.

**TIPS TO HELP YOU SHINE ON FACEBOOK**

**Image**

As on Twitter, a photo carries a lot of value. Use images with your posts. If you are using text which is not linked to an image, purchase some images from photo websites and use them with your posts. You will notice that your post which has an image will always get more likes and will get shared and commented on.

**Content**

Your posts may not get automatically promoted to all your likes. Remember to use rich media - include interesting content, videos or photos to make it more attractive.

**Be brief**

Do not use too many words. Keep your posts brief. Let the visual media do the work for you. If it is interesting content, people will click on it to learn more.
**Customer feedback**
If you have a happy customer, spread the happiness around by posting her feedback, preferably with photo. If she has posted it on her Facebook page, like it, thank her and share the post on your page.

**Engage and talk**
Make your Facebook page a place to interact with your followers. Do not make it all about your business. Build up relationships.

**SEO**
Your SEO ranking is impacted by your social existence. Select the right business category. Being active and having many likes, shares and comments on your Facebook page will help you optimize it and enhance your SEO rankings.

**Share**
Share content. Bring some value to your page by posting content about interesting facts related to your field of work. Do not just talk about your business. If you find something interesting related to your industry, post it.
BLOGS

In a world of quick-fix social media, writing a 150 or 300-word blog seems like a big exercise. So why blog? Because blogging is still one of the most powerful ways to get your business brand known online.

Blogging is citizen journalism. It gives you great power to express your opinions and become an influencer in your industry.

A blog can help you with:

SEO
If you do a weekly blog, you add fresh content to your website. Search engines can index more information about you.

Content
Your blog content provides ready material for your other social media platforms. A collection of blogs can be easily edited and turned into an e-book.

Connection
Your blog is a great way to engage with your clients. Blog analytics can help you track your readers and understand your market better, while readers’ comments can provide insight into consumer behaviour.

Expertise
You can position yourself as a leader in your industry through blogging. Many bloggers turn industry influencers and easily monetise their blogs.

TIPS TO SHINE AS A BLOGGER:

Consistence
Decide on the frequency of your blog posts – weekly? bi-weekly? Once you have decided the frequency, maintain it.

Length
Decide on the word count. Is it going to be about 150 words or 300 words? Decide what you want and then maintain the consistency in blog length.

Headline
Create headlines that can get a reader’s attention.

Share
Share across different platforms. Post the link to your Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or any social platform that you are using for your business.

Integrate
If you have a website, integrate your blog page with it. A weekly blog will mean fresh web content on a regular basis and optimise your SEO.

Language
Keep it conversational. Make it an easy read.

Images
Like any other social platform, use images in your blogs. Pictures create an impact.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Value</strong></th>
<th>Bring value to your blog by offering some insights. If you have done a survey or come across an important survey or research, link to it. People love to quote research and survey results.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Content</strong></td>
<td>Keep your blog content original. Duplicate content is not good for search engines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Follow</strong></td>
<td>If you write interesting blogs, people will like to follow. Make follow easy. Create an email subscription button or a button for RSS feed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Story</strong></td>
<td>Stories are more interesting than just bare facts. Develop a blog style that is interesting to your reader.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Promote</strong></td>
<td>Once you have posted your blog promote it. If your business partners or employees have their own blogs or social media platforms ask them they can share it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Past posts</strong></td>
<td>Look at your past posts. If you find that things have changed a lot since you wrote on a specific topic, write it again. Rewriting a blog keeps you updated with your industry changes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guest blog writers</strong></td>
<td>You can invite your mentors or other blog writers to write for you. It expands your network and also brings a different perspective to your blog page. Create Do’s and Don’ts for your guest bloggers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Don’ts for social media

- Don’t just jump into social media just because everybody is doing it. Have a strategy.
- Don’t create fake social media accounts.
- Don’t post offensive tweets. It is difficult to erase a bad online reputation. You can delete a tweet but that does not mean it has disappeared. Anyone who has seen an offensive tweet can save it. Tweets are archived too.
- Don’t put too much personal information. Be diligent with your privacy settings.
- Don’t be inconsistent with your posts. Let your clients know that you are fully engaged in the social conversation
- Don’t leave your passwords unsecured. Keep a key employee in charge of your passwords. Ensure that passwords are changed if your social media person is planning to move.
- Don’t ignore a critical tweet or a negative Facebook comment by a customer. Your prompt response offering a solution can create wonders for your customer service. Do not forget to respond to the customer thanking her for her business.
- Don’t forget to repeat important tweets. Tweets fade fast. So repeat and stay fresh in your clients’ mind.
- Don’t spam
- Don’t just talk about your sale events. Remember, your follower can” unfollow” you or “unlike” you very easily. Keep the conversation flowing and your clients engaged by posting interesting content.
- Don’t forget to analyse your return on the time you are investing in social media. Not up to expectations? Revisit your strategy. Find out what worked and what did not. Tweak your social media plan.
- Don’t waste time. Social media can be addictive. Decide beforehand how much time you will allocate for social media posts and monitoring.
- Don’t use difficult words/jargon. A few simple words can speak volumes. Craft your tweets and posts wisely.
❌ Don’t use the same words for your posts across social media platforms. Customize it. One size does not fit all.

❌ Don’t forget to engage. Thank a customer for an appreciative post. Be social

❌ Don’t forget to spellcheck. Always review your posts before you hit post.
Do’s for social media

✓ Do have a plan. If you know your goals, you can have a clear strategy.

✓ Do select your social media channels carefully. Analyse the pros and cons. Do you really need to be on Pinterest and Instagram? If yes, why. This will help you in creating a strategy for your different media channels.

✓ Do be patient. It will take time to grow a follower base.

✓ Do be social. Talk to people. Conversation is great for your business. It also tells your social media connections that you care.

✓ Do remember to use different Apps to simplify social media for you. Hootsuite, Twubs, Tweetdeck are some of the examples of such apps.

✓ Do use hashtags as they are a great way to get into conversations and spread the word about your brand. Do not overdo it. #Remember a #tweet that has too #many #hashtags for #any #business #related #conversation can #easily #turnoff #your #followers. Use hashtags wisely.

✓ Do research your hashtags if you plan to create your own for your business. Ensure that they are not being used for offensive or inappropriate subjects.

✓ Do complete your profile on your selected social media channels. Use the same logo and images to create brand awareness.

✓ Do check your content. Your brand is what you post. Remember not to post any content in a hurry. Always check if you are posting what you wanted your message to be.

✓ Do respond on time. Respond to your clients’ queries at the earliest. Customer care on social media is not very different from customer care done traditionally. The only difference is your client care on social media can be seen by all your followers. Remember, stories travel fast on social platforms. It just needs a few retweets and a few comments to start trending.

✓ Do be proactive and maintain consistency in your post schedule.

✓ Do remember to include links in your posts. One of the reasons you are active on social media is to direct traffic to your website. Always include the links if you are talking about your business. You can use https://bitly.com/ or http://ow.ly/url/shorten-url to make your URL short.
Do be mobile. You do not want to respond to a client’s complaint after 24 hours. Set up alerts on your mobile. This gives you enough time to sort out a customer’s complaint and respond with solutions. One of the best ways to address is to provide customer care information to the client. Once you have resolved the issue, thank your customer on the same social media platform where the complaint was first registered.

WE CAN HELP!

Women’s Enterprise Centre (WEC) can teach you how to integrate social media into your marketing plan so you can build brand awareness, develop engaging marketing campaigns, and provide improved customer care.

AVAILABLE SERVICES

If you’re a business-to-consumer (B2C) client with an established web presence, we can help you move to the next level with your social media. For all of these packages, we can meet with you through free online mediums such Skype, FaceTime or a similar online channel at your request.

- Get Started Package
- Stay Connected Package
- Facebook and Twitter Audit
- Social Listening
- Social Media Webinar

RE-INVESTING IN THE ENTREPRENEURIAL COMMUNITY

As a non-profit organization, WEC is committed to its vision of empowering women entrepreneurs to their business success. To this end, WEC plans to re-invest any surplus funds from this fee-for-service offering to create essential training programs for women entrepreneurs throughout BC who choose entrepreneurship as a career.

Curious about our social media training? Email us at inquiry@womensenterprise.ca or call 1.800.643.7014 for more information.

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