

WHY SOCIAL MEDIA



GenerationStrategies.com

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The Rationale Behind Social Media Use

It is staggering that in today's culture, where social media is the commodity, the trending form of currency, and the central place to gather, that more businesses, organizations, and influencers are not using social media in an emotional and effective way.

"But I AM on social media!" you say. However, I suggest that 3,000 likes on a facebook page - as someone who represents a quarter of a million people is not something to proudly announce. Or a business celebrating 200 likes that aims to reach thousands of customers is not something to consider an accomplishment. A statewide entity that claims to serve 9 million people but experiences lackluster engagement of a few thousand on your page - is failure.

It is one thing to be "on social media" but it's another thing to make it successful, fully and effectively servicing those you claim to want to reach.

Consider this:

- Have you ever determined what your quantitative and qualitative goals are for Social Media use?
- Have you considered what kind of culture you want for your social media? Does it meet that ambition now?
- Are you aware of your social media's potential, and the people you are not tapping into?
- Are you aware how your current followers perceive you, based on your social media?
- Are you aware of what an ideal social media culture looks like, for you and your company or cause?

The biggest question is - have you admitted to yourself yet that social media is not only here to stay but that if you long for maximized impact and dissemination of your message it is something you need to embrace, not procrastinate. In fact, if you do not insert your voice soon in an effective way, someone else will fill the space and your chance will be gone. It is an opportunity for influence that is drastically overlooked, especially by conservatives, Republicans, and people of faith.

Consider this:

- Did you know that anywhere from 0.5 to 15% of your current audience see your regular posts? (sources: .5% source and 3-15% source) Or in other terms, approximately 6% (one of the latest numbers I have heard) of your 3000 likes will see your content resulting in 180 people? That is a drop in the bucket to your potential.
- Did you know that consumers form an opinion of you and your industry based on your engagement on social media?
- Do you know that frequent, relevant, and authentic content creation or digital curation is needed to garner the desired results?
- Do you know how many hours or resources are required to make your social media thrive?

When the man walked on the moon, or Steve Jobs created an Apple product, or Thomas Edison created the lightbulb, it set a precedent, raised the bar, and caught the attention of the world. It gave

people something to aim towards. That standard for excellence and achievement is still available in the conservative, Republican, faith based arena to fill in the social media arena. A small few have risen to the surface but room remains at the table of strong voices of influence. Who that is - is still to be decided in the conservative/Republican/faith based culture. Are you that person?

Those that should be mastering the art of social media are those that have a story to tell. And for Republicans, conservatives, and people with a cause, we do have *a powerful, life saving, freedom giving, quality-of-life-increasing, you-have-the-ability-to-achieve-anything* story. But we have been very apathetic to understanding the social media arena, and becoming an expert *at the art and science of social media*, not to mention the ability of telling our story in a winsome way.

As conservatives, Republicans, and people of faith, our adaptation to treating social media like a market, industry, and culture has been only slightly faster than a turtle's crawl.

Following is a brief overview of social media, what you might be missing, and how you can achieve success in maximizing its influence for your message.

What is Social Media

Definition

Webster's dictionary defines *social media* as,

“forms of electronic communication (as Web sites for social networking and microblogging) through which users create online communities to share information, ideas, personal messages, and other content (as videos).”

In layman's terms, social media is a place for people to be social in a public way using electronics. It is used for connecting with people and getting a message out (whether it is for sales, votes, events etc).

Social Media is defined as a science and an art by this resource, *The Digiterati's resource “Social Media Marketing Fast Start”*, (bold text is mine)

“Social media is both an art and a science. It's a science because you need to test and learn how the different social media tools work. You also need to know the rules of play and learn how to use each platform to maximum effectiveness.

“But social media is also an art. Writing effective content is a highly creative skill. Those 140 characters of a tweet can cause a follower to click and engage or simply scroll on down.

Getting the tone right in your conversation is also important. Choosing the correct tone can win you business, choose the wrong tone and you're in a Twitterstorm.

“This is why social media responsibility should never be given solely to your intern/junior simply because they are a ‘digital native’. Just because they use platforms socially does not mean they can make the transition to social media strategist, content creator, headline writer and frontline spokesperson for your organisation.”

Types of Social Media

Social media “manifests” through different platforms that include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- YouTube
- GooglePlus
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn

The examples in this piece will primarily reference Facebook. It is the biggest social media market with over 1 billion users, and the primary tool of use. However the general principles within apply to other platforms. Check [this piece](#) out for other social media platform 2017 numbers.

Ever Changing

It is important to note that the realm of social media is continually changing both in the creation of new platforms, but also in how the established system works. What was successful yesterday may not be effective in a month. Social media is a very fluid and ever changing environment.

Understanding and implementing social media strategy is intimidating to some, yes (*why should I ever begin*, some may ask) but so is living life: nothing is stable and unchanging. It simply means you take a deep breath and agree to enjoy *the ride* knowing there will not be a final destination but that it is a wave that can get you to where you want to go. You must accept it is worth the risk and dig in, or accept the consequences of missing a vital culture.

Why You Need Social Media

It is Where People Gather

There are now over 1 Billion monthly active users on Facebook, and that is just one of the many platforms. Put simply - social media is where the people are.

In November 2016, *Small Biz Trends* said in this incredible numerical report,

“People are most likely to use social media in order to keep up with friends (43 percent) or news (41 percent), or to fill time (39 percent).”

They highlight that, of every three minutes consumers are online, one minute is devoted to social networking and messaging. Their daily average of engagement? Just under 2 hours a day that they are available for you to reach them. In the staggering numbers here, it is obvious that there is much competition for their attention.

A story from CNN notes impressive information from *Nielsen’s Total Audience Report* from the end of June 2016:

- Over 81% of American adults have smart phones, spending over an hour and a half each day on them
 - Americans spend over 10 hours a day consuming media (of all types).
- (Click here to download Nielsen’s report.)

Pew Research Center shares these poignant facts:

“Roughly eight-in-ten online Americans (79%) now use Facebook... Young adults continue to report using Facebook at high rates, but older adults are joining in increasing numbers. Some 62% of online adults ages 65 and older now use Facebook...” (source).

Small Biz Trends highlights that consumers have an average of 7 accounts on social media platforms. They also said,

“... [S]ocial media continues to be one of the top reasons people head online. In addition, a growing number of users now socialize, get news, or just play around on the go using social apps on their mobile devices.”

You need an active and strategic social media effort to be effective to meet the people where they are. If you have a message you want to convey, social media is the primary highway you need to use to get there.

Social media is the water cooler of our era, a community center gathering, an ongoing townhall discussion, or a friendly neighborhood park where people gather. It is the place where the conversation is happening, whether you participate or not. And if you do not participate (and especially - participate well), your competition wins the day. You have no one to blame but yourself.

- It’s where those you want to reach spend lots of time.
- It’s where people consume news, get enthralled with a story, share inspiration, watch videos, ask for peer insight, pontificate passionate views, network with others, and communicate.

- It's the "town halls" you long to speak to, the gatherings of hundreds and thousands you long for, and the public you want to engage.
- It's easy access to those you represent and aim to serve as businesses, churches, candidates, and elected leaders.

On social media, people are at your fingertips if you will just attempt to reach them in an effective way. The secret to experiencing success on social media has a formula and requires a strategy specific to your goals and market.

It is a relevant medium to sell your product, engage your voters, and create a cultural experience. Instead of begging them to come, this is an area where they are already "here", but simply waiting for you to engage.

It is Visual and Interactive

Utilizing social media is a perfect venue to communicate in the language that American citizens use: visual and interactive.

By meaningful, witty, inspirational, captivating, emotional, engaging content you can:

- Inspire your followers towards something greater
- Educate them on your ideals, philosophies
- Generate action through Calls to Action
- Provide transparency and original source (you) reporting on issues that could be skewed by the media
- Inform them of important community notices
- Tap into them as a resource of knowledge

Using pictures, videos, and short statements you can capture their attention, and motivate them.

Customer Service

If you have any inkling of providing good customer service, the frequent and professional use of social media is a must.

Those you aim to serve are people. Humans promise to deliver passion, highs and lows, good and bad. But they are the required commodity to get you to where you want to go.

- Apple could not have become a thriving success without millions of people
- Donald J. Trump could not have won the White House with millions of people
- The local city council cannot get elected without people
- Organizations cannot survive without the the generosity of people

In the majority of life's situations, you need people. And if you can have happy and satisfied people all the better. To have disgruntled customers is a lethal weapon.

In the context of social media, [this fantastic article](#) describes it this way (bold text is mine):

“Treating customers badly hurts your business not once, but twice. First, you anger your user, and then, you drive them into the waiting, willing arms of your biggest rivals. Almost 90 percent of consumers will start doing business with a competitor after a poor customer support experience, according to an Oracle report.

*“Bad customer service could happen easier than you think. When it comes to customer support, your users expect you to be fast on both email and social media. A Twitter study found that over 70 percent of Twitter users expect brands to reply to their questions on the app within one hour. A similar study about email found the same thing. **In an era of smartphones and always-on communication, people see no reason for a delay in company’s responses to them.**”*

If you are a candidate with high ambitions, a non-profit that will be vying for year end donors in a few months, a business that wants to reach a limited audience - to not service your social media audience with cream of the crop service, you are pushing them away into someone else’s “arms.”

- Do you thank them when they comment on your post?
- Do you answer their questions?
- Do you acknowledge their complaints?
- Do you point them to helpful resources?
- Do you thank individuals for their support, or kind sentiments?
- Do you let them know there are people behind your business that genuinely care about them?

Would you do these things if they were standing in front of you with similar situations? Okay, then why would you not do it via your computer?

To dismiss this arena as not-necessary is to mock the needs, and desires, and expectations of the consumer. A satisfied customer will tell a friend. This article notes that “91% of dissatisfied customers will not willingly do business with you again (Lee Resources).” Imagine what a dissatisfied voter will do for your big election, or a disgruntled donor to your year end campaign, or a frustrated community member to your program?

Customer (donors, voters, business supporters) satisfaction is and will increasingly become an important factor of your success or demise. This article also mentions that “*By 2020, customer experience will overtake price and product as the key brand differentiator.* (Source: Walker)” This means that among all the things people can be distracted by, pleased by, bought by, persuaded by - the customer experience (and I would argue influenced by the human interaction from you and your brand to them) will either sell them on you - or push them away.

Translation into social media terms: to be non-relatable, non-reachable, or unengaged sends a message to them. To only post to social media once a week, or once a day and dismiss engagement of customers, disregarding their inquiries, is simply not acceptable.

For many of you, your buyer (voter, donor) will be convinced, or encouraged, to continue to engage with you or give you the time of day not just because they like your product but because they enjoy the experience. They want you.

Tell Your Story

Life is a story. In fact, everything in life is a contribution to a story. What is your story as an individual or as individuals part of something bigger? What is the story of your business or ministry? How is it being told?

I suggest that the biggest concern you should consider is: **who is telling** your story?

- If you are not telling your story, someone else is
- If you are not telling your story, your consumers will run with what they can find
- Your silence or limited message is a message. And it's not positive for you, unless you are framing it how you want it conveyed - the accurate way.
- As a public leader you have hundreds of consumers that can easily frame a story how they depict best. In fact your competition can take it and run with it. But you are the original source. What you say matters. If you say nothing, that matters even more.

What is Not Said Matters

Based on your goals, you have to decide what *story you want to tell*. Do not be frustrated at customers or voters if they do not have the facts straight, or they mis-represent you. If you do not actively engage in telling, and framing your narrative *on this vital public platform in a winsome and captivating way*, do not be frustrated when others paint you in a light you do not recognize or appreciate.

Example: If you were a guest speaker at my event, would you be irritated to get up and speak if I read the wrong bio to introduce you?

If I described you as Sam Smith, a man who lived on the street corner because his mom kicked him out of the house, because he was broke, and no one liked him - when really you were Sam Smith, a man who lived on the street corner as a millionaire because he wanted to know the story of the disenfranchised so he could figure out how to best serve that community to help them find the American dream - would that matter to you? Both narratives involve Sam Smith and that he lived on a street corner but based on what and how it was detailed totally changed the narrative, and perception and understanding of the consumer.

How - and if - the story is told shapes your future. Yet, telling the story when no one is seeing it - because it is not being delivered in the right format or location - can matter just as much.

If you do not tell your story, someone else will use what information they can find to build a story that will contribute to their perception and understanding of you *that they want others to know*. However, do not be frustrated if they get it wrong while you are busying yourself with other "important things".

Perception is a Key Ingredient

Consumers' (voters, donors, etc) reality is based on perception. As humans, we frame our opinions, and even take action, based on what we understand to be true. If you want to be understood, you must ask - what are those you want to reach reading about you?

- Do they perceive you are telling the truth?
- Do they perceive you can be trusted?
- Do they perceive you understand the topic?
- Do they perceive you to be credible?
- Do they perceive there to be hope?

Everything about life contributes to that perception.

If you are not controlling, or contributing by choice to, how you are being perceived then the narrative that those you aim to reach are “reading” and perpetuating is damaging to you, your ministry, business or brand.

Like it or lump it - it's truth.

They Want Your Human Interaction

It is time that the Baby Boomers in the marketplace transition their way of thought on social media. No longer is it just a wall to throw content on but it is a community. A culture. A universe of people that are alive, well, and presently engaged - and *waiting to be tapped into*.

The Digiterati's Social Media Marketing Fast Start explains it this way (bold text is mine),

*“Remember too that **social media is a conversational medium**, not just a broadcast medium. Conversations are two-way, so you need to have resources in place to respond to the comments you will receive **in a timely fashion**. On some platforms, chiming in with a supplementary comment or question will **continue the conversation, make your brand ‘more human’ and increase your reach**.*”

“You will also find customers having conversations about your brand with other customers on your social brand pages and elsewhere. You have to consider how can you monitor this and engage with it. How can you encourage positive word of mouth behaviour?”

Example: I invite you to coffee. I shared facts with you about my life, “*I said something great in the media,*” or “*Here is a link to our organization’s vision for the next season*” or “*Here is a link to a random article on CNN.*” Yet, I did not ask questions of you, nor respond when you commented, or acknowledge your interaction with me. How would you respond? You would most likely feel as though I did not care about you, you were not significant enough for me to hear your thoughts, you would feel used, ignored, and probably quite ticked. “Who am I - this is a WASTE of my time!”

Now transfer that to social media (yes, I’m serious. It’s not crazy to think like this). Your social media platform needs to be seen as a “relationship”. If you continually post content on things that matter to you, but you do not engage with the audience, they will know you do not care about them.

Humans long for human interaction, even the introverts of this society in small measures. With the breakdowns of families, the craziness of this world, the hectic schedules - why do you think social media has become such a big tool for connection?

If consumers do not sense, feel, or see *your human interaction of consistency, transparency, and authenticity and engagement*, they will gravitate away from you. You want followers who are passionate about you and your cause because their eager support will draw others. In a recent survey on my own facebook page for why people use social media, several of the responses were “to connect with old friends.” Social media is an emotional tool for human engagement.

Yes, I know. All of this takes time. If you do not have time, you need to hire someone to do it for you.

It is the Future

If you plan on retiring, and closing your business tomorrow you can ignore this piece.

But if you plan on staying engaged either as an organization, a candidate, a lawmaker, etc, ask yourself this question: Where do I want my social media to be in 5 years? You need an answer. And to get there you need to start. How will you complete the marathon if you do not start training now?

Never can people interaction, one on one, be replaced by technology. That should always be our aim, and the top standard.

The more things improve and advance in technology, the more your customers are going to demand or look for your presence. Imagine if you were not yet using the telephone, my guess is you wouldn't have much business. Drastic example? Maybe not. If you do not get your arms around this part of your industry now, you will pay later.

How Social Media Works

The Mechanics

Let's just talk Facebook.

Facebook is run with what you call an algorithm. And the algorithm is always changing.

Currently Facebook has re-prioritized their system to focus on engagement and networking. They want users to engage with one another. They want to help connect peers to peers vs serving consumers with lots of business information.

Marketers identify this arena of the Facebook newsfeed as real estate: it gives them access to potential buyers. Facebook is less concerned about the advertisers and more concerned with engaging the everyday consumer. They are also interested in serving consumers with what *they* are interested in. So a page that posts that never gets engagement by a consumer will soon lose its spot on the consumer's feed.

Just because you have 100 people that like your page, does not mean that 100 people see your information. Remember, Facebook has limited real estate. If you want your consumers to see your content, you have to get them to engage. The more a consumer engages with your content the higher it moves on their Facebook feed. And the less your audience engages with you the more your posts will disappear from their feed.

Facebook is monitoring the response to your content. As they see your audience's lack of engagement, they recognize that your information really is not of great interest to your consumers. The more content you post that no one engages with the farther down your content moves on their totem pole of priorities for content for their Facebook feed.

This is why you need to get your audience to engage with you. Those who engage via a like or a comment are likely to see the next round of content.

Consider this: Let's say you have a facebook page for a Pet Store. You put two posts a week on your page: a new picture of a kitty every week, and a picture of your latest blogpost on your website. But the people who like your page that you are hoping to reach really are not interested in pet cats. So they don't like your post but instead skip over it. They might be interested in your blogpost, but the more your audience "does not engage with you", the less visible your content is to them. Soon enough your posts won't even be showing up to them.

Now let's consider the opposite scenario: Let's assume you start sharing more like 20-30 posts a week on your pet store facebook page. You discover your audience does not like cats, but you share content on puppies, and homemade food recipes for your pets, live videos of you from your store, interviews with people who love their pet, engaging questions like "what is your favorite pet name", I am confident you might find people more active.

The more they engage with you and your content, your posts move closer to the top of their newsfeed. Instead of your page disappearing into oblivion like it was doing with the two posts a week, you become part of the consumer's enjoyable social media culture. And they become a consistent part of your culture.

The above strategy combined with running facebook ads, and you constantly responding and engaging with them, will soon get your posts - and audience numbers - to greatly increase in popularity. When you try to sell them a product (for example), they will be more likely to respond and give you business, support, or votes.

When you post content you must also watch the response, and glean from what your content tells you. You and your team must take into consideration what influenced the success or lack of success: was it the time of day you posted it? Was it the leader you promoted? Did the post have too much text?

Generating effective and successful social media is indeed a dance, a process, and a journey.

Social Media is Free - Right?

Well, kind of. Breathing air is free - but if you want to do something with your life, and make an impact you have to move, and be engaged. It's the same way with social media.

To simply sign up for an account is free.

But to have it perform and produce results takes time to create content, engage with the audience, communicate with inquiries, monitor conversations, set up ads - just to name a few.

Time is Money

Social Media with its content creation, data analytics and culture study, establishing effective strategy, implementation of that strategy, and management of the whole project takes time. These categories are just a few.

It all takes lots of time if you want to do it well, to accomplish your mission and goal.

"If you're going to leverage social media to drive business results, you have to understand that success takes commitment, consistency and adaptation." (Source)

To create content that is specifically geared toward your audience - *takes time*.

To curate content through collaboration, and community give and take - takes time

To engage with your audience - takes time.

To set up, run, and monitor ads - takes time.

To study the data - takes time.

To continue to tweak and implement a strategy - takes time.

To know your culture - takes time.

To put it another way, if you are a company, a business, a lawmaker, a candidate, an organization - *you need to have at least one staff dedicated to social media. Full time.* The larger entity you are, the bigger goals you have, the bigger team you need.

We are beyond the days, if you want to be relevant, where staff can do social media “on the side.” It needs to be a priority of your operation and if it is not, the public will know.

If you have a facebook page that has 10 likes to it, that is something the President of your organization, or you as the candidate or elected leader, can handle. But my guess is you are hoping for a few more in your audience.

If you want to achieve success in the real world using social media, you need to do what it takes to get there.

Tools and Team

Social media, and using it effectively, is hard. Building a car is hard. Baking a blue ribbon pie is hard. Running a successful organization is hard. Anything worthwhile, and successful, is hard.

But when something is needed, that you are not skilled to do or have the time to do, you hire it out. You dedicate a budget and identify people you will trust to do your needed task.

Make room for people on your team who enjoy doing that which needs to be done, and who are skilled to do it well. Please refer back to the beginning of this piece when this concept was explained on page 4: if you want to do social media well, you cannot rely on interns and individuals who simply have access to platforms. It is time to lean on the professionals. Social media is not just a hobby but instead an art, science, and profession.

After you hire a team, they may need tools. Here are some possibilities:

- Social media monitoring program (Sprout Social, Hootsuite, etc)
- Programs (i.e. for data analysis program)
- Image editor for memes (Canva, Photoshop)
- Images that are legal to use and edit
- Video Editor
- Computer/Techware (computer, camera, printer)
- Subscriptions
- Trainings (Online, or in person conferences)
- Effective website (GoDaddy, Wordpress etc)
- An email program (Mailchimp or Constant Contact)

The bigger the goal, the bigger the team that is needed.

Paid Advertising

Originally you could rely on social media, let's say Facebook, to be reliable to reach your audience organically.

But the real estate on FB is limited (believe it or not!) and wanted - so advertisers are paying lots of money for your spot. The more people engage with your content, the more your content will come up in their feed.

You can spend very little on social media advertising but it is recommended to be running “daily ads” on Facebook that will keep your “waters stirred.” Based on your goals you should plan to spend anywhere from \$10 - \$100 a day.

Facebook ads are a huge endeavor but something worthy of utilizing to better ensure greater success.

You Already Spend the Money

You are already spending money whether it's \$1.00 or \$1 million on outreach, communications, marketing, networking, and branding. So why do you hesitate to spend money on social media?

Consider this. As a candidate, elected leader, business owner etc, you most likely spend money on:

- Event tickets you buy to show your support
- Table sponsorships you purchase to make sure your name is seen at an event for an important cause
- Ads or sponsorships in programs with your face and name so that gathering knows who you are and that you support them
- Campaign/information literature that tells people about you, or a policy, or a project
- Events that you coordinate or host to inform people, or reach donors
- Marketing or branding budgets on reaching the community or telling the public who you are, or what you are all about
- Gas to drive to show support at an event
- Money for a meal for one on one meetings to get to know someone, or let them know you
- Staff time allocated to all of the above

Whether you are a business that wants to make your presence known, or an elected official that wants to get your name out at an event, or an organization that is trying to promote a cause, why not put money where people are gathering, and where they want to be? Yes, on social media.

Stark truth hurts but you need to hear this about your consumers you are eager to reach. It is highly possible that:

- They won't remember the event
- They won't remember who sponsored their table, or that your face is in their event program
- They will throw your mailpiece away
- They won't remember what you talked about at an event

But assuming you do social media right, they can engage with you on a daily basis. You can become the “go to place” for information and resources. So why not put resources behind where people are?!

What Success Looks Like

I would propose that just to have social media *accounts* set up are not synonymous with having a *successful social media presence*. Reminder that the primary social media platform referred to in this piece will be Facebook. However, the points and content within this paper can cross over into other platforms.

Success is defined by having an engaged audience and active audience. For example, let's say you have 3000 likes on your Facebook page. If you are posting sporadically, and when you do post you obtain half a dozen likes, and reach only a few people - that is not an active page. It is a page that is barely breathing.

If you have 3000 likes, and your posts are consistent, and appealing to your audience and you receive a few hundred likes with a hundred shares to your posts, you are doing much better.

If you have had your page for awhile, and have not been feeding it, tending to it, or responding to it properly you in essence have a page that is dormant. It needs to be stirred to get the consumers and algorithm to wake up and be reminded that you "are here".

You should be posting anywhere from 2 - 4 times a day:

- Content that is geared toward your audience
- Raw, genuine, authentic content
- Videos
- Images
- Questions for their engagement

And you should be seeing responses from your community.

If none of this is happening - you are not on social media with a plan for success. You in essence have a sign out front that says "Away on Vacation. I don't know when I'll return."

Reaching Your Key Audience

Study your analytics and determine, if you are not reaching the ideal people you want to reach, then you need to slightly adjust your strategy.

If you need to reach financially successful households of 40 years and older, the fact that your insights are only getting you in front of 18 - 24 year olds suggests that your efforts need some tweaking.

You will only know if you are reaching the intended audience as you study your analytics provided in your insight mechanism of the platform.

Engaged and Active Audience

You need to be posting to get your audience engaged, when they are active. According to this article, they note that:

- The highest activity on Facebook is midweek between 1 - 3 PM (so it could be best you not post late at night)
- Thursday and Friday are days with more activity
- Much of the engagement is through mobile devices
- 510 comments, and thousands of statuses and photos are posted every 60 seconds ([source](#))

You need to be posting information on your page when your audience is online, or right before they are to get online, so you can be one of the top posts they see. There is nothing worse than having a powerful message to share to a banquet hall of a thousand people, only to show up 6 hours late after everyone has gone home.

Know who your audience is and meet them where they are - when they are there. And always take advantage of scheduling posts ahead of time.

Examples: Successful Profiles

Here are some examples of what Social Media should look like (either click on the hyperlink, or look them up by typing the name into Facebook)

- [Sandi Krakowski](#)
 - Over 1.3 million likes
 - Frequent posts throughout the day
 - Inspirational memes
 - Speaks directly to the audience, and interacts with them; audience interacts with one another
 - Authentic, real, personal, warm
- [Joel Osteen](#)
 - Over 14.9 million likes
 - Frequent engagement with visitors
 - Positive, encouraging
 - Periodic promotion of a product
- [Amazon](#)
 - Over 27.1 million likes
 - Frequent and friendly responses from the team of inquiry
 - Different content - videos, bios, products, fun images
- [L.L. Bean](#)
 - Over 738K likes
 - Visually stunning
 - Informative
 - Resourceful
 - Customers are engaged
- [National Hockey League](#)
 - 4.2 million likes
 - Lots of posts
 - Ton of engagement

Find some more tips from [this resource](#). They explain why these 15 pages are great.

Successful pages do not need to have massive amount of followers, but you should have a highly engaged rate.

Here is a recipe for success:

Strategy + Time + Resources + Fresh Content + Consistency + Visitor Engagement = thriving and active, fruitful facebook page.

What You Are Missing

What We Think of You

Consider a real life example of the *power of perception, and importance of your presence on social media*.

I'm a Millennial, born in the early 80's. I remember, and value, the handwritten letter, when news was consumed primarily via nightly televised reports, and where newspapers were a daily delivery. But I also value technology and social media, and the importance of the human touch through customer service and online. Nothing can replace human connectivity - even connection via a simple discussion on social media platform.

I have come to appreciate that behind every Facebook like, and every comment is a person. A post I might share on Facebook about some poignant issue may get 100 comments. These are 100 people with different stories, with different perspectives and experiences that frame why they feel or think how they do. I may agree with only 70% of them but even the 30% have value and significance, who are worthy of my respect.

If I go looking for information on a candidate, or business on facebook, or a social media platform and I discover:

- Their page is not existent
- Their account is hard to find
- Content is not posted consistently
- Content is boring, heavy on the text content and limited engaging images, or no video
- Comments are not acknowledged or responded to
- Images are unprofessional
- Text has mis-spellings
- Page is not current
- You cannot figure out how to reach the page owner through the page

My social media peers (older and younger) and I might think:

- This is an automated system, not something with a real live person behind the scenes
- It is unprofessional
- The leaders don't know how to use social media
- They do not care to use social media
- They do not have a story to tell
- They do not care if their story is told accurately
- They have no idea - and no concern or care about my generation (older and younger; the age of those who are using facebook has increased to over 60 years)
- They do not check in with their page often enough to know their images are cropped inappropriately, or that their comments go unresponded to
- The page owner is outdated, not up to speed on what the 21st century is all about, and focused more on the old school way of doing things
- They really have no desire to provide a cutting edge approach

We will conclude:

- To the page owner, social media is a waste of time.
- I am a waste of time
- They don't really want to reach me
- They want me to reach them

And like that ... we are gone. Do not look to or expect *or hope* to engage with us in another format or platform. If you will not reach us where we live, you have already told us about you and we are simply not important therefore you are not important to us. Harsh? Truth is uncomfortable sometimes.

Who You Are Not Reaching

Now for the really painful topic. Or, if you look at it the right way - the topic full of potential!

Ever think about the people you are not reaching and engaging? Here is a picture of some of the people who use social media - that you have the potential to reach.

- Ambitious, career, young adults who are in transit to employment and have time to read your updates on the train or waiting in line for the coffee
- Moms who need a break from the craziness of home
- Dads who are waiting on kids to get out of ballet practice, or who are distracting themselves in between sports games
- Conservatives who are attempting to use the platforms to stay engaged and educate their peers on important items
- Business owners who are looking to network and connect
- Young adults who are just spending time online and a sieve, waiting for engagement
- Rural voters ([source](#))
- Men - not just women
- And Influencers

Social Media Users are - on average:

- Higher income people ([source](#))
- More educated individuals ([source](#))

When you are not using social media effectively, you are not just missing "Teenagers" or "people who waste their time on social media when they could be doing something else," you are missing world changers.

According to Pew, social media users impact things:

"Pew Research reports have documented in great detail how the rise of social media has affected such things as work, politics and political deliberation, communications patterns around the globe, as well as the way people get and share information about health, civic life, news consumption, communities, teenage life, parenting, dating and even people's level of stress." (Source)

What is Your Vision for Your Social Media?

Businesses, political parties, candidates, churches, organizations, and public figure leaders need to get past the fact that they “should” be doing social media. I suggest it is, instead, time to dream.

Ask Yourself These Questions

Have you ever considered what you could get done if you could move 1,000 miles per hour? Or if you could take a high speed train back and forth to your family’s house 500 miles away? What could that do for your productivity! Your family relationships!

So, have you considered what you could create and accomplish through social media? Do you recognize the value and depth of meaning behind the interaction and engagement of contributors on your page?

Have you considered these opportunities for engagement you have here and now *won't happen elsewhere*?

- The busy mom of three that has 5 minutes of break while her kids are napping, won't have time to come to your town hall but you can reach her here and now.
- The career woman can't spare another evening away from her family but she'll give you her attention while she's waiting for the kids to get out of school.
- The college student who hangs out on social media constantly isn't into getting dressed up for your gathering but is glad to point you to the info you are looking for via facebook messenger.
- The businessman who is waiting for the oil to get changed on his car doesn't have the extra money to spend on your fundraiser. He has a dozen employees to take care of but he has 5 minutes to listen to your video.
- The senior citizen doesn't have a way to come to the event to learn about your issue but she does have lots of time to spend online and would love to learn, donate, and help.

Many of the people you want to reach will never open your letter, or come to your rally but they are willing to be engaged on social media. However, if you aren't saying anything to them, it's just another lost opportunity.

Have you ever asked yourself these questions:

- What is my goal with social media?
- Why do I want to use it?
- What do I want to accomplish?
- What kind of culture do I want to foster? (A place for complaints to be collected? Probably not. What about a place to share a vision, and give citizens a place to access you for question and a conversation? Or a place for citizens to share tips, etc.)
- How would you like to speak into consumer's lives?

It needs to be viewed with a broader vision. I suggest the following:

Social Media is People not a Task

When you engage with social media platform you are engaging with people.

- They have a purpose; they have a story .
- They want to engage with you and and they are willing to learn from you and hear your explanation.
- They want to have access to you.
- They are broken. They are full of hope. They have solutions that need to be heard. They are hungry for answers.
- Numbers are money. The more people you reach and engage the farther your message can disseminate because when they are impressed, they will share it and pass it on.
- They have untapped potential.
- They are a reservoir of resources.
- They are in need of your leadership.
- They are hungry for inspiration.
- They are connected to other people
- Every person represents a family, a household, a neighborhood, a community.

You have the potential of tapping into these people - if you will go for the gold.

Social media is a community, and a culture. An ideal and effective social media market builds a culture and community. Yes, online. Yes, even if you cannot see the people face to face. Again, it is where people are hanging out.

Webster Dictionary defines community in different ways, including:

- a unified body of individuals ...
- an interacting population of various kinds of individuals (as species) in a common location...
- a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society ...
- a group linked by a common policy...
- a body of persons of common and especially professional interests scattered through a larger society

To give you a picture of what I mean, take a [meander through this article](#). It highlights incredible brands that have been very successful, and have figured out how to utilize their social media to grow relationships and make a fun and engaging culture for their consumers to participate in.

Whether you are considering enhancing your SnapChat, LinkedIn, or Instagram accounts, the ideas in the above article should get your creative wheels spinning.

Tell Your Story - Firsthand

How many times have we heard news reports of something in Congress, or about a public figure but then if you hear it from the original source, it isn't anywhere close to what really happened.

Why rely on media, or a second or third source to tell your story? Instead, why not:

- Do a live video to explain to the customers why the latest product had a mistake
- Explain directly to voters why you made a public policy move
- Explain why you did not go to this event
- Explain why this issue is important to your church, or an issue you are not going to get engaged with.

Context, and original source reporting are two vital things to receiving the closest version of the truth.

You have the ability to serve your customers with the truth that they deserve, and to deliver the truth from your side that you deserve to have told.

Why would you not utilize a system that allows you to accomplish both?

Opportunity to Impact Lives

Your Social Media page is more than a store, or a place for your stump speech. Your social media page has to be more than just “sales pitches,” if you want social media to work for you.

Social media is *more than all about you*.

For every sales pitch (*here is a link to my new book, will you donate? Or please will you attend our big event?*) you need to have 3-6 posts of enjoyable content. A good social media culture will have limited promo pieces (sales pieces) when compared to the amount of inspirational, informative, and enlightening material shared on your page.

Seem outrageous? Really? Do you like having a friend always ask you to do something for them whenever you show up to visit? Neither do your consumers like being asked to buy your book every time they visit your facebook page. They also feel used when you only service your page around election season, or when you say “hi” only when it’s time for a donation. You have to make it more than a “store feel”, if you want it to succeed.

Your strategy and tactics of information delivery drastically influence the success you will have on your page.

Social media is an opportunity to bring solutions, encouragement, and information to millions of people. It is an opportunity to *personally* touch people, to build relationship with people, and to foster a discussion.

How can you reach all 162,000 people in your county? You cannot do it by newspaper - not everyone uses newspaper. You cannot do it by mail, by robo calls, lit drops or even one on one coffee time. But you can reach people through social media.

Implement Social Media Success

Determine Your Goals

You must determine what does success look like when it comes to your social media platform.

Ask yourself these questions:

- What type of culture do you want?
- How many people do you want to reach? (i.e. If you have 162,000 people in your county in a perfect world all of them would like your page. Would you consider success being 50% of that number engaged with you? How close are you to having 80K likes so far?)
- What goals do you want to accomplish?
- What do you want to get your audience to do? How do you want them to respond?
- What is the message you want to convey?
- What tasks do you want your audience to perform?

Before you go too far in social media you must determine what is your quantitative and qualitative goal:

- Do you want to get a consumer's vote in 2 years?
- Are you hoping they will volunteer in 6 months?
- Are you asking for them to attend a training?
- Are you aiming to stir a spirit of patriotism?
- Are you hoping to recruit a massive new base of donors?
- Or are you hoping to sell your book and have fans who will promote it in 3 months?

Be Strategic and Intentional

Stop throwing any and every topic, or link on your facebook page. Social media, to be effective, needs to be engaged with appropriate strategy. *An effective voice will accurately tell your story, in consistency with your brand and image, all the while moving you closer to your mission and goal.*

If all that your consumers find on your facebook page is one news story a week, or an infographic packed with facts but no emotion, or a random holiday video thrown up there for the sake of the holiday, this gives them no reason to "come back" and engage.

What is your voice saying? And more importantly, is it conveying what you want conveyed?

If you want to give a message of hope, then why when people come to your page do they feel bored, disinterested and convinced to never return? And believe me they will figure out that in about 20 seconds. You have to grab them quick.

The message that counts is not the one that you send, but the one that is received. Whether this is fair or not, and even though it bypasses your logic, and rationale - accept it. If the consumers are not receiving inspiration, are not invited to engage in the conversation, do not see that you care or your message is a worthwhile cause to engage with, they will hide you from their feed, they will tune you out, and they will walk away. (Good luck getting us back.)

Are you supplying them a voice that says:

- I know I need to have social media - so here is my contribution
- I really don't care about you on social media, but I'm just doing it because I have to
- Social media doesn't matter but here is my token post

Or, are you by chance conveying the positive side:

- I care about you! Here is what I am doing on your behalf!
- I value your opinion - can you weigh in on this?
- I am feeling hopeful today and I just want to inspire you!

Notice the difference in tones?

If you want to generate a certain response from your audience you have to give them content that inspires them, and that piques their interest to engage with it, which results in them possibly coming back for more. And passing it onto others.

Know your audience

Through the tool of social media, you can discover lots of data through the insights, and metrics behind the scenes. And I mean lots.

- What type of material are they interested in?
- When do they get online?
- What are their demographics?
- What are their psychographics?
- Who are they? Are they married? Are they parents? What level of education do they have?

With this information you can more strategically target your audience both in messaging, and calls to action. If your social media audience is primarily made up of those over 50 years old but you would like to let those 30 and younger know about your product, you need to make some changes. However you can reach them and engage them - with the right strategy and planning, the right content, engagement, time, and implementation.

Be consistent, and frequent

Relationships benefit from consistency. Your mom would not take it very well if you only talked to her once a year. Or your spouse wouldn't understand if you only checked in when you felt like it. Your children won't benefit from a parent who is erratic and inconsistent in behavior. Inconsistency does not build confidence, provide feelings of security, or allow for moving a relationship forward in a positive manner.

Guess what. There are similarities with social media as well.

It takes time. Plan Accordingly.

Let's say you have an election in 2 years. To maximize social media, you cannot expect it to do well for you if you start pushing content 3 weeks out.

The farther out you are the more time you have to cultivate.

Consider a farm: no matter how much you want it, you are not going to have a well producing crop if you do not strategize, orchestrate, plan and implement with sufficient time, resources, and attention.

Minus the seeds, fertile ground, and the need of sunshine, and rain, it's exactly the same thing with social media.

Engage Directly with Your Audience

By effective social media use, you can go directly to those you represent and serve, and give them an avenue to come directly to you.

No need to give them your cell phone number or personal email but let them know you care about them - from your social media page! And let them ask you questions while delivering a quick answer in return. And always let your staff help carry the ball. Even by them responding on your behalf provides a powerful connection to your audience.

As in any relationship, engagement matters. Here are some suggestions:

- Like their comments
- Answer their questions
- Thank them for “sharing” your post
- Connect them with resources
- Promote resources from your peers (by promoting others, they will sometimes promote you and you can continue to grow your audience)
- Make sure they know that you hear them and you care.

Provide Efficient Communication

Gone are the days that you had to rely on the snail mail to deliver you an answer. We have Google, email, text messaging - and social media.

Nothing will - or should - take the place of one on one, eye to eye communication. That is the highest value. But if you aim to serve more people than a dozen, it seems wise to utilize the easiest, and most efficient mode of communication.

A valuable relationship is generated from “conversation”, not just you distributing information. A Sheriff's Office benefits from disseminating information to the community, but also getting tips, and feedback in return. By leaning heavily on an easy mode of communication, they can free up important “phone” space, work around limited staff available, to quickly get and receive information.

If it is a valuable tool, why not maximize its potential?

Make the Rules

Sometimes leaders may shy away from engaging with social media out of the sense it is a trap both in time, and with disgruntled citizens, a sort of quagmire where you cannot win. This is fair rationale.

However, consider this: You establish a policy. In the same way there are unspoken rules of decency in restaurants or stores, there is nothing wrong with having policies of respect on your social media page. And it is extremely appropriate that you define them.

You control the content: do you delete inappropriate comments? Block disrespectful users? Or just walk away? You do not have to respond to everyone. By giving a “hat-tip” (a like, a thanks for sharing, etc) so they know you hear them and that you are alive is human decency.

People can be distracting and discouraging. But they can also be encouraging, an incredible resource, and a gift to you, your region and your cause. But if you are not interacting with them, how do you know?

Your page monitor controls the dialogue. Everything is how you frame it. Someone can complain to you about how you handled a crisis. But the response is on you and your team. You can respond in a couple different ways:

- With a smart alec, and disrespectful response: *“Moron! You do not know all the facts so shut up!”* or
- With class and as a statesman: *“Thank you for engaging here. And we are grateful for your show of support with this issue. It has been a mess and we are working to clean it up in a transparent way. Click here for more details on the situation.”*

You can also set the policies up front:

“This is a place to share ideas, and engage. Please note that there is no room for disrespectful and distasteful language. We will offer gentle warning if a situation arises. But two strikes, and we will have to remove you from the page. We are eager to serve you and hope it does not result in this!”

Conclusion

Social media is such an incredible opportunity and the more I learn, an untapped reservoir of potential. I want to see you succeed. And to not have your social media operating at its prime is a wasted opportunity.

Imagine that I invite you to speak to the graduating class of 2020. But instead of putting you on stage, I put you in the small room off the stage. The door is open and you are invited to yell real loud. The 20 people in the first row can hear you fine. But everyone else just assumes the speaker didn't show up.

If you had stepped out of the small room, onto the stage, spoke into the microphone, and looked into the lense of the tv camera, you would have reached millions. But you were satisfied with only speaking to those 20.

By using social media in a small and ineffective way, or not using it at all, you are in essence speaking to and influencing the stage hands, and a few people sitting in the front row.

If you are satisfied with that, toss this piece and disregard these concepts.

But if you know you were created for more, if your product is so good that it could change others' lives, if your policies and leadership can help shift the direction of a state, if the message you have can set people free, you have a duty, and a civic, ethical, and moral responsibility to do well with what you have been given.

You are invited to come onto the world stage. Are you ready? I am confident that what you have to share will change the world. But you have to pay the price to get there.

Be brave, bold, and take the leap to ante-up your social media. There is a world out there that needs to hear your story, buy your product, support your candidacy, or give to your organization. They are waiting. The question isn't will they listen or respond but will you come to where they are already hanging out. The future is in your hands.

Let your adventures of extreme social media success - begin!