8 Common Social Media Marketing Questions and Their Answers

There’s no such thing as a dumb question, so don’t be shy. Even the most experienced social media strategists return to the same basic issues. Whether you’re a novice or a seasoned vet, the answers to these common questions are a nice reminder to get back to the basics. To build the right following, you have to start with a solid foundation.

1. Do I Have to Be on Every Social Network?

**Answer:** No.

**Here’s why:** An easy way to figure out which social networks you should be on is to ask yourself where your customers are. That’s where you need to be. If they’re not on Facebook, don’t waste time building out a Facebook Page.

You absolutely don’t have to be on every social network, especially the ones you don’t understand or don’t have the capacity to do well. Every business will have a different social media footprint based on their audience and capabilities.

If you have the time and resources to make outstanding videos, then you should definitely have a presence on YouTube so you can share those videos across the networks your audience loves most. If you don’t have the bandwidth for video production, get off of YouTube and don’t feel guilty about not being there.

2. Do My Social Media Handles Have to Be Consistent?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Here’s why:** Not only will it be easier for you to promote your social media handles if they’re consistent, but it will also be easier for fans to find and tag you. When usernames are different across every network, it can get confusing. If you Tweet an Instagram image but you have two different usernames, it complicates things. Inevitably, someone will tag your Twitter name on Instagram or your Instagram name on Twitter and you’ll miss opportunities for engagement.

Today it’s not only domain names that matter; usernames are just as, if not more, valuable in terms of digital real estate. Sites like [Knowem](http://knowem.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) tell you whether or not your desired username is available across multiple networks.

If your first choice isn’t available, don’t despair. Get creative. And it’s okay if your social media usernames are slightly different than your URL. Use an underscore or abbreviation or add the word “dotcom,” “official” or “NYC” if that’s your location.

3. How Do I Come Up With All That Content?

**Answer:** It’s easier than you think.

**Here’s why:** It all comes down to knowing your ideal customer. If you have a solid understanding of their lifestyles, desires and pain points, it will become much easier to create or find relevant content that they would read and share.

Beyond that, start following influencers in your industry who create outstanding content and share their stuff. Or you can use it to inspire you to write a few blog posts or conversation starters that riff off the topic or expand upon it. You can also search relevant hashtags or check out what’s trending on Twitter and Instagram to understand what people are talking about right now, then join in on those conversations.

Idea generation is the hardest part, so let your audience do it for you. Talk to your followers or ideal customers and ask them what they would like to see. You can also ask your employees to contribute one blog post per month. When you divvy up the work, it becomes less stressful and more thoughtful.

4. How Often Should I Post?

**Answer:** It depends.

**Here’s why:** The frequency of your content creation depends on your resources and your audience. Your goal is to get quality content that your audience will love in front of as many eyes as possible.

It’s better to put nothing out there than to publish content that’s subpar. If that means you can only blog once per week then that’s fine. If that means you can post on Facebook only three times per week—but they are three really good posts that get a lot of engagement—then that’s fine, too. Just find a consistent schedule that you can maintain.

And remember that you can always repurpose content. Old blog posts can be Retweeted with new phrasing and imagery. In fact, you can set a strategy in which every blog post gets shared across every network on day one, a repeat on Twitter on day three, a repeat on Facebook on day eight and so on.

You can share the same content on each network but it should be phrased differently. For example, LinkedIn doesn’t use hashtags so you wouldn’t want to copy and paste something from Twitter. An infographic might perform better on Pinterest than on Facebook. You’ll have to track what kind of content and what format does best on each network and take that data into consideration when publishing on each platform.

Check out Sprout’s [social media publishing tools](http://sproutsocial.com/features/social-media-publishing) that allow you to schedule and queue messages at optimal post times.

5. How Do I Get More Followers?

**Answer:** By sharing outstanding content that your ideal customer will love at exactly the right time.

**Here’s why:** Regardless of which network you’re talking about, it’s the quality not quantity of followers that matters. You can pay for followers but that won’t guarantee engagement with your content or that they’ll become loyal customers.

To organically attract the right followers that will engage with your brand, it’s all about creating outstanding content and getting it in front of the right people at the right time. You want to consistently share quality content that’s creative and unique. An easy way to define “creative” is to look for the gaps your biggest competitors are leaving and fill it.

Beyond that, you’ll have to consider posting at the right time, using appropriate hashtags and potentially partnering with influencers to expand your reach. Remember that social media is a conversation not a broadcast. Respond to your followers and interact with them. Go where they are. Get involved.

6. Should I Connect With Everyone?

**Answer:** No.

**Here’s why:** You don’t always have to “follow back” on Twitter or Instagram or accept every LinkedIn request. Why? Because you’re curating a network. Who you follow says as much about your brand as who follows you.

On Twitter, you can create private Twitter lists which enable you to keep tabs on people like your competitors without following them. Of course you should always connect with influencers and potential partners, but there’s no need to reciprocate every “like” and “follow.” On Twitter and Instagram, your followers should be equal in number to those who you follow. On LinkedIn, it’s worth noting that the bigger your network is, the more potential you have.

That being said, if you follow people they will often follow you back. Sites like [Twellow](https://www.twellow.com/%22%20%5Ct%20%22_blank) can help you find relevant profiles. Follow them and hopefully they’ll follow you back.

7. Should I Pay for Social Media Advertising?

**Answer:** Probably.

**Here’s why:** On a platform like Facebook, you have to “pay to play.” You will often see a return on your investment because the ads are highly targeted. With a strong strategy in place, you can grow your following, drive traffic and drive sales.

When it comes to other networks, the choice is yours but it might require some testing. Remember that tip about knowing your audience and going where they are? That definitely applies here. If your following loves Pinterest and you see a lot of referral traffic from the site, a Promoted Pin might be perfect for you brand.

Make an educated guess on where you will see the highest return on investment. Decide upon a goal, take a look at posts that have performed well and then translate them into conversion posts that can drive sales, newsletter sign-ups or loyalty. This way you’re investing in a piece of content you know your audience already loves.

8. Do We Need an Editorial Calendar?

**Answer:** Yes.

**Here’s why:** An editorial calendar is a necessary step in bringing your strategy to life. It can help you stay on track and consistent in messaging across various networks. It can also help you create quality content by planning ahead. When you see the entire month across all networks in one document, it’s easier to edit the copy for strength and consistency.

Also, when you’re planning ahead, you have a better chance of maximizing your impact on social media. If you know you’re going to launch a contest or sale at the end of the month, reach out to influencers in advance and gain some momentum. Content will be more likely to go viral if you’ve already lined up influencers to Tweet about your product launch or big announcement the same time you do. Check out this post that outlines four steps for creating a [social media editorial calendar](http://sproutsocial.com/insights/social-media-editorial-calendar/).