

About Time and Social Media

Einstein said, “The only reason for time is so that everything doesn’t happen at once.” Not sure what he would have made of social media, which is omnipresent, but research has shown that in B2B and B2C marketing and social media outreach, timing can make a big difference. Watching the response of your own target audience over time is the most important, but a study done by Compendium that looked at data collected from more than 300 companies, found interesting trends that can be useful to factor in. For LinkedIn, Sunday was found to be the most effective day for sharing B2B content and Monday was best for B2C. For Twitter, Wednesday was reported as the most effective for B2B and Mondays and Wednesdays for B2C. Mornings were best for B2B via LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook, whereas noon or early afternoon were better on all three for B2C. The report also looked at differences in the level of audience response to using hashtags and numbers, including questions, and when messages contained exclamation points. As might be expected, Twitter for B2B had a big gain – 193% when hashtags were used. But, when going to consumers, the use of hashtags surprisingly resulted in 82% fewer clicks. There was a smaller range of impact shown (56% more B2B, and 20% less B2C) when using hashtags for LinkedIn.

The use of a number for Twitter gained 50% more clicks for B2B, while using numbers for LinkedIn didn’t have much effect. Questions didn’t go over well on Twitter (39% fewer clicks B2B, and 52% fewer B2C). LinkedIn response to questions was fewer for both as well, and using exclamation points got a mixed response (26% more B2B, 27% more B2C) for LinkedIn, and (15% less B2B & 8% less B2C) for Twitter.

A May article in *Social Media Today* recommended tools for tracking response to tweets and posts, so you could find out more specifically about friends and followers. They suggested using link shorteners, like [ow.ly](#) or [bit.ly](#) to track how many clicks you get to links you share. SocialBro is another useful service, which enables you to view daily reports on best times to tweet; and Google+, Timing+, analyzes the post times when your posts have had the most impact.

There’s also the issue of frequency – how often should you post? Hubspot’s Dan Zarella did a study in 2011 looking at a database of more than 100,000 accounts to see what timing and frequency were most effective. He determined leaving a minimum of an hour between messages was best, but in terms of how much, it depends on what your audience responds to – there’ll also be different levels of response to tweets, reposts, comments and clicks.

To determine what’s best for you, watch others who have a lot of active followers and see how often they engage. Think too about your audience and when they’re most likely to be available to engage, and plan accordingly. The answer will differ by segment – so teens, librarians, teachers, booksellers, and media will engage at very different times.

The same is true for email and other forms of communication, Fridays, certainly in summer are not good for business outreach. Tuesdays – always a favorite of mine, and Wednesdays can be

good because people have settled into their week and are more likely to respond within a couple of days.

Giving people breathing room is also important so they don't decide to opt-out. Wonder what Einstein would have done? (oops, sorry, a question!) 7:8/13