

Social Media for Small Business

Written by Ginny Grimsley
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5 'P's" for Your Social Media Marketing Success By: Jeremy Juhasz

Small businesses and nonprofits face a different set of circumstances when it comes to social media marketing than their larger for-profit counterparts, namely, smaller budgets, fewer employees and a greater priority on traditional forms of marketing.

For those charged with marketing, the biggest first step toward making social media an integral component of the plan may be convincing your organization. Despite widespread use of social networks for personal connections, the leadership of smaller organizations often questions its effectiveness as a marketing tool and whether they'll see a return on their investment.

I've developed and implemented social media strategies for a variety of organizations -- for-profits, nonprofits, and individuals. For all of them, I've discovered, when it comes to social media, it's important to remember the 5 P's:

1.) Plan - Identify what you hope to accomplish and create a strategy to take you there. Too many nonprofits and small businesses dive into social media because they "have" to and don't consider a plan of action before they do so. Make a list of what you want to accomplish. Is it to gain more donors? Get a higher attendance at your annual fundraiser? Increase sales?

Make it a priority to identify goals so you can create the social media strategies for meeting them.

2.) Patience - Nothing happens overnight. It takes time to develop relationships and establish credibility with your brand and your target audience. Over time, events and a steady pace will win out. Rushing leads to mistakes.

The type of patience I'm referring to is a long-term mindset. When day-to-day activities seem arduous and, at times, unfulfilling, know that each day builds to the greater goal. March on.

3.) Persistence - You must be stubbornly committed to your goals and your strategy. Keep plugging away and give your plan a fair amount of time and analysis before you pull the plug. If you know the plan is a good one, it's not a good idea to panic and change course simply because you're not seeing results as quickly as you'd like.

That said, circumstances change, not every strategy works, and you need to also be willing to recognize that it is time to try something new.

Be persistent in implementing your plan and in monitoring whether you're reaching the objectives that will take you to your goal.

4.) Pay (what you can) - These days, especially on Facebook, it's a pay-for-play landscape. Pay where you can, if you can. The results can provide the spark you need to drive a specific campaign or to increase your overall visibility to your target market. It can also be a very affordable alternative to other digital advertising options.

5.) Prioritize - I can't stress enough the importance of time management. If your marketing staff consists of only one or two people, it's essential that you stay on top of your social media strategy by prioritizing your quarterly, monthly, weekly and daily objectives and goals. Nonprofits and small businesses face countless new daily challenges. Sometimes we lose

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track of what's most important. Take the time to identify those tasks critical to your success and make them a priority.

You can succeed with social media even if your organization doesn't have the brand recognition of a multi-billion dollar corporation. If you remain even-keeled and set realistic goals, the return on investment will follow.

About Jeremy Juhasz

Jeremy Juhasz is a social media strategist at [EMSI Public Relations](#) and a panelist for the Tampa Bay Marketing Summit, (www.tampabaymarketingsummit.com) on Aug. 8. Jeremy has years of experience managing social media marketing for the nonprofit sector, including launching social media and online strategies for Feeding America Food Bank and Goodwill affiliates. His multi-media background includes work as a newspaper reporter and as a marketing professional. He's a graduate of Alfred University and attended Kent State's School of Communication and Information, public relations.