



Manage Your Time With Social Media for Business

When we recommend social media to our business clients, we hear all the time “But I don’t have time for it!” What do we say: “Make time! Because it works!” But that said, we know your time is valuable, and just like any other business marketing tool, it needs to be fast, effective and a regular part of your schedule. Here are our quick tips for managing your time when using social media for business:

1) Plan It

- Think about what you would like to get out of your use of social media and set some strategic goals that you can review regularly.
- Choose which tools you will engage based on your goals and be willing to change them up over time based on what does/doesn’t work.

2) Schedule It

- Decide it is worth the time investment and commit to it.
- Set aside specific time in your day, just like an appointment, and schedule it as an important item on your to do list.

3) Limit It

- Set a time limit, and when the allotted time is up, move on to the next scheduled item on your list.
- Keep in mind your comments/posts/replies don’t have to be perfect or long. In fact, it’s often better if they’re not, as they come across more genuine and less fabricated.
- Use programs you can close outside of your scheduled time, like TweetDeck or Twhirl.org. Log out of MySpace, Facebook and YouTube when you’re not using them.
- If you receive email alerts from your social media tools, create a rule in your email program and send them all to a specific folder that you can check during your allotted time.

4) Narrow It

- Only follow/friend/subscribe to people/blogs that provide you with the information you are most interested in and that are good business connections. Oftentimes e-newsletters, bloggers, Twitterers repeat others, so pick a few key ones to read and stick to those.
- On Facebook, don’t limit who you’re friends with, but use the tool that allows you to choose who you want to see more of in your newsfeed and who you don’t. It also allows you to choose if you’d rather see more articles versus photos, status updates versus notes, etc.
- Use a program like Tweetdeck if you follow a lot of people on Twitter. It lets you compartmentalize your list into segments (like friends, clients, prospects, news sources) so it’s not so overwhelming and you don’t miss anything important.

5) Use It

- There are a lot of applications and programs for social media that can help you save time. Here are a few examples:
 - TweetLater.com – schedule tweets to post later in the week
 - TwitterFeed.com – automatically send your blog posts to Twitter, identi.ca or Ping.fm
 - Twitter application for Facebook and MySpace – connect your Twitter account with your Facebook status and automatically post your tweets to MySpace
 - Google Reader – check new blog posts from blogs you follow all in one location

- MyBlogs application on Facebook/RSS Reader on MySpace – new blog posts or anything with a feed is automatically posted on Facebook and MySpace
 - PostLater.com – schedule blog posts
 - Google Alerts – set up email alerts for mentions of your business or other key words
- 6) **Grow It...Slowly**
- Don't try to be everywhere at once. Add to your social media activity slowly over time so you can adjust, work it into your schedule and do not get overwhelmed.
- 7) **Track It**
- Use a tool, such as Google Analytics, to monitor the traffic you're receiving from various social media tools.
 - In addition to traffic, track blog/video comments, online mentions, re-tweets, number of fans/friends, blog subscribers, new clients, referrals, votes (Diggs, Stumbles), etc.
 - After a set period (we recommend quarterly), check and see what is working for you and what isn't. Limit your activity on those tools that are not accomplishing your goals.
- 8) **Skip It**
- Save the personal activity for evenings and weekends.
 - Consider skipping the invaluable stuff like sending gifts, quizzes, etc.

See Sample Social Media Schedule Page 3



Sample Social Media Schedule

Daily

- Twice Daily, 10 minutes, check Twitter
 - Post new tweet
 - Reply to several others' tweets
 - Reply to @replies and direct messages
 - Review new followers and follow them back if appropriate
- Twice Daily, 5 minutes, check Facebook/MySpace/LinkedIn
 - Respond to anyone who has posted a comment to your page
 - Invite new business contacts to be friends/connections and fans of your business pages
 - Accept new friend requests
 - Post an interesting article/photos from a business event
- Once Daily, 5 minutes, Respond to new blog comments
- Once Daily, 10 minutes, Review Google Alerts; read and respond as appropriate
- Once Daily, 15 minutes, Read email newsletters and share any interesting articles via your favorite social bookmarking tool and/or Stumble it/Digg it

Weekly

- Twice Weekly, 30 minutes, Write a blog post (or write both at the same time and schedule one for later)
- Once Weekly, 15 minutes, Review others blogs online (ideally via your feed reader) and post comments as appropriate
- Once Weekly, 15 minutes, Review Google Analytics to see what items are sending the most traffic and repeat with similar outreach.
- Once Weekly, Check your YouTube channel for comments and respond; favorite new business-related videos and comment; post new videos
- Once Weekly, Set up RSS feeds for online questions (Questions.Yahoo.com, LinkedIn Questions, WikiAnswers.com) related to your expertise and respond to 1 or 2.

Monthly

- Record audio or video podcast
- Plan upcoming blog posts
- Sign up for MrTweet.com for Twitter and review recommendations for new people to follow.

Quarterly

- Review Google Analytics with the goal of seeing what has worked for you over the quarter; adjust your schedule to eliminate or reduce what isn't working and spend more time on what is.

About Step Ahead, Inc.

Step Ahead, Inc. is a company that combines the best of traditional public relations with social media campaigns that engage blogs, social networks, online video, Podcasting and more to help maximize visibility for companies and their products both online and off.

Got Questions?

Send them to lmettler@stepaheadinc.com and we'll try to answer them on our blog.

Did this help you save time?

Let us know how!

Follow us on Twitter at: @WebPRGirl, @SimonAshton, @SEOBud. See you online!

PO Box 852 • Mt. Pleasant, SC 29465
Phone - (843) 388-8376 • Fax – (843) 388-6247
www.stepaheadinc.com