



The 12 Biggest Social Media Marketing Mistakes Businesses Make



by Mari Smith

Social Media Leader, Facebook Marketing Expert

Mistake #1 – Set it and forget it

Many businesses set up their social profiles and then forget it and abandon it. It's like a ghost town. The reason that people do this is because, unfortunately, they have not made the long-term commitment and they have not dedicated resources to properly manage their social media marketing channels.

It's different if you want to reserve a username and have a profile "parked." To at least look more professional, I recommend putting up an image and/or text to clearly indicate this. Even so, the parked profile should still have proper branding, color schemes, etc. to be seamless with the rest of your presence. (See mistake #9 for more on this).

If you just set up a profile and your last update was two years ago and that's the only place people are finding you, you're not sending the right message.

SOLUTION: Have a good look at ALL your online profiles and make sure you haven't made the "set and forget" mistake. Update any profile images, branding, bios and posts where needed. One such tool you can use to see if you have profiles out there that you may not even have realized is <http://knowem.com> - great for checking if usernames are available, too!

Mistake #2 – Over-automating

This is where people have their tweets coming into Facebook automatically, for example. I don't think that's a good idea for a profile or a fan page. Twitter is a whole different language, and people don't necessarily connect with tweets on Facebook. I also think it kind of sends the message of, "I'm trying to do all my social media in on fell swoop here. I'm just going to blast it out everywhere."

SOLUTION: Use a scheduling tool like HootSuite, SocialOomph, or TweetDeck to post fresh content to your various sites. It's okay to repeat content on multiple platforms; perhaps not all at the same time, though. Now that Facebook fan pages have a built in scheduler, it's easy to load up content in advance and see exactly how the post will look in context.

Mistake #3 – Posting too often

This is the #1 reason that Facebook fans hide content from pages in their news feed. Keep an eye on your own Facebook news feed and notice which companies and brands (and people) post too often. This could look like once an hour, or I've even seen people on Facebook and Twitter who will publish a whole bunch of posts right one after the other. It's different on Twitter if you're live tweeting an event, for example.

SOLUTION: Strive to find your own sweet spot for posting frequency. On Facebook, that could be 1-3x a day. Twitter could be once every hour at most. See what kind of response rate you get from your friends, fans and followers and adjust accordingly. Check your metrics regularly for ongoing feedback. Try a site like <http://crowdboost.com> to get insights on what the best times and frequencies are for your particular social profiles.

Mistake #4 – Posting too seldom

The converse of mistake #3 is that you're posting too seldom. Interestingly enough, there's actually a law of diminishing returns. The larger Facebook pages, the ones with millions of fans, have extremely low engagement rates, quite simply because the fans have long since forgotten that they even joined that fan page, because the page has not been posting frequently enough to have that regular consistent engagement. The masses of fans, therefore, are pretty much useless.

SOLUTION: On the 2-3 social networks that you've chosen to be active, ensure you have a content strategy where posts are going out on a daily basis. Even one Facebook post per day can be sufficient. One tweet a day is probably not sufficient, though, as Twitter moves so much faster (see solution #3 above).

Mistake #5 – Posting the same message across all platforms

This is similar to the mistake #2 about over-automating. People will often just cut and paste or set up some kind of automated system that sends the same message everywhere (HootSuite, Pingfm). I don't think you should do that – not that people's eyeballs will all be going to the same platform at the same time, but still, just mix it up.

SOLUTION: You can put the same message on Twitter and then later in the same day put it on Google+, and maybe the next day put it on Facebook or something like that. HootSuite <http://hootsuite.com> now allows you to schedule posts to Facebook pages, profiles, multiple Twitter accounts, LinkedIn and now Google+. You can certainly get mileage out of the same content. I also recommend reviewing your most popular retweets and scheduling them to go back out again a week or two later. I do this practice myself ever week; my team selects all my top retweets from the week before (often as many as 15) and we reschedule on different days and times the following week. This allows more of my followers to see more of the great content I find for them! It takes great effort to find quality content, and it's perfectly acceptable to repeat tweets on Twitter... so long as they are not multiple times in one day, for example!

Mistake #6 – Never replying

Many studies have been done that show how brands are ignoring about half their social media comments. But, when people get a reply, as many as 80% of them go on to make a purchase decision as a result of the interaction. It's amazing to me how many brands and small and medium-sized businesses are leaving so much money on the table because they're neglecting to reply. See these posts for further reading on the topic: <http://www.simplyzesty.com/social-media/brands-are-ignoring-more-than-half-of-consumer-social-media-posts/> and <http://kylelacy.com/150-social-mobile-and-email-stats-from-the-fastest-growing-retailers/>.

SOLUTION: Implement an engagement strategy! You may need to hire a moderator or community manager to ensure you're replying to as many posts/comments as possible. It can take time to build up trust with your fans and followers. But, once they see you are a reliable source of great information *and* that you respond to your community, this is money in the bank for you!

Mistake #7 – Not treating social media as a long-term commitment

This is very much in conjunction with #6. Gary Vaynerchuk talks about it. It's really a marriage, not a one-night stand. You've got to really go for the long haul when it comes to social media marketing. Many businesses take on social media marketing like a one-hit "campaign" with a beginning, middle and end. Then they wonder why the results aren't that great. It takes *time* to build up momentum.

SOLUTION: Understand that social media has radically changed the way we function on the planet and there is no turning back. This is it. It's a new way of life, a new way of doing businesses and the more you can be on the leading edge with social technologies and engagement practices, your company will thrive and be very competitive. See this article for @GaryVee's thoughts:

<http://www.inc.com/videos/201110/gary-vaynerchuk-earn-lifelong-customers-over-social-media.html>

Mistake #8 – Not bringing leads into your own systems

So many people and businesses are not driving their social media traffic back to their own sites and offers. They just send their hard earned fans/friends/followers out to everyone else's sites. Granted, one of the primary purposes of utilizing social channels is certainly to add value with content (yours and OPC – other people's content). However, it's also critical to keep your marketing hat on, too.

SOLUTION: You have to be strategic about bringing people into your fold, your subscriber list, and your offers. Ensure that you are peppering your posts with specific calls to action that drives traffic to exactly where you want. (See mistake #10 for more on this).

Mistake #9 – Inconsistent branding

Even with major brands I see this happen, where they've got something on Twitter and it looks totally different than Facebook and totally different than their website. As mentioned in Module #2, your brand and branding are critical components to social media success.

SOLUTION: While reviewing all your online social channels earlier in mistake #1, go ahead and make a note of what backgrounds, skins, avatars, color schemes might need to be upgraded. Then have your web/graphic designer help out.

Mistake #10 – Not integrating planned promotions

It's a total myth that you cannot sell using social media. Businesses are losing money all the time by not properly promoting offers, products, specials, campaigns, even giveaways for lead generation (see #9).

SOLUTION: Create a combo Content Calendar + Promotional Calendar. By taking the time to map out what you plan to sell and when, your success (and your income!) will be much more predictable. Watch my friend @Michael_Stelzner – founder of <http://SocialMediaExaminer.com> for the way he very deliberately and strategically rolls out marketing cycles at various times of the year. (In fact, pick up a copy of Mike's book *Launch*: <http://amzn.com/111802723X>.)

Mistake #11 – Not claiming your business pages

If you run or work for a local business, you'll have a Facebook PLACE page, which is a bit different from a regular fan page – it has your address, map, hours, and shows check ins. Plus, you'll have a presence on Yelp, Foursquare, and Google+ (Places) pages. It's really important that you have control over all these location pages and that the branding is seamless and you're responding to any community activity. You want to make sure that your prospects and customers can FIND you.

SOLUTION: Search on the large sites for pages and profiles that may exist without you even knowing and go through the process of claiming and taking control over each. Then, you can update your information; add details of current offers, etc. For Facebook, you'll need to just use the main search feature to see if Place Pages exist in your business' name. (Ignore those auto-created Community Pages, they can't be claimed). For other location pages, see Foursquare business: <http://foursquare.com/business>. Yelp: <http://yelp.com/business>. Google: <http://google.com/places>.

Mistake #12 – Not using any listening tools or Google alerts

Every day, customers and prospects (and competitors) might be talking about you, your brand your products and services. These could be glowing reviews, or downright negative posts. As part of reputation management 101, it's vital that you set up "vanity search" Google alerts at an absolute minimum. Ideally, you use a complete social media monitoring tool so that you can respond when needed: acknowledge and thank reviewers and write-ups, and handle negative posts if it makes sense to do so. (If someone is just ranting/trolling, it may not make sense to get involved and draw attention to this person/blog).

SOLUTION: Set up alerts for your name with quotes, any common keywords and URLs pertaining to your business, your product names, etc. This doesn't have to be too comprehensive, depending on the

size of your company. For my own vanity searches, for example, I have alerts set up for “mari smith”, @marismith, and facebook.com/marismith. You might also check out free listening tools such as <http://socialmention.com>. For a comprehensive list of free monitoring tools, see this post: <http://www.dreamgrow.com/48-free-social-media-monitoring-tools/>

Hope you enjoyed this report and got value!! Tweet me to let me know: <http://twitter.com/marismith>. 😊

ABOUT MARI

Mari Smith is one of the world's leading Social Media experts, specializing in relationship marketing and Facebook marketing. She is author of *The New Relationship Marketing* and coauthor of *Facebook Marketing: An Hour A Day*.



Fast Company describes Mari as, “A veritable engine of personal branding, a relationship marketing whiz and the Pied Piper of the Online World.” Both Dun & Bradstreet Credibility and Forbes named Mari one of the Top Ten Influencers in Social Media.

Through her consulting and training business, Mari works with businesses of all sizes around the world to help accelerate their profits through proven social media marketing strategies. As a veteran in the genre, Mari also travels the United States and internationally to provide sage social media keynotes and in-depth training to entrepreneurs and corporations. She regularly appears in media locally and nationally in publications such as The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Inc., Forbes, Fortune, and Success Magazine.

Connect with Mari at <http://www.marismith.com>

 FACEBOOK FAN PAGE: <http://facebook.com/marismith>

 FACEBOOK PROFILE: <http://facebook.com/maris>

 TWITTER: <http://twitter.com/marismith>