

Social Media Marketing Strategy

LinkedIn

Conversational Marketing with Karen Yankovich

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Social Media. It's a wild wild wild world! It can feel overwhelming and there is so much to do, so many sites to choose from. Today we're only going to talk about LinkedIn.

Social Media is really just a new path in the evolution of communication tools. Smoke signals, Morse Code, radio, TV, we're always looking for ways to communicate. It's just the shift we're currently experiencing, right? The biggest difference is in the quantity of people that we're reaching now with our communications. We have a human desire to be connected, and let's cut to the chase, we're naturally nosy. We want to see what's going on with the businesses we interact with, even if it's what the owner had for lunch! Huge numbers of senders are now reaching huge numbers of people. So....

Let's make no mistake, today's conversations are happening on social media.

If you and your business want to be a part of those conversations, you need to learn the difference between a tweet and a poke. I don't care if you're a yoga teacher, a health coach, a lawyer or an accountant. Social media is where you'll find more clients.

This plan is going to give you detailed information on LinkedIn, one today's most popular Social Media sites, my personal favorite. I'll give you step by step instructions for maximizing your time there. These are powerful tools, and they aren't overwhelming complex to use. It can be fun, it can be easy, but if you don't have a system, it can suck up valuable time.

Very important, when having conversations with your tribe on LinkedIn, keep it real. Write as if you were talking directly to them. Read it out loud if you're not sure if it sounds too stiff. You want to stimulate that conversation, so that you can start converting those prospects to paying customers. Remember who your audience is! Post for your ideal clients, your audience, not your peers.

Do your best, be yourself.

I want to talk a minute about numbers of followers. There's a bit of controversy on this topic in the Social Media world. Some say that numbers are important, some say that numbers are unimportant, and that engagement is important. I'm in BOTH of those camps. Increasing numbers of followers, WITH engagement, is what you should be shooting for. There is a perceived value in a big number of connections and followers, and that's real social proof for your business. So grow your followers in every way you can! Without engagement though, it's like a huge stadium full of fans waiting for a football game to start, the football team has to be ready to play the game and engage the crowd, or the crowd will leave.

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Social media is the new marketing effort. It's not just a webpage, it's a work page. It's a place to establish assurance that you are who you say you are, and that you know your stuff. It's a place that you can establish yourself as an expert in your field, and most importantly, share that expertise with potential clients so that you can convert them to paying customers.

It allows for personalization of your business, it allows your brand to come through. It allows your business voice to shine. What happens when we're shining? We're attracting. Shiny objects attract attention. Attention attracts followers. If you're then listening to those followers, and engaging them in conversation, those followers may become customers.

Why should you participate?

Did I mention that Social Media is where the conversations are? In 2009, Howard Schultz, CEO of Starbucks saw a drop in sales. He engaged in social media to find out why. With Social Media, you get real time information about your company or brand.

Imagine if you saw those smoke signals passing over your house, and you knew they would give insight into what your customers are looking for, but you couldn't read smoke signals. Just because you don't see the conversations when you're not connected to social media doesn't mean they're not there! You're letting the smoke signals go un-read if you're not joining the conversation.

Social Media provides social proof to your prospective customers. If you see an ad for a deli in a magazine or a newspaper, you might be interested enough to go check it out someday. If you see on a Social Media site that your friend/neighbor/colleague is always "checking in" at a local deli, and talks about the amazing grilled vegetable wraps she gets there, you're going to be wanting that wrap! The more that people interact with your business on Social Media, the more social proof you are establishing for your business. That social proof will eventually translate to dollars and cents.

Use LinkedIn to build relationships with leaders and peers in your industry. Start following them, engage them in conversations, share their content with your followers. Note how often they post, and the kinds of things they are posting that get the most interaction. Pay attention to who they're following, that will give you new people to follow every day. Be reliable, be relatable. Listen, follow, engage.

Social Media is NOT

- Something you can do without participation
- Something you can do via alias
- Quick and done
- In place of a website
- Rocket Science
- The Field of Dreams – you can't just build it and expect people to come

What do YOU want?

What are you looking to achieve from your LinkedIn profile? Why are you doing this? Are you launching a product or service? Are you looking for a job, or more sales? Are you looking for more brand recognition? Are you sharing updates to your schedule with your clients? Are you educating your customers? Acting as an expert in your industry?

LinkedIn can be used for a variety of reasons. You need to be clear on YOUR reason, and tailor your posts to support that reason. Once the reason for your marketing is clear, you can establish measurable goals, calls to action, and specific messages.

What's YOUR story?

What is your business mission statement? Your prospective customers want to know about it! Not in a stuffy businessy kind of way, but it needs to be clear and consistent throughout your posts.

Content

Your content needs to be relevant. Post text, pictures/videos, links, whatever you're feeling for that day. The more varied the media, the more engagement you'll receive with your page. If you're sharing a post that you know came from someone in particular, cite that person. You don't have to write the copy for each and every thing you post, you can post quotes and sayings from others, but be sure you're citing where needed. Practice business common sense, practice Internet safety.

You want to evoke an emotion in the people who will be reading your content. Give people something to talk about, something to share

Keywords

Do your keyword research! This is essential for a successful Social Media Marketing Strategy. Search "google adwords", and use their "find keywords" tool. Search for words that are in your industry, search for words that are related to your industry. Search for phrases. Be creative, you're doing research here. Then, open up a thesaurus in another browser window, and use the two together. Create a list of

keywords that you believe will generate traffic to your business. Come up with a list of 10, KEEP that list, but narrow it down to 3-5. Use the exact words you choose, and use those words consistently in every online site you manage, including your website. If you're managing your social media effectively, you'll be doing this exercise every month, so keep a notebook or journal of this and use it over and over.

Let's talk about LinkedIn

LinkedIn is about YOU. This is where YOU can determine what first impression others get. Go ahead, google your name. Google ranks your LinkedIn profile very high, it's the first thing people will click on when they have reason to check you out, when they Google your name. Professionally optimizing your profile is how YOU get to determine what that first impression is.

I love connecting with people on LinkedIn. It's a great source of traffic to my website, and I like the more business feel of it for my business to business clients. Many people look at it as an online resume, it's so much more than that! It's a great place to let people know how much you value what they contribute to your business or your life. LinkedIn has been around for years, but is seeing a huge upsurge in use in 2013. People are connecting with other people in their industries, and using this powerful site to engage those connections. Connect with me on LinkedIn, tell me how you like this information! <http://www.linkedin.com/in/karenyankovich>

Your LinkedIn headline is searchable by Google, so where possible, insert keywords that you would want to be found by. Use them in your headline, your summary, and in your experience titles. Sprinkle those keywords throughout your LinkedIn profile descriptions. What are you known by? Do you have a book? Think of your headline as a mini description of what you are known for.

Find the right LinkedIn Group. There are over 1.5 MILLION groups on LinkedIn, and many of them are very active. You can join a group to keep up to date in your industry, you can join a group to share your expertise, you can join a group to find a new career opportunity, you can join a group to find prospects or leads for your business.

Search for LinkedIn groups with a focus. You can use standard search commands, like AND, OR, and NOT. Your search results will be delivered to you organized by size of group. While there are a lot of great reasons to join the huge LinkedIn groups, I personally like the smaller niche groups. In the smaller groups, I can get noticed more easily, my posts aren't getting lost in the dozens of other posts in the group.

Once you start joining groups, you'll notice suggestions for other groups you may want to join. Pay attention to those suggestions, LinkedIn does a great job of making relevant choices for you! There are more suggestions on the bottom of the main group page.

If you find you've joined a group that is just not working for you, simply remove yourself from the group. Don't waste your time, move on.

If you have a business, create a LinkedIn Company page. You must have the email address for the company in the settings. Once your company is created, you can add all of the promotional material you have that's COMPANY related to that page. You can add video, and talk about your company services here. Be sure to include links to subscribe to your list!

Of note: You can add sections to LinkedIn. For instance, if you've had a book or articles published, click the "add new sections" link in the "edit profile" section. One of the options is publications. Be sure to add in whatever you've published!

Get in the habit of giving LinkedIn recommendations to the connections who you feel do a great job. It can be a business associate, it can be your hairdresser. Once you start offering recommendations, you'll start seeing people recommend you back. More social proof that you know your stuff.



Once per month

1. Here's what you can do today. Log into to your respective sites, and put together something that looks like this. Add the names of the sites that you use, and enter the number of followers you have on those sites. Once you're done, put this task on your calendar for the same day next month, and eventually you will have a GREAT tool to measure the effectiveness of your social media marketing. It should look something like this:

	MO/YR								
Facebook									
LinkedIn									
Twitter									
Pinterest									
YouTube									

Once you have this invaluable data, you can start to evaluate it. Do you see a jump or a drop in followers in any particular month? Compare that to your sales for that same month. Does a jump in followers on Twitter coincide with a jump in sales that month? Only YOU can measure the effectiveness of your social media marketing like this, don't overlook this valuable data. It only takes a few minutes a month, and it will drive your social media decisions for the months ahead. This will help you determine if you are accessing the right media to locate your target market.

2. Check your Google Analytics. You will be able to see how many clicks to your website, by page accessed, are coming from each of your social network sites.

**** Important! While measuring the growth of followers is important, the Return on Investment of Social Media Marketing is not only the number of followers you have. It is in the number of qualified leads generated, the value of those leads, and the percentage that convert to paying customers or are retained. Measure that, as best you can, by dollars, not followers. Measure quality AND quantity.****

3. Evaluate your keywords. Month one, pick three keywords that you feel describe your business or your message. Those keywords should be sprinkled throughout all of your Social Media sites. Every month, review those keywords and see if they need updating.
4. Check your new clients for their social network sites, and be sure you're following THEM!
5. Take a look at your notifications. Decide if you're getting too many or not enough, and adjust accordingly.

Invest your time. You should be averaging about 20 minutes per day. You're probably doing that already, but maybe not in such a focused way. Put this on your calendar! This is a "big rock", it needs to be made a priority if you are going to successfully leverage the free marketing available to you.

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## **LinkedIn**

LinkedIn routine:

2x's per week:

- Review any new connection requests. Personally respond via message, thanking them for connecting, sharing whatever is timely for your business. If you don't have time to send the message, don't accept the connection until you do!
- Check and respond to any messages in your inbox.
- Review your groups, any new ones to join or non-productive ones to delete? Read up on the profile notes of two groups you belong to. Are you engaging according to the guidelines?
- Read your profile, and update where needed.
- Write a recommendation for someone you're connected with. A REAL recommendation, not an endorsement.
- Post your blog, share it in appropriate groups.

4-5x's per week:

- Check your feed for articles of interest, and comment on them. You can “like” LinkedIn posts, the same way you “like” Facebook posts.
- Check to see what’s going on in your groups. Be active, join existing conversations, start new conversations. Get a feel for the group. Be relevant, share useful knowledge.
- Who’s viewed your profile? It might be worth reaching out to see if you can assist them.
- Share an update, ask a question to your network. Post at maximum twice per day, 4-5 days per week. Use your keywords.

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Remember these top 5 social media tips:

1. Keep it relatable
2. Work your plan
3. Consistently engage your readers in conversations
4. Measure the follower, measure the dollars
5. Join the conversation and have fun!

Karen Yankovich is the CEO of Dimare Group, LLC, and has additionally built several other successful companies from the ground up. Having been there and done that in the arena of losing (and then re-finding) a focused approach to business and life, Karen now offers heart-based consulting for women entrepreneurs. Her unique specialty blends her "get it done" attitude with a passion for soulful living in her online workshops. Working with Karen guides over-stressed entrepreneurs to creating inner and outer wealth by combining smart business with simple practices that develop and maintain a soulful, passionate life.

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