

HOW TO CREATE A Social Media Strategy

*The Know-It-All's Complete Guide To
Launching Social Media For Monumental Growth*



 **CoSchedule**

Foreword by Jay Baer

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MEET THE AUTHORS



Garrett Moon, *CoSchedule*

CoSchedule Co-Founder, blogger, designer, content hacker and serial starter. Also, a firm believer in the do what you love, love what you do philosophy.



Nathan Ellering, *CoSchedule*

Content marketing enthusiast, brand advocate, and blogger. I love new ideas, strategy, and continually learning how to work more efficiently.



Julie Neidlinger, *Freelance Writer*

Julie R. Neidlinger is a writer, artist, and pilot from North Dakota. She has been blogging since 2002 at her Lone Prairie blog, and works as a freelance writer and visual artist.



Krista Tolstedt, *Public Relations Coordinator*

Krista is a social media expert who loves traveling, public speaking, and learning new things.



Shannon Byrne, *CloudPeeps*

Shannon Byrne is the Chief Content Officer at CloudPeeps where she crafts words, creates strategies, and recruits loyal advocates. She's based in New York. Get in touch with her at @ShannnonB.

CoSchedule On Social Media Strategy

CoSchedule is the social media and marketing editorial calendar that helps marketers finally get organized. The tool is dedicated to helping you take control of your project management and promotion all while saving tons of time.

Find out more about CoSchedule.

Put what you learn into practice immediately with free bonus guides that complement this book! Use these free gifts—including templates, infographics, worksheets, and more—to turn your new knowledge into reality.

Get your free bonus guides now.

Get even more actionable advice on social media, writing, productivity, planning, and organization with regular updates from the CoSchedule marketing blog.

Learn more about social media and marketing strategy.

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FOREWORD

By Jay Baer, Author of Hug Your Haters and Youtility

The goal isn't to be good at social media. The goal is to be good at business because of social media. To accomplish it, you need a clear understanding of WHY you're doing social media at all. You need a clear understanding of WHO you're trying to reach via social media. You need a clear understanding of WHERE those people congregate in social. And you need a clear understanding of WHAT they need, so you can deliver value, and build relationships.

Social media isn't hard. Success in social is bred from the same petri dish as is offline success: authenticity, consistency, and helpfulness. But there's no question that social media is complicated, and it becomes more so every day.

New platforms. New algorithms. New best practices. New media types. New apps. It's easy to envy the octopus when trying to juggle it all. But it's doable. Social media isn't magic, it's a learnable set of skills and processes that—when applied every day, over time—will yield the outcomes you want.

That's why I'm so fired up about this book from my friends at CoSchedule. "How to Create a Social Media Strategy" is that, of course. But it's also so much more than that. It's the tactical manual for successful social media programs. From channel selection to copywriting, and from smart image usage to success measurement, this is the guide you'll refer back to again and again and again.

I know it seems like there are an unlimited supply of Kardashian and Jenner sisters, but there are even MORE dispensers of social media advice out there, including me. One of the elements of this book that I like best is that CoSchedule doesn't just parrot back somebody else's research and adopt it as their own in this format. Instead, they've meticulously compared recommendations from multiple sources and collated them to create a synthesized set of how-tos and best practices.

I'm a daily user of CoSchedule myself. It's what powers the editorial calendar and first-level social media sharing at my award-winning blog, Convince & Convert. And really, the editorial calendar portion of this book by itself is extraordinarily useful and important. Considering, however, that "How to Create a Social Media Strategy" also includes about 100 other pages of fluff-free insights and advice, and you're about to read something that will make your social media life meaningfully better.

Thanks for taking a look at "How to Create a Social Media Strategy" and thanks to CoSchedule for the significant time and effort invested on this project.

See you in social!

—Jay Baer



Jay Baer

*President of Convince & Convert,
And Author of Hug Your Haters*



INTRODUCTION

Social media is that magical, mystical source of networking, engagement, advocacy, and traffic. That's why it's a perfect tool to help you share your content, grow your audience, and mature your business.

So, where do you start? And if you've already started, how can you improve? And how do you really find your audience to connect with them in a meaningful way that truly helps you reach your goals?

You've read the theories and understand the importance of optimizing your content and your audience's experiences. So now it's time to finally rock a comprehensive how-to manual that will help you actually implement a realistic, totally doable social media strategy that really works for you.

That's exactly what you'll get in this book.

Let's do this and do it right. This is your ultimate guide to help you build a social media strategy that will take your business to the next level.

So let's get to it.

CHAPTER 1

How To Create A Social Media Strategy



Getting things on paper (or at least, a digital document) is such an obvious but important step toward meeting a goal. Most of the time, we sort of tumble into an activity instead of planning out what we want and how we'll get there.

A serious content marketer will want a social media strategy template, something they can refer to and adjust as they forge ahead toward desired goals. Here is that template.

1. Choose your social networks.



Which networks should you be on? Should you have multiple social media accounts for certain networks? Let's take a look.

Discover Where Your Audience Is

You should be on the same networks as your audience, of course. And there's the dreaded statement: Know your audience. We have some great resources on how to know who your audience is:

- [Find The Right Audience And Make Writing Easy](#)
- [How To Find Your Target Audience In Content Marketing](#)
- [How To Write For Your Intended Audience](#)
- [Are You Making These 5 Assumptions About Your Audience?](#)
- [Using Google Analytics To Find Your Audience](#)
- [How To Write For Two Audiences At Once](#)

Make a list of three to five networks that are clearly popular with your audience. Don't get too big a list; remember, you are going to have to maintain content on these. If you can only handle one or two, that's perfectly fine.

Find Your Own Preferred Network

Once you know where your audience is, hold those networks up against a list of qualifications to see how high they should be in your "triage" list of networks to focus on. For example:

1. Find a network that connects with tools. Isolated networks are only going to add to your workload because you can't consolidate your efforts with tools. Find at least a few key social networks that connect with the tools you are already using to help reduce workload.

2. Find networks that have a good return. This is both a good return historically for you, and a good return broadly, for the general marketing populace (example: Facebook). *Find networks that have a good return.*

Order your audience-preferred networks against a list of qualifications like these. This way, you know which networks you absolutely must focus on (and perhaps spend money for promoted posts).

Decide On How Many Social Profiles You'll Have

Decide if you'll need more than one social profile on a single network. This might be because:

You have a broad audience with several niches inside that audience.

For example, CoSchedule has a Content Hackers Twitter account that focuses solely on the content found in their popular Content Marketing Update. They also have a Twitter account just for the content and discussion found on the CoSchedule Blog. Then, of course, there is the CoSchedule twitter account, which has some of the same content, but is also used by customers with tech support and product updates.

You have a branded social presence, but also a personal one.

I'll talk more about this in the next section, but the idea is that, depending on how you've created your brand, whether it's product-based or your own name, will determine whether or not your audience only wants on-topic content or whether they appreciate your vacation updates.

If you have more than one social profile, be sure that you have the tools to manage each profile, and that you aren't breaking the terms of service at the network that might govern that behavior.

2. Figure Out What You're Best At

Find Your Content Sharing Strength
For Social Media

Quiz

1. What apps and software do you have access to for creating content?
2. Are you a better writer or designer?
3. Do you have other team members who can help you out with your weak spots, or are you flying solo?
4. What social media do you enjoy yourself? Do you find yourself mimicking it easily?
5. Do you have a sense of humor? Are you more about being helpful?

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In the same way that I advocated that you do best to capitalize on your strengths when it came to setting up your blogging methodology, the same can be said for your social media.

What you can create.

If you don't have the equipment or the chops for making great videos, YouTube is probably not the place for you. Ask yourself questions that help you discover what you are the best at creating:

- What apps and software do you have access to for creating content?
- Are you a better writer or designer?
- Do you have other team members who can help you out with your weak spots, or are you flying solo?
- What social media do you enjoy yourself? Do you find yourself mimicking it easily?
- Do you have a sense of humor? Are you more about being helpful?

The idea here is to find your natural strengths, both in talent and resources, when it comes to the content you can create for social media. Think of more questions, if you can, and as always: Write it down.

How you communicate.

Are you a great conversationalist? Do you love chatting with followers? Are you johnny-on-the-spot whenever someone mentions you on Twitter?

I'm not any of those, to be truthful, and so my social media approach isn't heavy on the conversation. I take multi-day absences from social media (and the Internet in general) because I need that break. That means I don't answer immediately on social media.

You may be like me, or you may really dig talking to people. If you don't like talking to people constantly, perhaps your social messages shouldn't be prompting heavy conversations, such as asking questions of your audience or veering regularly into sharply controversial topics that prompt heavy discourse.

It's probably sacrilegious to suggest you don't have to be heavily into conversation to be on social media, but there are plenty of introverted folks like myself who are quickly drained by it. While we can create great content, we can only handle a minimal amount of interaction surrounding it. Be honest if that's you.

Don't set yourself up for communication failure. Work in your strengths, and create content that you can communicate around reliably to the best of your ability.

Your topics of expertise.

If you've done your homework right, your blog should be highly focused on the topics your audience cares about, and your social activity that is based from your own blog content will reflect that. Curation of outside content is where some of us go off the rails with on-topic social content.



It's easy to forget that for your branded social media properties, your own personal interests outside of that audience niche aren't really relevant, unless your brand is one of your personality—but that is not as easy or as common as you might think, unless you're a celebrity of some sort.

Going off topic when you've clearly established a niche is dangerous.

I'll use myself as an example.

On my personal Twitter account (not the one "branded" with my real name), I follow a wide variety of profiles based on all the things I'm interested in, while on my branded profile, I tend to follow profiles related to art and writing, my profession.

One profile is my professional account, while the other one is where I talk to siblings and friends and share things they might enjoy.

I'm a private pilot, so several of the Twitter profiles I follow with my personal profile have to do with aviation. One such profile specialized in "aviation updates" until I noticed that they began to publish the same link over and over, sometimes four or more times a day, that had nothing to do with aviation.

I unfollowed them.

I was tired of seeing that update in my news feed, and I was even more annoyed because this was clearly a niche profile that had decided to curate something completely off topic.

It is vitally important to understand what your niche topics will be, and have it written down ahead of time, or you run the risk of losing focus and curating content that your audience doesn't want. It's too easy for them to unfollow you.

Write down, in one sentence, what your brand is about. Make it general (e.g. food). Then, break it down into the sub-topics (e.g. natural foods, healthy foods, recipes, shopping tips, budget).

This list should look very much like the categories you use on your blog, and all curated content should be held up against this list to see if it fits. If you find content you want to share that doesn't fit, then put it over on a personal profile.

3. Make A Social Media Plan

Now that you know what networks you'll be on, and the way you'll be using them, it's time to make the plan.

Use an editorial calendar for planning your social media. Even if you have to use a paper version. It's the best way to make sure everything happens when and how you want them to. Get your plan on paper and assign a date.



Define your goals.

What is it you want to accomplish with social media? More traffic to your blog? To grow social followers? To increase sales? Get more people subscribed to your email list?

We don't all want the exact same results from social media, and knowing this beforehand matters.

Write down what you want in general (i.e. “more traffic”). Then, write down what you want in specific (i.e. 2,000 pageviews each month).

Why do both?

You start by writing down the big picture idea. This helps you get a general approach in mind. You will revisit this a few times a year, just to make sure that is what you still want.

The second part—writing down a specific goal—you will revisit each month. This is what you will use to actually measure whether or not you’re hitting that big picture goal, and it is also what you’ll adjust and use for A/B testing, increasing the measurable goal, and so on.

Until you define your goals, you don’t have any. Until you understand your ultimate destination, you’ll end up anywhere. And until you get a specific measurement to use, you won’t know what adjustments to make along the way. All three steps (defining a goal, painting the big picture, listing the specifics) are necessary.

Plan when you will publish.

Once in place, you can set up a social media publishing plan to fit your desired outcome. We’ve talked a lot about how to approach when you ought to publish social media, and it’s even built into CoSchedule.

The big takeaway here is that publishing more than once is the best approach, particularly for a network like Twitter. Some news feeds cycle quickly (Facebook, Twitter), while other networks (like Pinterest) function less like a flowing river and more like a bulletin board where people bring old things to the top again on their own.

Plan your budget.

Successful (and serious) social media strategy must include a budget to promote your posts on social networks. However, going into any expenditure without knowing where the budget line is drawn is a super bad idea.

You might be new to paying for social content, and have no real idea what it will cost. That's fine! Simply start with an amount you are able to absorb into your content marketing budget and begin learning.

As you figure out what works on each network, you'll use your budgeted dollars better than you do at the start. But you first have to start, and you have to set a limit. Once you hit the limit, evaluate. Check what's happened against the goals you set earlier

Plan what you will create.

These are the actual pieces of content. Visuals, videos, longer text posts on networks that allow for it?

I like to write down a plan for how I will create the content I've decided I need to create. Some of the things I jot down on my calendar and in my notes include the following:

Plan your imagery. Social networks are pushing imagery, and so you will need to plan to include some. If you've determined that creating imagery is not your strength or you don't have the expensive tools or access to a professional designer, you can create great imagery using tools like Canva.

Plan your campaigns. Social media, particularly if planned on an editorial calendar with other content, will have campaigns. They might be centered around events, holidays, promotions, Twitter chats, or a random whim, but you will have campaigns.

Plan your curated content. This is more ongoing than the previous two (which I generally revisit periodically throughout the year). You'll regularly be sharing outside content, and so you need to actively plan where and when you'll publish. Remember, you must stick to your topic!

If you use an RSS reader like Feedly, consciously collect feeds that fit your categories. Or, try Swayy, a great tool that helps with curation. It finds the content that works best with your audience by discovering what they already like and engage with the most.

Swayy will make content suggestions that you can share (or schedule to share later) easily in a few clicks. In that way, it takes a lot of guesswork out of curation for you, and makes it easy to find content they'll like.

We all approach social media a bit differently, but the key point I hope you take from this is that you need to consciously ask a few questions about what you want, how you think you should get there, what success will look like and then...write it down. Plan it out.

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CHAPTER 2

Social Media Listening

CHAPTER 2

How To Use Social Media Listening To Create Better Content For Your Audience



When producing content, your number one goal should be to add value for your community. That value might be sharing tactics to accomplish their goals, or lessons on how to make the best use of your product. Or it could be introducing them to tools that will make their lives easier, or even to the best restaurants in their city. No matter what your topic (aka value) is, your content is driven by your community.

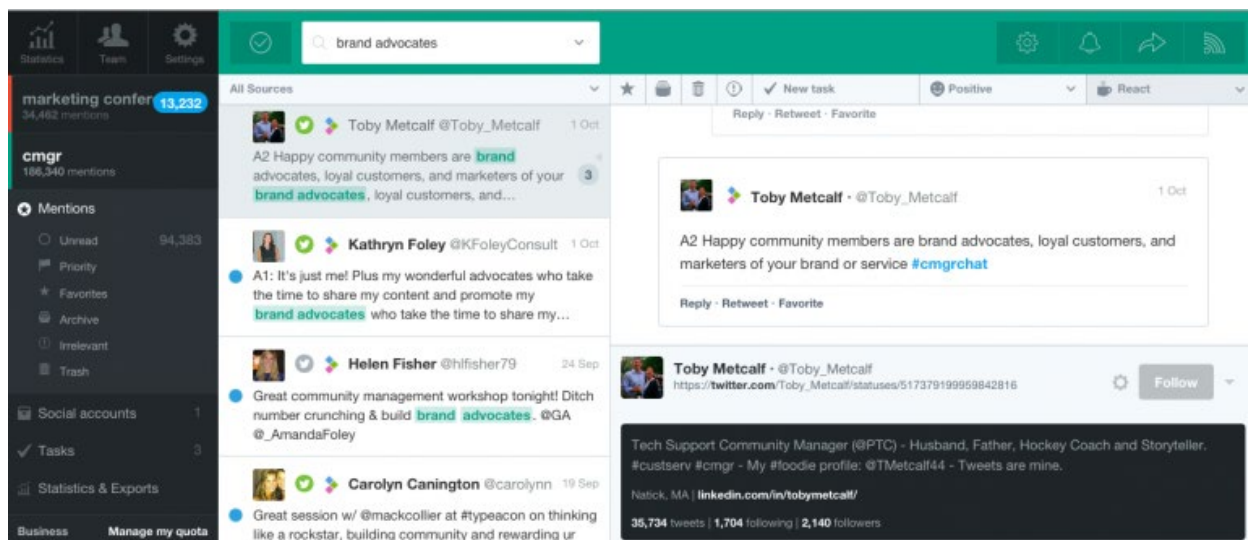
Listening to your community is an obvious first step to unlocking the power of your content marketing, but it's one that goes tremendously overlooked. Here's how you can lay the foundation of a strong and sustainable content strategy by using social media listening to hear what your community is saying.

Identify Relevant Topics to Write About

Gather invaluable insights by paying attention to what your community is saying to you, to your competitors, and to each other — problems they're trying to solve, tools they're using, and what it is about your brand/offering they like or dislike.

Monitor specific key terms relevant to your brand with a media monitoring tool (like Mention) to pinpoint your community's interests as they relate to the problem you're solving or value you're adding. Beyond monitoring your brand name, deciding on other keywords to track is as simple as choosing terms related to the problem you solve and mission of your product.

For example, we know that our content can be valuable to anyone looking to learn more about social media listening, social media strategy, community management, Twitter strategy, and content marketing, so we track all of those terms, among others.



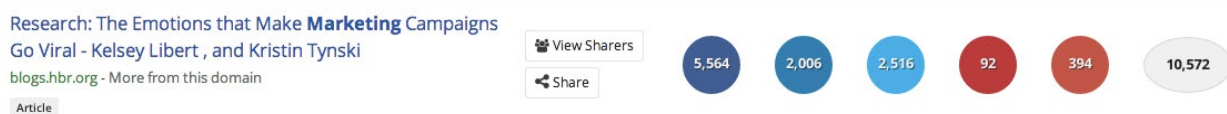
We recently noticed a trend in conversations around brand advocates in our “community management” feed, so we wrote a post on how to convert five types of customers into brand ambassadors using media monitoring, which performed significantly well. We chose brand ambassadors rather than advocates because from monitoring these conversations, we learned that both are important to a community ecosystem and often (but not always) they're one in the same. “Brand ambassadors” also seemed to appeal to a larger marketing-focused audience.

Identify Headlines with 'Viral' Potential

Swayy.co and Scoop.it are effective tools for discovering what stories your network or community is sharing on social media. You can monitor the content that's most popular among your community as a whole, or based on a specific topic you track. Forums with upvoting capability such as GrowthHackers.com, Inbound.org, and Hacker News are also great places for discovering headlines that resonate with audiences, by tracking which trend. Additionally, Buzzsumo will show you the most popular posts (measured by social shares) on any specific topic.

Use the headlines and topics you identify as inspiration for yours, but put your own spin on it by using your own unique case studies, for example. Or, take a look at the comments and social shares from these articles and see which section resonates with the audience the most, then produce content that elaborates on that particular segment.

You can also monitor the key terms used in these headlines to identify what other related topics your audience may be interested in. For example, we've recently seen a lot of content around the role of emotions and psychology in marketing. This happens to be a topic we're interested in, so we will create an alert around it, research the topic further, and brainstorm topics that are unique to our offering.



By taking this approach, we've seen our content perform well on these forums.



Growthhackers is now the fourth biggest driver of traffic to our blog.

Source / Medium ?	Acquisition		
	Sessions ? ↓	% New Sessions ?	New Users ?
1. google / organic	8,022 (31.10%)	90.39%	7,251 (34.98%)
2. (direct) / (none)	5,091 (19.74%)	82.79%	4,215 (20.33%)
3. twitter.com / social	4,981 (19.31%)	75.85%	3,778 (18.23%)
4. growthhackers.com / referral	2,013 (7.80%)	65.57%	1,320 (6.37%)

Discover Where Your Audience Hangs Out

Media monitoring and social media listening tools provide you with a vehicle for distributing your content directly to where your community is already sharing information. After all, in order to be heard over the noise that is the Internet, sometimes you have to hand deliver your content to where your community is finding information.

When monitoring your key terms, pay close attention to where these conversations are happening — what blogs and forums your audience is commenting on, which social networks they're conversing or sharing content on. Make a list of these channels for each key term. When you write on that topic, be sure to send your piece to each of these channels and their relevant influencers.

Write Custom Content That Solves Problems

Organizing and moderating a group on Facebook or LinkedIn (or a proprietary tool) gives you direct access to your community. This is an efficient way to ask your community questions and to provide a home for them to share thoughts, ideas, concerns, and questions with each other. With a hosted group, you're developing important relationships with your community members and acting as a catalyst for them to connect to each other.

Use these groups to discover your community's primary interests based on their comments and questions, or ask them directly what they'd like to hear. Groups are also great for testing content ideas, gathering quotes or insights for different pieces of content (such as field guides), and even recruiting potential guest bloggers. Great examples of active groups I've seen are Kapost's Content Marketing Academy on LinkedIn and CMX's Facebook group.

Identify Influencers and Build Relationships

Twitter chats are a form of active or participatory social media listening. If you're there, you might as well contribute, am I right? Join a chat to understand people's questions and concerns about a specific topic, as well as identify who's leading and influencing these conversations.

Favorite tweets to save them or take notes on any points that catch your attention as a potential topic to write about. Share your content if you already have information that answers a question. Pay attention to who seems to really know what they're talking about and who's happy to contribute. Connect with these people, as they're your future contributors.

I always learn a ton and make valuable connections during the weekly #bufferchats. And we just hosted our first #MentionChat and saw high-quality interactions with our brand and among participants. We even recruited a few new members of our Growth Marketers LinkedIn group. Twitter chat recaps also make for great content!

***Pro Tip:** Use a tool like [TweetChat.com](https://tweetchat.com) or [Mention](https://mention.com) to keep up with the conversation!*

Unlocking Your Content's Power With Social Media Listening

You now know how to find the information you need to develop a strong content strategy. That is:

- What interests your community
- Their perception of your brand
- What problems they're trying to solve and needs they're looking to fill
- Where they're communicating and discovering info
- Who's leading the conversations relevant to your brand
- What type of content trends among your community

Now it's time to put this information to work. Here's how:

1. Identify 2-3 recurring questions asked around a specific topic via media monitoring and during Twitter chats.
2. Ask your group their thoughts on the question.
3. Develop a piece of content (let's say a blog post) focused on that subject and answering their questions, along with two title options.
4. Ask your identified influencers to contribute insights or quotes.
5. Ask your community which title resonates with them the most.
6. Publish your piece of content, and let those who contributed know.
7. Distribute your content to the social networks, groups, and forums identified via media monitoring.
8. Measure your results based on your inbound goals.

9. If successful, repurpose into a smaller blog series, an ebook, podcast, infographic, a content academy, or webinar topic. Use your imagination!

To really streamline your content, identify several topics at a time and plan out a month's+ worth of content with an editorial calendar. The more you plan, the more time you save yourself and your team.

By taking these steps, you're creating quality content that's built custom for your audience and delivering it to them where they'll find it (and find it valuable).

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CHAPTER 3

Connecting Emotionally

CHAPTER 3

How To Connect With Your Customers Emotionally Using Social Media



Are you connecting with your customers emotionally using social media?

When the SPCA commercials come on the television, I brace myself for loads of emotion. The sad stories, the sad music, the faces of the puppies and kittens. What a downer.



I am emotionally moved to act and feel terrible about myself when I don't. Sadvertising is a merciless play on my emotions.

Writer Rae Ann Fera talked about this rise of "sadvertising" in which brands do more than pluck your heartstrings; they pull hard and hope to break them. In the past, though, these kinds of ads were meant to make you feel guilty (as with the SPCA commercial). This new breed, Fera says, is going for a different outcome. They don't want to guilt you into action. Instead, brands are trying to get you to connect with them on an emotional level, and are hoping to get shares on social media.

In an interview with NPR, Fera described it simply: "Purchasing seems like a very rational kind of thing, but in fact we don't make decisions rationally. We make decisions emotionally."

Just as emotional headlines get people to read your content, emotional social media content can get customers to buy. It taps into instinctive thinking rather than rational thinking. Neuroscientist Antonio Damasio performed a study on people whose brains had been damaged so that they were no longer able to feel emotions. In every other regard, they were completely normal. What did he discover?

Making decisions was almost impossible. They could logically process information, but they needed emotions to help them make a decision. To put a number on it? Our decision making is 70% emotional and 30% rational.

Connecting With Customers Emotionally With Social Media

You can see why you want an emotional connection with your customers; it helps break down barriers to both buying and loyalty. The emotional connection helps them decide to take action. Fortunately, social media is uniquely placed for making emotional connections.

A 2012 study by Motista, a company that specializes in helping brands connect with customers on an emotional level, revealed several interesting things about social media and emotions. Mainly, that customers who use social media are more emotionally connected to the brands they are following.

Getting their emotional identity: 46% of social media followers felt that their purchases from a brand reflected their personal lifestyles, while only 21% of non-social media followers would say the same thing.

Feeling positive about life: 46% of social media followers also felt that their purchases from companies they followed brought joy and pleasure to their life, while only 20% of non-social media followers said the same thing.



The Motista study reveals several interesting aspects about the purchasing habits and price sensitivity of social media followers vs. non-social media followers, which can be summed up easily: those who follow your brand on social media are more prone to acting positively towards purchasing because of how they feel about you.

So how can you make customers feel a positive emotion about you on social media?

Don't make your customer think too hard.

If you're trying to connect on an emotional level, don't appeal to their logical way of thinking. Don't make them think too hard. Don't ask tough rhetorical questions, or force them to make a difficult decision. Don't create content that dredges up conflicting thoughts about politics and worldviews. Let them instinctively connect with your content without forcing them to leave system one thinking and delve into system two.

We spend a limited time on social media networks, and don't have the time to process weighty intellectual thoughts. We like, share, and retweet on a whim in a moment. Ideally, your social media should register in the four emotional areas:

1. **Happy.** We want to feel happy about what we purchase. In fact, we have a fear that we will be unhappy. People also love a good laugh. Social media content that taps into the happy factor and does it well is going to be popular.
2. **Sad.** We've already talked about sadvertising, and how brands are trying to tug at bittersweet feelings and tears to get people to connect to their brands. When it works, it's powerful. When it doesn't, it makes people angry about feeling guilty or pandered to. Use this cautiously.
3. **Fear.** Customers are highly motivated by fear, even more than they are by pleasure. Avoiding pain is what the entire airline industry is built on, frankly. You should take time to list and understand the fears of your audience. Create social content that dispels those fears.

4. **Anger.** Avoid making people angry. This might work well for politics or other divisive arenas, but for most brands, angry customers aren't a good thing. Even if you are trying to use anger to motivate customers towards good behavior about some injustice, long-held anger is like adrenaline, and dissipates quickly while wearing out the person.

An interesting infographic by Go-Gulf can serve as a caution for some types of emotional content. While some sad content has gone viral, the general rule of thumb is to stay away from the negative emotions and go for those that make people feel happy, hopeful, and joyful.



Image from Go-Gulf

Remember: You're not answering their intellectual needs. You're hitting one of their four emotions.

Use repetition in your social media.

We've talked about how repetition is important in helping people remember our content, but repetition has value for marketers who want to tap into that system one thinking. When it comes to system one emotional decisions, repetition can seem like truth. The more our brain hears something, the more we start to assume it is true (just watch the political ads on TV).

By choosing a theme or idea for a social media campaign, you can repeat that theme in unique ways and not just repeat the same identical social media content. Whether it's on Twitter, Facebook, or YouTube, you can hammer home an idea by repeating it from every possible angle.

1. Choose the theme or idea.
2. Create content that approaches that theme or idea from different perspectives.
3. Publish regularly so your social media fans begin to attribute that to you.
4. Do not publish the same identical content repeatedly.

Microcar manufacturer Smart Car decided to use repetition and have a little fun with its followers on Twitter. They encouraged people to take a selfie and submit it. What they did next was clever:



They had fun with the selfies while also getting their product in the picture. It was both a great use of a repetition (a theme) and bringing their biggest fans into the fun.

By repeating your theme or idea throughout your social media, but in different ways, the repetition is implanted in your customer's mind and the next time they need you, there you are, at the front of their mind. People rely on familiarity rather than logic. Repetition makes you familiar.

"A reliable way to make people believe in falsehoods is frequent repetition, because familiarity is not easily distinguished from the truth."

— Daniel Kahneman

Know whether you're answering needs or wants.

Needs and wants aren't the same thing. There can be overlap.

Needs are those things that are real and functional. Your customer needs food. They need soap. They need help with their website. Wants, on the other hand, are more like emotional needs, things the customer can do without but still desires. Sometimes the customer doesn't know (consciously or unconsciously) whether their need is a real need or an emotional one.

The first stage in your customer's buying decision process is that of recognizing a need.

If your customer does not feel they need what you have to offer, they go nowhere. Emotional social messages best tap into your customer's wants, which often are motivated by emotion in the first place. When you answer an emotional need and want with an emotional social message, you can convince your customer that it's a real need.

This plays into the emotion of fear, too. Fear has a role to play in needs and wants. By understanding fears, you can also better understand both needs and wants. Let's look at Charmin's Twitter feed as an example. Clearly, people need their product. Is it possible Charmin can also tap into, uh, fear?



A recognized need, a sympathetic nod towards a fear held by parents, and a little humor to boot. Nice work, Charmin.

Tap into blissful ignorance for happy customers.

Sometimes we tell our customers too much.

You'll always have the customer who wants to know everything about the products they buy, but many customers would prefer to not know everything. It's called the "blissful ignorance effect" and it hinges on customers who are already committed to buying something. They don't want to know any unnecessary information that might make them question their decision to buy.

Check out this tweet from Delta. Instead of tweeting the safety record of the 737, or how much legroom you'll get, they instead go for happy.



Remember, information addresses system two thinking, the intellectual side, while less information allows the emotions to take over.

If you have a die-hard and loyal customer fan base always lining up for your product, you may want to keep details sparse and let them enjoy the happy emotions that come from not knowing everything about it. When creating social media content for already popular products, remember that people want to feel happy about their decision to buy and are, once committed, only concerned about justifying their purchases by playing up the positives while downplaying the negatives.

Help your customer achieve buyer happiness. Help them with the justification, convince them that they were right. Talk to their emotions instead of their heads.

Feed identities, not build relationships.

An emotional connection might end up being a one-off purchase by a customer, or a long-term relationship. The concept of building a relationship between a human being (your customer) and a brand (an entity) is impossible. At most, you're misusing the word relationship when what you mean to say is loyalty. A customer can have long-term loyalty with a brand, but it cannot relate to it.

That seems like splitting hairs, but it is important. If you are creating social media to create relationships, you will be disappointed in your return. But if you build to create loyalty, or even identity, you won't be disappointed.

Instead of asking "how can I form a relationship with customers?" ask "how can I make my customers loyal to me?"

The answer? Feed their identity.

As we saw in the Motista study, social media followers build identities around the products and brands they use. Help them by creating identities they can latch onto and share in their social media. According to Go-Gulf, 68% of social media users share content to show others who they are and what they care about.

Let's use Delta again, and look at a recent tweet. What identity are they feeding?



They are feeding nostalgia, but they are also giving people who love vintage airplanes and cars something to retweet in their feed.

You should know your audience already, and know what they identify with. Create social content that feeds that identity and allows them to easily share it to tell others who they are all about.

Watch out for adrenaline overload.

Word of warning about overuse of emotional hooks: It gets old, quickly.

Having too much adrenaline pumping for a long time is harmful for the human body. When it comes to tugging at emotional heartstrings, we can easily wear our customer out if we do it all of the time. There is always a place for the crisp, clean, and forthright copy that promotes your product's benefits here) without being emotional. Interspersing that with periodic emotional hits is better than all emotion, all the time.

It's all part of being a good social media publisher. You mix up curation, conversation, and emotional content so that your audience is never bored and never worn weary.

Why Connecting Emotionally Works

When it comes to understanding how we connect emotionally to advertisements, we need to understand a few things about how we process information and how we make decisions with that information. Once you understand how important it is that your social media content connect emotionally to your audience, you'll better understand why and how to do it.

Fast and slow thinking.

Psychologist Daniel Kahneman, 2002 Nobel Prize winner, showed that we are not rational beings in terms of how we make choices. In his book *Thinking Fast and Slow*, he demonstrated how we have two systems at work in our minds: an intuitive and automatic "system one", and a lazier and calculating "system two."

System one is the fast thinking, while system two is the slow thinking. System one relies on gut instinct, emotion, cravings, unconscious decision-making, or even prejudice, while system two is conscious, deliberate, and rational. System two rationalizes system one's ideas, and often overrules them. Most of us think we are using system two, making all of our decisions carefully and deliberately.

We don't.

We use both systems when thinking, but we try as hard as we can to avoid slow thinking as much as possible. We're processing a lot of information and decision-making every day, and we rely on our "gut instincts" to help us out. So what does that mean?

Your customer isn't making decisions logically, at least most of the time. They are relying on emotions and instinct when it comes to deciding what to buy or what to read. By creating content on social media that triggers that emotional response, you are tapping into this and understanding that emotional content requires less work for your audience to decide about.

Warning: this can go both ways. Your poorly made emotional content can turn your audience off violently, too.

While there are still detractors that believe it is impossible, or not useful, to connect with customers emotionally on social media, what we know about the human brain and how we make decisions should tell us otherwise. People aren't looking to be best friends with a brand, but it is still possible to create social media content periodically that hits an emotional bulls-eye and helps your customer decide to buy.

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CHAPTER 4

How To Make Writing For Social Media Work For Your Business



So you're browsing Twitter and see a post and think, "Huh, that's cool." Then you hop over to Facebook and see that same post. Later when you're on LinkedIn, the post pops up, word for word, image for image. Then the post follows you again to Google+.

Pretty soon a social media post you once found cool or interesting seems to be taking over your newsfeed and becoming a pain in your side.

There seems to be a misconception that by sharing one basic social message on multiple social media platforms, companies are doing their job and being active on social media. While there is some truth to this, writing for social media is so much more than that.

Really, if you're going to take the time to be active on social media, you may as well learn how to write for social media in a way that will bring you the results you've been looking for.

Tailor Your Social Media Messages

Seeing the same message on multiple platforms is a sign of a company's laziness or ignorance.

When writing for social media, you need to tailor your social messages to each audience you are trying to reach on each network.

Everyone has a social network preference, and what draws them to that network makes them unique. Each person has a favorite network because they like to be communicated with in a specific way, a specific voice. Communicating with people on Facebook in a way you would communicate with your audience on Twitter will definitely turn off your Facebook fans.

Takeaways:

1. Writing for social media—done really well—means sharing more than one basic message on multiple networks.
2. There are intricacies of each social network to which you can optimize your messages to be super effective.

Approach Your Audience In The Way They Prefer



Even if your audience uses multiple social networks, when they go to a certain platform, they are expecting to be communicated with in a specific way. Here's how to write awesome messages for some of the biggest social networks:

Planning for Twitter.

People who prefer Twitter like:

- Short and simple messages, straight to the point.
- Links so they can get more information.
- Hashtags help group the message to a group of related conversations.

How to write for Twitter:

Attention-getters: With the fast timeline, people will easily scroll by your post. Get them to stop by grabbing their attention. Facts, questions, and useful information are great ways to nab attention.

Images: Buffer found that sharing images on Twitter increases retweets by 150%. Images are helpful because they can get a complex message across in one take. If you want to increase your chances for a higher engagement rate, try incorporating images in your tweets.

Calls to action: Let your audience know what they should do with your tweet. Whether it's simply absorbing a tidbit of useful information or clicking a link to buy your product, direct your audience with a call to action.

Links: Don't try to cram a ton of information into your tweet. Since Twitter only allows 140 characters, use a link to direct your followers to your content.

Keep it short: Avoid using 140 characters on Twitter. It's best to leave about 20 characters for your audience to reply to your tweet.

Hashtags: Hashtags help users to easily search Twitter for areas of interest. They are a great way to join in a conversation already happening or organize a conversation, like a Twitter Chat.

Use hashtags responsibly:

Try not to use more than 2 hashtags per post (otherwise it looks like spam).

Make sure the hashtags are relevant to your topic.

Search the hashtag before you use it. Don't misuse the hashtag. Also, make sure it's a conversation you want to join.

Planning for Facebook.

People who prefer Facebook like:

- A personal touch. They want to know you're a real person.
- Belonging to a group or community of people. Keep in mind, people often use Facebook because they feel the need to belong.

How to write for Facebook:

Stories: Tell a story to connect with fans and make them want to read more. Try to appeal to their emotions.

Ask questions and get feedback: This helps people feel they belong to a group and their opinion is valued.

Videos: Videos work much better than images because your fans don't have to click a link to get more information. Plus, Facebook has an instant play feature on videos, which makes it hard to keep scrolling once a video starts playing because it sucks the audience in.

Links: Once again, links are important because it takes the audience right to your content. On Facebook, you can update your image for a link post. Make sure the image you choose has a purpose: Remember, emotions are a great way to appeal to your Facebook audience.

Planning for Pinterest.

People who prefer Pinterest like:

Stress relief: People go on Pinterest to relieve stress and organize things.

Simplicity: Pinterest is an elegant, simple design that people love.

Interaction: Pinterest makes it easy to discover new boards and engage with others when they re-pin your pin.

How to write for Pinterest:

Images: Images are everything on Pinterest. Make sure your images on Pinterest are top notch. If they're lacking, your audience will scroll right by.

Get creative: Display and promote your product or service in a unique and creative way. Keep in mind, 9 out of 10 Pinterest users are women. So, if your target audience strongly consists of women, it's worth looking into a Pinterest account.

Planning for LinkedIn.

People who prefer LinkedIn like:

Professional growth opportunities: People will often search LinkedIn for new professional opportunities.

Continual learning: Many search LinkedIn for professional posts that can help with their career.

Networking: This is basically why LinkedIn exists. Frequent LinkedIn users enjoy discussing niche industry topic with their peers, all the while making new connections.

How to write for LinkedIn:

Engagement: Engage with your LinkedIn audience, ask questions, and host a discussion.

Validation: Provide your followers with proof that you are knowledgeable about a specific topic.

Planning for Google+

People who prefer Google+ like:

Connecting: Google+ makes it easy to connect with people who have similar interests. It's great for meeting new people.

Consolidation: Google+ is an all-in-one kind of network. It allows you to have long conversations like Facebook, share quality photos like Instagram, connect with likeminded people like LinkedIn, video chat like Skype, and more.

How to write for Google+:

Highlight your niche: In your messaging, discuss the niche of your content and include tags. This will attract like-minded people.

Hashtags: Just like Twitter, hashtags help users to easily search Google+ for areas of interest. They are a great way to join in a conversation already happening or organize a conversation.

Take a unique approach when posting to each social network. Share your content in a way not only your audience in general will appreciate, but in a way the audience you are reaching on the specific platform will be attracted to.

The Content You Share Will Perform Differently Depending On The Network

Different content does well on different social platforms—it all depends on the audience you are trying to reach and what the post is.

For example, our blog post, *How To Actually Make Money Blogging*, is performing well, but had a relatively low engagement rate on Twitter. However, on LinkedIn, the post had our highest engagement rate ever on that network.

The highest engagement rate on the post for Twitter was 1 percent, while the engagement rate for that post on LinkedIn was 4.82 percent.

This is the type of posts that professionals would be more interested in, hence why it performed better on LinkedIn.

Takeaway: *It's just fine to share the same piece of content on multiple social networks. Go into it understanding on which social network it is likely to perform best, and optimize your message accordingly.*

Turn Your Content Into Social Media Friendly Content



Once you have the main bulk of your content, like your completed blog post, writing for social media is easy, right?

Yes and no.

Yes, writing for social media is easier because you know what content you will be sharing. However, it can get tricky. While sharing the headline and header image of a post once or twice is fine, you need to spice it up and make the social media posts original to each network you are posting to. Engage your audience by providing them with tidbits of what they can expect from your post.

Now, you're not changing your tone or brand voice when writing for social media or different social media platforms. Keep consistency through your company's brand voice and tone, just **change the way the message is *perceived* on each platform**. Adapt to your audience, appeal to them.

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CHAPTER 5

The Best Times To Post

CHAPTER 5

What Are The Best Times To Post On Social Media?



The best times to post on social media are when the people you want to see the content are on the network.

That's the easy answer.

And not a useful answer.

After digging around the Internet a bit, I thought I'd compile some research I found from within the past year, breaking it up into more palatable chunks of information. I'll be referencing several sources in this, including:

1. Neil Patel's research and compiled data on Quick Sprout
2. Elle & Co. compiled research
3. SurePayroll's compiled research
4. Huffington Post's compiled research
5. Buffer's research
6. Fast Company's compiled research
7. TrackMaven's research
8. Chron's compiled research
9. Kissmetrics' compiled research
10. Buffer's compiled research

Let's take a look.

How Do You Factor In Time Zones?

Did you know that Arizona doesn't practice daylight savings time?

It's timing nuances like these that make finding the perfect times to post even harder. Before we delve into the best times to post on social media, let's take a look at the best time zones.

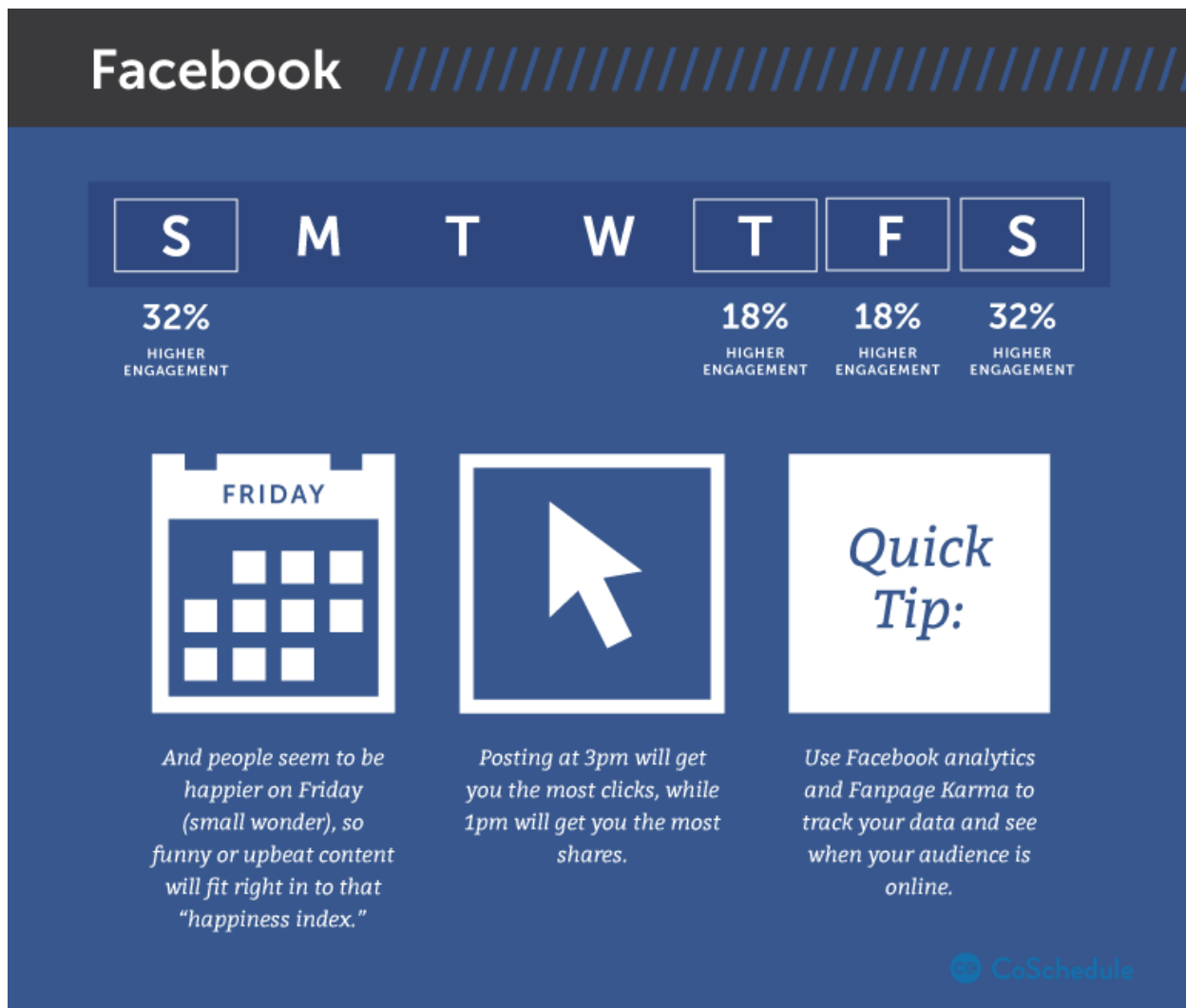
50% of the U.S. population is in the Eastern Time Zone, and the Eastern and Central combined represent almost 80% of the U.S. population.

In theory, the Eastern or Central timezone would be the best time to base off for a United States audience to reach the most people through your social media shares.

For those of you who have audiences outside the United States, demographic research like this is simple enough with Google Analytics to understand *where* your own audience is online, giving you the opportunity to target their time zones accordingly.

There are also a few tools to help you find when *your own* audience is online and using the social networks you're concentrating on. Read on to learn more.

When Is The Best Time To Post On Facebook?



Answer: The best times to post on Facebook are 1–4 p.m. late into the week and on weekends.

Saturday and Sunday at 12–1 p.m.

Thursday and Friday at 1–4 p.m.

Wednesday at 3 p.m.

Quick Sprout: The best days of the week to publish to Facebook are any day during the workweek, with engagement being the highest on Thursday and Friday. Engagement is about 3.5% lower on Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday. And people seem to be happier on Friday (small wonder), so funny or upbeat content will fit right in to that "happiness index."

According to Patel, early afternoon is the optimal time to post on Facebook. 1 p.m. will get you the most shares, while 3 p.m. will get you the most clicks. Anytime between 9 a.m.–7 p.m. will always be better than content shared outside of that window.

Elle & Co.: The best days to publish on Facebook are Saturday and Sunday with the peak times being 1 p.m. on those days. These posts get 32% more engagement than workweek posts. According to Elle and Co, the best time to post on Facebook is between 1–3 p.m.

SurePayroll: Wednesdays at 3 p.m. is the best day to post on Facebook. But on average, 1–4 p.m. had the highest click-throughs. The worst times are weekends before 8 a.m. and after 8 p.m.

Fast Company: The best times to share on Facebook are 1–4 p.m., and the peak time is Wednesdays at 3 p.m. Overall, Fast Company says that the worst time to post is after 8 p.m. on weekends.

Huffington Post: Thursday and Friday are the best days to post on Facebook. Monday and Wednesday get the lowest engagement rates. Generally speaking, the best time to post on Facebook is between 1–3 p.m. and more broadly 9 a.m. through 7 p.m. In addition, Facebook use spikes by 10 percent on Fridays.

Kissmetrics: The best day to share on Facebook is Saturday, and shares tend to spike around noon and a little after 7 p.m. The best time to post on Facebook is noon.

Buffer: Engagement rates are 18% higher on Thursdays and Fridays. The best time to post on Facebook has been up for some debate with stats ranging from 1 p.m. to get the most shares to 3 p.m. to get the most clicks, and anytime between before dinner generally. Stats seem to fall anytime after dinner, and posting before work is a long shot.

Tools to help you track when your audience is on Facebook.

Facebook Analytics:

Right in your brands page in Facebook, go to Insights and click on Reach to see the data of when your viewers are online.



Fanpage Karma:

This tool helps you track several different key performance indicators of your Facebook pages. Finding the best time to reach your unique audience is one of them.

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1	The Little Things	19.1	316	2.09 %	29.8	37
2	Buyer & Seller	15.1	1,190	0.57 %	184.3	17
3	Real Estate	15.1	146	0.78 %	1.1	4

Reports with just one click

The bubble chart shows performance across days of the week (Mon-Sun) and hours (12-24). Bubbles of varying sizes and colors represent different metrics, with larger bubbles indicating higher values. The chart shows a general trend of higher activity during the day and on weekends.

Always up-to-date

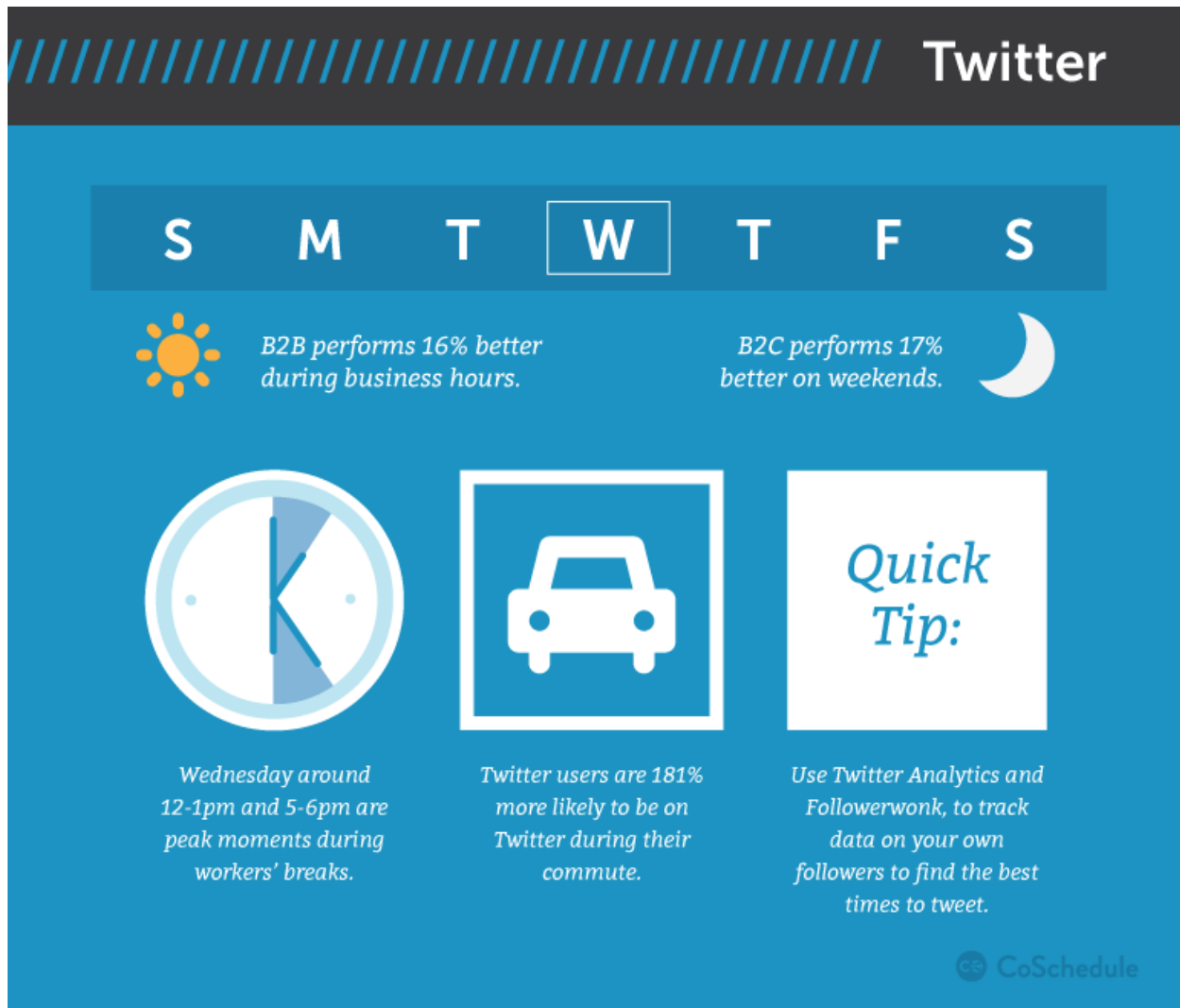
Fanpage Karma alert

New Post on Mashable's Facebook Wall

"Social Media Day is just three weeks away. How will you celebrate? Share your..."

[see on Facebook](#)

When Are The Best Times To Post On Twitter?



Answer: The optimal times to tweet are 12–3 p.m., with a peak best time at 5 p.m. During the workweek is the best, though some niches might have more active audiences on the weekend.

Wednesday at noon and 5–6 p.m.

Monday–Friday at 12–3 p.m. and 5 p.m.

Experiment with 2–3 a.m., 6–7 a.m., and 9–10 p.m.

Quick Sprout: The best day to tweet depends on whether you are business-to-business (B2B) or business-to-customer (B2C). If you're B2B, you'll do better tweeting during the workweek, getting more more engagement than on weekends. However, individuals tend to interact with Twitter more on weekends, so if you're B2C, you'll definitely want to be tweeting on the weekends, too.

According to Patel, tweeting around 5 p.m. will get you the most retweets, but 12 p.m. and 6 p.m. will bring you more click-throughs. Twitter gets used a lot during work breaks and the commute to and from work.

Elle & Co.: The best day to post to Twitter is Wednesday with the best times to post between 12–1 p.m. and 6–7 p.m. You'll get more retweets during these times.

SurePayroll: The best days are Monday–Thursday. The best times are between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. on the optimal days. Anytime between 9 a.m.–3 p.m. are peak times of Twitter use.

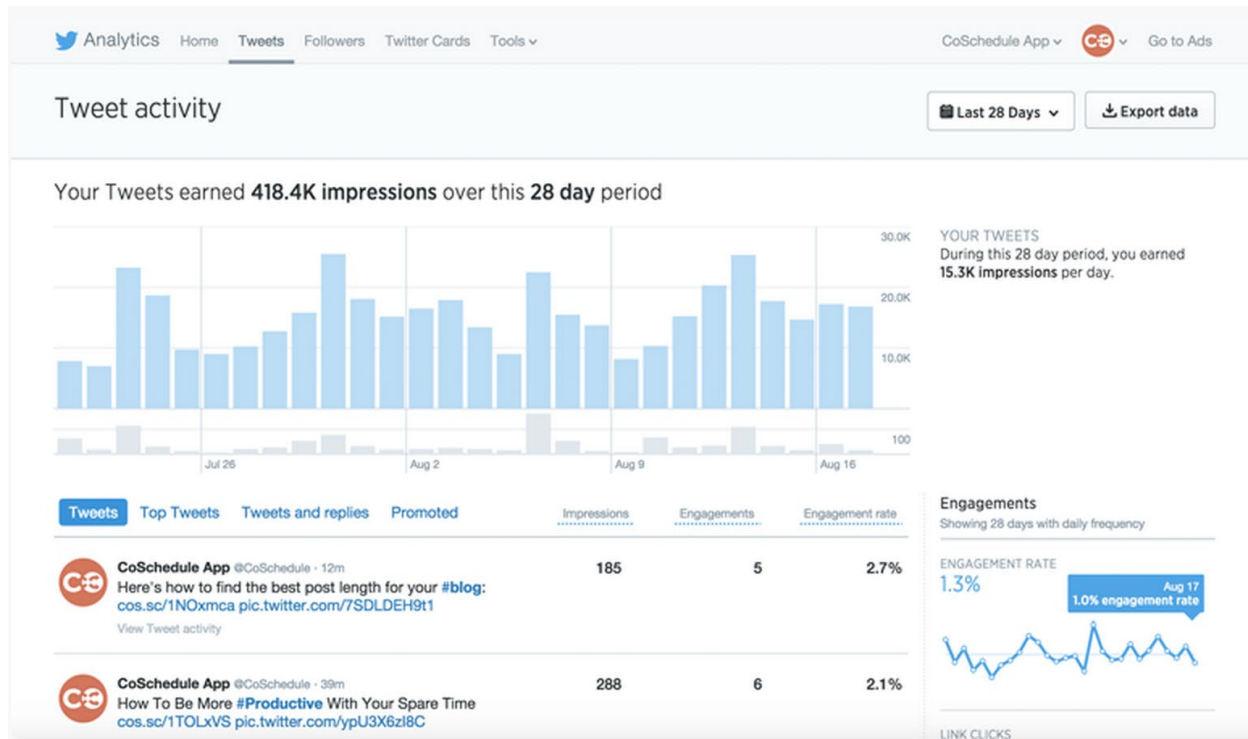
Huffington Post: For maximum retweets, post at 12 p.m. and 5 p.m. The best days to post for B2B organizations is Monday–Friday, and for B2C it's the weekends and Wednesdays.

Kissmetrics: The best time to tweet is at 5 p.m. and the best days to tweet are midweek and weekends with the best day to tweet being Wednesday.

Buffer: Dan Zarrella's research shows engagement is 17% higher on weekends. Click-through rates are highest on Wednesdays for B2B audiences while weekends work best for B2C. Retweets are highest around 5 p.m. while click-throughs are best at noon and 6 p.m. Recent research shows tweets get the most clicks from 2–3 a.m., most retweets at 9–10 p.m., and the ultimate best times to post for clicks worldwide is 6–7 a.m.

Tools to help you monitor your best times to post on Twitter.

Twitter Analytics:



Followerwonk:

This tool from Moz helps you discover where your followers are located and when they tweet to help you focus your social sharing during the right time zones and when they actively use Twitter.

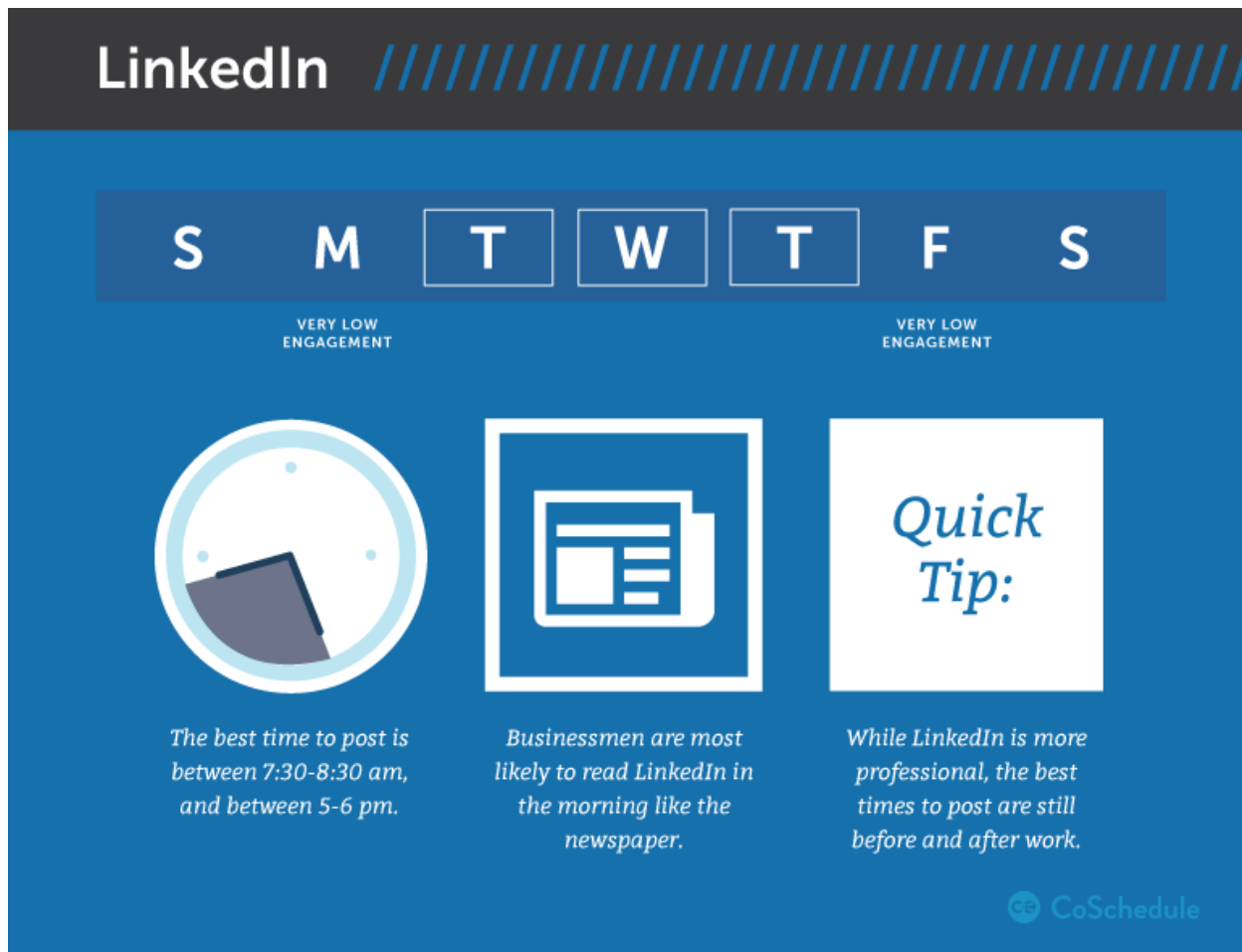
The screenshot shows the Followerwonk website, a Moz app. The header includes navigation links: Search bios, Compare users, Analyze, Track followers, and Sort followers. The main heading is 'Twitter Analytics: Find, Analyze, and Optimize for Social Growth'. Below this, a search bar is visible. A list of followers is displayed, including profiles like CNN, BuzzFeed, and Tony Roche, with columns for influence, tweets, and followers. A sidebar on the right lists key features of the tool.

Followerwonk helps you explore and grow your social graph.

- Dig deeper into Twitter analytics: Who are your followers? Where are they located? When do they tweet?
- Find and connect with new influencers in your niche.
- Use super-actionable visualizations to compare your social graph to others.
- Easily share your reports with the world.

A prominent 'SIGN IN WITH TWITTER' button is located at the bottom right.

When Should You Post On LinkedIn?



Answer: Midweek posting is optimal from 5–6 p.m.

Tuesday at 10–11 a.m.

Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday at 7:30–8:30 a.m., 12 p.m., and 5–6 p.m.

Quick Sprout: The best days to post on LinkedIn are during the workweek, preferably Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays. The most clicks and shares happen on Tuesdays.

According to Patel, the best time to post is during the workday, which makes sense if you understand that LinkedIn is the “professional” social network. Between 7–8 a.m. and 5–6 p.m. are good times to post. Tuesdays, between 10–11 a.m. may also be a sweet spot.

Elle & Co.: The best days to post on LinkedIn are Tuesday and Thursday, while SurePayroll broadened that to include Tuesday through Thursday.

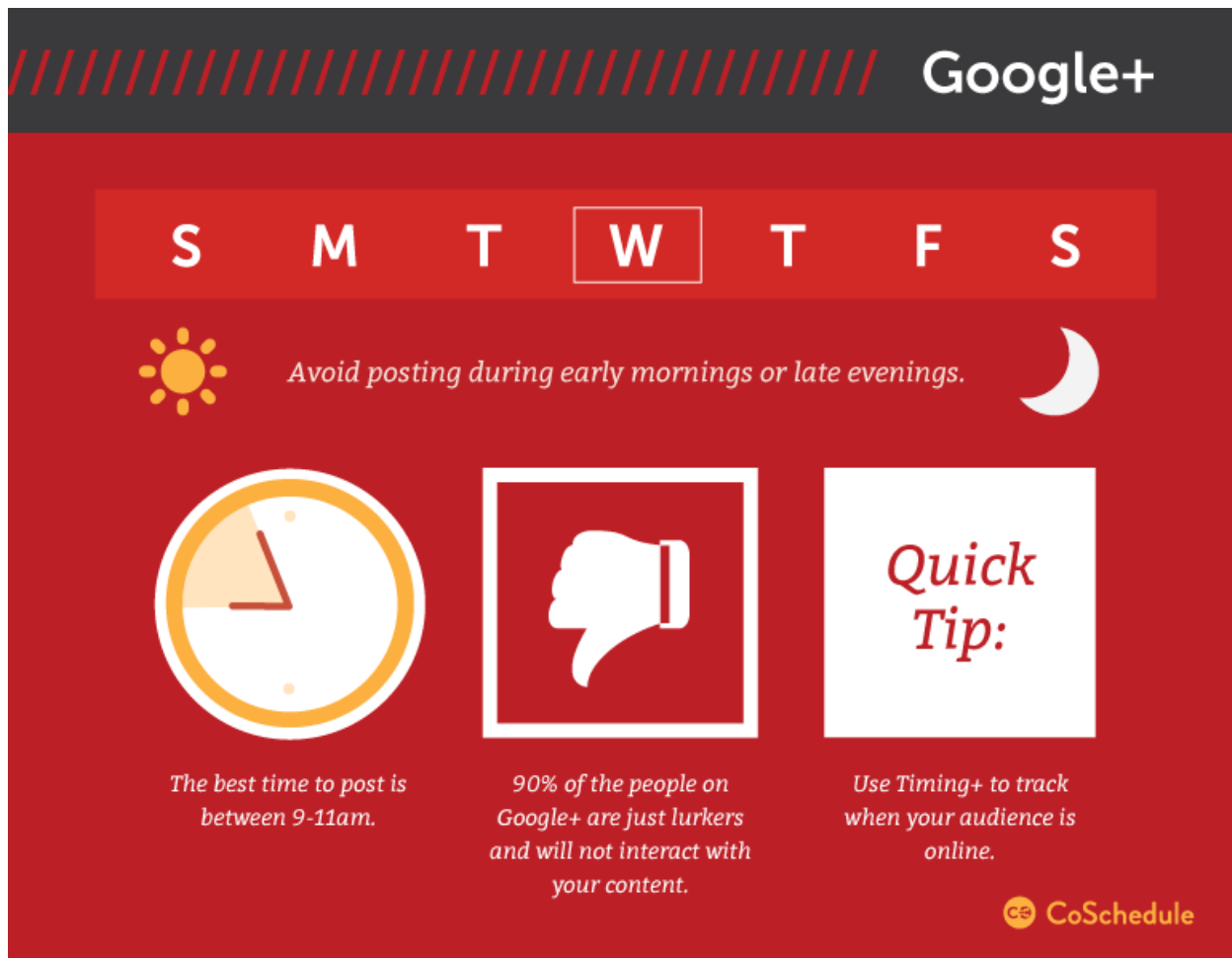
According to Elle & Co., the best time to post is between 7:30–8:30 a.m., and between 5–6 p.m.

Huffington Post: The best days to post on LinkedIn are Tuesday through Thursday during work hours. In addition, Tuesday 10 a.m.–11 a.m. are known to get the most clicks and shares. The worst time to post content on LinkedIn is between the hours of 10 p.m.–6 a.m.

Fast Company: The best time to post on LinkedIn is Tuesday though Thursday with the optimal time to post being noon and 5–6 p.m. and the worst time is after 8 p.m.

Chron: The best times to post on LinkedIn are early evening starting between 5–6 p.m. The worst time to post is between the hours of 10 p.m.–6 a.m. The best days to post on LinkedIn are midweek from Tuesday–Thursday. An assumption is that Monday is bad because people are just getting back into the work week, and people are leaving early for the weekend on Fridays.

When Is The Best Time To Post On Google+?



Answer: The beginning of the workday morning is optimal for Google+.

Wednesday at 9 a.m.

Weekdays at 9–11 a.m.

Quick Sprout: The workweek is the best time to post to Google+, and not the weekends. Wednesday posts fared a bit better than other workdays. According to Patel, 9–11 a.m. was the best time to post to Google+, with late mornings generally doing better as far as engagement was concerned. SurePayroll agreed with those findings.

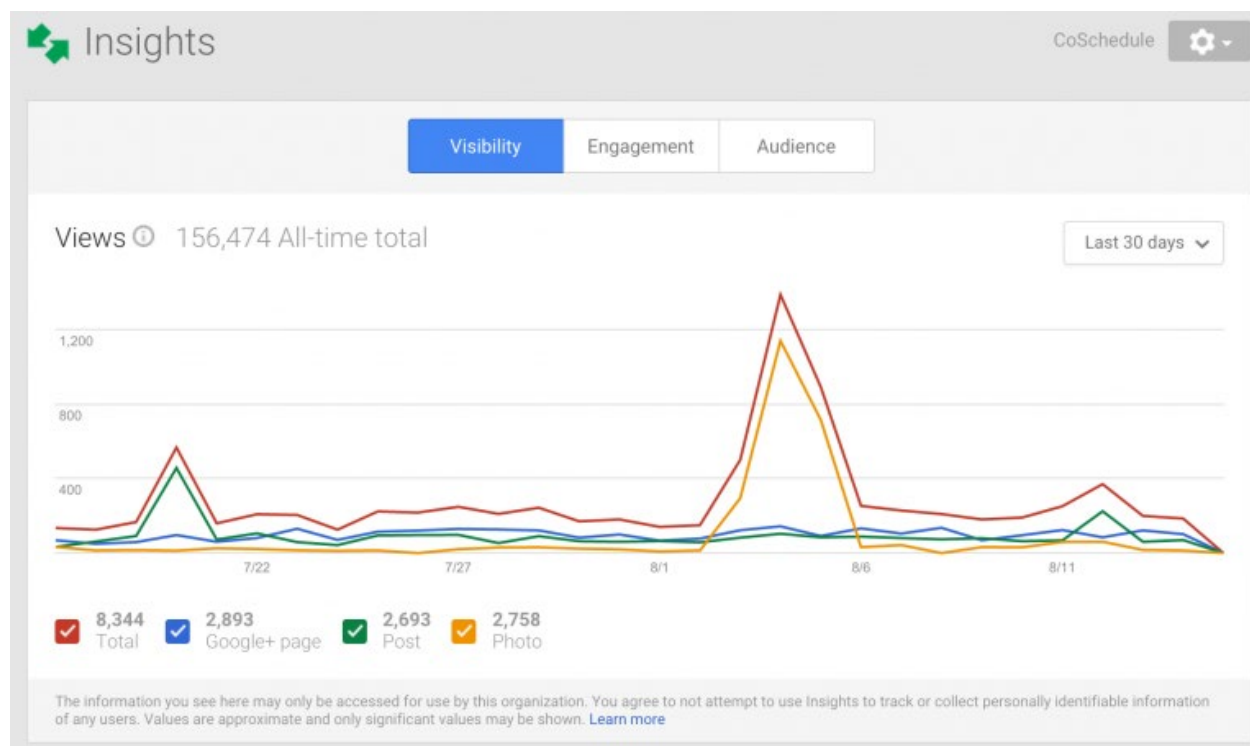
SurePayroll: 9–10 a.m. is the best time with the peak time being Wednesdays at 9 am. The worst time to post on Google+ is early mornings and evenings.

Fast Company: The best time to post on Google+ is during the workday since it's a professional social media tool. The best time to post is from 9–10 a.m. with the peak time to post being Wednesday at 9 a.m. The worst time to post on Google+ is in the early morning and evening.

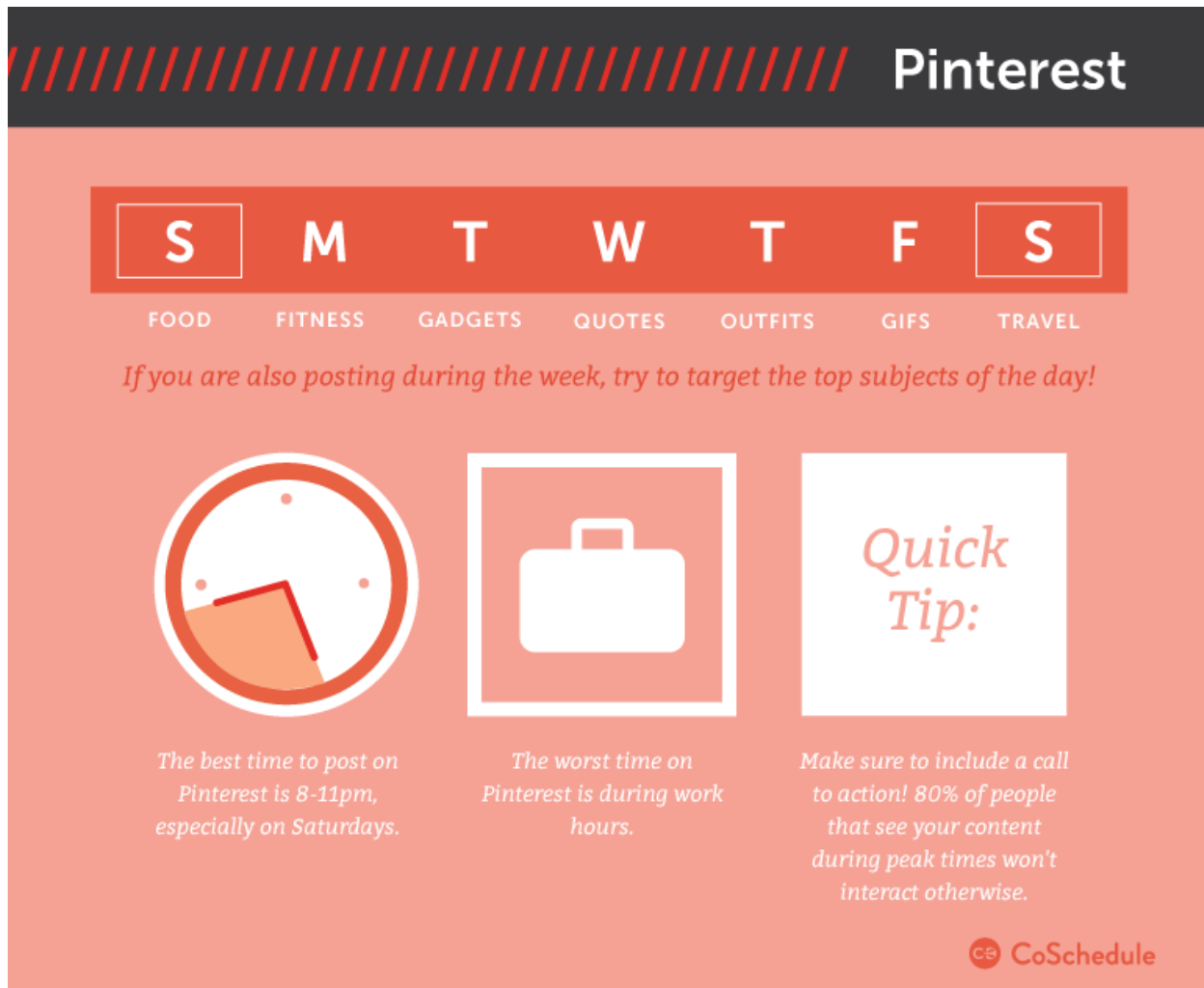
When is your Google+ audience looking at your content?

Google+ Analytics:

Liz Jostes has some good advice on measuring the impact of the content you share on Google+. Experiment with your posting times to measure their impact on your metrics.



When Are The Best Times To Post On Pinterest?



Answer: Saturdays are your best bet for reaching Pinterest users—and later at night.

Saturdays at 8–11 p.m.

Any day 2–4 a.m. and 2–4 p.m.

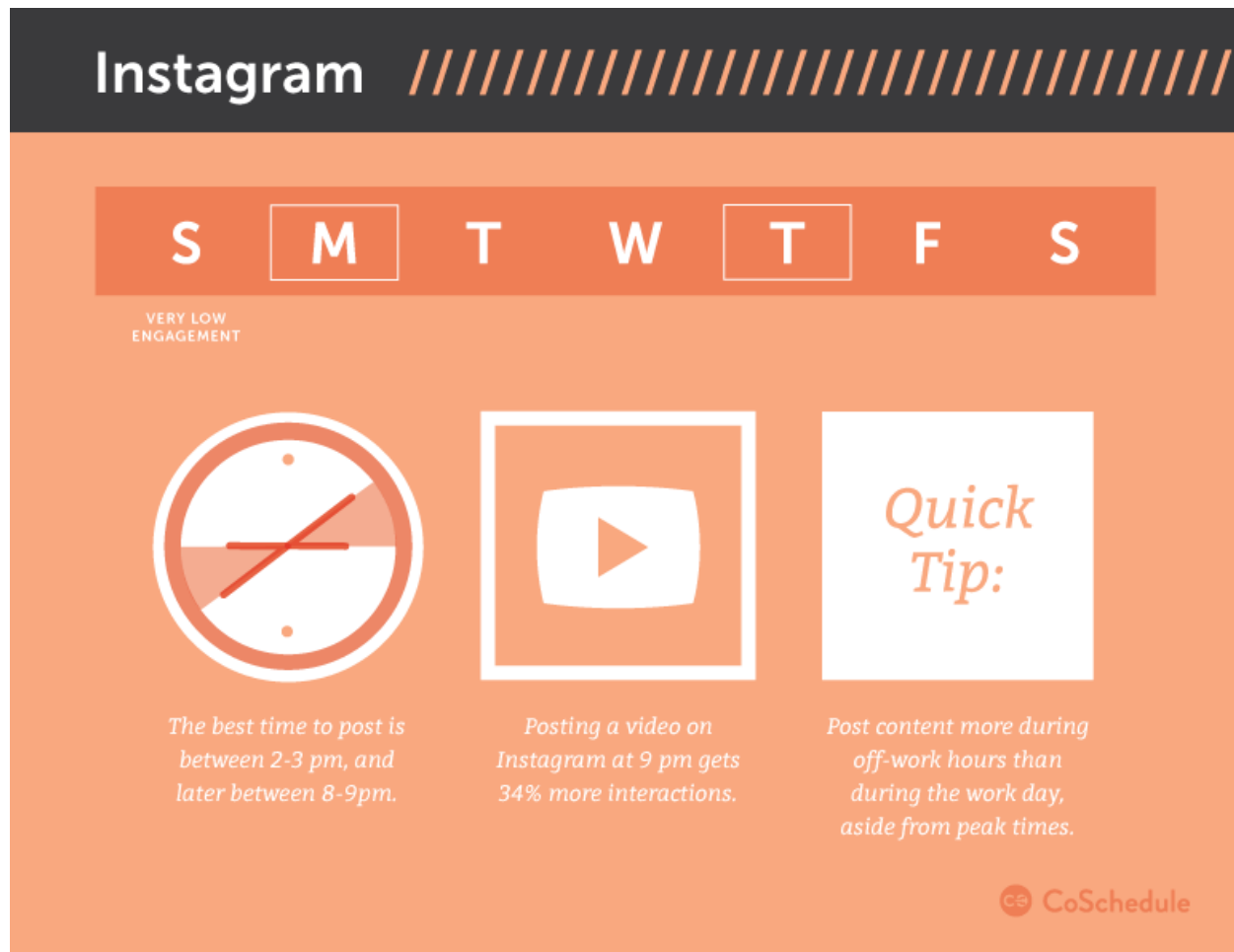
Fridays at 3 p.m.

Quick Sprout: The best day to post on Pinterest is Saturday. According to Patel, the best times to post on Pinterest are 8–11 p.m.

However, this is a conglomeration of several groups of data that show Pinterest posts doing well also between 2–4 a.m., and 2–4 p.m.

Elle & Co.: The best time to post to Pinterest is 8–11 p.m. SurePayroll agrees with the idea of Saturday morning as the best time for posting, though Fridays at 3 p.m. performs well, too.

When Should You Post On Instagram?



Answer: Instagram audiences are engaged throughout the week. Mondays should maybe get a little more attention.

Monday and Thursday at any time other than 3–4 p.m.

Videos any day at 9 p.m.–8 a.m.

Experiment with 2 a.m., 5 p.m., and Wednesday at 7 p.m.

Quick Sprout: Instagram engagement is fairly steady, with slight increases on Monday and decreases on Sunday. Overall, though, any day of the week is good. According to Patel, who noted that weekday engagement was

fairly similar, the same could be said for time of day. Most Instagram users engage with Instagram content more during off-work hours than during the workday.

Elle & Co.: The best day to post on Instagram is Monday. Posting throughout the day would be fine since Instagram users are consistently active. However, there is a slight dip in activity from 3–4 p.m.

Huffington Post: The best time to post is 2 a.m. and 5 p.m. The peak time and day is Wednesday at 7 p.m.

TrackMaven: The best time to post videos is between 9 p.m.–8 a.m. with picture posts consistent throughout the week with slight peaks on Thursday and Monday.

Network Summaries

Getting away from the specific days and times, each network is better understood by how it is used.

Facebook is broadly used on mobile and desktop, at work and at home. It really depends on the audience as far as who and how it is used.

Twitter is a hard nut to crack, and definitely audience-dependant, like Facebook. It is often treated like an RSS feed, and something to read during down times like commutes, breaks, and so on.

LinkedIn is for professionals, and they tend to use it around work hours.

Google+ is for a more tech-savvy audience who is most active in the morning.

Pinterest users seem to like to make network activity an evening sport, much like sitting down to TV in the evening during their free time.

Instagram users are on a platform meant for mobile, and that means they tend to use the network all the time, any time.

How To Use This Data

As you can see, not everyone agrees as to the best timing for social posts, and when they do, it is often because they are referring to the same source. Even using data doesn't provide a perfect answer, because it doesn't take into account:

- Different industries
- Different audiences
- Different goals (e.g. clicks vs. reshares)

So, putting this data to work for you in an attempt to find optimal posting time involves three possible outcomes:

1. Pick one and stick to it.

You might decide to use one of the sources listed in this post, and stick to what they found. Consistency in approach has its benefits; certainly your audience gets used to what to expect.

However, you may not see the success you could. Maybe you picked the wrong one, or are limiting yourself too much.

2. Use a general approach of several.

You could use a broad swath of ideal posting times, mixing together the days and times of several of the data sources in the hopes of finding a fit by covering a wider range. For those of you wanting to do this, we provided a summary that combined the results of the data covered.

This approach might work, but you'll have more ground to cover and more work to do in order to create and publish posts to cover larger blocks of time.

3. Find the one that works for you.

By this, you might start with one set of research, stick to it, measure it, and note the results. Then adjust that with different days and times, and do the same measurement and data recording.

In other words, test it out. See which one works for you. Not every industry is the same. Patel even noted, for example, that the fashion industry sees better success on Pinterest with a slightly different approach.

Get your free bonus guides from CoSchedule now!

CHAPTER 6

Grow Your Traffic

CHAPTER 6







How To Quadruple Your Traffic With A Social Media Editorial Calendar



A couple months ago, one of our blog posts got 31.5 times more click-throughs—a whopping 3,150% in one week—because of our social media editorial calendar.

That's way more than quadrupling your traffic. I just have no idea what the word is for getting 31.5 times more traffic.

A Real-Life Example Of How Social Media Editorial Calendar Helps Content Be Successful

							
		IMPRESSIONS	LINK CLICKS	RETWEETS	FAVORITES	REPLIES	EMAIL SHARES
DAY 1	1 ST TWEET	544	2	1	1	0	0
	2 ND TWEET	993	18	3	4	10	1
	3 RD TWEET	1,190	7	4	5	3	2
DAY 2	4 TH TWEET	508	8	1	0	2	1
DAY 3	5 TH TWEET	471	6	2	3	1	1
DAY 4	6 TH TWEET	458	6	3	2	2	2
DAY 5	7 TH TWEET	508	6	1	2	0	0
DAY 6	8 TH TWEET	638	8	3	2	0	0
DAY 7	9 TH TWEET	677	4	0	0	0	0

First Message Clicks: 2

Additional Clicks From Social Media Editorial Calendar: 63

Total Clicks For The First Week: 65

Click Increase From Social Media Editorial Calendar: 3,150%



And that was just on Twitter. We share our content on multiple social media accounts, so you can imagine the advantage a comprehensive social media editorial calendar provides our content.

The good news is that it doesn't take that long to set up your calendar, and you'll boost your shares and traffic with near-immediate results.

Of course, there are a few things to know that'll really help you out when you create your own social media editorial calendar. So let's get started.

3 Must-Haves Of Any Worthwhile Editorial Calendar

Here's the easiest way to think about your editorial calendar.



There are three phases for planning any solid editorial calendar—and you've probably already mastered the first two. Now it's time to perfect your social media editorial calendar, which falls in the third phase:

1. The broad and general calendar.

You'll need an overarching calendar to help you focus on topics that matter to your audience.

For bloggers and content marketers, it would be perfect to schedule your broad topic calendar four to six months out. That gives you the opportunity to plan new content based your audience's reaction.

You can base your general calendar on the model from traditional magazines. They typically offer these sorts of editorial calendars for an entire year to attract advertisers for specific issues.

For example, check out this [2015 editorial calendar from Forbes](#).

2. The content calendar.

The content calendar provides a lot more detail.

This is when you can look at your topics and plan the actual content types best suited to tell your specific stories—blog posts, e-books, videos, webinars, events, and whathaveyou.

At this point, you can assign the specific dates on which each piece will publish. Typically, you can work two to three months out with this calendar.

3. The distribution calendar.

The distribution calendar is your plan to share all of that content.

This is when you'll schedule your social media messages and plan your emails, newsletters, and other ways you'll share your content.

You can then assign the specific dates you'll share each of these messages, which usually takes place immediately after you're done creating the content you'll share (but you can plan this ahead of schedule with the right tools).

It's this third layer where your social media editorial calendar comes into play—it's really just a component of the distribution calendar.

What Makes Up A Good Social Media Editorial Calendar?

It seems like a lot of bloggers create great content, share it when it goes live, and then they call it good. They're all missing out on their own 3,150% more click-throughs.

Instead of taking this minimalist approach, a great social media editorial calendar maximizes exposure of your content on the social media your audience uses—without being spammy.

As you plan your content, these eight things can make or break your social media editorial calendar.

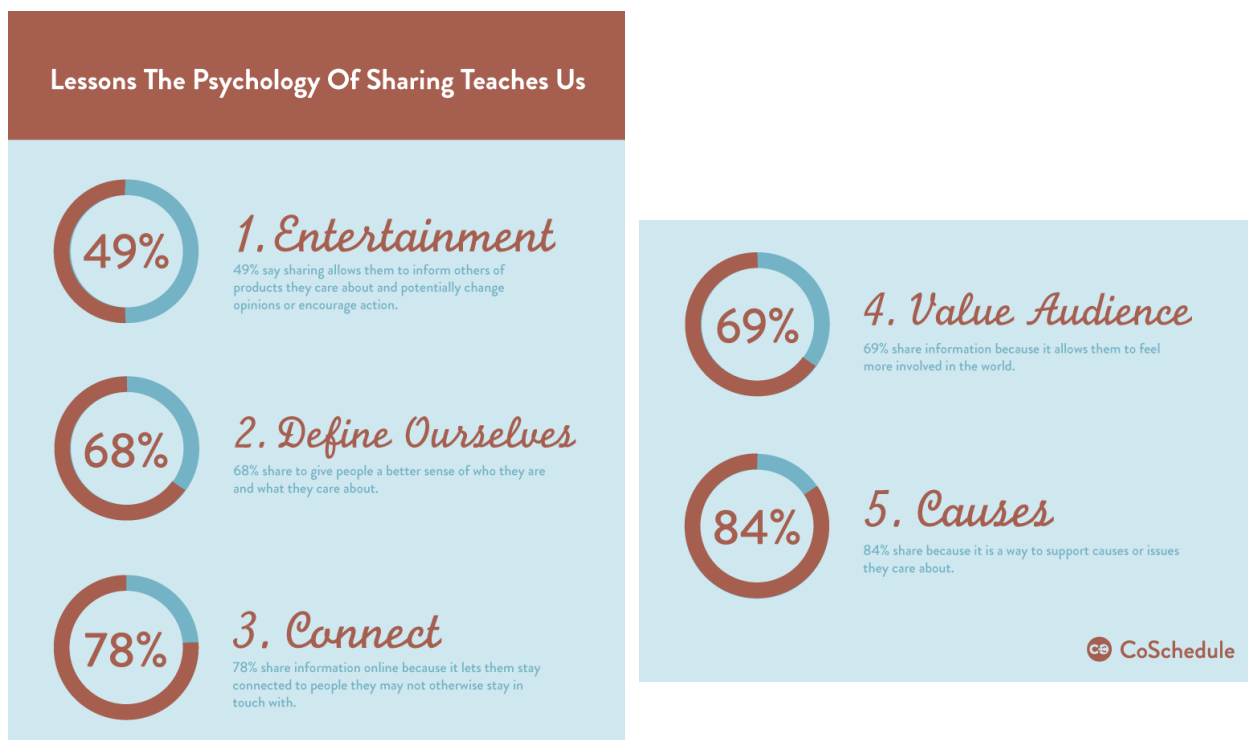
1. Understand why your audience shares your content.

Once you understand the [psychology of why your audience shares](#), you can create content in ways that are most likely to connect with them. This will

help you plan awesome content from the get-go, and help you interact—socialize—with your audience using social media.

A recent report from The New York Times Customer Insight Group found five major reasons why people share content with their networks:

1. 49% share for entertainment or to provide valuable content to others.
2. 68% share to define themselves.
3. 78% share to stay connected with those they know.
4. 69% share to feel involved in the world.
5. 84% share to support a cause.



The study also found that 73% of the survey takers shared content to understand the information more thoughtfully.

As you can imagine, there are a lot of lessons to learn from this knowledge. As you plan your social media editorial calendar, keep this in mind:

Make sure your content is extremely entertaining or useful (you get bonus points if it's both).

We took this lesson to heart when we launched our headline analyzer as a free tool to help our audience write better headlines.

Within just a few weeks, the average time on page is more than 4 and a half minutes, and our audience has tested just over 31,000 headlines.

Help them define themselves.

Create content about your different customer types and help them self-identify. That will help you, and help them connect with your content.

Help them connect with others.

Imagine the possibilities a forum—or even a larger brand ambassador program—could present for your customers to ask each other questions and learn from one another.

Value them—and let them know it.

If someone sends you a message, leaves you a comment, responds to a tweet—whatever it is—let them know that you valued their contribution.

Help them believe in something.

Again, let your advocates know you appreciate their respect. They are your rock stars, and almost nothing is better than social proof.

While some of this is more about creating awesome content in the first place, this is the backbone on which you'll build your social media editorial calendar. But without sharing good content in the first place, why would anyone want to interact with you?

2. Figure out what content works for specific social media.

Some content lends itself better for certain social networks. And—assuming you know your audience—you're using specific social media to target your customers.

Figure Out What Content Works For The Different *Social Networks*



Twitter

Share useful business tips that draw your readers in.
Share visual content with 70-100 character messages.



Facebook

Share entertaining content to engage your audience.
Share visual content with messages less than 100 characters.



LinkedIn

Share business, industry news, and thought leadership content.
Share posts with images and short messages about why people should engage with your content.



Google+

Share technical how-to content like videos, GIFs, and blog posts.
Use rich text to create paragraphs and mark up your text. Try long-form content.



Pinterest

Brianstorm ways to try new visual content that stands out.
Plan how to create awesome visuals for every share before you jump in.

Can you share your same blog post on multiple networks? Yes. Just make sure your social media messages follow these best practices to get the most traffic.

Use Twitter to share business tips and show a little personality.

Twitter has become the bloggers' and content marketers' best friend recently. That's because one of the best ways to use Twitter is to share helpful business tips.

And after all, that's exactly what you're creating in your blog posts, right?

Other content types that work well for sharing are news and things going on behind the scenes to share your business' passion.

Tip: Share useful business tips that draw your readers in.

Buffer recently found that **sharing images on Twitter increases retweets by 150%**. So definitely try images in your tweets to see if that will make a difference.

Track Social also found data to support that **70–100 characters is the ideal length for tweets** to get retweets. Imagine that: Just enough context to know what you're sharing with enough room for them to add their own individual thoughts.

Tip: Share visual content on Twitter with a 70–100-character message.

Facebook is for entertainment.

Facebook wants your useful and entertaining content—the kind that people can share with their friends and family no matter their background.

Industry *blah* content just doesn't work on Facebook.

Tip: Share entertaining content. Think of quizzes that are fun to take or comment on—and then you also get some cool data. Or think of storytelling and how inspirational or emotional stories seem to light up your newsfeed.

Facebook posts with less than 100 characters typically perform the best. Combine this with images and videos, and your posts will be even more likely to increase your engagement.

Tip: Share visual content on Facebook with a message less than 100 characters long.

Use LinkedIn to share your business and industry news.

I'm not talking cheesy press releases here that are all about you. I'm talking about valuable information like business case studies, how-to posts—examples of how to grow professionally as a person and business in your niche.

Remember that people use social media to define themselves and build relationships? LinkedIn is exactly that for professionals.

Tip: Share content that helps your audience grow professionally.

Images on LinkedIn get 98% more comments than posts without images. And apparently, video links to YouTube result in a 75% higher share rate.

Combine those visuals with shorter messages—questions, demands, or helpful takeaways you personally learned—and you'll get some interaction with your content.

Tip: Share posts with images and short messages about why your audience should engage with your content.

Google+ combines personal and professional content.

Google+ is kind of a grab bag between personal and professional. In your private circle, you can share pics of your kids, and in your public circle, you can share your professional content.

But there are exciting opportunities with Google+ from a business perspective.

Share your helpful content here like you might on LinkedIn. Imagine how-to videos, helpful GIFs to use your product, and other support content.

Early research found that Google+ content is slightly tech-driven, so your straightforward content on doing something better may be your best bet.

Tip: Share technical how-to content like videos, GIFs, and blog posts.

For Google+ posts, differentiate your content with longer rich text snippets.

Long-form posts for Google+ help you stand out for your audience—and you'll capitalize on the network's natural SEO juice. Pare down your introduction and pick two or three of your big ideas to share.

Tip: Use rich text to create paragraphs and mark up your text (bold, etc.). Try longer content to see what your audience will appreciate.

The only way to use Pinterest is with awesome visuals.

The only way to use Pinterest really well is to share extremely awesome visual content. Think of small info-images, infographics, comics, custom photography, and memes.

Tip: Brainstorm the best ways to connect with your audience visually and explore those media types. Don't get stuck on one if it's not working.

Pinterest has an audience that's looking for fun, how-to content that looks... well... awesome.

It's no secret that Pinterest is dominated by women users—80% of their entire user base—so if that is your target audience, this may be a great platform for you. Some of the best content on Pinterest involves **fashion, recipes, and DIY**.

Tip: Don't even try Pinterest unless you have awesome visual content. Plan how you'll do that before you just jump in.

3. Don't share the same message too often.

While you should share your content more than once on your social networks, it's kind of lame to use the same wording over and over.

This is an example of what a social media editorial calendar looks like in CoSchedule filtered to show only Twitter shares. You can see that we don't share the same messages too often.

You have to mix up your wording and visuals to keep your audience interested. Changing out your messages with quotes, key ideas, helpful takeaways, and more may draw in someone who ignored an earlier message.

Remember, while you can share your same content on multiple different social networks, your audience uses those for different purposes. Try to connect your social messages in the best way that is right for each network.

Don't Share The Same Message Too Often
Switch up your messages
—Especially among the different social networks.

Find Inspiration From

Headlines, Visuals, Questions, Quotes, and Takeaways

So where can you find inspiration to switch up your social messages?

Headlines

If you're like us, you go through a ton of headlines before you find the one that's just right.

We write at least 25 headlines for every single one of our posts, and we use some the best ones for our social messages. This is an easy practice to help you get more social shares from the get-go, so why not maximize the work you've already done?

Visuals

If your posts are packed with visuals, share those with tidbits of what they're about.

This not only helps your messages stand out from each other, but your audience can learn from each of the multiple lessons in your post.

Questions

Ask your audience questions to see how they'll respond. Think of straightforward and rhetorical.

Some people may even answer your questions. But this will at least catch their eye since people inherently feel the need to know the answers.

Quotes

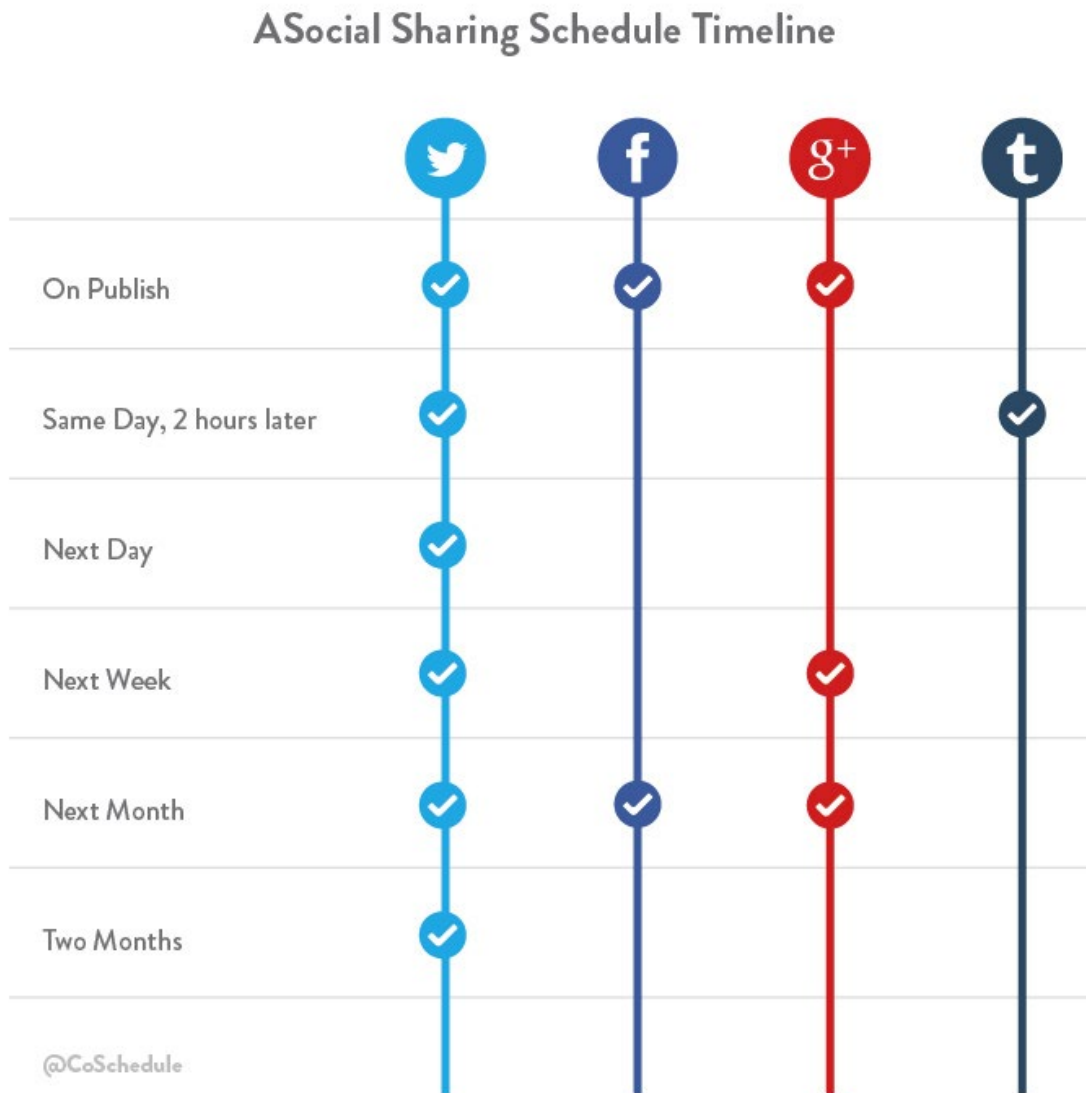
You can easily find your best quotes from your article and use them directly. Unique perspectives, analogies, and metaphors could help your message stand out.

Takeaways

Sharing helpful takeaways from your articles is a great way to share enough information to pique your audience's curiosity to click through.

4. Plan an appropriate sharing frequency.

Know how many times you should share your content on specific social media.



1. Same time as publish — Schedule your first social messages for a few of your networks. Optimize your messages for the appropriate channels.

2. Same day as publish — Plan a few more messages throughout the day for the right networks (Twitter is a good one).

3. Day after publish — Schedule a couple messages.

4. Week after publish — Give your content another subtle run with a few messages scattered throughout the next week across your different social media.

5. 30 days after publish — Schedule a reminder for yourself to check if the post was successful. If it was, set up another share queue.

6. Next _____ — The opportunity is endless. Just don't spam your fans, followers, and subscribers.

From the example earlier, we would have lost tons of click-throughs if we only shared the post once. In fact, we had the highest amount of click-throughs with our second tweet of that post!

A Real-Life Example Of How Social Media Editorial Calendar Helps Content Be Successful








IMPRESSIONS | LINK CLICKS | RETWEETS | FAVORITES | REPLIES | EMAIL SHARES

DAY 1	1 ST TWEET	544	2	1	1	0	0
	2 ND TWEET	993	18	3	4	10	1
	3 RD TWEET	1,190	7	4	5	3	2
DAY 2	4 TH TWEET	508	8	1	0	2	1
DAY 3	5 TH TWEET	471	6	2	3	1	1
DAY 4	6 TH TWEET	458	6	3	2	2	2
DAY 5	7 TH TWEET	508	6	1	2	0	0
DAY 6	8 TH TWEET	638	8	3	2	0	0
DAY 7	9 TH TWEET	677	4	0	0	0	0

Buffer found that they get 75% as many retweets for every subsequent tweet after their initial. Imagine what that could do for your social shares and traffic if you also implemented this strategy.

5. Stop sharing your content when the time is right.

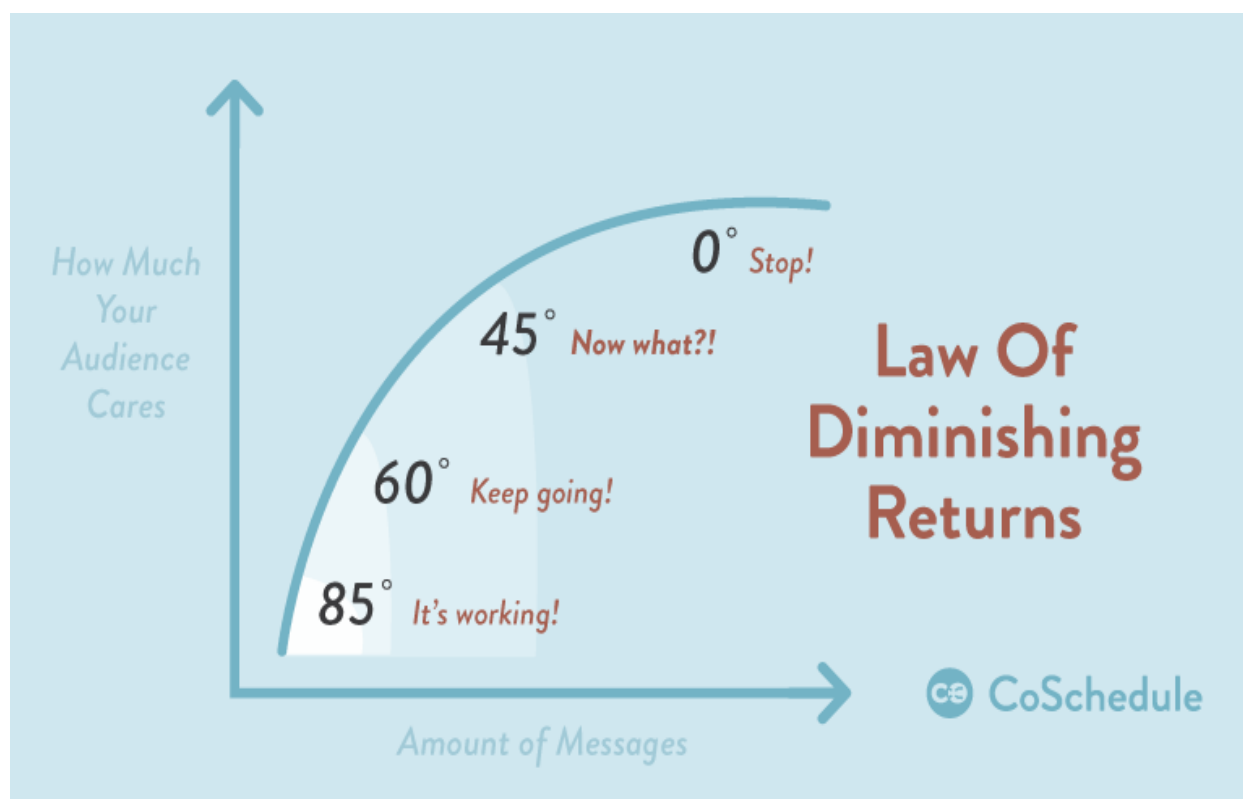
If you're no longer getting click-throughs on your social media messages, it's time to reassess.

This is as simple as spot-checking the stats for a couple of your messages. For example, check Twitter Analytics to assess your click-throughs.

Afterward, you can redefine your sharing frequency so you don't come off like you're spamming your social media accounts.

You don't have to go into great detail to make these tweaks. Just find a few of the posts you've shared for a single piece of content, and determine when the breaking point is to stop sharing it.

That breaking point is the law of diminishing returns for your blog content:



Really, you're just sharing multiple messages for the same piece of content while the size of your audience remains relatively stable. When that happens, your audience will likely stop caring after a while, and you should provide new content.

Don't let the law of diminishing returns stop you from sharing your content multiple times initially. One-and-done social media shares are how you'll miss out on your own 31.5 times more click-throughs.

6. Combine curated and earned content with your own.

Spread the word with earned content.

If you're guest blogging, help spread the word to get some traction for the company you blogged for.

If you received positive reviews, thank people and spread the news. If you were mentioned positively somehow, thank that person and share their content.

Look out for mentions of your name and contribute to the conversation.

Share how smart your friends are with curated content.































Curated content helps you spread the word of other smart people you know—who your audience will really enjoy—and helps you so you don't come off as a pompous, self-indulged, narcissistic self-promoter.

Share awesome content from other people with your audience.

The world is social. It's personal. Share other people's content like you'd want them to share yours, and you'll open the doors to build your relationships.

7. Share your best content again.

Take a look at your best content. It's the best for a reason—share it again because others probably want to read it, too.

761	 How To Write Irresistible Blog Post Introductions That'll Keep Your Readers Reading a month ago Nov 26, 2014	 40  370  41  310  10	85/88 Messages Sent Share Post
742	 What Type Of Content Creator Are You? A Visual Guide To Your Copywriting Identity 2 months ago Nov 10, 2014	 48  566  103  0  25	108/111 Messages Sent Share Post
669	 How To Get Your Content In Front Of The Right Audience At The Right Time 3 months ago Sep 24, 2014	 192  374  103  0  30	36/36 Messages Sent Share Post
655	 50+ Places To Repurpose Your Content: The Ultimate Guide 7 months ago Jun 04, 2014	 61  314  35  245  121	30/31 Messages Sent Share Post
654	 How To Write Exciting Content Even If You're In A Boring Industry 2 months ago Oct 22, 2014	 26  565  63  0  43	91/91 Messages Sent Share Post

Look at your best content—if a lot of people shared it, you could probably schedule a few more messages in your social media editorial calendar. You can use CoSchedule to see how many social messages you've sent and how many are upcoming to know if you're maximizing your best content.

8. Plan your social media messages ahead of time.

Now, all of this seems like you'd only do it after you write your content, right?

Nope.

You can—and should—plan your social media editorial calendar ahead of time. Think of all these tips from the get-go and figure out the solution that's best for you:

- 1. Understand what your audience truly wants** from you to know from the get-go that the content you're creating has a high likelihood of getting shared.
- 2. Get to know which social media your audience uses**, why they use those networks, and how they use them to share content. Get your game plan together on how you'll create the messages that will draw them in.
- 3. Mix up your wording and visuals** across all of your social networks.

4. Understand the appropriate frequency for each social network and maximize it.

5. Know when you'll check the frequency to see when you should stop sharing your content.

6. Figure out how you'll combine earned and curated content with your own.

7. Know how you'll measure each post's success, and share the best ones again if they're evergreen.

You can do *all* of these things before you're even done creating a piece of content.

Plan your social media editorial calendar to save a lot of time sharing your posts—you won't have to reinvent the wheel because you'll have a template to follow.

How To Actually Plan Your Own Social Media Editorial Calendar

You put a lot of time into creating awesome content. And time's not something you have a lot of to begin with.

So it makes sense that you'd want to get the most out of every single blog post you write. That's exactly what you can do with a little help from your social media editorial calendar.

You've probably guessed it—CoSchedule is the social media editorial calendar where you can plan your content and social media messages all in one place.

Get your free bonus guides from CoSchedule now!

CHAPTER 7

Social Media Calendar

CHAPTER 7

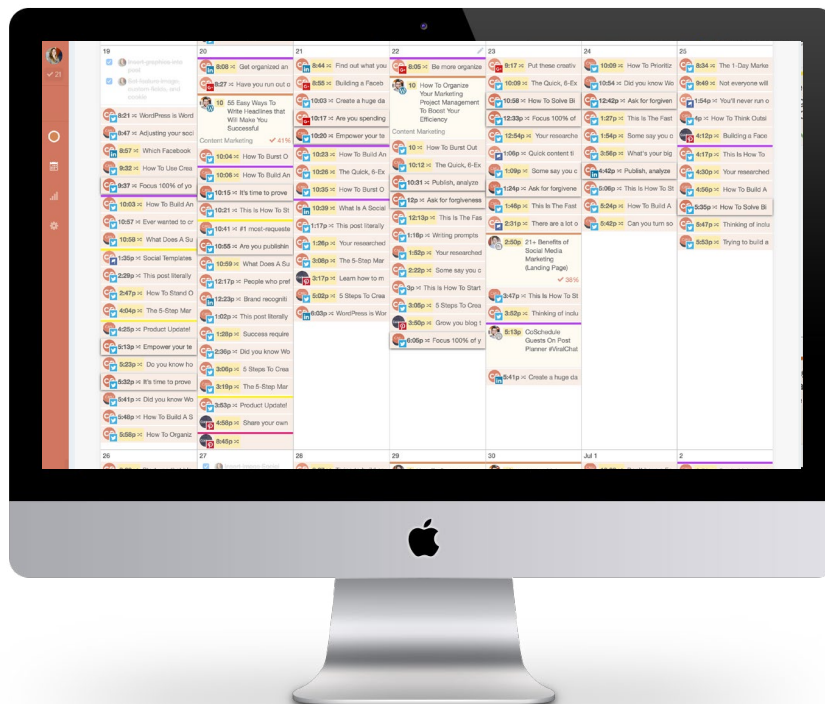
How To Use CoSchedule To Rock Your Social Media Strategy

When you follow the advice from this book, you'll become a social media rock star. You can use CoSchedule to help you get organized and take control of your process along the way.

Take Control Of Your Marketing With An All-In-One Social Media Editorial Calendar

As a marketer, you want to be able to organize all of your content in one place, manage your workflow for a project with one tool, and nail every deadline.

Manage all of your content from a single editorial calendar designed to make social media marketing easier.

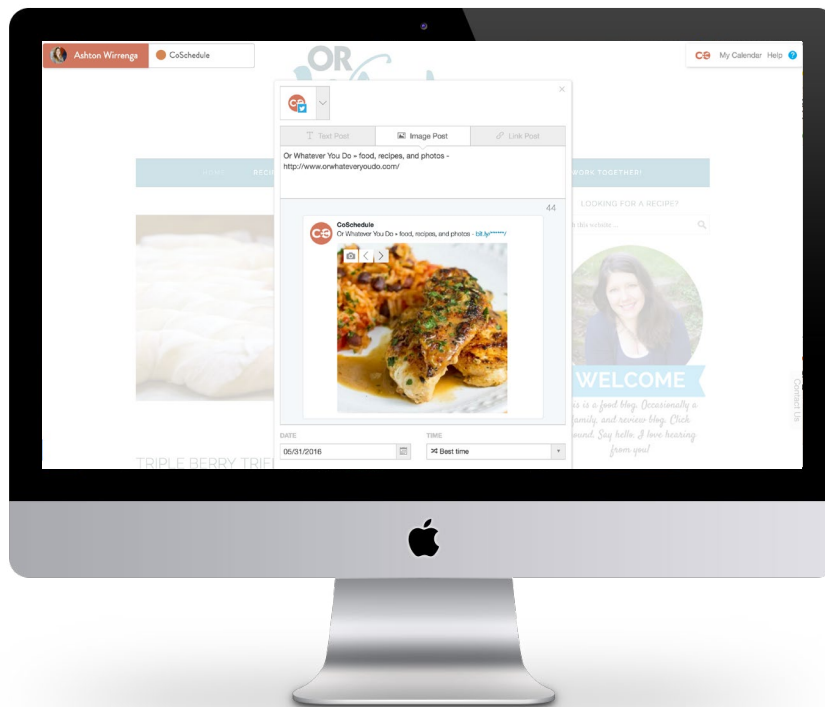


CoSchedule is a project management tool designed to help you organize your content creation process and social media together. Plan your blog posts, web pages, e-books and more in the same calendar where you schedule social media messages to share that content with your followers.

Curate The Best Content From Anywhere With The Chrome Extension

Curate content from around the web and track it on your calendar where you manage everything else.

CoSchedule has always made it easy to schedule social media messages that promote your own content, but many marketers are also looking for an easier way to curate content from around the web.

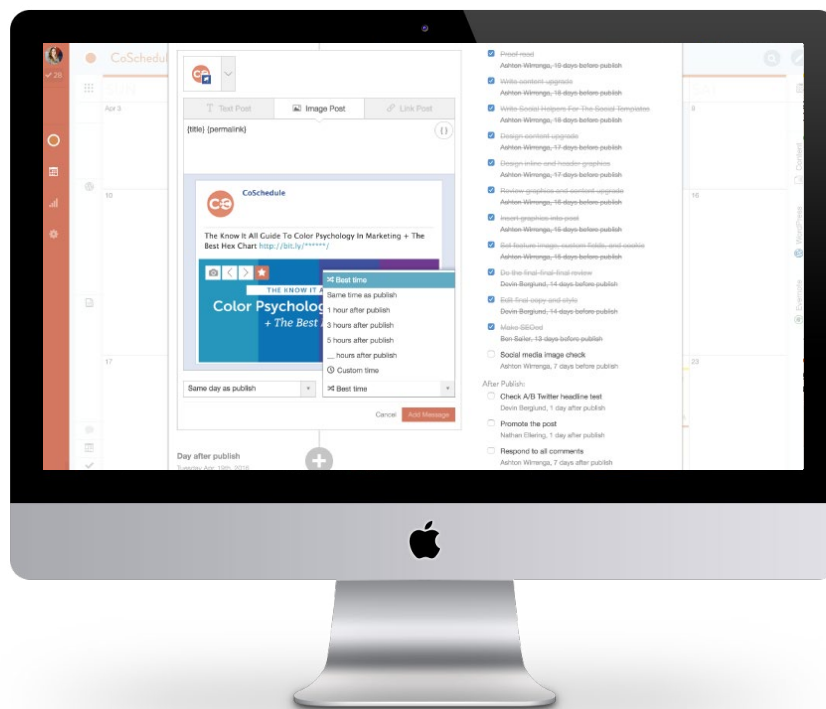


With the extension, you can quickly add social messages from anywhere on the web to your calendar. You'll have a perfectly-tuned social media presence in no time.

Schedule Your Social Media At The Best Times Without The Guesswork

What if you didn't have to remember the best times to share on your social networks while still getting the traffic, engagement, and followers your content deserves?

Your CoSchedule social media calendar automatically uses the science behind the best times to share on social media to help you easily schedule social messages to reach more followers on your social networks.



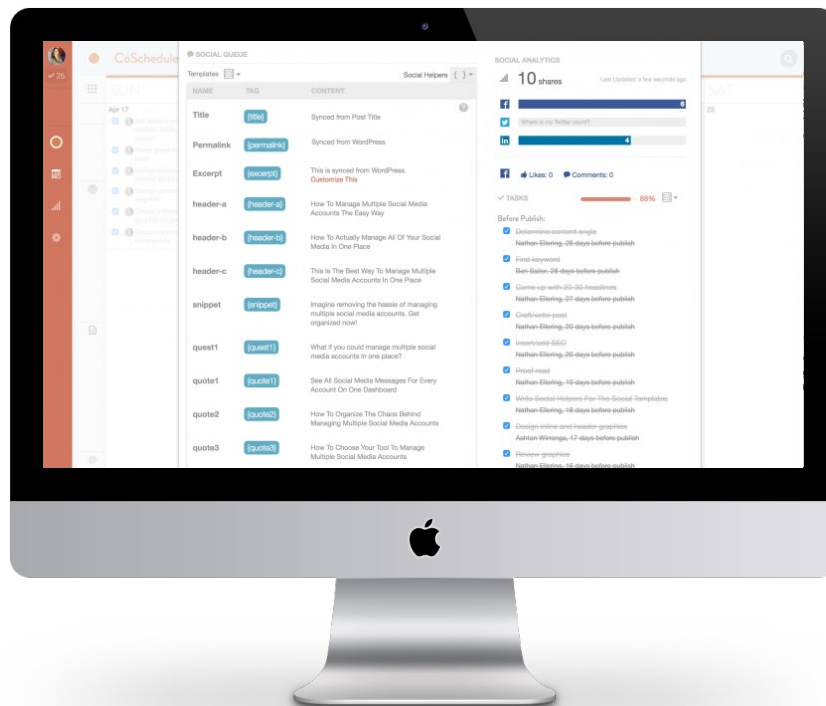
You'll get more engagement from every share without having to think about it.

Schedule Dozens Of Social Messages In A Few Easy Minutes With Social Templates

What if you could write a variety of awesome messages to automatically fill up your social media schedule without wasting time copying and pasting?

And what if you could reuse your work as a template for the next time you want to schedule social messages?

You'd eliminate the tedious process of manual scheduling. And you can do it with the social templates built right into your favorite CoSchedule social media calendar.



You'll create the perfect social sharing plan, fine tune your messages for maximum engagement, and apply your reusable social template to any blog post or piece of content on your editorial calendar.

Turn Your Social Media Strategy Into A Reality With CoSchedule

Get started with your *14-day free trial of CoSchedule* now!

Here's what others like you are saying...

"Can I tell you, I FREAKING LOVE CoSchedule! Why didn't I jump on this MONTHS ago? It's SO awesome being able to just schedule this stuff and know that it's going out, that I'm promoting, but don't have to be sitting on the computer (as I most often do) to do it!!!" —**Lynne Feifer**

"I don't know how they do it, but @CoSchedule blows my MIND. How did I miss this Chrome Extension? I'll never quit you." —**Holly McCaig**

"I just started my trial and these social templates are LIFESAVING! The drag and drop calendar is too! I'm in love." —**DeAndra Douglas**

"Lots of praise for @CoSchedule as a tool for managing and scheduling social media for a small team." —**Joel Adams**

"Can I tell you all about how much I love the new 'best time' feature on @CoSchedule?! Lovvee." —**Lyanna Aka Yanni**

CONCLUSION

You did it! You learned exactly how to plan a social media strategy that will help you grow your audience, reach your goals, and mature your business!

Well done!

Now it's time to execute that strategy. CoSchedule is a perfect tool to help you do just that.

CoSchedule combines social media and marketing together in a single marketing calendar that helps you communicate with your team, complete tasks on time, and publish consistently on your deadlines. It's a marketing project management tool combined with a beautiful, visual calendar that is intuitive from the first time you use it.

Our customers tell us it's a game changer in their social media strategy.

And we really think CoSchedule is going to help you do everything you planned, too, because we help people just like you turn strategy into action.

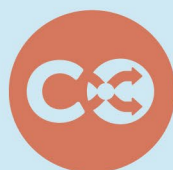
Try CoSchedule today for free, and see what a difference it makes for your marketing.

Publish Better Content With Free Guides!

Become a rock star with exclusive access to free marketing templates, worksheets, guides, infographics, and more!



FREE BONUS



HEAR THE RAVES



"I use CoSchedule to promote every new blog post and to re-promote my most popular posts on a regular basis. It is a one-stop solution, since I can post to every social media channel from within WordPress. It is simple, elegant, and an indispensable part of my toolbox.

—Michael Hyatt, *New York Times*
Bestselling Author of *Platform:*
Get Noticed in a Noisy World

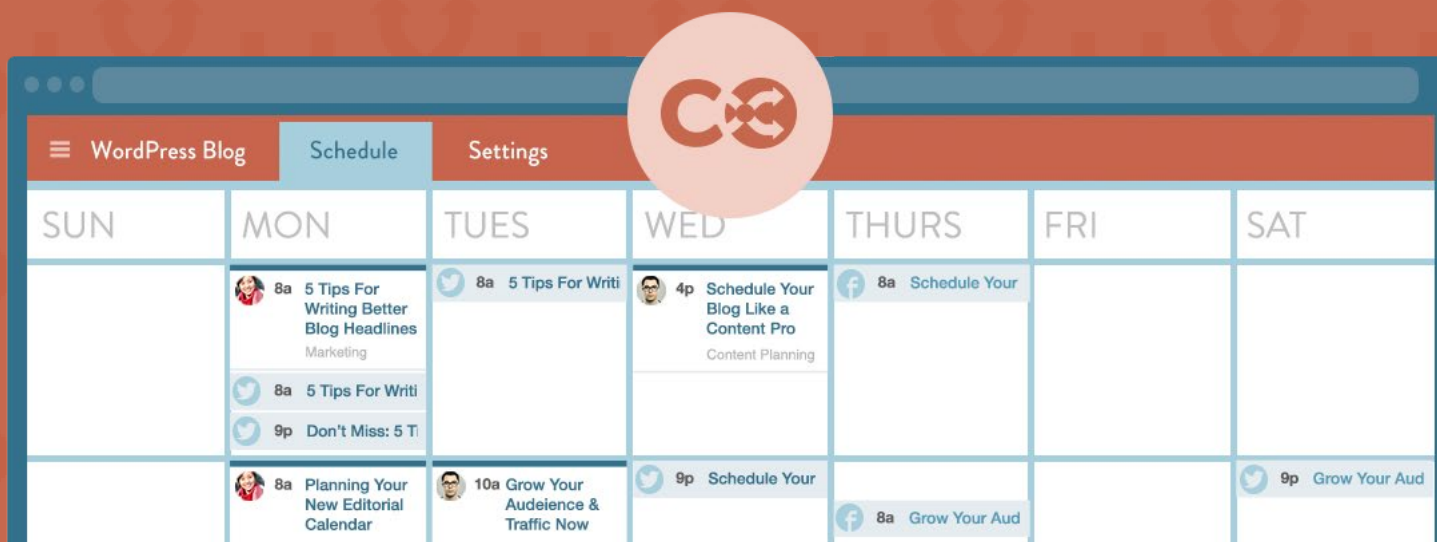


"I need to keep our editorial calendar sharp, coordinate our guest contributors, and make sure we are amplifying our blog posts with social media. For me, CoSchedule does all that perfectly. It's like magic for my blog!"

—Jay Baer, *Convince & Convert*
Bestselling Author of *YouTility:*
Why Smart Marketing Is About
Help Not Hype

CoSchedule

The social media editorial calendar for WordPress





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FOR MORE RESOURCES*