Introduction to HootSuite Social Media Best Practices
HootSuite’s Social Media Best Practices

Social media use is maturing; once a playground on the peripherals of the internet, now this space has become an important hub for business. With more and more brands finding a place on social networks, many social businesses face challenges getting into the conversation online, putting themselves at risk for messaging mistakes and have trouble tying efforts to concrete results and objectives.

There is a tendency amongst businesses and organizations seeking to engage in social media (or those who already are) to dive right in without any thought to collaboration, security, engagement or measurement of their efforts. Without defined objectives and a social strategy how can you expect results? Long before you send your first tweet or make your first post, here are the steps you need to take to roll out your organization’s social media according to HootSuite’s established best practices.

Remember; before you start, strategize.

About this Guide

This HootSuite guide to social media best practices is designed to help SMBs and Enterprise businesses achieve the best possible return on their social initiatives using the advanced functionality in the HootSuite dashboard.

About HootSuite

The HootSuite social media dashboard helps teams spread messages, monitor conversations and measure results across multiple social networks including Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.
1. Set an Internal Policy

Any good strategy will be founded on a solid internal policy by which to govern and guide external communication. To begin, set up your team by attributing the appropriate responsibility levels to the right team members, starting by giving account ownership to a reliable stakeholder in the company (don’t give the intern the keys to the bus). This will ensure that teams can streamline monitoring and outreach efforts while maintaining control and security over valuable social profiles.

You’ll also want to draft and save messages that use the correct tone of voice so multiple collaborators can post updates while maintaining a standard of brand personality. Next, establish an appropriate escalation process for complaints – team members on the front lines may have to deal with unhappy or frustrated customers, so it’s important that they have support from team members who may be more knowledgeable or better suited to handle sensitive issues.

2. Integrate Across Teams

You’re only as effective as the resources you have available to you. Each audience interaction deserves the best possible response from your organization. Not every question can be handled by PR, but perhaps some are ideal for support, HR, sales or marketing.

Team Permissions

HootSuite offers multiple permission levels for maintaining social networks, from account owner to a read-only Limited Permissions level for Enterprise clients.

Assign for Success

With the HootSuite Pro and Enterprise plans, team members can assign messages for follow up to ensure customer inquiries or comments are handled by the best possible department.
With internal collaboration across teams, each business unit can own its social media outreach and campaigns, but still link effectively to other channels to efficiently manage audience engagement.

Using the message assignment functionality in the HootSuite dashboard, assign responses to other teams. Append a message, and track response times to ensure for the best possible follow up.

3. Define an Objective and Measure a Benchmark

It’s critical to understand social media as a part of your overall structure, rather than expecting it to function as a department in isolation. What goals are you trying to achieve as an organization? Leads? Sales? Signups? A reduction in call centre volume? Define the objective for your social media use, and establish a benchmark from which to measure from the outset — number of sign-ups, sales, support tickets filed etc — and measure against it to understand the strengths and weaknesses of your social media activities.

4. Listen to Everything

Now that you have solid guidelines and objectives in place, it’s time to take part in the conversation. This requires that you first listen to what’s being said. There are hundreds social networks and millions of messages sent daily, so wading through the noise to tune into relevant messages becomes an important task. Once you’ve set up your profiles on various social networks like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc., you can save time and streamline efforts by managing all of your social channels in one centralized dashboard. Using HootSuite, you can monitor all of your important social profiles from one screen.

Case Study

The New York Public Library empowered their organization to use social media with the help of HootSuite’s scheduling and assignment tools. Find out how.
You also don’t want to inundate your team with the task of reading everything. Very few people use your @name or reference your brand directly, so Search capabilities become incredibly useful and efficient.

Set up and save search streams for keyword search: brand names, competitor names, executive names, product names, campaign titles, campaign hashtags etc. Everything.

Share these Search streams with team members to promote inter-departmental collaboration and assign messages to the appropriate channels for follow-up.

5. Measure From Click to Conversion

Social media measurement is increasingly important as practitioners are expected to deliver results and show the impact their actions have on the company’s bottom line. Using the correct tools will allow you to gather data and metrics that demonstrate actual ROI.

To get you started, using HootSuite’s Ow.ly URL shortener will give you click through stats and the opportunity to apply custom URL parameters which link to your Google Analytics, so you can follow your audience’s movement, from tweet to transaction.
6. Be Interesting

A few tips: Keep your messaging SIMPLE. This usually means short. Ask a question that entices an immediate response, whether emotional or opinion based. Ask for Likes. Ask for retweets. And pay attention; statistics show that visual media is most attractive to audiences, so include pictures and videos whenever possible - especially on Facebook where they’ll stand out in a newsfeed.

7. Get to Know Your Audience

Now that you’re measuring, tracking, listening and engaging, you’ll be able to look at which tweets, posts and updates are most successful. So what type of messaging does your audience like to see? What time of day are they most active? Which day of the week?

Use analytics tools like Ow.ly click through stats and Facebook Insights to learn which messages are most successful. Then you can tailor your updates to follow these formulas. And perhaps most importantly; keep watching. The social space is always in flux so you’ll want to be nimble – and aware – as the market changes.

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About Hootsuite Enterprise

Partner with Hootsuite to accelerate your social transformation

Hootsuite Enterprise empowers organizations to execute business strategies for the social media era. As the world’s most widely used social relationship platform, Hootsuite Enterprise enables global businesses to scale social media activities across multiple teams, departments, and business units. Our versatile platform supports a thriving ecosystem of technology integrations, allowing businesses to extend social media into existing systems and programs.

We help organizations create deeper relationships with customers and draw meaningful insights from social media data. Innovating since day one, we continue to help businesses pioneer the social media landscape and accelerate their success through education and professional services.

Request a custom demo today by visiting enterprise.hootsuite.com

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