How do You Tweet?: Five Tips for Posting on Social Media

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Five Tips for Posting on Social Media

By Jennifer Mart-Rice

Whether you are fairly new or a few years into the social media world, you may be looking for ways in which you can appropriately reach out to an intended audience. With so many social media platforms available to you, you need to first research to see which platforms are best suited for your wants or needs. Look to see where your target audience visits most frequently and where you think you will get the most attention and create a larger return on your investment of time and maybe money. Once you have decided on which platform(s) you are going to use, it is time to start thinking about what kind of content you would like to share with your “followers.” Here are five tips to help you along the way on your social media adventure:

Policy
Whether you are posting on behalf of yourself or a law firm, you should start by developing a social media marketing strategy or policy that outlines your goals and objectives; you should be “posting with a purpose.” This should help focus your energies on what messages/services you want to promote and it will help later with the cost analysis of time versus return on investment. Your social media policy should be created prior to selecting a social media platform but it can be done at any time. Just make sure you have selected the outlet that is right for you given your wants and needs according to your policy. For example, even though many people use Pinterest, that platform is not really the most effective place to detail what is going on in your professional life. However, you can use Pinterest if you choose with a little extra effort. One such way is to create an impactful visual image with an overlaid catchy phrase that reaches out to your audience and leads them to a relevant informational link on your blog or website. A little bit of strategy can go a long way, just try not to expel a lot of effort where no return exists.

Content
Coming up with new content for your social media site is sometimes easy and at other times very difficult. Always be mindful of the rules of professional conduct and avoid blatant advertisements, solicitations, and the like. Keep things simple but engaging. Generic marketing messages sent to all of your followers can lead to people ignoring your posts or clicking that “unfollow” button quickly. Instead, post positive messages that engage your followers and build a trust relationship so that when a legal issue does arise, they think of you first as someone they can trust and call. You also want your followers to see that you are personable and not very different from them. It is ok to post personal things such as your community involvement, support of the local Lions’ Club pancake breakfast, or even your sponsorship/support of a local kids’ sports team. This will help you to connect with your followers and allow them to see the real you. However, please do remember that some things are best left in the privacy of your own home so avoid oversharing. You can also share the things that you are doing in your professional life such as any publications or presentations you may do. Something like the following is a good example: “I just published a new article on social media in the CBA Report, you should check it out.” You can then attach a related image and/or link to your article online.

Try to keep posted images and/or content as simple and engaging as possible. Consider asking yourself the following three-part question before you post: What am I trying to communicate to my followers and how will they benefit from the information I’m sharing? Make every word count and put the most important/catchy information at the top of the post, shorten URLs with a service like bit.ly, and attach a relevant image when applicable. It should be mentioned here that if you choose to utilize images or graphics in your postings, and you should because studies have shown that more users are drawn to images over text, that you still need to make sure that the image is clear and obvious even on the tiniest of screens.

Frequency & Timing
The frequency of your posts is a slippery slope; careful posting too much or too little. When you choose to post things on a daily basis, you can eliminate the impact of your posts because
you can be seen as “too social.” Consider posting every on a frequency of every 3-5 days. However, on the other hand, if you only post something only once a month, your messages are just as likely to be ignored. Think of the goals you outlined in your policy from tip 1 above. Another issue is that of timing. Take the time to learn when your followers and/or target audience is most likely to visit social media sites and set aside time to post during those hours so that you are at the top of their stream once they log in. For most social media sites, this would mean posting between noon and 4 p.m.

Consistency

Once you take off on the social media train, you need to be aware of how often and how much you are actually using social media. If you begin by posting consistently and carry on until you build a large following, an immediate halt in those efforts will have repercussions. Any progress made will come to a screeching stop and your followers will begin noticing your page is outdated and then they will question not only the currency and your efforts on the site, but also the integrity of it. One way to avoid this from happening is to set aside time in your schedule to post updates and look over your social media pages a few times each week. This is where a social media scheduler will come in handy (see below).

Another way to boost your efforts in social media is to post consistently and in an engaging manner. Make every effort to ensure that your postings are interesting, valuable and appropriate given your platform and background. If you are a blogger, consider selecting only certain blog posts to share on your other social media sites so that your followers are not overwhelmed with repetitive content. If you are concerned with repetition, consider using a social media scheduling tool such as Edgar (meetedgar.com) or Sprout Social (sproutsocial.com) to help you create posting categories and track your postings.1 These tools can also monitor and analyze your past posts to improve the impact of your future posts. They can also generate reports to tell you which posts were shared, retweeted or liked the most. This information can then be used to build on future content; just avoid repeating what you have already said.

Knowing When to Stop

A final tip that you need to be aware of is that social media is not for everyone; sometimes you need to know when to quit and focus your efforts elsewhere. Social media may not be right for you or your firm and that is ok. After attempting social media for some time, and this time limitation is something you should consider when making a policy, then you will need to go back and evaluate whether or not you have had any return on your investment of time and maybe money. (Note here that by “return on investment,” I am referring to the traffic that your social media sites will bring to your company website, blog, referrals for services, etc.) If you created a social media policy with specific goals and intentions in the beginning then making the decision to “shut it all down” will be easier than if you do not have measurable goals. In order to perform an analysis, you may find the following options helpful: Google Analytics, Hootsuite, and Buffer.2 These tools have other functionalities but they are very useful in helping you to hone in on your postings and change things on your social media site or make the determination to stop your social media efforts altogether.

Conclusion

I hope that you find these tips useful in plotting the course of your social media adventure. Do not be afraid to show your true personality and develop your own distinct voice online. There are so many other individuals out in the social media realm and you need to find a way to stand out professionally. In the beginning try tackling a few different platforms and take the time to post on them so that you can then measure their effectiveness. Remember, everything is worth trying once so have fun with it!

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1 Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of social media scheduling tools, it is just a sampling of options.

2 Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of analytical tools for social media, just a sampling of services.