

# The Spokes of Your Social Media Wheel



By Helen Yoest

**S**trategy is the most crucial social media topic. Come up with a plan and stick with it for at least six months. I encourage my clients to write an editorial calendar — three months out — so each week they are not wondering what to write about. I believe it's something that can be started at anytime.

It will seem impossible and overwhelming at first, but I promise, you will get into a rhythm and it will be better. Keep in mind, there are a lot of efficiencies provided in most social media platforms.

Whether you're getting started, looking to maintain things or simply seek improvements, here are eight ways to keep the spokes of your social media wheel spinning. Improve on these and you'll see website traffic improve, too.

## The Pillar Post

**1** If only posting to your blog or website once a week, make each post a pillar, providing useful information that will be revisited through the years via searches.

A pillar post is one that stands the test of time. They tend to be more in-depth and lengthy giving useful tips, detailed instruction or an educational piece about a topic.

This will deepen your digital footprint, positioning your business as an area expert, a place to get answers, and also a place where media can go, making their job easier as they look for local authorities. This of course is "free" advertising for your business.

## Picture Perfect

**2** Good photos are also key. Too many shots are taken looking down at the plant or the lawn. Try taking photos at different angles to make the photo a bit more interesting.

## Be Social

**3** Most experts will tell you, including me, this is social media ... so be social.

A good rule of thumb is to "talk social" eight times to every one promotional item about your business.

And, I wouldn't have to say this if I didn't see it time after time: don't WRITE IN ALL CAPS! I see this on Twitter so often, I wonder if someone is actually advising them to do so.

## A Like Is a Like

**4** Getting people to go tell their friends to "like" you, is a good way to start. It just is, and it doesn't matter if the "like" comes from California and you are in Kalamazoo, Mich. Having numbers do matter.

For my clients who have retail on their sites, we see a 3 percent conversion rate — just like we see in print ads. Yes, numbers matter.

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## Defining Success

**5** Google Analytics is really all that is needed for a blog. These are easy to read and interpret. I also recommend carefully reading the analytics Facebook provides weekly. There should be no surprises there, though. You will clearly see if you were busy that week or if you had time for a little bit of extra effort.

## Abandon! Abandon?

**6** I don't recommended abandoning any social media platform, per se, but do put energy where you are seeing the most action. I can honestly say, in my experience, I haven't seen a pattern. One company's blog may see more traffic from Twitter and another from Facebook.

I think businesses need to have these spokes in their wheel: Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, Flickr, and YouTube. There are others, but these are the

biggies. You can then watch your own analytics to see where to put your energy.

Give it some time, though; a good social media campaign will not happen overnight — just like one ad in a magazine is not enough to build brand awareness.

## Blogging Through the Times

**7** I cannot stress enough the benefits of a blog. The main reason the blog makes sense is because it's dynamic. It should be a place for constant chatter — constant meaning at least daily, at a minimum. To define chatter, it's not just comments on the blog but it's also as simple as views. Your website is static, serving more as a brochure. The spokes I mentioned will support the framework of your hub, which is your website.

Analyzing your Google Analytics will shed light as to where people are coming from and where they are going to within your hub. You can see what resonates. I manage some sites where plant profiles rein supreme and for others it's design.

This also becomes important to know so when you are sharing in Facebook, and yes you should be sharing, you can focus on what your readership is tuning into.

## Businesses Are People, Too

**8** Content is king. Have good content to share. Show the human side of your business. Share photos from a weekend, have customers post their photos of purchases, have contests on the blog and Facebook where your customers can win a discount. Involve your customers.

If you are known to have a resident cat or dog, share photos. Share what you are doing in the community. One of our local garden centers embraced the Garden Writers Association (GWA) Plant a Row for the Hungry. Wow, are they getting press!

I know the owners and managers and can tell you they did it for altruistic reasons — they really believed in what they were doing — but the side benefit was free advertising. Be true to yourself, and you will benefit. **LGR**

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