

# **Social Media Strategy Planning Workbook for Small Businesses**



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# TEACH ME SOCIAL

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## About

Teach Me Social empowers small businesses to take control of their social media presence to maintain an authentic voice for their brand. Our unique suite of services is aimed at providing knowledge and support to busy entrepreneurs who have a need to expand their company's online presence.

Teach Me Social stays on top of trends and changes in today's world of digital marketing and delivers relevant content to you in personalized workshops. We take the time to understand your unique needs in order to identify and deliver relevant services that benefit your business.

Once we have a complete view of your personal digital marketing needs, we create and implement a plan with your goals as our priority. Teach Me Social then monitors all key performance Indicators at regular intervals, communicating the results with you and adjusting strategies as needed.

Teach Me Social offers a full range of services designed to address all the online and digital media needs of both small and growing businesses. We offer individual or group training sessions to teach and empower business owners. For businesses ready to hand over the reigns of their online marketing, we also offer comprehensive social media account and community management services to help create and maintain effective social media profiles for our clients.

Why not begin with a no-strings consultation which includes an audit of your existing social media presence and recommendations?

Email [info@teachmesocial.ca](mailto:info@teachmesocial.ca) to get started!



**KELLY FARRELL**

*Founder & Director , Teach Me Social*

## Introduction

The vast arrays of Social Media networks can leave you dizzy and ready to walk away, while doing so can be detrimental to your website and overall marketing strategy. Popular search engines are not only using Social Media to judge the popularity and credibility of websites, but individual posts are being indexed and included in search results. As a result, being both present and active on Social Media can work to improve your search engine optimization, your brand reputation, as well as to draw a whole new crowd of visitors to your website or online shop.

Social Media can help you expand your business reach, draw traffic back to your website and grow your brand online. Using Social Media effectively as part of your marketing strategy includes expanding your reach to all of the most popular sites, including Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Instagram and Google+, thus reaching a far wider audience of potential customers.

Through this workbook, Teach Me Social will show you how to manage your time to gain the most benefit from having a presence across all Social Media platforms. Teach Me Social will help you build a social media presence that will showcase your products and services to the world while drawing traffic back to your website where they can find you!

*Your social media presence should **point** potential customers in the direction of your website.*

*Use your social sites to **entice** followers to visit your website by sharing engaging links, images and ideas!*

## Part One - Getting Started

### Branding Your Social Media for Business

Entrepreneurship in the 21st century demands a knowledge of so much more than just what your specialty is. A business owner today needs to be adept at all facets of business, or at least how to navigate through all the outsourcing options to find the best resource at the most cost-effective rate. Social Media is no different. There are numerous companies who will manage your online presence, but like other outsourcing options, it is up to the business owner to dictate how and what that presence will look like. That demands an understanding of the unique realm of Social Networking.

Growing your brand online means so much more than having a website! It means being “social” – being connected. To be connected, one must also be consistent. Think of social media as “people to people” digital marketing. To help you get started, here are three essential components for every small business social media marketing plan to adopt.

*Take every **opportunity** to let your audience know where to engage with you online!*

**Step 1: Be Consistent** - Ensure your brand has representation (accounts) on all major networks with the same username so people can find and follow you. The top 8 networks (at the time of writing) include: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google for Business, LinkedIn, YouTube, Pinterest. Once your accounts are set up, choose one (or maybe 2) to really focus on – then post regularly! On most social networks, this means posting something every day as well as interacting with other users and responding to comments or messages on your page. To make consistency more manageable, try using pre-scheduling tools like the Facebook schedule option or possibly hire a social media account manager to do this for you. For on-the-go and day-to-day interactions, use mobile apps. Consistency doesn’t need to be time consuming, but it does need to be interactive!

**Step 2: Be Cohesive** - Cohesive branding across all accounts is the key to gaining brand recognition. Your logo and/or profile pictures on all your social networking accounts should represent your brand. Colours used in posts and in your email signature should also be representative of your brand. Take the time to ensure that you have the required sizes of your logo for all the different platforms (no, it's not as simple as having one image file for your logo!) and that they are formatted and centered correctly. Review your website and social media description fields to ensure your messaging is cohesive too – does your bio explain what you actually represent? If not, revise your descriptions so that your brand presents a cohesive impression across all digital media.

*Social Networking is about being **actively** engaged in a growing digital world by adding value, connecting with and learning from a limitless network.*

**Step 3: Be Connected** - To grow your following on your social networks, make it easy for your clients and contacts to find you! List your website in online professional directories and join social networking groups to expand your influence and reach on social media. Include your Social Network links in your email signature and on every page of your website or blog. Link back to your website from your social media profiles; creating easy navigational flow for your followers will build brand loyalty and consequently increase your network. Grow your network by following Teach Me Social's 'rule of three' - follow and be followed in equal part by your cheerleaders, members of your professional networks as well as past and potential customers.

**Gotta-Have Tools to Explore:**

Wisestamp (for email signatures)	Constant Contact (email marketing)
Canva (create digital images)	PicMonkey (Edit, create images)
Dropbox (file sharing/syncing)	Google Apps (tools for business)
Buffer (Social media scheduling)	Mailchimp (easy email marketing)

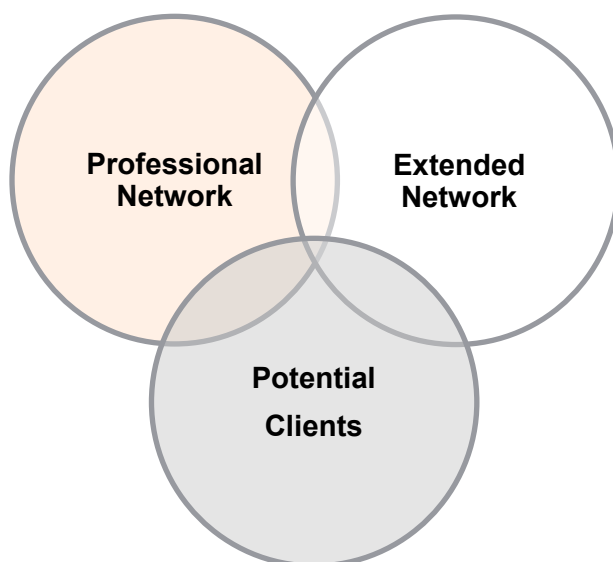
## **Part Two - Expanding Your Reach**

### **Networking on Social Media**

The most important thing to recognize about Social Media is the word “Social”. Online networking through so-called Social Media sites grew out of a need for people to remain connected in a growing digital world. This is not a passive form of marketing; the ‘Social’ aspect means actively interacting, sharing, commenting, adding a personal touch, making connections and growing your network.

Think about your presence online just as you would think of your attendance at a (very large) networking event or conference. Everyone you meet adds value to your business, whether they are going to turn out to be new clients, new friends, or new supporters in your professional learning network (PLN).

You share something different with each person while maintaining the message and integrity of your brand in all of your conversations. Growing your social media networks is the same, and you are going to be able to divide your networks into three groups of equal parts: Professional, Extended, and Client networks.



- **Your Professional Network** - Contacts who share for each other, read each other blogs and work in the same or similar industries. Just like at networking events, these are the colleagues with whom you want to build mutual respect and admiration.

- **Your Extended Network** - These are your 'cheerleaders'! They like your posts, take an interest in what you do and are there when you need them! Most likely, this group is made up of close friends and family, but their interactions with you on Social Media can lead to invaluable referrals!

- **Your Potential Clients** - Waiting in the background, watching what you do, waiting until the right thing grabs their attention. Don't be afraid to engage potential clients by asking them to share experiences, photos and opinions on your posts - you never know when someone wants the opportunity to feel acknowledged!

It is important to pay attention to each group, as you never know where your next lead will come from, and who might be watching from afar, waiting until the time is right.

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**Follow-up Task:** Evaluate your network and decide which third of your network you need to focus on growing.

#### **Key Questions: Social Networking**

Who is your target market?

How can you connect with them?

Who are your professional advisers or colleagues?

Are you connecting and engaging with them online?

Are you making the most of your extended network?

NOTE: It is important to frequently revisit and re-evaluate these questions!



## **Part Three - Strategy & Focus**

### **The Core of Your Social Media Strategy**

Each business needs to first determine purpose for each Social Media campaign that is undertaken. It might be purely PR with a goal to build brand awareness; maybe it's event promotion or registration; and commonly, businesses use Social Media to promote products or services. What many business owners forget is that Social Networks are not online shopping malls, but rather can be better compared to online coffee shops, where friends meet to share ideas, photos and conversation. In most cases, social network members are not there to be sold to and find blatant advertising annoying and out of place.

Successful brands have discovered that social media has fantastic potential as a platform to creatively market their products and services without advertising. They are using client stories and informal testimonials to build a brand story which has a place and even stands out amongst the other stories social networkers are sharing. Through the use of hashtags, visual media and social sharing, brands are letting their clients take control of sharing brand messaging.

What is your brand's story? Before embarking on any social media campaign, you must first identify the story you want to tell. What do you represent? Why would people buy from you? What do your customers usually ask? What brings repeat business through the door? If you have a unique "why" to share, this is what is going to make your followers connect with you on a personal level and keep them coming back for more. Give your brand a personality online - if your brand had an avatar, what would she look like? How would she talk? Use the answers to these questions to drive your overall strategy and determine the answers to many of the questions in the next section.

## What is your STOP Sign?

Social sharing and brand awareness is great, but what about sales? In this case, brands need to draw their clients away from the social network for long enough to make a purchase. It is important to make this transition as easy and painless as possible, which means being completely clear about where you want the customer to end up and exactly what you want them to do when they are there. This is what we call your “Stop Sign” - where your customer will stop and make a certain action. Sometimes this is also called a “Call to Action”, but a “Stop Sign” is more about knowing what the exact end result is going to be.



Once you have identified your stop sign, you can build your social media strategy outwards, ensuring that with a single click away from social media gets your customers exactly where you want them to be. Your stop sign should be very clear, either a purchase, sign up, or reading and sharing a blog post. Most users will go to the first page of a site they are redirected to, but most will not go further. If you want them to do something on that first page, make it very clear that this is the stop sign.

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**Follow-up Task:** Determine your ultimate purpose for having a social media presence, identify your stop sign (might be a different one for each campaign), determine how you will accomplish these goals. By answering the following questions and writing down your goals for each social media campaign and each social media network, you can take control and build an effective online marketing strategy.

**Key Questions: Social Media Strategic Planning & Management**

What is your purpose for marketing on Social Media?

What is your stop sign for this social media campaign?

What is your target demographic / target market?

What is the timeline for this social media campaign?

How will you expand your online network?

How often will you create and post new content?

Where will you source new or curated content?

Will you manage your social networking in-house, by contract, or both?

How will you measure your effectiveness?

When will you revisit and revise your current strategy?

## **Part Four - Planning & Implementation**

### **Making Time for Social Media**

It's not always easy to find time for marketing your business, but it's definitely the most important ingredient to success! What you tell the world about your business defines your brand. The same can be said for being consistent, cohesive and connected on social media. If you are not paying attention to your social media presence, how does that reflect back onto your brand in general? It's a question worth considering as you decide how to implement your new plans for social networking.

### **Scheduling Tools**

I imagine scheduling tools came about as people started realizing that there were optimum times to be posting on social media, like when people were online for example. Today, the time of day is less important, but the importance of spacing out your posts and maintaining consistency in posting on a regular basis has risen. There are many options to choose from when selecting a tool that can help you pre-schedule your posts so that you can ideally sit down once a week and pre-plan all of your posts for that time period by finding content and selecting when you want it to be posted to your account. When choosing a tool, remember that the tool is only as good as the user - try it before you buy it to make sure it is user-friendly and will be something that will add value to your business, not more hassle and headache!

### **Account & Community Management Agencies**

Consider outsourcing your social media to account managers who can find the right content and manage your posting timeline. Community managers are also very valuable, as they can monitor your accounts and respond in a timely and appropriate manner to your followers, customers and clients! In choosing an account manager, make sure they understand your business and be positive that you are comfortable with that person representing your brand online.

## Content Calendars

Using a content calendar saves you more than you realize! By taking time once a week or once a month and plugging in important dates and reminders into your social media planning, you can use your day-to-day time to reply to followers, engage in groups and actually run the rest of your business!

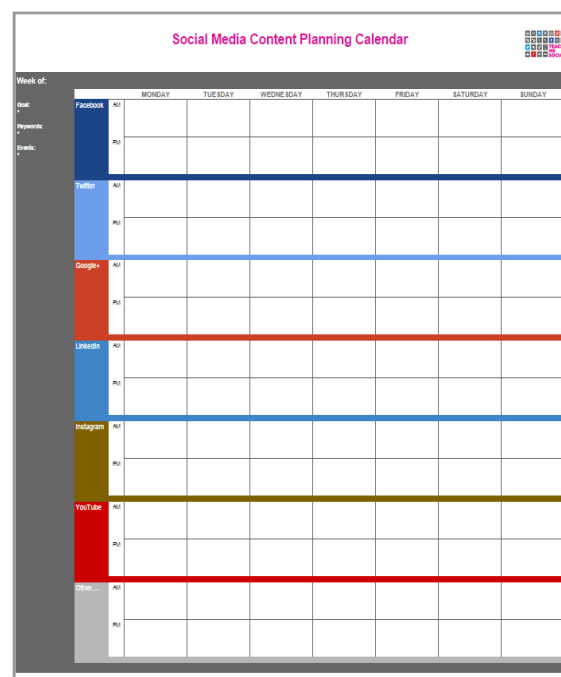
Here are a few different styles of Content Calendars that were created in a spreadsheet:

### Option A: Monthly Content Overview



This spreadsheet template, titled "Social Media Content Planning Calendar", provides a monthly overview. It features four identical weekly grids stacked vertically. Each grid has columns for the days of the week (Monday through Sunday) and rows for different social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Other. To the left of each weekly grid, there are labels for "Week of:", "Out:", "Keywords:", and "Events:", followed by a small grid of colored squares.

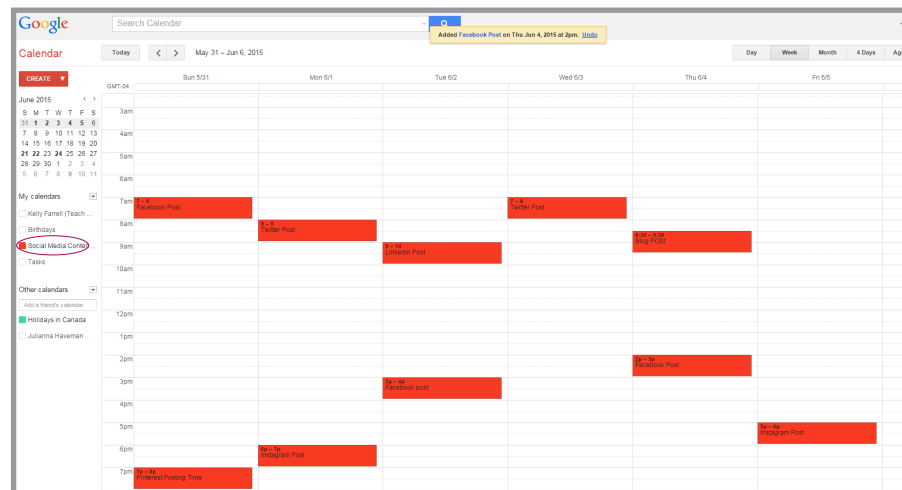
### Option B: Weekly Detailed Content



This spreadsheet template, also titled "Social Media Content Planning Calendar", provides a detailed weekly view. It features a single large grid with columns for the days of the week (Monday through Sunday) and rows for different social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, Instagram, YouTube, and Other. To the left of the grid, there are labels for "Week of:", "Out:", "Keywords:", and "Events:", followed by a small grid of colored squares.

### Option C: Google Calendar

\*Integrate with your calendar through Gmail, sync to your smartphone, colour code posts and calendar events, add text and links ahead of time, set reminders, etc.



This screenshot shows a Google Calendar interface. The calendar is set to May 31 - June 6, 2015. The left sidebar shows a list of calendars, including "My calendars" and "Other calendars". The main calendar area displays a grid of dates with various events scheduled. The events are color-coded: red for "Facebook Post", blue for "Twitter Post", green for "LinkedIn Post", and yellow for "Instagram Post". The events are scheduled for various times throughout the week, including 7am, 8am, 9am, 10am, 11am, 12pm, 1pm, 2pm, 3pm, 4pm, 5pm, 6pm, 7pm, and 8pm.

### Notes:

[illegible]

### Notes:

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