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40 Ideas for your 2013 Social Media Plan



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Introduction

Wondering how to delegate your people, time and resources on social media this year, but aren't able to read every blog post, attend every conference, or dial into every webinar about the topic?

We researched our most useful and popular recommendations from 2012.

Pick and choose from these 40 ideas to find out how you can...

- Respond to your next crisis like an all-star
- Use social media at your next conference or trade show
- Assess your organization's social media maturity
- Overcome cultural obstacles to social media adoption in your company.
- Deputize your social media super fans.

... plus 35 more ideas.

1. Build a social media command center.

A social media command center is simply a dedicated area where a company's social media team can monitor and engage social conversation around their brand and market.

It might be a state of the art showpiece, or just a grouping of desks in a room. The real point of a social media command center is to allow real-time monitoring of trends around marketing efficiency, customer service, and risk management, and make it easy for passing execs to gauge the social health of the brand at a glance.

The command center handles daily workflow and triage, and is poised to ramp up and implement a crisis management plan. The command center coordinates with other departments in the company: customer service, public relations, sales, marketing, and others.

President Obama at the American Red Cross Digital Operations Center. Photo from Dell, Inc.



Photo courtesy of Dell, Inc.

Our ebook [10 Examples of Social Media Command Centers](#) will inspire you with the command centers created by large brands such as the American Red Cross, Dell and Gatorade. See pictures and videos of the command centers and learn how they're used. If you're interested in creating a command center of your own, [let us help](#).

2. Craft a successful social media content marketing plan.

Content marketing is driven by one big idea: if you produce and share fantastically useful content, your community will be more likely to become customers, remain customers, and send you more customers.

Contrast that with old-school interruption marketing: forcing your target audience to watch a commercial, read a billboard, or close a popup window. We all hate interruption marketing. That's why people buy TiVos, install ad-blockers, and subscribe to Netflix.

Here are some of the benefits you'll enjoy once you create and implement a content marketing plan:

- A stronger customer relationship with your brand once they see you're trying to help them instead of just shilling your product
- A well-earned reputation as the thought leader in your industry
- Increased traffic to your website through higher SEO rankings, inbound links and social shares
- Educated and empowered repeat customers who become brand ambassadors
- Fewer customer service requests
- Opportunities to engage with prospects seeking to educate themselves about their buying decisions

Read our ebook [How to Craft a Successful Social Media Content Marketing Plan](#) to learn how to craft a content marketing plan that will help you build a strong relationship with your community.

3. Create your own social media playbook.

The best way to get your company started on your social media journey is to develop a playbook. While your social media strategy guides the overall vision and objectives, the playbook helps everyone on the social media team execute the strategy in harmony.

Your playbook should cover:

- Business Objectives
- Roles, Responsibilities and Expectations
- Determining What to Respond to and What Not to Respond to
- Using Workflow to Your Advantage
- Knowing the Who, What and Why of Conversations



- Knowing the Who, How and When to Respond
- Escalation
- Reporting

This is a starting point. By having a playbook that addresses these topics, your organization will have a consistent and documented approach to listening and engaging with your community. It will also enable you to develop a workflow that provides reporting, metrics and accountability.

To learn more, read our ebook, [What the Heck is a Social Media Playbook, and Why Do I Need One?](#)

4. Include social ads in your advertising campaign.

Social ads are advertisements that appear in a social network. They use social actions and recommendations, as well as targeting, to create highly relevant and engaging messaging. Here are 10 reasons why social ads should be part of your advertising plan.

1. Social ads shine light on the needs and personas of your customer and potential customer.
2. They deliver a useful level of control over your ad campaign.
3. You're able to measure reach and analyze effectiveness in real time.
4. The monitoring opportunities of your campaign ensure you never waste a dollar.
5. If something isn't working, you can take action today to improve your ad.
6. Even better, if something is working, you can automate its amplification.
7. In an age where social media takes much of the message control out of your hands, social ads give some control back to you.
8. You're able to make a compelling ad that tells the story you want to tell.

"Social ads reach the audience in which you've invested a lot of money and time into nurturing. You can see which audiences are engaging the most, so you can ensure that your ads are being bought correctly and you're actually growing your fan base based on true data."

Peter Goodman, VP, Salesforce Marketing Cloud



9. Social ads lead your audience directly to the point of contact you want.
10. You can quickly and easily change anything and everything about them including color, placement, copy, images, size and more.

Learn more by reading our ebook, [Everything You Need to Know About Social Media Ads](#).

5. Automate your social advertising.

Automation works with your CRM, engagement platform, social ad campaigns and metrics to set rules around your ad budget. It can assist with publishing, allowing you to run your ads on multiple platforms in multiple formats. Based on all the information it collects, your automation engine can suggest and implement ad changes.

Here are some things to consider when it comes to automation:

- How much control to give to an automation system versus media-buying control
- How much money to devote to a budget for automated ad-purchasing
- The engagement threshold level for purchasing social ads automatically
- Who receives alerts when an automation level is triggered
- The type of ads that can be purchased automatically, versus manual purchasing

6. Track and measure social media leads

Whether you're using a spreadsheet or a CRM system to keep track of your prospects, you'll want a way to designate a lead source. You can even split that source into specific social channels: blog subscribers, Twitter followers, LinkedIn contacts, etc. For example:

- Note leads that come from a direct source, like a blog subscription.
- Include a field on your website's contact form that asks visitors how they found you.
- Note leads that come in from offline events.
- Note referral traffic to your site from social networks.
- Map a contact form submission or a click on a "Contact Us" email link.

- Track landing pages with the social networks they were shared on.
- Track requests for content downloads from email signups.
- Overlay names on your followers list with your lead pipeline.

After you've gathered all this information, look at these stats in total.

- How many leads do you generate each month that are from social media?
- What percentage are from your overall lead pipeline?
- What percentage of that group of leads are unique?
- Can you take leads that are inactive or aged in your database and try to reactivate them through a social media touch point?

Many CRM platforms, such as salesforce.com, allow you to track the lead stages themselves, whether the lead is brand new, or whether they're in deeper consideration and talks with your sales team. You can also look at the leads that originate in social networks and see how they're distributed across those stages over time.

7. Respond to your next crisis like an All-Star.



FedEx responded to a crisis using online video featuring [Matthew Thornton, III](#), Senior VP of FedEx Operations.

All-Star Social Media Crisis Response for Brands is designed to help you create a social media crisis response plan for your brand that'll help you survive — or even thrive — through a crisis.

There are many things you can do to set yourself up for success in a time of brand crisis online. Learn to monitor insights and brand sentiment in real time. Create a clear action plan. Designate responsibility to members of your team in advance. Go through your response drill once a quarter to keep it fresh. Have the skeleton of a response to any crisis prepared in advance.

By creating and sticking to a crisis management plan, you will be ahead of the game and ready to handle any brand crisis the moment it hits. A crisis doesn't have to be a surprise. Our ebook

8. Write a social media-friendly press release.

Social media often joins the camp of public relations and communications and it makes sense: the always-on personal reach of social media and public relations go hand-in-hand.

When it comes time to submit your press releases to the media, social media can help. Here are some tips on how to create the perfect press release using social media.

- Have a social media-friendly logo. Make sure the logo can work in multiple sizes so no matter how the media uses it, it is clear and legible.
- Add social sites to your media contact block. It's where the media looks for your contact info, so include at least your Facebook and Twitter accounts.
- Include links in every paragraph. Link back to your landing page or relevant campaign content so even if your press release gets edited for space, your readers will have the information they need. Plus your SEO and inbound marketing remains strong.
- Use multimedia. Video, Slideshare links, Pinterest boards – whatever you can conjure up to grab attention and deliver your message.
- Create small chunks of succinct details so that it can translate well to social. This makes it easy if the media wants to Tweet information about you.
- The title of the press release should act like a news headline and be eye catching, setting up your news story and driving the reader to action.
- To increase the chances of media and bloggers finding your information, use your SEO keyphrases throughout your press release, including the headline.
- Tell a clear story in each and every paragraph you write.
- Use that closing paragraph to make a last-chance pitch and reiterate the points.
- Keep your audience groups top of mind. A social media press release targets three different groups: media, bloggers and consumers. It needs to appeal to all of them.
- Be interactive. Use the capability of sites like [PitchEngine](#) or [PRWeb](#) to embed video, upload photo galleries, and make your press release visually compelling.
- Create a template you can reuse for each new press release. This will make writing them much faster.

- Make your press releases available on your website (not just on the wire service site), and provide an RSS feed for those who want to keep up with your announcements. It's a one-time development effort that lets people subscribe to your news.

For more information and helpful lists, check out our ebook [Social Media Strategy for PR and Communications](#).

9. Enhance your approach to LinkedIn to get strong candidates.

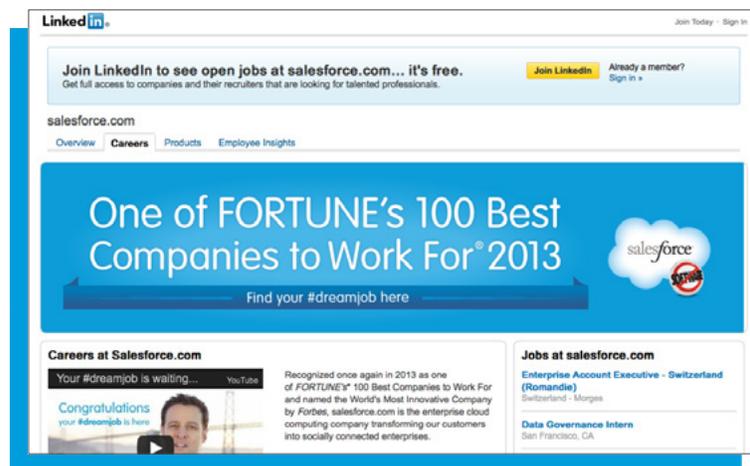
LinkedIn is the world's largest professional network, with over [200 million members](#) (as of January 9, 2013) and rising fast. LinkedIn corporate hiring solutions are used by 82 of the Fortune 100.

It's much more efficient than wading through job boards and much more cost-effective than other hiring solutions.

Start by building up your own referral network of people who may be candidates themselves or can recommend candidates. Connect with current clients, industry experts, and current and former employees. Join relevant LinkedIn Groups to establish yourself as an expert, raise your profile, and find qualified professionals who are influential in your industry. (For your own growth, join and engage in LinkedIn groups dedicated to HR professionals, especially in your industry.)

LinkedIn charges several hundred dollars to [post a job](#) for 30 days. (Price varies by geographical location.) You can also purchase ads targeted directly at professionals specified by your criteria.

[LinkedIn Career Pages](#) are “a home on LinkedIn to highlight your jobs, feature employees, and build your employment brand”. Take a look at what [Google](#), [BP](#) and [3M](#) are doing with theirs. Here's the page for [salesforce.com](#):



10. Find great job candidates on Facebook.

Facebook's [one billion active users](#) makes it by far the largest network available to any recruiter. [48% of all job seekers use Facebook for some form of social job hunting](#). So not only is your ideal candidate already on Facebook, there's a good chance she's using the network to find her ideal employer.

Create a dedicated Careers Page or tab to highlight job openings, accept resumes, and describe your benefits and other important details.

A final tip: keep an eye on fan pages around your brand or industry for promising applicants.

[Marie Larsen of Recruiter.com summarizes some best practices for your Careers Page](#): To entice top talent to a career page, it's crucial to provide a rich and visually stimulating experience. YouTube videos offering employee testimonials and a day-in-a-life of a worker should be front and center. Customers and job seekers should be encouraged to participate in the discussion on the Wall, using polls, contests and quizzes. And employees should promptly address questions and comments. It's also a smart idea to introduce the talent acquisition team and make them available to answer inquiries about job opportunities. The more personalized the experience for candidates, the better.

11. Screen job candidates with social media.

Social media background checks can be [a minefield for employers](#). Peeking into an applicant's Facebook profile for evidence of heavy drinking or drug use, scantily-clad photos, or politically-incorrect comments can be invasive. [It certainly is controversial](#).

If you do decide to conduct a social media background check yourself or through a third party, you'd be wise to ask for the applicant's permission first. Consult with your lawyer before crafting your policy.

- Screen on LinkedIn. Carefully comb through the candidate's profile. Look for:
 - Whether their list of jobs and descriptions match the resume they submitted
 - If they present themselves professionally
 - References and understand who they are and what they're saying

- Important connections
- The groups they're part of to gauge their professional interests
- How active they are on the site
- Screen on Twitter. A candidate's activity on Twitter offers helpful insights into how they communicate, how they relate, and what they find interesting. Look for:
 - Their network and whether they have a healthy balance between followers and followings
 - How often their Tweets are shared
 - If they get the attention of influencers
 - The content they're Tweeting and if they include original insights
 - How they relate to, and engage with, others



Looking at one of the Salesforce Marketing Cloud team member's Twitter bio.

Google the person's name to find other posts on personal and corporate blogs, industry discussion boards, news articles, and elsewhere online. Triple-check that this is the same person who's applied for the position.

No matter where their activity, you're looking for three things: red flags, job qualifications, and cultural fit.

12. Conduct agile market research with social media.

Brands used to assume that market research was only the purview of companies that could afford to hire expensive firms. If your business had the budget for this in-depth market research, you figured that the price tag would be astronomical and the research might stretch on for months or years. Social media market research changes this completely.

The purpose of market research is simple. Excellent market research can help you:

- Gain a deeper understanding of your customer's needs.
- Gather relevant opinions and data from your customer in real-time.
- Figure out market trends before they happen.
- Quickly create the products that your customer truly wants.
- Avoid missteps in product design and development that can be costly.
- Track and optimize your marketing to reach a broader market and save cost.

To learn more, download our ebook, [Agile Market Research with Social Media](#).

13. Use social media at your next conference or trade show.

Whether you are attending a conference, trade show, or seminar, knowing how to use the various social media networks to your advantage will help you plan beforehand, get the most of the event while you're there, share takeaways and solidify connections afterward.

Before the event:

- Make sure your social media profiles are up to date.
- Follow the events official channels on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.
- Make connections with fellow attendees on Twitter and LinkedIn.
- Feeling extra ambitious? [Organize a Tweetup](#).
- Become familiar with the speakers.

- Create Twitter lists and Google+ circles for easy reference.
- Write and share a blog post anticipating the event, [like this one](#).

While you're there:

- Announce you've arrived on the event hashtag.
- Ask your network what sessions they're attending.
- Share your own comments and takeaways on the event hashtag — and engage with others.
- Attend social get-togethers.
- Share what inspires you.

After you return home:

- Share your newfound knowledge internally and with your community.
- Stay memorable so your new friends don't forget about you.
- Reflect on how social media helped you at the event.

For more details on all these points, read our ebook [Social Media for Conferences and Trade Shows](#).

14. Turn transactions into relationships.

[Rashid Temuri](#) is a cab driver who has figured out how to turn a commoditized business into a relational one with social media.

Temuri has a presence on many networks, but he really shines on Twitter, where he goes by the handle [@ChicagoCabbie](#). There he chats with new friends he's made in his car, posts Instagram photos of the city, and checks into different locations around the Windy City.

Here's a typical conversation.



Temuri's social presence helps him get both new and repeat business. "My personal service gives me [an] advantage," he told [Ars Technica](#). "When you call me, you know who I am and who will be showing up at your door."

All throughout his business, Temuri is hard at work thinking of ways to make his customer's lives less painful and more enjoyable, and they're rewarding him by becoming loyal customers and advocates.

Why can't your business do the same? Here are 5 takeaways to consider:

1. In a commoditized business, relationships can make all the difference.
2. Use social to unearth customers' common pain points and eliminate them.
3. Use social to find and reach out to customers who are ready to buy (in Temuri's case, people who've "checked-in" at the airport).
4. Try different ways to connect with your customers and see which ones generate the most buzz.
5. After someone becomes a customer, keep in touch on social so they turn to you next time.

15. Serve as an open forum.

Why are sites like the The Consumerist, TripAdvisor, and Angie’s List so successful? They thrive on honest opinions and feedback from everyday people like you and me who want to share their experiences and knowledge for the benefit of others.

How can you apply this to your brand? Consider these tactics:

- Develop a forum or comments area on your website and enable feedback to be published publicly.
- Enable commenting on your Facebook Page and ask questions about your product or service.
- Create new discussions on LinkedIn or relevant forums to gather feedback.
- Freely share information about your brand.

It may be tough to convince your execs to share your secret sauce or a beta product with customers, but openness can go a long way in social media. Your community will feel involved in your company and appreciate the trust you put in them. They may become interested in your story, want to get involved in your product trials and stay in touch when it comes to updates. That hook may be what you need to generate new customers and keep them for the long term.

16. Bookmark these seven essential equations for measuring social media success.

Potential Reach of Social Media

Potential Reach = Social Shares + Fans in their Network

Example: If you have 1,000 fans and followers, and together they have 90,000 followers, then you have a potential reach of 91,000.

Value of Fan

Value of Fan = Total \$ Value of Transaction Resulting from Conversations / Actual Reach

Example: If you’ve generated \$25,000 of revenue from your 1,000 fans, each fan is worth \$25 to you.

Value of Facebook Like

Value of Facebook Like = Total revenue in a Month from Facebook traffic /
Total Number of Likes

Example: If you had 2000 Facebook likes in March, and generated \$30,000 in revenue from Facebook traffic, then each Facebook like was worth \$15.

Share of Conversation

Share of Conversation = Posts discussing topic and your brand / Posts discussing topic
If 50,000 of the 80,000 posts mentioning “smartphone” also mentioned “iPhone” or “Apple”, then Apple’s share of conversation is 62.5%.

(Salesforce Marketing Cloud SVP Marcel Lebrun defined Share of Conversation [in this post](#) 4 years ago.)

Social Media ROI

ROI = (Revenue – Cost) / Cost, x 100

Example: Your social media efforts cost you \$150,000 but drove \$225,000 of business, meaning you had an ROI of 50%.

(We published a free ebook by Dr. Natalie Petouhoff ([@drnatalie](#)) called [Social Media ROI](#) that provides more detail on this important topic.)

Cost per Issue Resolution

Cost per Issue Resolution = Daily Support Costs / Average # of Issues Handled Daily

Example: Your 5 team members, office space, and equipment cost you \$1,500 every day.

On average, your team handles 175 issues each day, meaning your cost per issue resolution is \$8.57.

Issue Resolution Time

Average Issue Resolution Time = Total Work Hours Resolving Issues in a Month / Number of Issues Resolved in a Month

Example: In March, your 3 full-time and 2 part-time team members spent 128 hours resolving 1,870 issues. The average issue resolution time was therefore 0.068 hours, or 4 minutes and 5 seconds.

Download [5 Steps to Effective Social Media Measurement](#) for more detailed explanations of these equations, and how you can use them.

17. Set sensible social media goals and objectives.

A solid strategy begins with goals and objectives. While social media can be used for ad-hoc campaigns with simple objectives, let's focus on higher-level business goals.

Many companies are aiming to increase sales by acquiring and retaining customers, or improving brand awareness as measured by marketing surveys. Others look at reducing costs by making their marketing more efficient, streamlining customer service or improving their customer satisfaction scores. These are the types of business goals that you should ladder up to when developing your social media goals.

With some of these higher-level business goals in mind, what do social media goals look like? You can increase the number of leads, and ultimately sales, that come through social media. This can be a big long-term goal, but it is the holy grail of many companies. Since you are frequently starting at zero, it is easy to show progress, but be sure to set realistic expectations, both in timeframe and results, so your management is not disappointed.

18. Make your customers the hero.

You already have piles of case studies and customer stories. The opportunity lies in the way you share those tales.

Spend time interviewing the customer and get the real story, in human (not corporate) speak. That means an hour on Skype, on the phone or in person versus an email questionnaire. The best stories are in the tangents.

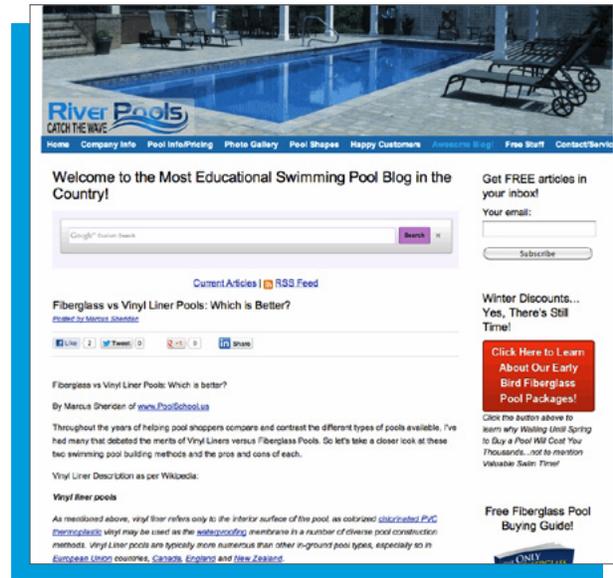
It doesn't matter that your product or service led to customer success. Let the story showcase the customer as the one who saved the day, came up with solution and reaped the reward.

Your audience will respond to these honest stories from their peers.

19. Slake your community's thirst for knowledge.

You and your fellow employees are experts. You were hired because you excel at what you do. And you probably know your industry pretty well too. It's time to share that knowledge.

- Answer all questions. To start, Google your brand and industry and you'll find questions. MarketingProf's [Ann Handley](#) calls these, "Frequently Unanswered Questions." Write a blog post for each answer and share it. Not only are you helping customers and potential customers, but you're helping yourself. Google will start to recognize your posts and you'll show up higher on search results.
- Get your internal experts blogging. You're not the only one with the great insights. Your HR and IT team members are experts too. With contributions from multiple employees, you're suddenly generating more content with more meat.
- Have an opinion. All thought leaders have these so if you want to become a leader in your space, as [Marcus Sheridan](#) said, "Have a dang opinion!"



This [small pool installation company in Virginia](#) saw business soar when they began systematically answering every single question people were Googling about pools.

People seek information relevant to them. Answer the questions they're asking and teach them new things.

20. Think and talk in pictures.

Social media users have less time to read content yet more content options to choose from.

To share content that captures their attention and creates an emotional response, think about how you are sharing information. One way to break through is with visuals.

Here are 20 reasons why you must start thinking visually when crafting a blog post, a new campaign and your overall social media strategy.

1. Visuals are simple and easy to understand
2. They can tell a story
3. They can quickly convey a message
4. They can grab an audience
5. Visuals can be used to invite an audience to join in
6. They strengthen your brand identity
7. They have the ability to show emotion
8. They build trust with your community
9. They personalize your brand
10. They can convey emotion
11. They are sharable
12. They easily work on multiple social channels (Pinterest, anyone?)
13. They can save you 1,000 words
14. They can affect purchasing habits
15. They can explain dense concepts
16. They can summarize multiple viewpoints
17. They can reiterate an existing concept
18. They can promote your brand, product or service
19. They can showcase key data/trends
20. They can resonate with your community

Your community can benefit from including photos, videos and infographics into your social media initiatives. There is a lot to be learned from how users are flocking to photo sharing websites. Give it a try and invite your community to do the same.

21. Thank your social media followers.

Followers are incredibly important to any brand on social media. Without your followers, you would have no one to share your content and engage with, making your social media presence redundant. Remember to say “thank you” to your community members.

If you want to really make your followers feel special, put a personal touch on it. Burberry recently thanked their [one million plus Twitter followers](#) with [personalized notecards in the form of animated GIFs](#). Followers could receive them by including the hashtag #thanksamillion in their Tweets. The fact that the note cards were in the handwriting style of Burberry’s Chief Creative Officer, Christopher Bailey, made them even more personal.

22. Be active on the weekends.

While there is plenty of trial and error involved in social media engagement, brands have data available to help guide the way they interact on the major social networks. One such resource is the Salesforce Marketing Cloud data report, [Strategies for Effective Tweeting: A Statistical Review](#).

The report, which analyzed 320 Twitter handles of the world’s biggest brands for the span of 10 weeks, presents best practices for brands to increase engagement on Twitter.

One surprising result? While only 19% of all brand Tweets are published on the weekends, Saturday and Sunday interaction rates are 15% higher on Facebook, and 17% higher on Twitter. Schedule some posts when your audience isn’t busy with work.



8 AM - 7 PM
"BUSY HOURS"



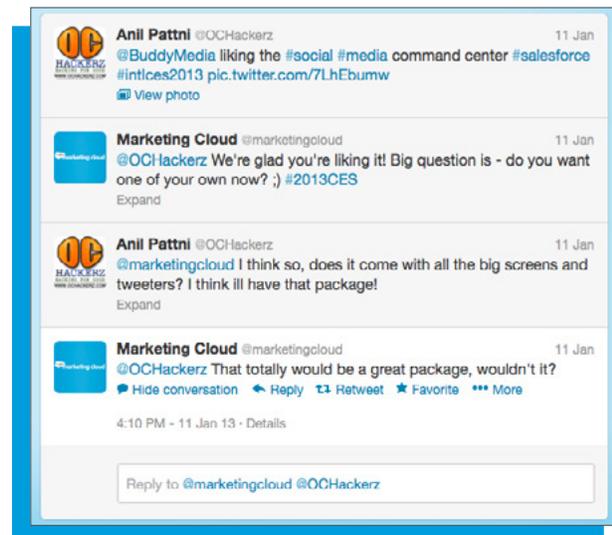
8 PM - 7 AM
"NON-BUSY HOURS"

23. Turn yourself into a Twitter maven.

People come up to us at various events asking what to type into that little white box every day. You might be one of them — convinced of the value of social media, you want to be a team player, and you’re making the right connections. But you have no idea what to say.

Here are six ideas you can use, every single day.

- Imitate interesting people. Scroll through your Twitter timeline and note the Tweets that consistently jump out at you. Consider the tactics that work for you, and avoid the ones that don’t.
- Respond to others. Social media should be a dialogue, not a monologue. Discipline yourself to respond to at least one other Tweet before crafting your own. Or two. Or ten. You’ll make stronger connections and find your social media experience much more rewarding.
- Be an informed curator. Make it your goal to find and share one or two resources every day that will be helpful to your industry. Don’t give people stuff they’re probably reading already. Subscribe to blogs and follow people whose insights will be fresh and unexpected.
- Add your own insights. Establish your authority. Spread your ideas. Sprinkle in your commentary.
- Start a conversation — or debate. Periodically throw out a question (Friday afternoons are good for this!) to start a conversation. “What book inspired you lately?” “What’s your favorite tech product, and why?”
- Go further and ignite a debate. Wondering why things have to be done a certain way in your industry? Challenge the accepted wisdom. Often these are the Tweets that generate the most conversation.



- Sprinkle in your personality. The 80/20 rule applies here. Toss in an occasional Tweet about your travel woes or something funny your 3-year-old said. Your followers will enjoy your human side.

If you Tweet from these six categories every day, you'll gradually build up a loyal and appreciative following. And those 140 characters won't feel so hard to fill.

24. Choose the right social monitoring search terms.

Social media listening involves hearing what's being said about your brand, industry and competitors anywhere on the web. The keywords you monitor will determine whether you are collecting valuable intelligence, or just gathering noise. So let's take a look at what types of terms you should be monitoring.

Brand Monitoring. Concentrate brand monitoring on:

- Brand name and any variations
- Seasonal campaign names and terms
- Names of executives or stakeholders
- Names of specific products and services you offer
- Nicknames, misspellings, or abbreviations of any of the above

Industry Monitoring. Concentrate industry monitoring on:

- Terms related to verticals you specialize in
- Phrases that define the markets you serve
- Later industry keywords or categories
- Professional organizations you belong to or that fit your business profile
- Names of your industry thought leaders
- Keyword phrases that indicate an intent to purchase or learn more

Competitor Monitoring. Concentrate competitor monitoring on:

- Names of competitive companies, brands, products and services
- Stakeholders in those companies
- Buzz around competitive campaigns or promotions
- Nicknames, misspellings and the like of any of these

25. Assess your social media maturity by filling out our Social Scorecard.

The Salesforce Marketing Cloud [Social Scorecard](#) is a simple, online tool you can use to see how social media has impacted your organization to date, and develop a path to move forward. In less than five minutes you can learn where your company's social media maturity ranks against other companies, based on more than a year of data gathered from social enterprises of every size in every market. (Plus, the dataset grows as more people participate.)

The results are provided in both numeric form and on a grid showing company results across nine key metrics. We'll email you your Social Media Maturity Grid, along with a list of free enterprise social media resources tailored to your needs — a road map for the journey ahead, if you will.

The Social Scorecard looks at key metrics of a company's social media maturity, including:

- Ideology and Leadership
- Staffing
- Internal Education
- Social Listening
- Engagement and Community
- Social Content
- Social Advertising
- Measurement and Analytics
- Social Media Tools

26. Suggest the hiring of a Chief Social Officer.

A CSO can set the vision for the growth of internal social media. They can drive projects like an internal social network for better employee collaboration, social media education and certification to make sure employees understand their role in the company's social media activities, and they can even work with VPs of legal, human resources and finance to integrate social media into their processes as well.

Executive-led projects get more attention, and that helps move them along. If you have ever tried to get a social media council together, think how different the atmosphere would have been if this was driven from the top down.

27. Set up a social media council.

One of the most fundamental and effective tactics for a successful social enterprise is the creation of an internal group to guide the adoption and implementation of social media.

A social media council can help you:

- Turn your Legal team from enemy to ally
- Make sure HR doesn't squash your social media strategy
- Identify and share best practices
- Overcome internal objections
- Eliminate duplication of effort
- Speak with a unified voice

Every organization is different, but in many successful social enterprises, the duties of the social media council include:

- Creating and updating social media policies and guidelines for employees
- Providing clear direction on how employees should integrate their personal social media activities into their professional life
- Approving the creation of new social media channels (and preventing duplication of effort and unnecessary proliferation of pages and accounts)

- Ensuring consistent branding and messaging across all channels
- Identifying, testing and approving third-party tools, such as social media monitoring platforms and social media management tools
- Coordinating the adoption of social media tools with other systems, including customer relationship management and marketing automation (often in conjunction with IT)
- Sharing social media best practices and success stories internally
- Working with Legal, HR and IT to integrate social media policies with existing company policies
- Creating core materials for social media presences and campaigns that can be modified and localized for reuse by other parts of the organization (business units and country offices, for instance)

28. Organize your social media editorial team.

To carry out a comprehensive content marketing plan, you'll need a team of enthusiastic writers and creators who ideally have some business background to boot. A larger organization may have an entire team of people to fulfill each role in the editorial team.

These are the roles that have worked well for us at the Salesforce Marketing Cloud. Robert Rose and Joe Pulizzi describe these roles in more detail in their helpful book *Managing Content Marketing*.

- Director of Content Marketing. This person owns the content marketing initiative, writes the plan, measures results, and ensures all content is serving broader marketing and business objectives.
- Managing Editor. This person is responsible for meeting deadlines set in the editorial calendar, implementing a style guide, and ensuring all content is of high quality.
- Content Creators. These folks write your blog posts, produce your ebooks, and record your podcast.
- Content Producers. These specialists add aesthetic pizzazz to everything your team creates. They know how to shoot video, edit podcasts, design a presentation, or spruce up an ebook.

You'll also need to intersect with some other roles within your company:

- Web manager for posting material to the site
- SEO and web analytics specialists to measure how visible your content is in search engines, and to suggest improvements
- Social media or community manager(s) to promote your content and manage the subsequent questions and comments

29. Overcome cultural obstacles to social media adoption in your company.

Wholeheartedly embracing social media involves a sea change in an organization. Social media isn't just a technology that can be bolted onto the traditional way of doing things: it's an entirely new way of relating and doing business.

Many factors can combine to ensnare your earnest attempts to turn your company into a social enterprise. Here are some of the common ones and helpful responses to quiet the critics.

Objection	Response
"Social media is only a passing fad."	"Look at the latest stats showing the phenomenal growth of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Pinterest."
"We're in B2B. Our customers won't buy multi-million dollar systems on Facebook."	"Actually, B2B has certain advantages at social media that B2C's lack. B2B understands their customers better, have deep subject-matter expertise, are used to finding ways to minimize cost per lead, and already nurture relationship-based sales."
"We can't control what happens in social media."	"People are out there talking about us whether we have a Facebook Page or not. So why not listen and join in the conversation as a respectful partner?"
"I'm terrified of precipitating a social media crisis."	"Social media crises happen even to companies who aren't on social media. Our absence is likely to make the crisis worse. We need to be engaging with our community now, building trust and earning advocates for when something goes wrong."

<p>“Social media is a waste of company time.”</p>	<p>“If we distrust our employees this much, we have some issues. Inviting our employees to engage with customers is an incredible way to empower them and get them excited about the contributions they can make to the company.”</p>
<p>“Social media participation causes us to risk violating legal and compliance guidelines.”</p>	<p>“OK, let’s work with Legal to develop clear guidelines so team members on social media don’t inadvertently publish sensitive company information, violate compliance rules, or otherwise expose the company to legal action.”</p>
<p>“We don’t have enough people in our organization with the competency to manage and execute a social media plan.”</p>	<p>“Let’s build a social media training program for our employees. Employees need to understand our overall vision of a social business, how to execute our social media playbook, and absorb our social media policy.”</p>
<p>“My VP is demanding hard numbers to justify investing in social media.”</p>	<p>“Let’s figure out what success will look like and create metrics that actually measure that.”</p>

30. Automate your social workflows.

Workflow and automation bring together your social listening, social content, engagement, measurement, and social ad reach into one manageable system that your entire company can use to meet their needs.

These processes are about bridging gaps and connecting the dots in a way that becomes part of the fabric and culture of your social business. A social business depends on a rock-solid CRM solution to be truly effective. By putting the information of the entire social web at your fingertips and combining it with real-time metrics, engagement, content and solid customer data built over time, you develop the kind of relationship with a customer that makes them a customer for life. A customer for life becomes your best brand advocate.

Two common outcomes of creating advanced social workflows, including the addition of logical automation, are solving company problems effectively and quickly, and fielding customer service issues. The added benefit to market research, product development, sales and marketing and overall agility and response improvements can’t be overstated. Using a CRM effectively can change the way you do business and give you the kind of staying power that businesses avoiding social simply don’t have.

31. Craft a social media policy that's actually useful.

You need to support and empower employees by arming them with the information they need to successfully and appropriately engage on blogs, Facebook, Twitter, and other social media channels. Specifying rules and guidelines means staff can be confident about engaging without being afraid of doing lasting damage to your brand.

Our ebook *Building Blocks of a Sound Social Media Policy* addresses all the vital elements of a social media policy, complete with examples from different companies so you can create or improve your organization's very own policy.

For your policy to be actually useful, you need to do 7 things:

1. Identify the purpose
2. Sync with established corporate principles
3. Get input and approval from Legal, IT, HR and the executive team
4. Write in plain English
5. Conform to your company culture
6. Make it as brief as possible
7. Direct employees to more information

32. Ensure employees adhere to your social media policy.

After working so hard on a company social media policy, you'll want to take the necessary steps to make sure it actually gets read and adhered to.

Here are a few tips to help make your social media policy a successful one:

1. Incorporate it into employee training
2. Make it accessible
3. Reshare and remind
4. Revise as needed
5. Regularly review employee accounts for compliance

Once you have your social media policy written and adopted, everyone across the company can stop worrying about accidentally embarrassing the company, and instead feel the freedom to explore the wonderful world of social media.

33. Use social media to test different content approaches.

Social media is a market research tool. It's a place for instant feedback from your audience. When creating content for Facebook or sharing your blog content on Twitter, keep track of the results to see what works. What gets shared the most?

This fun, timely and simple post performed really well on Avon's Facebook Timeline — over 4,600 likes and 3,400 shares.

Instead of letting it go to waste, Avon asked their audience to post pictures of their manicures to Facebook and then selected a few to serve as Avon's Facebook cover photo. This created significant engagement.

Once you see that your post is doing well, promote it on other social channels. For instance, Avon's candy-corn manicure image can be shared on Twitter, written as a blog post or turned into a video. The more ways you can reach your audience, the better. You can even put some ad dollars behind it.



34. Be inspired by storytelling

Storytelling is a large part of any social media marketing strategy, and you might be wondering where to start with your own brand. Here are some places to look for inspiration.

Your Customers

Case studies are a great way to showcase successful customer stories that are indirectly successful from your product or service. They also serve as an excellent sales resource for your team. To get these case studies, dig through customers' product and services feedback looking for the gold, a.k.a., great customer stories. Turn that into content (with your customers' permission, of course). If you are still trying to find the buried treasure, put a call-out on your social media channels.

Real-world example: [Brock University uses social media to build a connected campus.](#)

Your Employees

Your employees are the face of your company. Give your brand a more personal feel by sharing employee stories. Profile them on your blog, give them a dedicated webpage or let them share their stories first-hand. It will give your employees some well-deserved recognition and break down the corporate walls.

Real-world example: We introduce our content and community team [here](#).

Your Brand

While your customers interact with your employees, products, and services, there is a lot that goes on behind the scenes that your community doesn't get a chance to see. Why not use your content to give them a glimpse into the inner workings of your brand? Show your customers what life is like in your office or how your brand and employees are involved in your local and global communities. The possibilities are endless.

Real-world example: Our Halifax team banded together to raise awareness and funds for the fight against cancer. We share the story [here](#).

35. Imagine if a customer read your social media strategy by mistake.

Oops. You just emailed your social media plan to Nina, your biggest customer, by mistake. The blood drains from your face. What will she think?

Use this little scenario as a mental check on your social media activities. Are your tactics meant to benefit your community — or to just manipulate them for your own ends?

So read your plan again with your customer's eyes. Imagine how Nina would feel if she found out you were:

- Erasing bad product reviews
- Anonymously trashing your competitors
- Artificially swelling your follower counts
- Ghostwriting your CEO's blog posts
- Abusing customers' Facebook data

Don't just avoid ethical pitfalls. Your social media plan should fill your fans with anticipation of all the great ways you're going to make their life more enjoyable this year. Here are some activities you should include in your social media plan:

- Passing along helpful information
- Publishing useful content
- Providing superb customer service
- Answering product questions promptly
- Maintaining a friendly, human presence
- Admitting when you screw up and making it right immediately
- Rewarding and honoring your best fans
- Delighting your fans in surprising ways
- Guiding them to the products and services they actually need

If your social media plan is bursting with ways to serve your community, people like Nina will reward you with their business, their loyalty, and their advocacy. And you'll never have to fear being exposed.

36. Deputize your social media super fans.

Many brands count on their super fans to jump into conversations and respond to online questions, sometimes even before the company representatives can. Rather than just assume this happens, what if you deputize your super fans to provide social customer service for your brand?

Give them the resources to manage this. That includes an [engagement playbook](#) created especially for super fans so they know what they can respond to and how they should respond. But it can also include access to a social media engagement tool. If that were something like the [Salesforce Marketing Cloud](#) they could indicate posts are resolved, and your community team would not need to respond. Since these super fans are not company reps, they can provide some additional personality in their responses.

And if you really want to give them a behind-the-scenes view of things, invite a super fan to an event and ask them to engage alongside your community team. If they love your brand, they probably already know your team and would be thrilled to sit with them and do what they do.

37. Take your social interactions offline.

The best part of social media is being social. So don't limit yourself to being social only on the web; nurture your connections by taking them offline.

Events are really important for community building. Think of social networking the same way you think of networking offline. It's all about relationships. People want to do business with people they know, and support the people they like. Create meet ups, [Tweetups](#) and other offline events to get your community together and interacting – not just with your brand, but with each other. Facilitate introductions to help others get connected, and build their networks both online and off. (For more info around creating events read [How to Throw Successful Events for Your Social Media Connections](#).)

Platforms like [Eventbrite](#) and [Plancast](#) can help you find and share events to attend. Don't stop there though. Let your community know where and when they can find you, by sharing this information on your website and in your blog.

Once you get back to the office, be sure to close the circle with all those great people you've met. Let them know it was great to meet them and thank them for chatting with you. Also, take a moment to think about projects you can work on collaboratively.

Cement these relationships by meeting routinely. If you're bound by geographic restrictions, pick up the phone and connect. Face-to-face connections are wonderful, but when that isn't practical, hearing someone's voice is the next best thing.

38. Be more transparent.

Oil Can Henry's does one simple thing to stand apart from other oil change franchises. Customers stay in their car and watch the mechanics working over a video feed on custom TV screens.



In his book *Personality Not Included*, Rohit Bhargava observes, “If [Oil Can Henry’s] customers are able to watch a mechanic work on their car, it automatically creates a feeling of ease and encourages trust.”

Many of their customers may not even understand what they're watching on the screen, but the very fact Oil Can Henry's has nothing to hide is impressive. What about your brand? Might your customers feel like you're trying to hide something?

Here are seven ideas for being more transparent.

1. Take your customers behind the scenes. Do a video walkthrough of the shop floor. [Livestream your all-hands meeting.](#)
2. Never censor blog or Facebook comments just because they make you look bad.
3. Turn your CEO loose on Twitter. [Here's Salesforce's Marc Benioff.](#)
4. Read, act on, and respond to reviews. [Think of your critics as volunteer mystery shoppers offering valuable insights.](#)
5. Actively solicit feedback, like [My Starbucks Idea.](#)
6. [Introduce your team.](#) Let your customers meet and chat with your employees online.
7. Admit when you screw up and fix the problem. ([Learn from Fedex.](#))

39. Time Facebook posts for maximum exposure and interaction.

When it comes to Facebook, brands that post outside of normal business hours see the best interaction rates. In fact, posting during “non-busy hours,” which fall between 8 PM and 7 AM, lead to a 14% higher interaction rate.

Don't post too often. [Brands that post one or two times per day see 19% higher interaction rates](#) than those who post three or more times per day. Space posts throughout the week to avoid overdoing it.

40. Optimize your Facebook content so it appears in your fans' news feeds.

The Facebook News Feed has become one of the most effective digital marketing tools for brands. Indeed, [40% of all time on Facebook is spent in the News Feed](#), which means it has become increasingly important for you to implement a strategy for News Feed optimization.

While Facebook's method for determining News Feed placement remains a closely guarded secret, our research shows that the following ten tips – along with relevant examples and suggestions – can optimize your presence in the News Feed.

1. Ask questions.
2. Post games and trivia.
3. Interact with fan engagement.
4. Incorporate relevant photos.
5. Relate to current events.
6. Incorporate videos.
7. Post content for time-sensitive campaigns
8. Include links within posts
9. Include an explicit call to action.

To learn more, download our white paper, [Facebook News Feed Optimization: Cut Through the Clutter](#).

Conclusion

If you apply these ideas — whether you're just starting out, working on your strategy, trying to listen harder, increasing your engagement or turning up the tracking — 2013 could be your best year yet.

To learn more about Salesforce Marketing Cloud, [click here](#) or see a [demo](#).

