

Social Media Marketing Revealed

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NOTES TO THE READER

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THE MUST-USE SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGIES TO EXPAND YOUR BRAND

An integral part of your business success is reaching customers through inventive and comprehensive social-media marketing campaigns.

[Here are some tips to help build up your following and your brand.](#)

Make your tweets stand out.

If you don't want your posts to get lost in the Twitter stream, make sure to include an image, related link or even an emoji to separate your missives from the torrent of other tweets.

Express yourself with longer posts.

If you feel limited by Twitter's 140 character count, feel free to expand on a point with posts on platforms like Tumblr, Google+ and LinkedIn.

Strengthen your Face-book network.

If you find that you aren't getting the response you are after from your company's Facebook page, create some groups to spark more connections and conversations around your product and brand. Your customers can also choose to get updates from you this way.

Inspire action.

Include call to action buttons (i.e. "like this page" and "learn more") in your posts to gain more traction, clicks and conversions.

Stay top of mind.

Market and post consistently across multiple platforms. Tailor your posts for each community and be sure to include links to your other social accounts in the bio and about sections so customers know where else to find you.

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Make connections.

You're not just selling a product or a service, but a larger network. If you know of people in your orbit that would benefit from meeting, whether they are an investor, advisor, client or customer, make the introduction – you and the brand be well remembered.

Share your feedback.

When you get positive feedback from a customer, don't be afraid to highlight it. Retweet customer praise, thank individual customers on your Face-book page and consider a crowd sourced, user-generated campaign.

Veer off the beaten track.

If a marketing idea appeals to you but you're not sure if it'll work, do the research but give it a try anyway. People will appreciate something a little unusual, and it could go viral.

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HOWTO BUILD A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY THAT WORKS

Social media is one of the most powerful tools in your marketing arsenal. If you use it correctly, you can create a strong personal connection with your prospective customers. However, marketers often make the mistake of diving into social media without a clear plan. At best, this is a waste of time – and at worst, it can lead to a PR disaster. To benefit from social media, you need to build a clear strategy that takes into account what you're trying to achieve, that your customers are and what your competition is doing.

Here are a few tips to help get you started:

Understand your goals

As with any journey, the first step in creating a social-media marketing strategy is to understand where you want to go. What is the purpose of your social media marketing efforts? Do you want to create or raise awareness of your brand? Are you looking to increase sales, or website traffic, or both? Is your goal to build customer loyalty and increase retention? These goals aren't mutually exclusive, but you should focus on one or two: If you spread yourself too thin, you're not going to accomplish anything.

Create measurable objectives

It's time to set clear objectives based on your goals. Focus on the S.M.A.R.T. strategy for goal setting to ensure your objectives are specific, measurable, attainable, and relevant and time based.

For example, if you're a B2B marketer looking to increase sales, you might decide that you want to generate an additional 100 online leads a month. On the other hand, if your goal is brand awareness, then you might want to increase the number of times your brand is mentioned on social media by 50 percent. In all cases, these objectives should be di-

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rectly tied to your business goals, and they should be achievable. Otherwise, they're just wishful thinking. Also, make sure your objectives are time limited. For instance, you need to achieve that 50 percent growth in brand awareness within six months, not at some undefined time in the future.

Once you set your objectives, make sure you can measure them. Find the right tools to track and analyze each one, so that you can quantify your progress. Not only will this let you know when you have arrived, it will also help you to spot problems early and adjust your course if you need to.

Characterize your customers

Now you know where you're going, but you still don't know how to get there. A successful social-media strategy is all about targeting the right people with the right messages. To do this, you need to understand your audience. For instance, there's no point in targeting everyone in the 18 to 35 age group if you really want to get to upwardly mobile young professionals who are technology enthusiasts.

The best way to do this is to create buyer personas. Sit down and create a detailed profile of your ideal customer. Start by giving them a name. How old are they? What is their income? Do they have children? What do they like or dislike? What motivates them? And so on. If you have more than one ideal customer, create a persona for each.

Look at the competition

When it comes to social media, your competition can tell you a lot about what works and what doesn't. After all, they're targeting the same customers you are. If you ignore your competition, you're giving up a fantastic opportunity to learn from their successes and mistakes.

To research your competitors, start by picking three or four of the top ones. Find out which social networks they're active on, and study their content. Is it funny or serious? What kind of cultural references do they use? Do they talk about their product primarily, or do they focus on other things?

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For example, if you sell snowboards, do your competitors talk about how their snowboards perform, or do they post amazing snowboarding videos that just happen to include their products? Then, see how well each competitor is doing (e.g. how much engagement comments, shares, likes) they get on their Face-book updates.) This will let you determine which strategies work and which ones don't.

Develop your messages

Now you have a handle on your ideal customers and your competition, it's time to start building your messages. This isn't detailed content; rather it's the top level set of key messages that you think will resonate with your customers based on the personas you have created. Choose two or three messages, and then break each one down another level creating a simple messaging hierarchy.

There's nothing wrong with adopting some of your competitors' successful messaging ideas but also try to create original messages that set you apart this will help you to create a unique brand voice. Don't be afraid to get creative as your social media presence should be exciting, not boring.

Choose your channels

Not all social-media platforms are the same. You need to choose the right ones for the products or services you're selling.

For example, LinkedIn is a good platform to target for business-to-business sales while Pinterest may be better if you're in the fashion business. Some of these channels will become obvious when you look at your competitors but see if any relevant channels were overlooked.

You should also identify influencers who can reach your target audience. Good bloggers command high levels of trust in their readers and are indispensable in creating buzz around your brand. Take the time to target the most appropriate bloggers.

Build a content plan

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Finally, you need to develop a strong content plan that will deliver engaging material. The content needs to align with your overall messaging and be appropriate for the channels you're using. This is more than just product information – think about how you can deliver real value to your audience. Don't just stick to one type of media – a mix of videos, guides, info-graphics and other styles will engage your potential customers more effectively. Also, don't think of content as something you post once. You need to have an ongoing presence on social media, and that includes delivering fresh content on a regular basis.

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WHEN, HOW AND WHERE TO PROMOTE YOUR CONTENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA

The process requires so much: coming up with ideas, drafting concepts, editing to perfection, designing the visuals, and publishing, promoting and measuring success.

Promotion is just one part of the process, but it's a complex machine of its own. Learning when, how and where to promote on social media takes knowledge, skill and testing or, at the very least, a well-crafted article explaining things to you.

When should I promote my content on social media?

It's an honest question that opens the door to a vast number of answers.

There's the really technical side, where I advise you to publish on Saturdays at noon on Face-book. But I think we, as marketers, have a tendency to get so bogged down about specifics that we miss the big picture. (Like the fact that if everyone published at the same time, social media would feel incredibly boring.)

So, instead, I'm going to take a more high-level view when approaching the topic of when:

The same day you hit "publish."

This one's pretty obvious. You want to start promoting your new content right away. As soon as you release a piece of content, start sharing it on your social media channels.

Promote again the day after.

Don't be afraid to share your content on social media more than once. It seems like people get hung up on only sharing it one time. Go ahead and share it again the next day, as it's unlikely that all of your readers, or even the majority, saw it the first time.

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Share the content once more a week later.

At a minimum, you want to share a third time, one week later. Stop worrying about over-sharing, especially at this level. It's unlikely that your audience will even notice.

Push the limits with multiple shares.

I want to make sure you understand that these recommendations are only a minimum. You can do so much more when you invest in sharing multiple times.

Embrace visuals.

Photos on Face-book generate 53 percent more likes. YouTube gets over 4 million views a day. Instagram passed Twitter for daily active users.

People love visuals.

Want to really succeed with promotion on social media? Find new and creative ways to use visuals to complement your content.

Test different headlines.

A powerful headline can mean the difference between thousands of people clicking your post and it going completely unnoticed. Test different headlines every time you share the content.

Not only will it give you some insight into the types of headlines that work, it'll keep things fresh for your audience. It's hard for your audience to get bored with your sharing when it's a bit different every time.

Customize the message for each platform.

If you're not customizing your message for each social media channel, you're doing it wrong. Each channel has nuances that make it unique.

You must understand these differences and respect them to truly make an impact.

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Share with your network.

Never forget to share the content directly with your audience. If you do nothing else, do this. Post your content on each social channel you have an active presence on.

Participate in groups.

Networks such as LinkedIn, Face-book and Google+ have niche communities and groups. If you actively participate in discussions, don't hesitate to share your content here.

Just make sure to always respect the community guidelines. Add to the conversation -- don't just spam your link.

Leverage your profile.

If you have a special piece of content that you'd like to promote, leverage your profile. Some ideas for promoting content this way include:

- ❖ Portfolio links on LinkedIn
- ❖ Cover photo on Face-book

Link in your bio on Twitter You worked hard on your content, so don't be afraid to share it! Far from being seen as overly-promotional, your audience will appreciate the obvious pride you've put into your work.

These strategies should give you a much better understanding of the when, how and where of social media promotion.

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MASTERING LINKEDIN

LinkedIn enters into every conversation I have about personal branding.

It comes up in the daily conversations I have about content marketing and new media advertising. And whenever I'm tasked with helping people get started with social media marketing, the discussion always includes LinkedIn.

There has never been a more powerful business networking tool than LinkedIn. Everything that fuels the ascent of your personal brand lives and breathes on the network. It's the online center for meeting people, sharing content, and creating and building business relationships.

If you're a LinkedIn slacker, that is, you have a presence, but are not active on the network; the following facts may give you the nudge you need:

- ❖ LinkedIn has more than 350 million users from 200+ countries.
- ❖ B2B marketers rate LinkedIn the top social media for delivering B2B content and most effective for generating leads.
- ❖ 40% of LinkedIn members check in daily.

Even if you enjoy other social media more, I want you to understand LinkedIn must be a part of your media mix. To help you make the most of LinkedIn, I'm going to walk you through best practices for developing your personal brand with the many opportunities the network offers.

You need to rock your profile

You'll shoot yourself in the foot if you rush through the process of creating a profile. More so than on other social media, your profile will be visited and read.

Because the personal brand is so central to the LinkedIn environment, you're given a big and flexible canvas on which to paint a picture of yourself. Put some effort, thought and creativity into rocking your public profile top to bottom.

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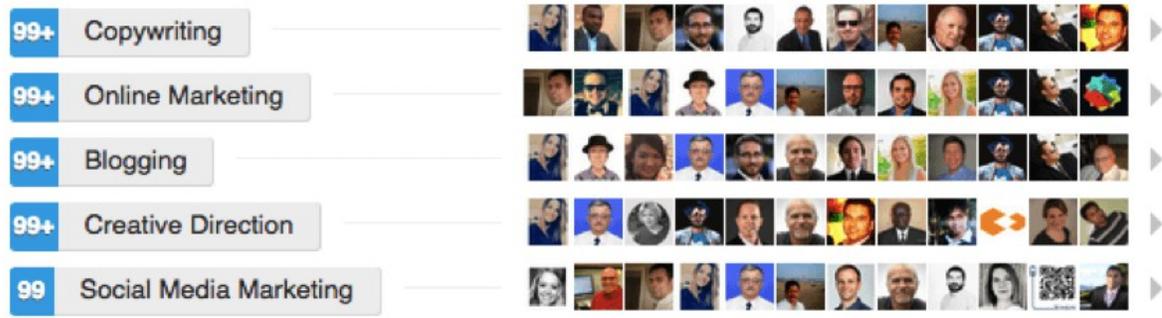
- ❖ **A professional headline** - just below your name you're given up to 120 characters to populate your "headline" field. Consider beginning with a tagline to make a first impression. Next, enter a healthy dose of keywords describing yourself and your areas of expertise. You want to be found via relevant searches. Try to showcase your strengths without being pretentious.
- ❖ **Photo** - your profile is 11X more likely to be viewed if it includes a photo. Your photo should be a high quality headshot. Look into the lens to make eye contact and smile. Weirdness and creativity will not serve you well here.
- ❖ **Background** - LinkedIn allows you to upload a background image to serve as your "cover photo." Choose an image that reflects well on your brand.
- ❖ **Contact info** - this section asks for the usual suspects, but be aware you can override some of the defaults as you like. For instance, you can edit the standard links with the name of your blog and website.
- ❖ **URL** - LinkedIn issues you an impossibly long and anonymous URL, but it's easy to customize it with your name, which makes it much easier to remember and share.
- ❖ **Summary** - Use the summary section to tell your story as you would on an "about" page. Include keywords for search purposes, but compose your summary in a warm way aiming to answer basic questions about your skills and inspiring visitors to keep reading.
- ❖ **Showcase your work** - LinkedIn makes it easy to showcase your work via its integration with Slide-Share. Upload the media of your choice to Slide-Share and choose "Add to LinkedIn profile."
- ❖ **Experience** - populate the fields in the experience section with your work history to present your credentials as you would in a resume.
- ❖ **Add media** - in both the *experience* and *education* sections you can display documents, photos, links, presentations, or videos. Using a video will help make your profile stand out.

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- ❖ **Skills and endorsements** - this section allows you to select your skills and present endorsements given to you from LinkedIn members. Listing your skills gives members a 13X boost in profile views.

Skills & Endorsements

Top Skills



A lot of people feel the endorsements section is lightweight, but I believe when the endorsements begin piling up it helps support your personal brand with a credibility boost.

- ❖ **Recommendations** – Written testimonials are presented here, which are even more powerful than endorsements.
- ❖ **Additional information and summary elements** - there's a crazy long list of optional sections you can add to your profile: groups, certifications, publications, projects, honors, organizations and more. Publish the things you feel are credentials and/or conversation starters and order them as you like.



When you have your profile rocking the way a personal brander should, you can promote it by snagging a LinkedIn badge and placing it on your blog and website.

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The name LinkedIn suggests building relationships

Far too many think of LinkedIn strictly as a place where you find a job or recruiters find you. While employment's a big part of the LinkedIn picture, when it comes to professional development, there's very little you can't find on LinkedIn.

In addition to being the network for building your personal brand, LinkedIn's an ideal place to promote your content, generate leads, find partnership opportunities, conduct research and recruit.

You accomplish all of the above by connecting with LinkedIn members. Let's look at how it's done.

Grow your network - Access the "people you may know" section by searching for it. (Features get moved around often.) LinkedIn does a scary good job of populating the list with; you guessed it, people you may know. Here, you'll find their faces, titles and companies.

You can send an automatic invitation with a single click on "connect."

If you've imported your email contacts list via "add connections," LinkedIn shows you their email address and the option to send an invitation by clicking "add to network."

Other options include:

- ❖ Run an advanced people search.
- ❖ Find alumni.
- ❖ Ask for introductions to the people LinkedIn identifies as second degree connections.

Of course, in your travels across the network you'll also come across people you'd like to connect with. Making a connection request invokes a default email message, which reads "I'd like to connect with you on LinkedIn." You can - and should - write a more interesting greeting if you'd like to make a memorable first impression.

Join groups - one of the platform's most useful features is LinkedIn Groups. There are millions of groups catering to all business interests. Groups generally exist to share con-

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tent and ideas. They also provide another way to identify and make meaningful connections.

Use keyword searches to get started finding relevant groups. The results will give you some insights into the group's charter and also indicate its size by member count. You may also want to examine the profiles of your connections, prospects and clients to see which groups they participate in.

You can join up to 50 groups with a free account. Some will require approval from the group's moderator. Over time, you'll find it more meaningful to focus on a small number of active and interesting groups; however you won't know until you sign-up.

You also have the option to start your own groups, public or private. Creating a group is a cinch, but understands that managing a group takes a fair amount of time.

Frequency of group digest emails



You can configure how often you get updates from your groups. Your Groups updates may be collected as one email or may arrive individually.

B2B Content Marketing	No Email
B2B Technology Marketing Community	Daily Digest Email
Be A Speaker (learn, share, grow)	Weekly Digest Email

Fair warning: You'll receive a barrage of email if you don't tinker with your email preferences. This screen shot shows you the options for group email settings.

Deliver valuable content

Your quest to develop a strong personal brand calls for developing and sharing original content as well as creating additional content you believe serves the interests of your connections.

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In recent years, through both the development of new features and the integration of services LinkedIn has added by way of acquisitions, the network has become a giant content marketing hub for individuals and companies.

Share your thoughts - as is the case with all social networks, you need to contribute to the conversation. On your LinkedIn home page, “share an update” presents a blank field in which you can write your thoughts, upload a photo, and paste a link if you choose. LinkedIn doesn’t yet offer the option to share video this way.

A pull-down menu allows you to share your update publicly, strictly with your connections, and via Twitter. Of course, if you elect to share via Twitter, your update will be limited to Twitter’s 140-character restriction.

If you’d like to notify a LinkedIn member you’ve mentioned him or her in an update, enters @, and followed by the name. The feature also works to mention companies.

Starts a group discussion - you start discussions within your groups by giving your comment a title and then writing details, which you can designate as “general,” “job” or “promotion.” You cannot add media types here. In some cases, you can include links; however some group moderators discourage or prohibit it.

Link to a blog post, article, eBook, presentation, or whatever is relevant to the discussion you’re starting. Asking questions tends to be the best way to invoke a meaningful discussion. Ask a great question and you may inspire hundreds of responses from members.

Stay tuned-in because your question is likely to beget additional questions. Often, healthy debates follow and you’ll likely want to express your point of view.

Go one-on-one - In the course of your updates and discussions you’re likely to want to engage individually. LinkedIn enables you to do so via LinkedIn email. If you’re looking to nurture a “pen pal” relationship into something more, this is how it’s done.

Publish blog posts - In 2014, LinkedIn took a bold step toward becoming a content marketing hub by introducing its own publishing platform. I was offered the opportunity to join its first-round pilot and jumped in.

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One of the first posts I contributed was about the platform itself and became a hit (relatively speaking).

- ❖ LinkedIn has created the easiest blog publishing platform anywhere. It's very intuitive and nice looking too.
- ❖ Publishing a blog post of any length on LinkedIn is a wonderful opportunity to reach your ideal audience and support your personal brand.

The reason I'm slightly less excited about the platform today is being that it's now open to all members; there are tons of posts published every day. As such, quality is all over the map and it's more difficult to stand out and get the shares required to reach thousands of readers.

That said, on any given day, a great post stands the chance of getting picked up by LinkedIn's personalized online magazine, "Pulse," which often does find a large audience and can inspire oodles of shares and comments.

LinkedIn's loaded with content

Slide-Share

In 2012, LinkedIn acquired Slide-Share, the world's largest community for sharing presentations and other professional content. Slide-Share allows you to post presentations, info-graphics, documents, videos, and PDFs. Slide-Share boasts 60 million unique visitors a month.

I'm a big fan of Slide-Share and consider it a significant element of my personal branding efforts. I publish content there often and have contributed to its blog numerous times.

LinkedIn Pulse

In 2013, LinkedIn Today became Pulse (as a result of an acquisition). LinkedIn Pulse delivers professional news tailored to your interests. Its home to the robust "LinkedInfluencers" blog, which features exclusive posts from hundreds of carefully selected industry leaders across many topics, the news aggregator is available on the LinkedIn site and via smart-phone apps.

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Another level of LinkedIn

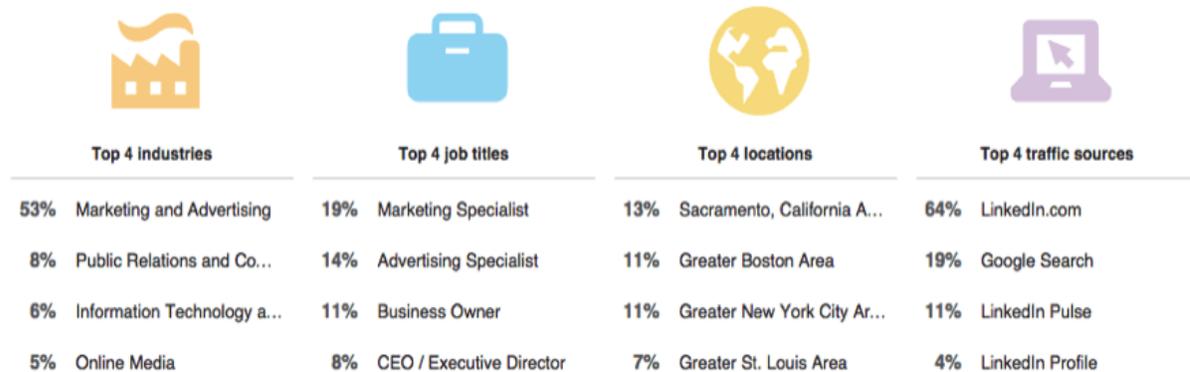
LinkedIn is largely free. However, the company does offer paid services. If you join as free member, you'll learn of the paid options soon enough. LinkedIn is very good and aggressive at promoting its premium services.

LinkedIn Premium accounts - You'll do fine developing your personal brand on LinkedIn without investing in paid services, however you should be aware premium accounts are offered. The premium offering provides a number of value-added services, some of them useful to power users.

Premium accounts are available to general users and there are specific offerings for recruiters, job seekers and sales professionals.

LinkedIn analytics - The free analytics provided by LinkedIn to individual members are a far cry from deep, however they will reveal people who have viewed your profile, how you rank among your connections and some additional insights.

Demographics of your readers ⓘ



Some of the free analytics are note-worthy. I found it interesting LinkedIn helps you understand the demographics of your readers.

LinkedIn advertising - LinkedIn's advertising options are many. The programs offer powerful B2B targeting features to reach the audience you choose among its nearly 350 million members.

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LinkedIn company pages - LinkedIn company pages are a smart play for social media marketers. With their many features, company pages can help you engage followers with news and content and take advantage of lead generation opportunities. The analytics provided for company pages are more robust.

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KEY TO MARKETING ON TWITTER

Look at most companies' social media activity and chances are their Twitter presence is going to have the smallest, but still rapidly growing, following among the platforms there. Twitter was originally created for sharing short-burst thoughts, yet it has grown into one of the three core social media platforms, beside Instagram and Facebook. That's why you need to pay attention to your tweets.

At my own company, Yes Man Watches, our tweets are motivational and inspiring. Yours may be different. But the point is to grow your Twitter presence through compelling content. A potential follower won't waste time on your page if your tweets aren't interesting. So, to achieve that, ensure that your Twitter presence aligns with your brand. Think about your core competencies and base your tweets around them. Taco Bell, for instance, has built its active following by incorporating comedy, tweeting, in one case I saw, "Time will heal a broken heart, but Taco Bell will heal it faster."

With over 302 million active users, Twitter is a platform you shouldn't miss out on. To ensure you too make the most of your account, utilize these three keys:

Favorite"/ retweet interesting content

Finding content based on hashtags can be a key to growing your following. When you "favorite" yes, Twitter uses the word as a verb someone's tweet, you will often catch his or her attention. Doing this manually can be tedious, and platforms like FlockWithMe.io automate this process. On FlockWithMe's platform, you can automatically "favorite" and follow people based on hashtags. This white-hat approach enables you to interact with real people while you're seamlessly growing your Twitter following.

Tweet often.

To ensure your account stays active, I recommend tweeting at least once a day. If you're running a Twitter account for your brand, there really isn't a limit. When I worked on the Twitter account for Kickstarter Success, we would often tweet once every five minutes,

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as our target market of crowd-funding was packed with new projects waiting to gain exposure. With the help of the crowd-funding community, we grew to 200,000-plus followers in just over a year.

Interact with your followers.

Tweeting your own tweets is just as important as responding to what people are saying to you on Twitter. If someone tweets @yourtwitter, be sure to respond in a timely manner. Oftentimes, brands actually use Twitter as an extension to their customer support activities. For example, Delta Airlines uses the handle @DeltaAssist to manage customer questions.

Catch trends.

One of the best ways to integrate your brand into the Twitter community is by voicing your opinion on trends. If one of your Tweets goes viral through a hashtag, chances are your Twitter following will increase dramatically. To see what's trending on Twitter, simply go to the homepage and look in the bottom left. If a trend catches your eye, I suggest tweeting what you think about it. As I write this, #BBKing is trending to commemorate the passing of this music legend. If you too were tweeting today and believed that your followers knew #BBKing, you could tweet your own condolences.

As Twitter continues to grow, it should be an essential part of your company's marketing strategy. By interacting with your followers, you'll find that they'll become more loyal to your brand. A company's footprint can expand through Twitter and there's no reason not to utilize this community. If your company isn't on Twitter already, it's time to start, or risk losing the potential to interact with over 302 million people

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