

20 Social Media Tips That Increase Engagement

Social media marketing is a core inbound tactic with participation having become essential. Predominantly used as a means to attract visitors to your site by content sharing, social plays a pivotal role across the inbound methodology as well as the buyer journey.

But successful social media marketing isn't as simple as posting an update and sitting back with your cup of coffee in anticipation of results. True social media success lies in proactively encouraging engagement across your respective social platforms.

Fortunately there are a few tricks to this, and they aren't necessarily uniform across the social networks. Each platform has it's own nuances and their users have their own preferences for the types of posts they'll engage with. So we've rounded the best advice for Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in one easy-to-reference post for you - let's get to it.

How to Encourage Engagement on Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

Facebook

Facebook folks are generally looking for a bit of light entertainment while they're stuck on the train, bus or in a queue at the bank. They're primarily using Facebook to keep up to date with friends and family, but are open to brand engagement when it's relevant.

Make it Worth Their While

The golden rule (irrespective of platform) is to provide value. Focus on creating or sharing content that is interesting and informative, and something that your audience will want to read and share.

Entertain, Excite and Inspire

The Facebook community enjoy being entertained, inspired and excited. Seek out content that serves them well on these fronts and you'll be rewarded with higher engagement rates.

A Picture is Worth a 1,000 Words

... or a comment or two at least! Facebook updates that include images get the highest amount of likes, comments and shares. Be mindful of the visuals you choose to use (especially with curated or shared content), always ensure they are in line with your brand guidelines, and optimise images for Facebook dimensions for best results.

Give Them Somewhere to Go

While engagement on your social streams is fantastic, bear in mind that the overall objective is to drive conversion, which means you should include links to your website content. If you're not using a social automation tool like HubSpot or Hootsuite, I recommend that you shorten your links using Bitly in order to track how many visits you're getting from your Facebook initiatives.

Watch the Clock

Use the built-in Facebook analytics to determine your audiences' social activity schedules. Aim to post your most valuable, engagement-worthy content within their peak times, boosting chances of higher engagement rates.

Keep the Conversation Going

Your comments and responses are just as important as your posts. If your audience is taking the time to engage with you, be sure to respond in a timely and applicable manner. People are quick to pick up on insincere, automated or cookie-cutter responses - and they're even quicker to call you out on it! If you're not living with Facebook open 24/7 be sure to set up notifications that will alert you to activity that requires your attention.

Twitter

Twitter users are highly active and engaged online. They use Twitter as their go-to platform for everything from breaking news to business questions. It's a fast-paced, noisy environment though and you've only got 140 characters so keep things snappy and aim for maximum impact in minimum time. Since its inception, Twitter has adapted to not include links and mentions as part of its 140 character count. It's important to remember, however, that some platforms (currently HubSpot is one of these) have not updated their automation and scheduling to including this update. So pay special attention when setting up your tweets, especially when using apps and scheduling platforms.

Use Favourite Formats

Pose questions, make bold statements, share facts, stats or figures to engage users and drive retweets and dialogue.

Be Unequivocally Clear on Actions

Twitter isn't a network to beat about the bush. Give followers clear direction as to what you want them to do. Don't be shy to blatantly state, 'Please RT' if that's your desired

result. Studies have shown that straight shooting tweets usually garner higher engagement rates.

Don't Discount Good Grammar

The 140 character limit is no excuse for shoddy English. Check your spelling. Stick to the basics of grammar and avoid 'text speak' such as "LOL" and other colloquialisms and acronyms. It's a social media platform, not an instant message program.

Leave Room for Thoughts, Mentions and Retweets

If squeezing your own update into less than 140 characters isn't enough of a challenge, consider that others may want to add their own thought to your tweet when retweeting (this is called a modified tweet, usually denoted by MT). Aim to leave around 20 characters free for 'old school' retweets where users add 'RT' and your Twitter handle.

Shorten Up Links

Much like the above two points, shortening link URLs goes a long way to generating higher engagement. If you're a HubSpot user and publishing via the Social Inbox, your links will automatically be shortened. Other options include Bitly, Hootsuite or Google URL shortener.

Clarify Content

With all the scams and spam floating around on the Internet, online users are wary of links that aren't clear about the content on the other side of their click. Build trust by clarifying the content they can expect by adding bracketed content types such as [VIDEO] or [INFOGRAPHIC], or include copy such as 'read blog post' or **'download eBook'**.

Use Hashtags (Properly)

Hashtags (#) can do wonders for expanding the reach of your tweets, and promoting engagement - when used correctly! This isn't an opportunity to #getallexcitedabouthashtags and overdo it. Find the existing hashtags commonly used for your industry, service or product and apply them when appropriate or create your own campaign specific ones.

LinkedIn

The LinkedIn audience are busy professionals, looking to connect with people and brands that will help them achieve their business objectives, overcome their challenges and generally keep them abreast of industry news, views and developments.

Keep it Concise

While LinkedIn offers unlimited characters for updates, best-practice guidelines advise to keep posts below 25 words for maximum engagement.

Put Quality Over Quantity

Aim for top-notch quality posts that offer current information. LinkedIn is a 'slower' moving platform and you want to take care to not oversaturate your followers' feeds. One to two great quality posts a day is more than sufficient.

Strike Up Conversation

One of the best ways to encourage engagement on LinkedIn is to ask questions or elicit feedback. You could ask what they think about a certain new industry development or news item. Ask them for their best tips on completing a certain task or project. Anything

really that will get them 'talking'. From there it's a case of building on those conversations to develop stronger relationships with your followers.

Mix Up Content Types

LinkedIn users are particularly open to an array of content types and formats. Keep engagement going by offering both gated and ungated content offers, and post updates that include video, images, text, links or slide decks.

Time it Right

Data points to the fact that the general LinkedIn audience are most engaging while on their early morning commute or with their first cup of coffee at the office. Schedule or post your updates according to your followers' social activity peaks to get their attention, and engagement.

Target Your Updates

A great feature of LinkedIn is the ability to target your updates to specific followers who match a particular demographic or firmographic. (Note: You require a minimum of 100 followers within the target range for this feature to be used.) This is a fantastic way to push highly relevant, tailored content to individuals who will value it most, and up the chances of greater engagement as a result.

Keep Tabs on Analytics

Check in on your LinkedIn analytics to see which posts resonate best with your audience, paying particular attention to engagement rates. Use this insight to formulate more content and updates that are similar to your historical best performers.

There you have it, 20 easy-to-implement posting tips to elevate engagement from your social media followers and fans. What else would you add to the list? What do you do to elicit social engagement? We'd love to hear from you in the comments