

The 4 Essentials to Building Your Brand on Social Media

Whether you want to sell products, gain subscribers, persuade followers to a point or sway the hearts and minds of readers to your cause, they've got to know who you are in the first place.

Your ability to encourage any of these actions comes from your brand's authority -- and one of the best ways to build that is through the savvy use of social media. In fact, recent research from Econsultancy shows that 71 percent of brands plan to [invest more heavily in social media](#) in the coming year to reach new followers and build brand reputation.

Want to join their ranks and become known in your industry? Here's everything you need to know about using social media to build your brand:

1. Choose networks that support your brand image.

[Using social media multiple times a day](#) is one of the best mediums on which to build your brand. There are literally hundreds of social networks out there, but most of them aren't worth investing your time and energy.

Instead, find the platforms that support your brand image, taking the following factors into consideration:

- **Facebook** is a good platform for promoting brand awareness. As of the first quarter of 2016, Facebook had 1.65 billion monthly active users. In the third quarter of 2012, the number of active Facebook users had surpassed 1 billion. Active users are those which have logged in to Facebook during the last 30

days. Facebook is a great platform for [promoting virtually any brand](#), due to its very heterogeneous user base.

- Brands are using **Twitter** — whether or not you want them around. Some of them don't quite get the medium and just tweet self-serving links or marketing speak, but there are some pretty powerful things going on in the twittersphere. Smart brands use Twitter in meaningful ways, and most of them use their brand name as a way to make sure customers can find and recognize them. No other medium gets you inside a business or brand quiet like Twitter.
- **Instagram** is a great option for brands that rely heavily on images, such as clothing companies and retailers. It's also particularly effective for reaching young adults.
- While **Google+** hasn't taken off as well as many people predicted, it can be a great platform to reach men in the technology industry, as two-thirds of the network's users are men, most of whom work in engineering or other technical professions.
- **Pinterest** is an excellent social network to reach women, especially for brands selling jewelry or clothing.
- If you operate a business-to-business company, **LinkedIn** is a stronger choice for promoting business-related content and connecting with other corporate influencers.

2. Provide valuable and shareable content.

It should go without saying, but you'll create a much stronger brand reputation if you focus on creating useful content that viewers will want to share, rather than cranking out

content to meet arbitrary publishing calendars or that covers subjects only you'd want to read.

Keep the following principles in mind as you craft content for social sharing:

- Every single piece of content you share should support your brand image. Remember, humor can be difficult to pull off. If you can use memes effectively, they can be powerful brand-building tools. But if you aren't 100 percent sure how your audience will respond to your image, resist the temptation to create memes or engage in clickbait strategies that have the potential to reflect poorly on your company.
- Figure out which content is most likely to gain visibility on your social networks. Images may resonate better with your audience than blog posts, but you won't know that if you don't look at your data.
- Don't be afraid to use visual content. Articles with [images receive 94 percent more views](#). Twitter content with images [receives nearly twice as many views as text posts](#), even though there are seven times more text posts on Twitter.

One of the easiest ways to create content for deployment on social media profiles that'll support your brand building efforts is to see what types of posts others have been successful with and put together your own, better versions.

Say, for example, that one of your competitors has received good social traction with a blog post titled "12 Strategies for Increasing Website Traffic."

Instead of wasting your time building content around unproven topics, you could release a stronger content piece on this same subject. For instance, you could put together a post titled "102 Strategies for Increasing Website Traffic," or you could go through your

competitor's list of techniques and put together your own guide that goes into more depth on how to put these principles into action.

To find the content pieces that are performing well in your industry, use tools such as [BuzzSumo](#) and sort based on past social engagement. To learn more about implementing this technique, check out the [Backlinko blog's guide](#) on the subject.

3. Leverage influencers.

Publishing killer content to your social profiles is important, but it's only one part of the equation. If you have a relatively unknown brand, your voice is likely getting lost in the noise. While you can eventually [build your own audience](#) through the creation of great content, this strategy is going to take time.

A much faster approach is to leverage the audiences existing influencers in your industry have already built. There are a few different ways you can do this:

- Mention their names or cite their websites in your content pieces. Influencers with Google Alerts or other notifications set up on their names will see your content after it's published.
- Tag any influencers you've referenced when sharing content to your social media profiles.
- Email influencers after you've published your content to let them know they've been referenced in your work.

The goal of all these different actions is to get them to share your content piece with their followers via social networking. It can take time to build up the kinds of relationships that lead to influencer sharing, but if you're consistent about producing quality content, your efforts will get noticed.

4. Use social campaigns to promote content.

Finally, keep in mind that, in an age of [diminishing organic reach](#), paid campaigns -- especially those run through [native advertising platforms](#) -- may be one of your better options for building your brand on social networks.

A growing number of brands use strategies such as contests and other social media campaigns to successfully gain visibility and generate leads.

To take advantage of this effect, provide your audience with valuable incentives that encourage user participation and make sure that your campaigns offers value to all participants.

While social media is one of the most powerful ways to reach new leads, it's easy to waste time or alienate people if you don't use it appropriately. That's what makes having a sound social media strategy in place so important.

If you make it a priority to consistently share great content and leverage the power of existing social media influencers, your brand building efforts are bound to pay off in the long-run.

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Author: Aron Argius

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