

SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS FOR PUBLISHERS

Hotsheets

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For a long time (and even still in some office environments), social media has been seen as a negative thing, and possibly something that should be blocked from the workplace—it is such a time-sucker!

But social media is more than that, as many of us tracking its user performance know, and for publishers, there is more to being successful on social media platforms than being able to draw advertising revenue from it.

What social media does is drive traffic, lots of it. And, it is a SEO-supporting environment. This is good for your magazine content!

Don't know what that is? Well, let's start there.

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the process of considering and introducing specific words into any type of content that is posted to the internet. With magazine publishing, how we produce and post our content to the internet will depend on how 'searchable' the words are in the document.

We want to have our content be as searchable as possible. In SEO, we consider what words a reader might use if they were going to search for a topic to have our story to pop up in their search. Those words would be 'keywords.'

Another term, Social Media Optimization (SMO) is a different process, where we optimize the content being produced and posted to social media for our magazines, specific to the market we are targeting.

This process is more audience driven. While the objective is increasing your viewership, it is more specifically targeting your audience, so that the audience can be considered as a qualified one, and therefore, more valuable.

It can be easy to lift the number of 'likes' and 'followers' in your social media accounts by purchasing them, but the value of a qualified audience is worth the time it takes to cultivate it.

Valued customers are no different on social media. They are loyal to a brand, which is good for us publishers, who are good at retaining targeted audiences with excellent storytelling.

The difficulty with social media is the time it takes to organically grow a valuable following for a magazine brand. It's slow going. You'll wonder if it's worthwhile when the initial performance results for the efforts are not that great. Given that social media is still a new and changing platform, it's hard to figure out. It doesn't make the idea of putting any time into social media as a business driver sound very appealing.

But like anything else, the best thing to do when trying something new is to start small. Here are a few tips to get going:

1. DEFINE YOUR AUDIENCE.

This part is easy—you already know who they are. Your magazine brand will be specifically targeting an audience. Find them. All social media platforms have specific user demographic information. Which ones are your readers using?



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Ontario

Ontario Media Development
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de l'industrie des médias
de l'Ontario

Magazines
Canada

79% of online adults (68% of all Americans) use Facebook

% of online adults who use Facebook

All online adults	79%
Men	75
Women	83
18-29	88
30-49	84
50-64	72
65+	62
High school degree or less	77
Some college	82
College+	79
Less than \$30K/year	84
\$30K-\$49,999	80
\$50K-\$74,999	75
\$75,000+	77
Urban	81
Suburban	77
Rural	81

Note: Race/ethnicity breaks not shown due to sample size.

Source: Survey conducted March 7-April 4, 2016.

"Social Media Update 2016"

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For example, many publishers report the best success posting content to Facebook despite it not being a revenue-generating platform. Regardless that you cannot purchase from the site, it can have users clicking from within your content and going to your website to make a purchase. Given the 2016 user demographics, it's easy to see why audience uptick would be so good on that platform if it matches your magazine's target demographic.

The same user data is available for all social media sites. Do your homework. As organic audience building is time-consuming, as building any relationship would be, it's important to focus your time, learning what works where, and then doing those particular things consistently well.

Given the vast number of social platforms, this information is good to consider right off the bat:

- In a U.S.-based study of 1520 adults conducted between March 7-April 4, 2016, Facebook is still the most popular site, with nearly 8 in 10 adults reportedly active on Facebook, which was more than double Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram or LinkedIn's share of the usage margin.
- Facebook has increased its number of users by 7% since last year.
- That doesn't make the other social platforms not worth considering, but it does have you consider what you might use them for.

source: <http://www.pewinternet.org/2016/11/11/social-media-update-2016/>

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Tip from Fabi Reyna, Founder/Editor in Chief, @sheshredsmag:

"At She Shreds, we use Facebook to deliver our main content, Instagram for visibility and to showcase our creativity, and on Twitter, we're friends." – as quoted, Magazines in a Digital World, Magazines Canada event, March 28th, 2017, Corus Theatre

2. TO MANAGE POSTING YOUR CONTENT TO MULTIPLE SITES, YOU'LL NEED TO CONSIDER SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE.

That's software that helps to manage multiple social media accounts by assisting you with scheduling, suggesting content for your platforms, provide some reporting tools and the ability to manage multiple user accounts in one place. Usually there is a user dashboard that makes monitoring the activity on your accounts easier.

Having social media management software installed is very helpful to manage time and be more efficient with your social media accounts.

More robust paid-solutions will provide better, more detailed reporting tools and analytics, as well as the opportunity to manage multiple brand accounts, i.e. multiple magazines, using the same user accounts.

Most publishers start with one or two social media accounts, but taking the time to set your accounts up properly using a tool like Buffer or Hootsuite and managing your user passwords and business accounts right from the beginning can be beneficial down the road. Not just for efficiency (and proficiency) of posts, but to maintain a secure social environment for your magazine as 'official' account users come and go.

Software solution examples:

Free/paid smaller solutions

- Hootsuite <http://signup.hootsuite.com/>
- Buffer <https://buffer.com/>
- Zoho <https://www.zoho.com/social/>

More robust paid solutions

- Sprout <http://sproutsocial.com/>
- Meltwater <https://www.meltwater.com/>
- Sysomos <https://sysomos.com/>
- Agorapulse <https://www.agorapulse.com/>

3. CREATE A SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR STAFF USER ACCOUNTS.

It's important for your voice to have a voice, but it can also be embarrassing if a post is regretful. Promote a positive environment that is true to your magazine's voice within your social accounts and its users.

4. ASSIGN RESPONSIBILITIES TO PUBLISHING CONTENT ONLINE USING THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS THAT ARE BEST FOR YOUR MAGAZINE.

Who performs these tasks will depend on how you divvy up the responsibilities for your magazine staff. It can be an editor, a marketing person or someone in the digital department. Whoever it is, remember there is a necessity for scheduling posts on Hootsuite, editing them and ensuring they are on-brand.

More importantly, they are responsible for building your brand beyond just posting content, so choose carefully!

5. ANALYZE!

A digital strategy for your brand is vital, and you'll be learning as you go, using the analytics tools you have available to find what works and what doesn't.

As you go forward and learn more about your social media communities using the reporting tools found in the social media platforms, seeing how to apply what you learn about your audience will become easier. Then, applying the customer data gathered from social media as an analytics and performance tool can become an integral part of your business planning.

