

The ultimate social media marketing success list

By Bianca Delport

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In a time where physical distancing plays such a significant role in our lives, it has never been more important to connect with our customers through social media.



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To keep the industry moving forward in their marketing efforts, Africa Travel Week invited Suze Bouwer, marketing guru and founder of [redmatchstick.com](#), to lead their recent masterclass entitled Social Media: Content, Comms & Managing a Crisis.



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With over 25 years' experience in the hospitality industry across Southern Africa, Bouwer reaffirmed that when it comes to a social media plan, "It is important for business owners to realise that there is no 'one size fits all'. Instead, it is about testing and adjusting as you go."

And while there isn't one straightforward manual that business owners can all follow to maximise their reputation and results on social media, she was able to offer a general marketing success list for us to refer to for guidance.

Finding the right content

"Content marketing is key to victory in all aspects of internet marketing – social media included," she explains.

"You need to create valuable, insightful, and educational content that seeks to educate, entertain, and/or enrich. Listen in to the communities around you to get an idea of what people are talking about in your space, then work to become a part of the conversation ... to contribute rather than disrupt it."

It is also critical to familiarise yourself with the art of repurposing your content in order to squeeze every ounce of value out of your hard work. For example, a webinar could be transformed into a blog post or a press release, and a blog post could be turned into an infographic or an instructional video.



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Finding the right place

You need to investigate where your target audience is spending the majority of its time. The question is, what is the easiest way in which to figure this out?

“Don’t hesitate to ask your existing clients directly! Remember that simply creating a presence on every popular social media platform just isn’t going to get the job done. You need to think about it as though every platform is a different meeting room with a different agenda and, as such, you should focus on communicating a different message through different types of content in order to make your efforts worthwhile. Posting the same content across the board isn’t going to impress anyone,” explains Bouwer.

Finding the right time

It doesn’t matter if your latest content is extraordinary – it is going to go to waste if nobody is there to consume it! The time that you choose to post your content matters tremendously. Along with knowing when your audience is awake and active online, it is also essential to be aware of what they are doing at those times and to tailor the type of content that you upload accordingly.

For example, you would be better off posting a link to your podcast in the late afternoon, as this is the time when your audience is likely to be driving home from the office. An attractive, inspirational image works great in the mornings as they scroll through their newsfeed while eating breakfast, and a long-form, educational article has its place in the evenings when they are sitting on the couch winding down after a busy day. Make use of a scheduling tool or a platform’s built-in scheduling feature to simplify your life in this regard!

Finding the right format

Format refers to the type of content that you produce. As mentioned, different platforms demand different types of content – but it doesn’t stop there. The type of content that your audience prefers to consume will depend on their generation and the specific device that they are using to view it.

“Luckily, there are certain content types that work across the board,” Bouwer says. “Currently, you can’t go wrong with live sessions, videos, animations/GIFs, and stories (otherwise known as ephemeral content).”

Finding the right language

According to Bouwer, social media should be seen as a tool to foster powerful relationships from a distance. Speak to your audience in their ‘language’ and you will find it endlessly easier to connect with them right from the get-go. Don’t exclusively focus on tone and your choice of vocabulary. You also need to try your hand at using emojis, hashtags, and acronyms (LOL, BRB, FYI, ROFL), all of which have become part and parcel of the culture of social media. Hashtags, in particular, also have a functional use in that they help to make your posts visible to people who are searching for certain terms, thus broadening your reach.

Finding the right device

As highlighted above, clients use different devices at different times of the day. Up until now, the focus has been on ensuring that all content and websites are mobile-friendly as more and more individuals have been using smartphones to scroll through social media and browse the internet. Mobile-friendliness is still an absolute must but, due to Covid, the times are changing once again. As a huge portion of the workforce now works from home, the trend of using PCs to access digital content is skyrocketing once again.

Avoid missing out on an opportunity to connect with and impress your audience by simply endeavouring to ensure that your content is accessible regardless of which device is being used. Always check how your website, emails, social media cover photos, etc. translate onto all devices before uploading.

Finding the right person

None of the above matters at all if you have not made every single one of these decisions based on your specific target market. It is vital to create flexible buyers' personas to better understand your clients' mindsets and what makes them tick. Look into the groups that they have joined and the influencers that they follow to learn about their interests and to start conversations. Research the brands that they love, the magazines that they read, the travel experiences that they lust after, and when is the best time to get their attention.



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“Lean in and truly listen before taking action to respond. Make it your sole purpose to get to know your ideal customer better than anyone,” Bouwer says.

“Take the time to craft your own ‘real estate’ on the internet, comprising not only of a strong social media presence, but also of a functional and beautiful website over which you have complete control, and perhaps funnelling a certain portion of your marketing budget into paid advertising to reach your desired customer.”

Your action sheet

Here is a round-up of Bouwer’s top tips to put into action immediately:

- **Identify your USPs and passion:** Figure out what sets you apart and what drives you to do what you do – and use these factors to form deeper connections with your target audience.
- **Enable smartphone capabilities:** Know what your smart devices can do for your social media presence and embrace these features, i.e. filming live video sessions, editing images, etc.
- **Go where your audience is:** Know where they hang out and endeavour to meet them there!
- **Be YOU:** Nobody else can copy you. Authenticity makes it instantly easier for people to relate to your brand and to build up a sense of loyalty toward it.
- **Produce quality content, consistently:** Give your audience the type of content that they are looking for and do so again and again without fail.
- **Test, monitor, and tweak:** Never take anything for granted. Times are forever changing, as are your clients’ desires and demands. Test, monitor, and tweak your social media strategy continuously as you go.
- **Be patient:** You cannot achieve success in the online realm overnight. Push forward but be patient. Eventually, you WILL see results.
- **The bottom line?** Don’t allow Covid to derail your social media efforts. Instead, let it be the reason why you up your game.

ABOUT BIANCA DELPORT

Bianca Marie Delport studied Linguistics and English literature before entering the content marketing industry in 2011. In 2014, she joined the National Positions team and has since then established herself as one of the company's leading content specialists. When not writing or brainstorming content ideas, she enjoys spending time with her beloved fur child, Snooki.

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