



**By: Michael W Hobach**

**Blue Eye Group LLC**

**[www.BlueEyeGroup.com](http://www.BlueEyeGroup.com)**

## **25 Steps to Get Started with Social Media:**

### ***Checklist for Local Businesses***

- Have I researched the leading social media sites?
  - Get comfortable with what each site offers
  - Look at different options for companies and brands
  - Check out competitors on each site
  - Look for mentions of my business
  - Research my industry to see how others are using social media
- Have I created a social media goal list?
  - Identify what I want to accomplish from social media
  - Create a list of goals, such as brand awareness, increased online presence, and/or positive online reputation
- Have I figured out my social media budget?
  - Determine how much you are willing to spend on expanding your business via social media
  - Research advertisement costs on each social media site
  - Determine if you need a social media manager and the costs involved
  - Factor in other expenses such as add-ons, time spent, and optional marketing tools
- Have I found out where my target audience hangs out online?
  - Perform an Internet search for industry-relevant blogs and forums
  - Visit the sites with highest amount of activity that's associated with your business industry
  - Find social media groups on the leading social media platforms
  - Engage naturally with other forum members and post interesting blog comments
- Have I created a plan to consistently generate social media content?
  - Visit your target audiences' hangouts to get an idea of hot topics
  - Visit relevant company sites and social media pages to see trending topics in my industry

- Have I determined how much time I can dedicate to my social media accounts?
  - Factor in time for profile creation
  - Remember that consistent content is vital
  - Customer engagement must be done regularly
  - Consider hiring help if I don't have the time
- Have I filled out my social media profile completely?
  - Make sure each section is filled out in detail
  - Upload and add a high-quality company photo
  - Make sure business details are clearly visible and easy to understand
- Have I considered long-term maintenance of my social media accounts?
  - Keep in mind that a consistent, long-term effort is needed to be successful on social media
  - Remember that I will get from social media what I put into it.
  - Instant "push" automated updates is not recommended
- Have I found a method to elicit responses?
  - Activity and engagement with others is the primary focus of social media
  - Ask questions that are thought-provoking and get your followers a chance to respond
  - Allow all users the ability to respond to you and ask questions
- Have I joined relevant communities and groups?
  - Don't limit myself to just my business page
  - Make connections with other like-minded businesses
  - Offer tips and answer questions in community forums
- Have I built a separate personal account?
  - Keep personal business out of my business account
  - While sharing personal team photos and company outings are fine, don't share details concerning personal problems and events that have nothing to do with my business
  - Personal views on touchy topics should never be given
  - Stay unbiased during debates and/or heated discussions
- Have I learned how to engage without being too "sales-like?"
  - While it's fine to talk about my business, don't throw hard sales pitches on every comment or update
  - Remember social media is about letting your presence be known

- Focus on being an authentic business with a human side and the sales will come
- Have I considered online promotions and freebies?
  - Offer free coupons to the next 10 followers
  - Provide free promotions to followers
  - Offer free samples
  - Run regular contests and sweepstakes
- Have I invited current customers and other contacts?
  - Send out invites to my social media accounts
  - Use email address book and place my social media account information on my business website
- Have I researched the best time to publish content?
  - Research when my target audience is the most active online
  - Adhere to a similar schedule so my followers have the best chance of seeing updates
- Have I determined how to vary the types of content I post?
  - Don't post repetitive content
  - Make a blog post one day, followed by a tutorial
  - Consider sharing product links and relevant industry news on the following days
- Have I identified the best keywords to use?
  - Use the free Google Adwords tool to determine the best keywords to use for my business
  - Strategically but naturally place keywords in articles, videos, and blogs
- Have I optimized my business website with social media tools?
  - Use icons that lead back to my social media accounts
  - Make updates on my business website to lead readers to my social media accounts
- Have I learned the lingo of each major social media site?
  - Each site has its own "net lingo"
  - Understand the important lingo on each site, such as hashtags, tweets, InMail, DMS, and more
- Have I gone over the mistakes to avoid in social media?
  - Remember to consistently post but balance it out so I don't over-post.
  - Remember to offer incentives and contests instead of hard selling

- Have I considered that social media success isn't immediate?
  - Efforts must be long-term
  - Success will not happen overnight via social media
  - Social media isn't fly-by-night. It takes permanent effort and dedication
- Have I planned in-person events?
  - Boost sales and increase the number of paying customers by holding in-person events
  - Send reminders via social media
  - Offer incentives to participate
- Have I learned how to track my social media progress?
  - Measure my efforts via predefined goals (as discussed in Step 2)
  - Devise a plan to keep track of each goal
- Have I created an editorial calendar?
  - Editorial calendars help to schedule consistent content
  - Plan promotions and events with an easy to method to keep up with everything
- Have I implemented useful photos and videos?
  - People are visual, and buying decisions are most often made when high-quality photos and videos accompany credible content
  - Photos need to be clear and colorful while conveying your company's appeal
  - Videos should always be professional with proper lighting, clear sounds, and full of engaging yet entertaining information.

If you would like to discuss using Social Media to market your business in particular, contact us at 414-731-0450. We will help you determine your specific needs and a detailed action plan to ensure you get started on the right foot.

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414-731-0450

[mhobach@blueeyegroup.com](mailto:mhobach@blueeyegroup.com)

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