

DOs & DON'Ts of Social Media

Top 10 DOs:

1. **Be social.** It's great to watch and listen, but it's even greater to engage, communicate and participate in conversations. Leverage the power of your social media channels. Share your message on multiple channels and in different ways. For example, Facebook is fabulous for pictures, links, and videos. Twitter is a good place to start a conversation, so ask questions, and share interesting tidbits. Pinterest is visual, so share your best pictures there. LinkedIn is for business networking and sharing professional articles.
2. **Support others.** Social media is a great place to let people know you like what they have to say. When sharing someone else's content, make sure that you acknowledge them. It's ok to tweet or post your own links sometimes, but it's also a good idea to ask questions, comment, and share others' videos and articles. That's how you offer variety and stay interesting.
3. **Go where your community is.** You don't have to use every social media channel if you don't have the time to devote to it, or your community isn't there. If you're having success on Facebook, that's where you need to be.
4. **Answer to controversy.** Social media isn't just for pats on the back. If you have negative comments, acknowledge them, then offer to solve the problem online. Ignoring or deleting negative feedback both defeats the two-way communication of social media.
5. **Plan.** Social media requires the same kind of planning as any other marketing tool. Decide where you want to go, how you want to get there, and when you want that to be. Identify metrics, goals, and responsibilities. Create a strategy and a content calendar.
6. **Brand.** Develop clear messages that your community will identify with you. Ensure that you are consistent, even if you don't want to be predictable.
7. **Deliver your message.** Variety is the spice of life. Feel free to share your message in multiple places, just change it up to suit the channel.
8. **Give credit.** Lots of people share fantastic content across the Internet. If you're going to borrow an idea, photo, or whatever, give credit where credit is due. Not only will that create goodwill, it will prevent any discrepancies when it comes to intellectual property.
9. **Proofread.** There's nothing worse than a business or other professional organization publishing work that contains spelling mistakes or other typos. If someone points out an error, fix it, and say thank you.
10. **Connect the organization.** Make sure all areas of your organization are on board with your social media efforts. See if anyone else wants to join in the fun. Offer to share their news and content, an endeavor, which can only increase company-wide buy-in.

Top 8 DONTs:

1. **Ignore Controversy.** There's more than one way to get a conversation going, and one of those is to introduce controversy to the equation. According to a Pew Internet survey, social media participants have identified debating as one of their top 3 reasons for using these platforms.
2. **Be selfish.** Social media is meant to be a dialogue, not a broadcast. Many brands only share their own content or only offer links back to their own content. This platform demands engagement, dialogue and the kindness of sharing.
3. **Ignore your audience.** Not engaging or answering tweets, Facebook comments or other feedback makes people wonder why you're there. Sixty percent of consumers are looking for, and expecting a brand to respond to and engage with them. However, the vast majority (97%) of brands use these channels to broadcast! You have the opportunity to be the exception.
4. **Shy away from, ignore, or delete negative feedback.** Social media users are looking for connections that are genuine, transparent and authentic. Whether you want to hear their comments or not, they will discuss how they feel about your brand. Allow them the platform to provide criticism; then take it, fix it and acknowledge it. Brands have found that often, loyalty is stronger when it has properly managed a crisis rather than being a brand that has never experienced a crisis.
5. **Spread yourself too thin.** You don't have to use all channels. Your time is limited; so get to know your consumer and go where they are. Build up your social media stamina as you get more familiar with each platform.
6. **Sell.** Of course you need to sell! But in social media communities, people are looking to share expertise, learn from one another, engage with one another and build relationships with people they can trust. From there, business can flow; but just like in the "offline" world, people don't buy from companies. They buy from people they trust.
7. **Expect social media communities to grow themselves.** Just because you have a Twitter profile or Facebook account, it doesn't mean that people will just connect with you. You need to invest time in building your community and nurturing it. Make sure you plan your content and approach so you have a roadmap guiding your efforts.
8. **Focus on numbers.** When it comes to social media, you are dealing with people and personalities. Naturally, as a business, you are ultimately trying to positively impact your bottom line. But remember, getting there happens through a series of metrics. Before thinking of ROI, think of all the metrics required: awareness, engagement, and conversions. Each step is important, so give each interaction the attention it deserves; and value it!

Social media is about community. Become a part of the community in an authentic manner and see the results.



About Our Kids

With more than 10 years of experience, Our Kids proves how the interaction of content creation, engagement and analytics leads to awesome marketing results.

Our websites, blogs, mobile apps, and print magazines house hundreds of articles, videos and advice guides on education and child development, making Our Kids Media the largest multimedia publisher and #1 school search resource in Canada.

We have launched the Our Kids Marketing Academy to provide you with an even higher standard of service and enable you to be better marketers.