

Eight ways to avoid social media blunders

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Many factors influence the success of a startup, amongst them is the effective use of social media in creating brand awareness. While marketing on social media can boost the growth of your startup significantly, it could also have detrimental effects on the profitability and reputation of your business if not done properly.

Common social media mistakes

1. Not having a plan - Social media marketing is not just about creating profiles and sharing as much content as possible. You need to have a [solid plan](#) in place in order to succeed. Here are some questions you should ask:

- Does your business really need social media?
 - How will social media combine with your traditional marketing strategies?
 - Why exactly do you want to be on a particular platform?
 - What kind of people do you want to reach?
 - What kind of information do you want to disseminate?
 - How will you measure success?
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- Who will be in charge of implementing your social media marketing plan?



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2. Ignoring competitors - While focusing on your own business, it is also very important to know who your competitors are. Remember to keep track of their social media activity constantly. For instance, you could visit their sites and look at how they have displayed their social media icons. Check out their social media profiles to see what their followers are saying. How are they reacting to the competitor's products? Is there something they are complaining about that you could improve on?

3. Not measuring social media success - If you do not measure your [social media marketing](#) success, you will not know whether you are growing or not. Some of the things you need to monitor include the size of your community, the traffic generated to your business website, the mentions of your brand on social media and the number of comments on your posts. The good news is that there are many tools out there that can help you keep track of your metrics. This includes Kissmetrics, Cyfe, Google Analytics, SocialMention, Simply Measured and PageLever.

4. Poor timing of social media posts - Before you start posting anything, you should first understand who your customer is and how they operate on social media. Where do they live? At what [times of the day](#) are they most active on social media? Do not make the mistake of posting messages when most of your target audience is asleep. To create maximum brand awareness, it would be advisable to share your content at peak hours. You can carry out A/B

testing to find out what works best for your audience.

5. Lack of commitment - Success in social media requires a high level of commitment. You will need to invest much time in studying your audience, researching your content, creating posts, analysing metrics and tweaking your social media profiles. If you are not committed, your accounts might end up becoming dormant and you could lose your followers. Therefore, make sure you are ready to put in the work required for your social media marketing plans to work.

6. Inconsistency in design - The design elements used in your social media platforms need to be consistent with the persona of your brand. If your design is inconsistent with the values and USPs of your brand, your customers and prospects might end up confused. Some of the things you need to consider when creating your designs include colours, fonts, textures, shapes and lines. Being consistent allows faster brand recognition, thus enhancing loyalty and trust with your audience.

7. Not using platforms appropriately - Different social media platforms were created for different purposes. For example, Twitter is useful for short, quick messaging while Facebook is meant for communication that is more detailed. Instagram on the other hand is designed for communication via images and videos. Therefore, be sure to tailor your messages for each social media platform. This will greatly enhance your chances of success.

8. Failing to engage your audience - Having a social media presence and posting content is not enough. You need to take time to [engage your audience](#) actively. One of the best ways to start a conversation is by asking a thought-provoking question. As people respond, be sure to like and reply to their comments. Look for like-minded people on different platforms and follow them. Do not forget to follow back those who follow you first. As you promote your brand, take time to promote other brands as well. When you mention another business or person in your posts, they are likely to return the favour.

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