

SEJ Search Engine
Journal

SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY

Where the rubber meets the road:
A look at SEJ's own social media game plan for 2014



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Last Words

Our mission statement at Search Engine Journal is “Helping marketers succeed by producing best-in-industry guides and information while cultivating a positive community.”

But with so many “best practice” articles out there, it can be difficult to distill what works best for you, your company, or your client. The best social media strategy must consider the context of industry, goals, and audience.

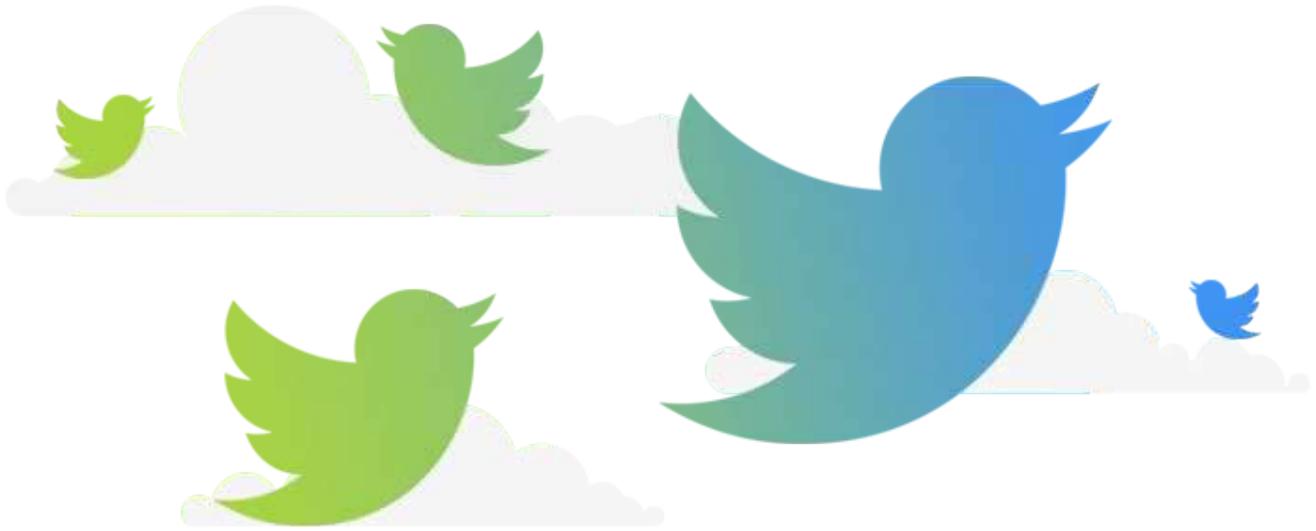
So, where to start?

Instead of producing yet another Social Media Guide, we have decided to reveal our own internal strategy we developed for SEJ. The following is a document, written by **Debbie Miller** and produced by **Brent Csutoras** and **Jenise Henrikson**, that was originally intended for internal use only. It discloses what we are doing on Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest, and Instagram.

We have added some context, such as this introduction and a few pretty graphics, but the original content is mostly untouched. It looks very much the same as when Debbie presented it to our internal stakeholders in March 2014.

This internal guide covers more than just our goals, numbers, and best practices – we also detail why we are following these particular strategies and how we expect we will benefit.

We hope our audience will also benefit by our reveal of how we are “eating our own dog food”— that is, putting into practice the very tactics and strategies that we have been publishing for the last 10 years.



CHAPTER 1

Search Engine Journal's Twitter Strategy

One of the largest social networks, Twitter is the “buzz generator” where people go for breaking news and updates. It’s a very fast-paced environment, intended to be short and sweet with each tweet being no more than 140 characters. Twitter shares some features with the most common social media tools: Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, Google+, and YouTube.

However, the differences really define Twitter:

- **Facebook:** A tweet is like a short Facebook status update, but with Twitter every tweet arrives at every follower’s feed, unlike the filter of Facebook’s EdgeRank.
- **Pinterest:** Twitter allows you to share photographs and provide commentary in your tweet, and with Twitter it’s much easier to have a conversation around a shared image versus the comment feature on Pinterest.
- **LinkedIn:** A tweet is like a short LinkedIn status update. While LinkedIn is based on trust relationships (and two-way agreements), Twitter allows you to follow anyone, including strangers.

- **Google+:** A tweet is like a short Google+ status update. Twitter also allows you to organize people into lists that organize conversations similar to Google+ groups.
- **YouTube:** A tweet can contain a link to a video; although, Twitter doesn't allow you to create a channel, or organize your videos for easy location and commentary.

Twitter Posting Strategy

- Use feeds to automatically stream through the latest SEJ posts as they go live
- Integrate a variety of non-SEJ content, such as humorous articles/photos and content from other related sites about industry events, timely news, quotes, etc.
- Promote the SEJ Writers by retweeting their content and sharing posts
- Tweet at least one month-old post each day
- Promote our team and writers onsite and off using their Twitter handle
- Share timely SEO news from other reliable sources

Twitter Engagement Strategy

- Reply to at least 10 users per day
- Propose questions about corresponding topics
- Thank people for sharing our posts

- Identify users who manually Tweet a post, comment, or otherwise interact
- Retweet at least 3 posts per day
- “Listen” to what people are saying about SEJ by searching Twitter for relevant keywords surrounding the company name

Twitter Following Strategy

Following new users on a regular basis will help grow our own fan base. Following quality brands and individuals will ensure we get as much relevant information from Twitter as possible. Our timeline will be more manageable with contributions from targeted accounts, as opposed to randomly following anyone or automatically following people back.

How to identify which accounts to follow:

- Look at those who follow us. Scroll through bios, select people who seem relevant, and ensure their feeds are live.
- Consider those who are retweeted frequently. If we are only following quality people, then the folks they are retweeting are probably worth investigating, too.
- Allude to our writer lists to see who they are quoting and talking about.
- Visit competitors’ follower lists. Anyone following them is clearly interested in the subject matter, and thus, we’d be of interest to them as well.
- Clean up older/inactive/automated users at least once a month. Use platforms like Twitter Karma, Just Unfollow, Status People, etc.

Twitter Observation Strategy

Observing other users along with their habits or the habits of related cohorts can be extremely educational in growing our fan base. One of the great things about Twitter is transparency—we can see everything everyone is saying. This makes competitive research super accessible. Our competitors have networks that likely include influencers who are directly related to the industry. Eavesdropping on Twitter conversations surrounding pertinent topics will help to ensure we are staying on top of what our audience is saying and interacting with.

Identifying influencers that are already following us is useful as well. Followerwonk is a platform which ranks users' social authority based on the retweet rate of their last few hundred tweets, the recentness of those tweets, and a retweet-based model trained on user profile data. This number is by no means perfect, but retweets are so strongly correlated with a healthy community that they are a great way to identify relationships that should be pursued.

Twitter Sentiment/Tone

Keep the overall sentiment light and positive. Avoid tweets that are negative in nature or could come across as unprofessional; like those including: profanities, racism, stereotyping, or referencing unprofessional activities. Do not engage in any argumentative conversation.

Hashtag

On Twitter, it is common practice for people to use the hashtag symbol (#) before a relevant keyword or phrase (without spaces) in their tweet to categorize those tweets and help to increase their visibility in Twitter search. No wonder, since studies show tweets using hashtags get twice as much engagement as those without. For example, if you search for #SEO you will get a list of tweets related to SEO that contain the hashtag phrase.

- Clicking on a hashtagged word in any message shows you all other tweets tagged with that keyword
- Hashtags can occur anywhere in the tweet – at the beginning, middle, or end
- Hashtagged words that become very popular are often trending topics
- Good practice to research trending hashtags in order to avoid accidental misuse
- Use hashtags only on tweets relevant to the topic
- Do not #spam #with #hashtags. Don't over-tag a single tweet. (Best practices recommend using no more than two hashtags per tweet.)

Photos Usage

Studies show tweets with images can get 60-200% more shares than those without. Using images means we have a better chance of standing out in follower's feeds.

SEJ uses the "Summary" version of Twitter cards.



Twitter Goals

Twitter is about building a community of followers who are passionate about SEO, social media, digital marketing, etc., and eventually become passionate about SEJ. The primary goal is to increase our Twitter following by at least 5% each month through Q2 2014.

- **February 2014** = 2,775 fan increase
- **March 2014** = 2,913 fan increase
- **April 2014** = 3,058 fan increase

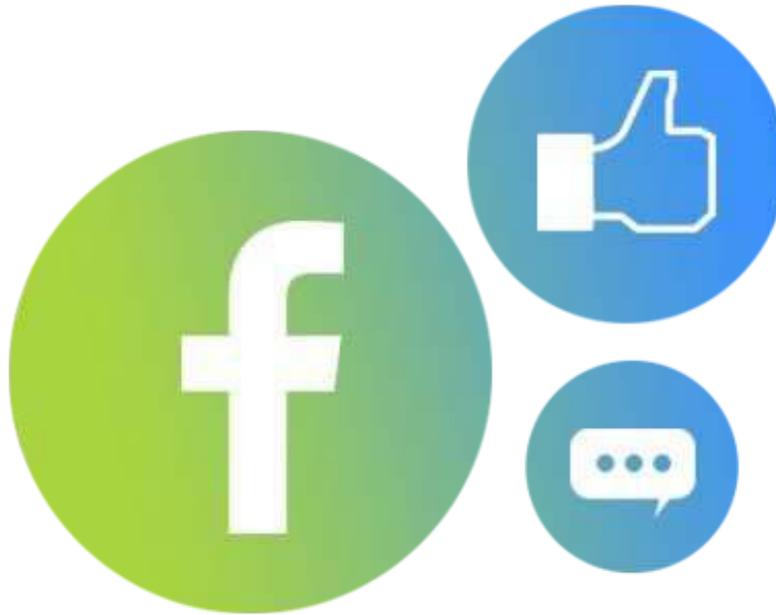
Ideally, this will draw traffic to the website, where we monetize our efforts through advertising and sponsorships. Social traffic referrals to the website should rise at least 10% month over month.

We also hope to consistently grow the number of mentions, retweets, and replies. In January 2014, we had 1188 retweets, 137 replies, and 3489 mentions. We hope to grow these numbers at least 5% through Q2.

Another major goal is to enhance the reputation of SEJ as an expert voice in the search arena. Showing that we are always on top of what is happening in the search world helps solidify our persona as a leading source in the field. This means keeping the community updated by continuously showcasing knowledge in various related topics such as social media, blogging, content marketing, and industry events.

Promoting the SEJ editorial team and guest writers will also aid in diversifying and creating high-quality content to share. Spotlighting SEJ authors and their work offsite will help strengthen our relationships with them. However, such content should be presented with a light hand so it does not come across as too promotional.

Using Twitter to monitor what is being said about our company is vital. We should respond in a timely manner to any issues and make sure all inquiries are addressed. Maintaining a consistent tone will help our audience understand who we are. Our voice should be professional, yet conversational and friendly.



CHAPTER 2

Search Engine Journal's Facebook Strategy

A Facebook Page helps to keep a business:

- **Discoverable.** When people search for you on Facebook, they'll be able to find you.
- **Connected.** Have one-on-one conversations with your customers, who can like your Page, read your posts, share them with friends, and check in when they visit.
- **Timely.** Your Page can help you reach large groups of people frequently, with messages tailored to their needs and interests.
- **Insightful.** Analytics provide a deeper understanding of your customers and your marketing activities.

Facebook Posting Strategy

SEJ's posting strategy should involve sharing a mix of relevant links and engaging content, and then watching insights to see what garners the most response. People love trivia, tips, and tricks about matters in which they are interested. They like answering questions and being heard.

Conveying a lot of humor surrounding pertinent topics also aids in reaping engagement. **Visual content such as photos and videos create a lot of interaction, especially when educational, comic, enjoyable, or inspiring.**

Sharing our interview videos will help provide consistent visual content and emphasize our immersion in the search space. We will also feature upcoming events and SEJ happenings, and encourage excitement around said initiatives.

Due to the large amount of new content posted regularly on the SEJ website, six to eight Facebook posts per day is a steady amount that will ensure all our posts, along with others, are being distributed.

Facebook post types will vary; for example, posts will feature photos, links, or polls. To ensure we are not being entirely self-promotional, we will increase the amount of non-SEJ content ensuring at least 20% of posts come from other sources.

Facebook Best Posting Practices

- Alternate update lengths. Enlist a variety of varied post lengths to keep people educated, engaged, and interested.
- Use hashtags intelligently. (Many use hashtags frivolously and without intent.)

- Make sure any hashtags used contain valuable, pertinent content, and use no more than two hashtags per post.
- Ideal image dimensions: 403 x 403 pixels
- What to do when sharing links:
 - Vary the usage of images with link updates to avoid monotony
 - Incorporate an equal mix of update types while watching insights to learn what the audience is responding to most
- Ensure each post has the AIDA factor- Attention, Interest, Desire, and Action.
- Make sure when you are engaging you are signed in as your PAGE and not as an individual
- How to post on Facebook pages (via Facebook Help)
- How to schedule posts to appear later (via Facebook Help)

Six Types of Posts that Build Engagement on Facebook

Photos. As they say, a picture is worth a thousand words.

Fill in the Blanks. My biggest pet peeve with Google is _____.

Photo Captions. Help us caption this: <intriguing picture>.

Questions. Start, or end, posts with questions.

Tips. Share “Did you know” style tips in posts.

Quotes. Share relevant or inspirational quotes.

Facebook Engagement Strategy

Engaging with users is critically important to building relationships and creating brand advocates. Steps to nurturing fan relationships include:

- **Acknowledge comments:** “Like” generic comments, comment on ones that warrant responses
- **Listen to our audience:** Note any specific feedback, requests
- **Converse with other brands:** Like and comment on their posts to show support, collaboration, friendliness (hopefully they will reciprocate, partner, etc.)

Facebook Community Building Strategy

- Actively communicate and acknowledge relevant individuals
- Constantly search for related pages and participate with their communities – like, share, etc.
- Engage with other members of those communities to organically increase visibility

Facebook Monitoring Strategy

If negative comments are posted on our page, we should try to connect with the individual and resolve the issue, or transform the difficult situation into something beneficial.

Always delete comments on our page that are:

- Self-promotional
- Controversial or potentially offensive
- Not relevant
- Spam

Incorporate, and stick to, a disclaimer on the Facebook page that notes any of the above types of comments, or any that do not further the discussion in a productive manner, will be deleted. This will ensure our page remains engaging and informative.

Facebook Promotion Strategy

We will develop at least four campaigns per year aimed at increasing excitement and communication with/about SEJ. These campaigns should tie in larger SEJ initiatives, such as a website re-launch, events, conferences, etc. Consider when to boost posts based on engagement and post type. Boost ROI on particularly engaging posts when an extra push seems worthwhile. Budget will depend upon the goals of each campaign.

Facebook Goals

The primary goal is to increase the Facebook following by at least 10% each month through Q2 2014.

- **February 2014** = 6,700 fan increase
- **March 2014** = 7,370 fan increase
- **April 2014** = 8,107 fan increase

Social traffic referrals to the website should rise at least 10% month over month.

Another major goal is to brand SEJ as an expert in the search field by showing that we are always on top of the latest news. Promoting the SEJ team and writers will help diversify our content and increase the amount of high-quality content we have to share. Should not be too promotional, rather more informative.

Using Facebook to monitor what is being said about our company is another vital imperative. We should respond in a timely manner to any issues and ensure all inquiries are addressed. Maintaining a consistent tone and voice will help our audience understand who we are. This voice should be professional, yet conversational and friendly.

Facebook Metrics That Matter

Reporting Strategy

- Monitor:
 - Likes
 - Comments
 - Impressions
 - Website traffic

- Check trends, tactics, and insights each month and adjust accordingly
- Track Facebook trends, blogs, and groups
- Adjust based on any algorithm updates or other changes

Fan Reach

- Unique number of users reached by your content
- Helps determine account quality

Engagement per Post

- Number of people clicked anywhere in your post
- Determines appeal factor of each update

People Talking About This

- Number of people actually sharing, liking, or commenting
- Shows engagement of updates, potential viral success



CHAPTER 3

Search Engine Journal's LinkedIn Strategy

While the SEJ LinkedIn company page is relatively new, there are many benefits of being present in this space. Some include engaging potential followers with company news, updates, events, and relevant content. LinkedIn has a different aura than other social networks, as users on LinkedIn tend to be more professionally proactive.

There is also the opportunity for improved search engine rankings as LinkedIn pages often perform well in company searches. There are also lead generation opportunities from the content marketing side.

In fact, research shows that 50% of LinkedIn members are more likely to purchase from companies when they engage with them on LinkedIn.

Optimizing Our LinkedIn Profile

An optimized LinkedIn page allows us to showcase what SEJ has to offer. By building up the “products and services page” we can showcase what we are about and give people compelling reasons to follow.

Company pages are also very SEO-friendly. Google previews up to 156 characters of text from each business page. As a result, we must ensure our description leads with powerful, keyword-rich sentences. Plus, members can search for companies by keyword on LinkedIn, so we should also include words and phrases that describe SEJ and our industry focus.

Engaging Our LinkedIn Audience

With LinkedIn company pages, we can now “like” and share content as a company, similar to how we do on Facebook and Google+. Therefore, we use this platform to share our own articles, as well as other industry news, with an audience that may not be active on one of the other social networks. We post at least four times a day to ensure that articles are being seen.

Similarly, company page admins can “like” and respond to member comments generated from posts. We can also support our contributors and other partners by sharing their content as well.

Targeted Updates

With LinkedIn's targeted updates, we can easily tailor certain messaging if desired. For example, when creating an update, we can choose to share it with "all followers" or to a "targeted audience."

Choosing the latter allows us to send an update to a subset of followers based on geography, industry, company size, or level of seniority. For example, if we were having a meet-up in a certain city, we can tailor updates toward people in that region.

Attracting More LinkedIn Followers

To grow our LinkedIn followers, we started by spreading the word internally and encouraged all team members, contributors, etc., to follow and engage with the page. We also urge contributors to add SEJ to their LinkedIn profiles, either as a job or "contributing publication".

Use a multi-channel approach. Add a link to the company page to email signatures and add a "Follow" button to the website, which shows that we are on LinkedIn and makes it easy for people to follow.

Analyze LinkedIn Results

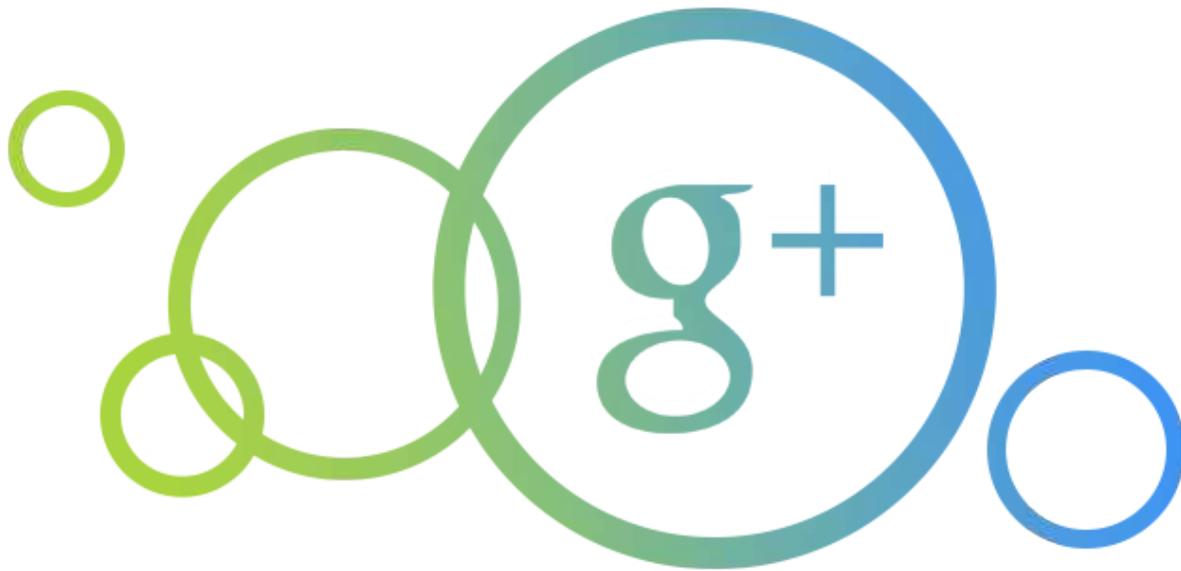
Use LinkedIn Analytics to help us better engage with followers and monitor our success. There is an array of insights available to help us focus and refine our strategy, including:

Engagement % — Engagement = interactions + clicks + followers acquired. In other words, this metric answers the question, “Of those who’ve seen my update, how many are truly engaging with it?” Looking at updates with higher engagement rates, and noting the type of content, people targeted, date and time, helps us learn how to optimize future content around what is proven to work.

Demographics — From seniority and industry to company size and function, demographics provide a snapshot of followers. With this information, we can tailor the type of content shared as well as the tone in which it is delivered. Demographics will also help determine which segments to focus on for targeted status updates.

How You Compare — Knowing how our company page compares to the pages of our competitors is a great way to determine whether we should change our strategy.

Since our LinkedIn page is new, we do not have many benchmarks yet. For now, we will observe and re-evaluate page goals in a few months.



CHAPTER 4

Search Engine Journal's Google+ Strategy

Why Google+?

Because Google+ is not just a social network— it is part of a powerful social platform that integrates with key capabilities like Google docs, chat, hangouts, gmail, and more.

In addition to the social benefits, there are powerful search benefits as well. Google search algorithms recognize social sharing, as each share tells them that the content is valuable and trustworthy. This is true regardless of the social media site, but it is all the more powerful with G+, since it ties in directly with Google search products.

For these reasons alone, Google+ is a high-value opportunity worth investing the time and resources required to cultivate it.

A common misconception is that Google+ is a ghost town. In reality, Google+ is home to vibrant, active communities that foster deep engagement. The trick is learning how to find and take advantage of these communities to build long-lasting relationships with core audiences.

Driving Google+ Follower Growth

In conjunction with the recent website re-design, it would be fruitful to give the Google+ badge more prominent placement. This allows users to easily follow our Google+ page directly from the website.

Encourage sharing of SEJ content on Google+ among internal stakeholders, such as ABM team members, contributing writers, etc.

Direct Connect is an interesting search tie-in that enables users to automatically add brands to their Circles by including the plus symbol (+) before a brand name in their Google search queries. Similar to call-outs in advertising that ask consumers to “Like us on Facebook,” we can say, “Search for +SearchEngineJournal on Google,” and the action will take users directly to our Google+ page. This functionality is available for many, but not all, so maybe we can suggest an article be written on the topic and then use it to encourage locating our Google+ page this way.

Being More Strategic with Google+ Circles

As of March, 2014, we had about 40 people in our own circles. By circling more influential users ourselves, we can engage more regularly with more peoples’ related content and subsequently get in front of the eyes of their fans, and hopefully grow our fan base.

Google+ Hangouts

Hangouts allow multiple Google+ users to participate in spontaneous video chats. This is a feature brands can use to engage followers in targeted discussions or focus groups around the topics they care about.

Although only 10 people can participate in a Hangout at one time, the Hangouts On Air feature allows for Hangouts to broadcast to many more viewers who can watch events, product demonstrations, or focus groups in real-time.

It would be great to optimize this function by having monthly or bi-monthly Hangouts featuring internet marketing professionals. The Hangouts could be an open discussion of current trends, or rely on a specific hot topic. This allows our community to engage with us in a much more intimate way, and users would have to circle us in order to view the Hangout which would indirectly help grow the numbers, too.

We can work with Kelsey to find authors who would be willing to hold SEJ hangouts with us. We could look for content that received a lot of comments or traction, and then ask the writer if they would do a Hangout to discuss the topic further and answer any questions.

Google+ Post Visibility

Once a user "circles" our Google+ page, our posts show up in Google searches when users are logged into their Google accounts. A person could circle our page and never engage with or visit it again, but our posts still have the potential to show up in their Google searches. Posts with +1s have a better possibility of showing up in searches.

Google Algorithm

Google does not apply an algorithm to the home feed, which is a huge differentiator from Facebook. For Google+, this means timing matters: posts decay and are not bumped up by affinity or weight values. It also emphasizes the value of getting into users' circles – one you're in, you're in – and you have just as much chance as anyone else in their circles at getting your posts seen.

+1s

+1s also matter. +1 is to Google+ posts what likes are to Facebook posts. The only major differentiator is that posts with more +1s are more likely to be seen in Google search results. Keywords also matter more on Google+ since posts are more likely to show in search results for certain topics.

Google + Posting Strategy

Similar to Facebook, the posting strategy should involve sharing a mix of relevant links and engaging content. People love trivia, tips, and tricks about things they are interested in. They like answering questions and having their voices heard.

Conveying a lot of humor surrounding pertinent topics also aids in garnering engagement. Visual content such as photos and videos typically create a lot of interaction.

Due to the large amount of new content posted on the SEJ website, at least four posts per day is a steady amount to ensure all our posts, along with others, are being distributed.

Post types will vary and feature photos, links, and polls, along with various posts lengths: some longer post intros, some shorter ones. To ensure we are not being entirely self-promotional, we will also include regular posts from other sources.

Tagging other pages when opportunistic is also something we can start taking advantage of. Similarly, although Google+ has started attaching hashtags to posts regularly based on the content of the posts, using specific hashtags more frequently have the added benefit of us showing up in search results for those hashtags.

Google+ Engagement Strategy

Engaging with users is critically important to building relationships and creating brand advocates. Steps to nurturing fan relationships include:

- **Acknowledge comments:** +1 generic comments, comment on those that warrant a response
- **Listen to our audience:** Note requests and specific feedback
- **Engage with other brands:** +1, comment on their posts to show support and friendliness

Google + Monitoring Strategy

If we come across negative comments on our page, try to connect with the individual to learn more about the issue. We should try to resolve mendable issues to transform a difficult situation into something beneficial.

Delete comments on our page that are:

- Self-promotional
- Controversial or potentially offensive
- Not relevant

Google+ Goals

A primary goal is to drive traffic to the website. In the month of January 2014, 15,602 visitors arrived at the website via Google+. We would like to see this percentage rise by at least 10% each month.

- **February 2014 goal** = 17,162 visitors
- **March 2014 goal** = 18,878 visitors
- **April 2014 goal** = 20,766 visitors

As of March 2014, 10,700 people have circled us and 23,200 have +1ed our page. In January, we had 515 +1s on posts along with 127 re-shares and 43 comments. Growing these numbers month over month at a minimum rate of 10% would be ideal as well.

Preferably, using Google+ will draw more traffic to the website and lead to numerous benefits, such as increases in advertising sales and sponsorship opportunities, and help continue to brand SEJ as an expert in the search arena.

Google+ Reporting Strategy

Monitor and report monthly on:

- +1s on posts
- Comments on posts
- +1s on page itself
- People who have circled us
- Website traffic
- Trends, tactics, and insights



CHAPTER 5

Search Engine Journal's Pinterest Strategy

Pinterest keeps growing and has now amassed 70 million users. This means nearly one in every six people who use the Internet are on Pinterest. According to Pew research, these users are well educated and 18% have an annual income of \$75,000 or more.

In other words, Pinterest is being utilized by an extraordinary amount of people, many of whom likely carry influential weight in the online community. It would be remiss not to optimize our presence here for a variety of reasons.

Driving Website Traffic

Beth Hayden, author of Pinfluence, revealed that Pinterest drives more referral traffic than LinkedIn, Google+, and YouTube combined.

In order to take advantage of this, Pinterest users first have to be attracted to SEJ's pins and re-pin them to their boards. The most successful pins on Pinterest have some traits in common. They combine great images with content to solve a problem, inspire, or appeal to an interest. Since our SEJ articles do just that, this is a perfect outlet.

Promoting Articles on Pinterest

Our primary objective on Pinterest should be to spread awareness about our knowledge and immersion in the industry, and subsequently drive traffic back to the website.

- Regularly pin new articles to corresponding Pinterest boards
- Incorporate Pinterest sharing into our "share" buttons on individual SEJ posts
- Add "Pin it" buttons to every page of the website
- Ensure all articles include an image so that if one is pinned it will have an alluring, accommodating image
- Ensure post meta-content is filled in, as that description will translate over as the pin description when someone pins the article (if not, a blank box appears so people can tailor their own description, which may be less optimized than desired)

Engaging on Pinterest

Engaging with other brands and pinners will help spread awareness that we are on Pinterest. We can optimize engagement by:

- Following other industry Pinterest pages and interacting with them
- Following other active SEO/social media influencers and engaging with them
- Monitoring our own pins and responding to comments

Taking Advantage of the “Search” Feature

The search feature allows us to search for pins featuring any specific phrase or verbiage. It is likely that people are already pinning SEJ articles, so by performing searches for “Search Engine Journal” we can be sure to engage with users that are currently posting about us. Also, search for keywords like “SEO,” “social media,” and other relevant terms to engage with other members of our Pinterest community who are interested in similar topics.

Optimizing Pinterest Presence

In conjunction with many of the above objectives, while we have a Pinterest page set up with a few boards, there are more things we could do to take it to the next level:

- Verify our website: this allows users to see the full website URL on our profile and in search results
- Be regularly active
- Add at least 10 more boards over the next couple months
- Follow additional users
- Use hashtags when relevant
- Identify boards to which we would benefit from “collaborator” access on a quarterly basis
- Determine what we could utilize for social icons and buttons for the site re-design
- Adding “Pin it” and other Pinterest-gearred buttons to the site could be useful, but we want to focus on what works best for our audience, and SEJ does not fit naturally into Pinterest.

Pinterest Goals

In January 2014, we had 9,837 visitors to the website from Pinterest. Considering we were not active, this is a decent start. Beginning in March 2014 with the re-activation and overhaul of our Pinterest presence, we will monitor traffic and growth, and then make reasonable goals for the following months in accordance with those numbers.



CHAPTER 6

Search Engine Journal's Instagram Strategy

Instagram is a mobile app where users share their life stories and events using only photos with cool filters and captions. Instagram is owned by Facebook and has 150 million monthly active users as of December 2013.

Similar to Facebook, photos are posted to a feed where followers can see what is being shared and leave comments or click on a heart symbol to "like" the photo. Similar to Foursquare, people can tag a specific location to a photo. Similar to Twitter, users can view a feed of the most popular photos around the world from other public-sharing users or only view the photos in the feed of the people they are following.

We are in a slightly trickier position since we do not have a visual product to showcase and URLs are not linkable if we were to share a photo pertaining to a certain article. Instagram is different from other platforms in that it is not really a place to share our articles on a regular basis, but rather, it is a place to engage others in the SEO space and build brand awareness.

Using Hashtags Effectively on Instagram

Hashtags are widely used on Instagram. Hashtags are words or phrases marked with the # symbol and are used to enable collecting all content with that tag in one place.

With public Instagram accounts, anyone searching for a hashtag used in a photo caption will be able to see that image. This is a great way to get specific photos and brand accounts a lot more attention. Like on Twitter and Facebook, users should be smart with hashtags: Do not overuse them, and only use words that are actually relevant to the photo being tagged.

Some brands overuse hashtags with the goal of getting more likes and followers. This is not going to get the followers they want and will likely attract spammy comments.

Engagement on Instagram

Like other social platforms, engaging with other users is a significant part of the experience. Looking at who is following us then following back relevant individuals and users of certain hashtags, as well as significant people at events, we can continue to grow our following and get in front of a greater audience. We should also consider gathering Instagram handles of our authors and following them.

Optimizing Instagram at Events

Instagram is often used at industry events. Using the event hashtag is a great way to connect with others that are also at events. By searching for the event hashtag and engaging with other photos from the event, other users will see we are there as well and likely follow back. We can also feature short videos from the events and behind-the-scenes photos.

Website and Social Integration for Instagram

Our website currently does not include the Instagram logo among our apparent social icons. Adding it to that list and adding a widget that features some of our recent photos are great ways to alert website users that we do have an Instagram presence and are staying active on it.

Furthermore, Instagram can be easily linked to Twitter and Facebook allowing us to share photos directly to both platforms when posting them on Instagram.

Instagram Goals

We are presently following 330 users and have 113 following us. We have only posted seven photos, but as we begin to use Instagram more, subsequently we will grow. Beginning with a large push during SMX, we hope to gain more followers and rapidly increase activity, then use our progress results from March as a baseline for future growth.



CHAPTER 7

Search Engine Journal's Snapchat Strategy

Snapchat is one of the most popular social media apps on the market today. Snapchat now has over 350 million photos shared daily, an increase of 150 million from June 2013. Like Instagram and Vine in their initial stages, users can only utilize the app directly from their phone, and no web-based version exists.

Even though the popularity of Snapchat is mainly still among teenagers and young adults, the app's widespread growth has led to a wider range of demographics and daily users of all ages. Snapchat appeal lies in the fact that all messages are temporary and cannot be found by other users (or, in teenagers' case, parents). Marketers can harness this hidden and secretive attraction to create innovative communication channels for their target market.

Posting Strategy

Forums such as Facebook and Twitter do provide a plethora of marketing prospects, but one thing that they lack is the ability to form a long-lasting and personal connection with followers. By using Snapchat's single message format, marketers can reach users in a more personal way without seeming intrusive, since the message is viewable on the recipient's terms. When it comes down to it, Snapchat is all about moments: goofy moments between friends and loyal moments between brands and customers.

1. **Time your picture according to its subject:** You have the option of selecting the amount of time your picture will be up for the recipient to view. Since you have a range of one to ten seconds, use it wisely. If you want your customers to be deeply intrigued and just catch a glance of the picture you are snapping, then a couple seconds may be good enough.
2. **Use the text caption bar:** The addition of texts on pictures can ensure a well-delivered and effective message, but must be used wisely. At times, cryptic messages may just erupt in a frenzy of excitement, but may not be understood by your followers if they are not utilized properly. In Example A, you can't understand the written text; a caption would have been much better instead.



Example A



Example B

- 3. Use the marker\paint tool to your advantage:** Just like the text option, you can also enhance your snaps with the paint tool (which was attempted in Example A). **“Snapchat Artist” could be the next trending job title when it comes to social media.** For example, Michael Platco regularly sends out Snapchat art that delights his friends and Tumblr followers. Example B is a selection of his best Harry Potter snaps, used with his permission.

- 4. Give your followers up to 24 hours to respond before engaging again:** Not everyone opens snaps at work, especially since they do not know what they are going to see. You don’t want to be too pushy.
- 5. Reply to Snapchats you receive from your followers:** Individualized snaps can be a great way to make your users feel special, if your resources allow.
- 6. Polished and filtered pictures as snaps belong to Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter:** Snapchat is all about living in the moment, so share the raw version. It may also develop a sense of intimacy and personalization for your followers.
- 7. Be fun and creative:** That is what the younger demographic reigning on Snapchat wants. Be what they want and you will go far.

How Can Businesses and Organizations Use Snapchat For Marketing?

As mentioned previously, due to the thrill teenagers get with exposing their deepest, darkest, and at times ugliest secrets, Snapchat is perceived as one of the most popular social media networks for younger demographics. This in itself is a huge advantage for marketers, as specific brands and businesses can use this platform to intrigue this already curious age group and create potential benefits for their businesses.

Marketers really need to be on the forefront of marketing and digital advertising trends. Strategy needs to be based around pop culture and what is trending visually now, while still looking natural. Snapchat's main market (teens to young adults) is a savvy audience who knows when they are being lied to or manipulated. They appreciate genuine communication with brands that understand what they are interested in.

Ways to Use Snapchat as a Business

- **Coupons:** Send your customers a discount code, coupon, or keyword they can then use in order to save money while making purchases. Making your coupons secretive has an air of exclusivity, which feeds into the overall Snapchat feel.
- **Competitions:** Hold contests for the best snaps or have a QuickSnap contest, where the first person(s) to respond with a snap back wins the prize.

- **Engagement and Community Building:** This is covered in strategy, but depending on your popularity, sending responsive snaps back to users who send ones to you can help them feel like they are being heard; a huge benefit in the fight to get consumers' attention.

Why Should Businesses Utilize Snapchat?

The true essence of a professional marketer lies in his or her innovativeness and the way he or she combines those ideas with the marketing tools available. There are a plethora of ideas just waiting to be launched through Snapchat that other businesses have not done yet. Doing Snapchat marketing now will help you build up a following through the medium while others are still wondering where to start.

Snapchat can help your business in the following ways (besides the coupons, competitions, and engagement mentioned above):

- **Humanizing your business will increase brand brownie points:** Take snaps of office events and happenings to make your users feel more engaged with what is going on at your company during its day-to-day, which will cultivate a feeling of closeness users will remember long after the billboards and tweets have faded away. This will also result in brand loyalty, a feat not accomplished easily.
- **Every business has core mission and values.** Let the customers know what your business is all about and what it stands for, and they will respond in kind with messages of what is important to them. Just be sure to listen when they do.

It all comes down to just one thing: your followers Think about your marketing strategy, your target audience, and the trends that could make your Snapchat embraced by users. In the end, a brand needs to see what the best marketing strategy for their business is, and with a growing list of social media tools available, marketers have a lot to choose from. Snapchat is one of those tools that allows marketers to be creative and reach their consumers in a new and fun way.

Last Words

So, there you have it: the entire SEJ social media strategy on every major platform. Are there other platforms you think we should have included? What strategies have you seen work well on social media?

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