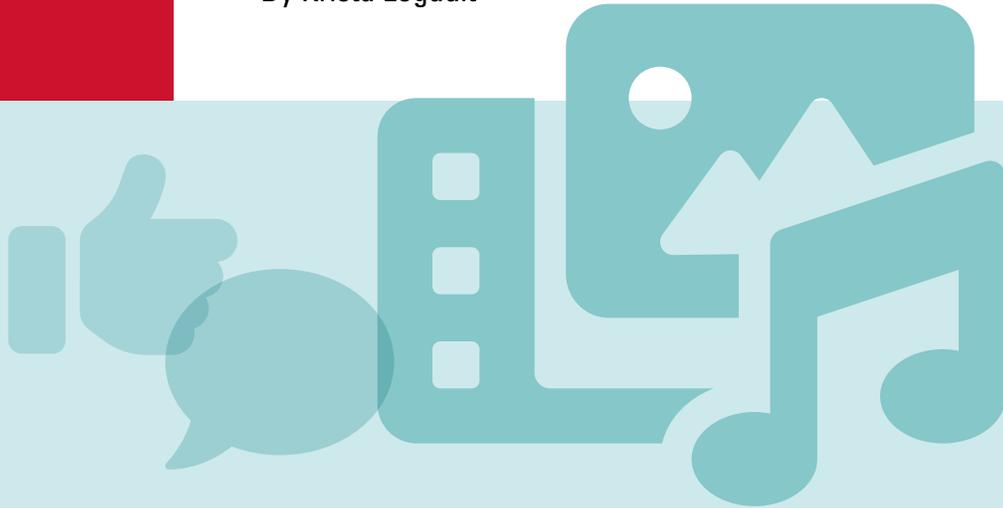


HOTSHEET

THE SECRETS OF CREATING ENGAGING SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

By Krista Legault



With Canadians spending more time than ever on social media watching a seemingly endless stream of content, how do you create engaging content that stands out? It's a thrilling challenge. And the good news? You don't need to get it exactly right from the start. It's all about learning, listening to your audience, and growing and adapting your content. Let's look at the key content stages.

How to Brainstorm Content

Set your objectives from the start. The importance of building your brand cannot be overstated. It goes beyond clicks – you're developing a consumer-facing voice that will represent your brand to your audience.

First up: Let's draft a content calendar! This helps determine the amount of content you should aim to release each week. Google Sheets is a great place to start. It offers a schedule template that helps you plot out your week. A content calendar helps establish a consistent presence across platforms, but it's important to also leave room for flexibility too. If a topic related to your audience is trending, you need flexibility to release in-the-moment content.

To brainstorm content, get familiar with the platforms you're working across. Having a deep understanding allows you to see the type of content

people engage with. To discover trends, Google Trends is helpful, along with browsing Twitter trending topics, and trending #hashtags on Instagram and Tik Tok.

And get your colleagues involved! Host regular brainstorming sessions to bounce ideas around. This can include engaging pre-created videos, video stories, live videos, images (infographics, relatable quotes and memes, eye-catching photography), contests, announcements, event information, article links, fun quizzes, audience Q&As, and re-posted audience-generated content.

Five pieces of software that help with content creation:

- Social platforms themselves: Don't underestimate the advantages of creating content within the native platforms. Use the variety of editing and design tools within Tik Tok, Instagram and Facebook to stitch together videos, add text over images, and incorporate music or subtitles.
- Adobe Photoshop: Best known for photo editing and graphic design, Photoshop also offers an excellent (less well-known) video editing tool.
- Canva: This easy-to-use, stand-out design software specializes in social media graphics and offers a variety of templates.
- Adobe Premiere Pro: For the more experienced video editors, Premiere uses timelines to edit video content that can be exported to your specifications.
- Repost App: An excellent tool for re-posting content, this adds a watermark to original images. Now you can re-post your audience's content while making sure you always give appropriate credit.

Now for something that cannot be overstated: TRY, TRY, TRY! It's a learning process. Don't be afraid to try all sorts of content. So long as you're staying authentic to your brand voice, you'll quickly learn which types of content your audience most engages with.

How to Schedule Content

Schedule the majority of content to be released when your audience is most likely to be online, such as early morning, at lunchtime, or after work hours. Some content can be scheduled within the platform itself – such as within YouTube and Facebook. For the other platforms, external software is very helpful.

Three pieces of software that help with scheduling:

- Later: Works particularly well for Instagram and includes a special

LinkedIn feature. Bonus: Let's you create a content calendar within the platform itself.

- Hootsuite: Allows you to schedule content across multiple accounts, with helpful account monitoring and resulting tracking.
- Sprout Social: An excellent, collaborative option when multiple team members are working on the same social account(s).

How to Track and Adapt Content

Now that you've released the content, how do you tell what's hitting the mark? Keeping track of analytics on a regular basis is key. You can often track results within the platform itself. YouTube, for example, offers comprehensive analytics including views, reach, and in-depth audience demographics.

External scheduling software also often includes analytics tracking. From here you can see when content is best performing, and what types of content are generating the most engagement (e.g., videos vs. images, contests vs. articles).

Happy content creating! And remember: Don't be afraid to try new things!

