

# HR TOOLKIT

## Social Media

Provided by: Casimere Insurance Services



**Casimere Insurance Services**

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# Introduction

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To say that social media is a growing trend for business would be an understatement. At this point, your company may be behind the times if you are not utilizing social media. But why has social media become so important for business?

Word-of-mouth knows no barriers with social networks—the possibilities for spreading content or ideas are endless. Social media creates influence and scale in a way traditional media simply cannot, for a fraction of the cost.

## *Strengthen and Protect Your Brand*

Most likely, people are already talking about your company on social media. If you're not involved or listening, you're taking the following risks:

- Missing opportunities to highlight and take advantage of positive comments
- Missing negative feedback that could help your company improve, and hurting your reputation by essentially “ignoring” negative comments that are out there
- Missing opportunities to connect with customers or prospects

Marketing has changed. It is no longer about pushing information to people; instead, it is about conversation. People want to participate, have a voice and make sure their opinions are heard. To market effectively today, two-way communication through social media needs to be a part of your strategy.

People have always shared positive and negative business interactions with friends and family. The difference with social media is the reach of those comments. A story that might have reached a dozen people 20 years ago could now reach thousands or even millions in minutes. Use this to your advantage. Social media is a great way to draw attention to your competitive edge and encourage customers to talk about your brand.

## *Monitor Your Competition*

Your competitors are likely already on social media. If you are not, you're missing out on a crucial opportunity to see what they're up to. Although companies can choose what is public on their social profiles on certain sites, you can still learn a lot from keeping an eye on competitors' online presence.

Furthermore, if your competition is on social media, they are reaching a market and audience that you are not.

Casimere Insurance Services is equipped to support your social media initiatives and can provide informative articles, resources and programs to assist you every step of the way.



# WHY USE SOCIAL MEDIA?

Companies today are at a huge disadvantage if they are not using social media. Social media can create influence in a way that traditional media cannot.

## 2.3 BILLION

people worldwide use social media

## 76%

of online adults use social networking sites

Social media gives you the opportunity to connect with customers and monitor your competition. In fact, **82 percent** of businesses find social media to be effective for lead generation.

## 74%

of consumers rely on social media to make purchasing decisions

### SOCIAL MEDIA CAN INCREASE:



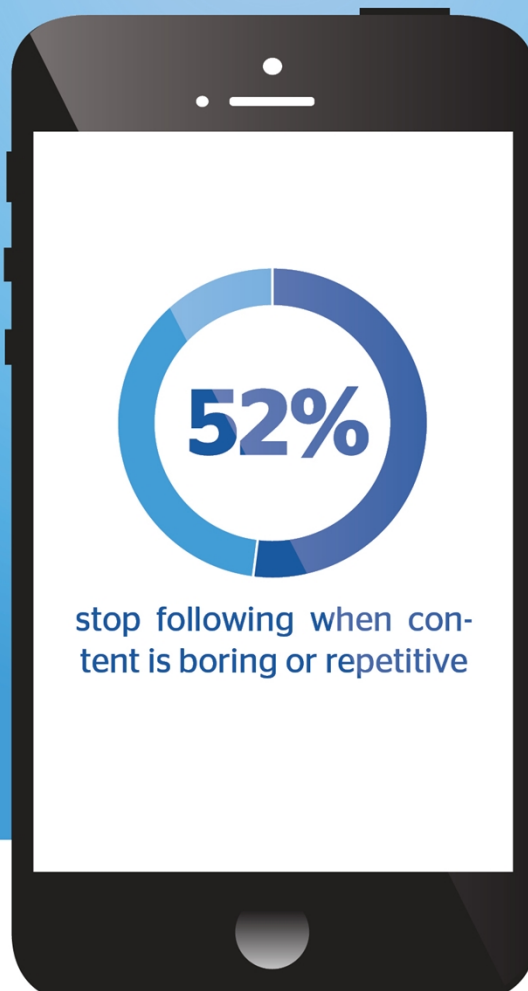
Interested in launching a social media program? Follow this list of social media do's and don'ts.

#### DO

- Provide valuable content.
- Be a good listener.
- Be genuine and personal.
- Use contests and polls to engage your audience.
- Share regularly, but don't overdo it.

#### DON'T

- Be too sales-focused.
- Share too much.
- Delete negative comments.
- Neglect your site or ignore customer feedback.
- Talk about politics or other controversial news topics.



**Best:** 1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

**Worst:** 12 a.m. - 8 a.m.

**Saturdays and Sundays are not optimal**



**Best:** 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

**Worst:** 8 p.m. - 8 a.m.

**Saturdays and Sundays are not optimal**

# Types of Social Media

## Facebook

If your business isn't on Facebook yet, you're missing out on a valuable tool—there were nearly 1.8 billion monthly active users in 2016. Business Facebook "Pages" have become so popular that you're likely to see companies advertise their Facebook Pages, rather than their websites, on TV commercials.

As with any social media venture, you shouldn't jump into Facebook without a clear plan. The following section offers tips and strategies to make the most of Facebook's functionality and potential for your business.

### Identify Your Objectives

At this point you have likely identified overall goals for your social media initiative.

However, each social media site may be conducive to different objectives. Think about specific goals for Facebook. Do you want to drive people to your public website? Are you trying to connect with your client base? Are you trying to influence your brand's reputation?

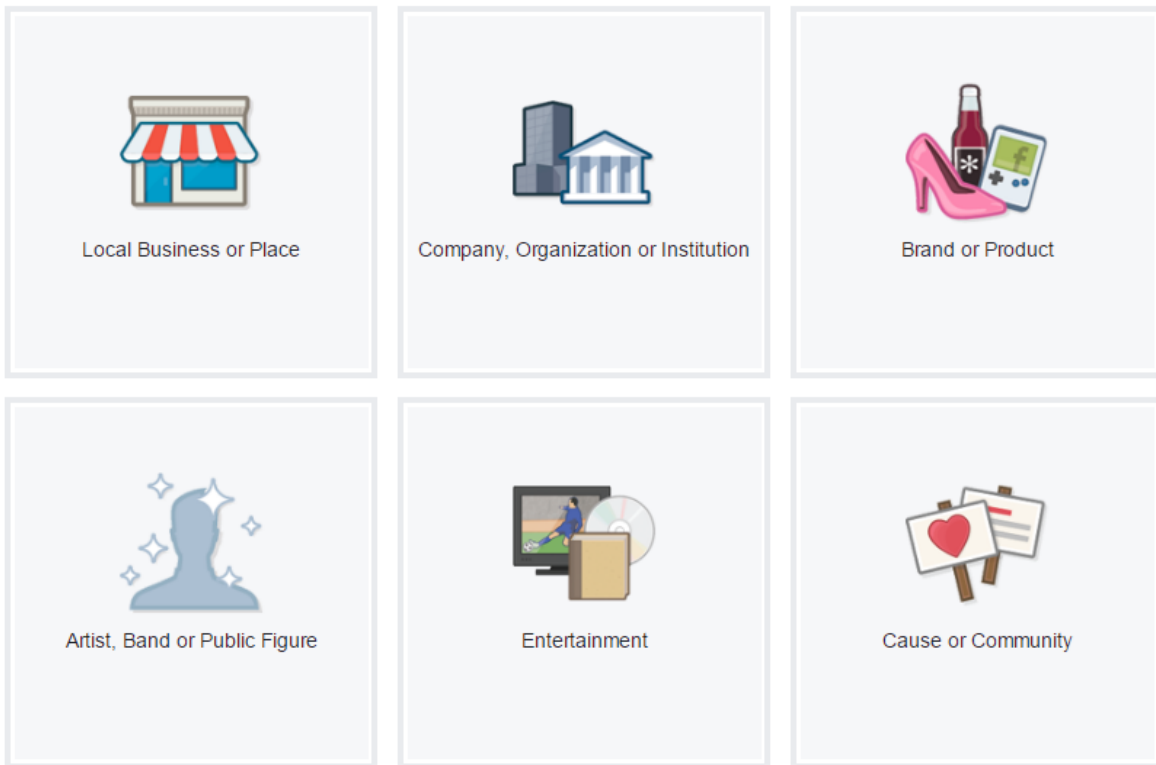


**How you develop your page and execute your strategy should pertain to your goals.**

## Create Your Page

To create a company profile, you must first create a Facebook account, if you don't already have one. Once your account is set up, create your company Facebook Page at [www.facebook.com/pages/create](http://www.facebook.com/pages/create).

A Facebook Page is different from a personal profile or a group. Pages will appear in Facebook's search results, and users can also display Pages they enjoy in the "Like" sections on their personal profiles. If users like your Page, then your status updates will display on their home page, called a "news feed," along with displaying on the home pages of their other Facebook friends.



[www.facebook.com/pages/create](http://www.facebook.com/pages/create)

When setting up your Page, consider the following suggestions:

- Use a professional title that reflects your company name—you cannot change it later.
- After 25 people like your Page you can create a username and personalized URL to easily direct people to your Page.
- Be sure to customize your Page. Add an image, details about your business, company history, contact information, etc.
  - Select and crop your main image carefully so that it displays well as your thumbnail image on your Page.



- Choose a cover photo. Be creative with this space, but be sure to follow Facebook guidelines, which can be found at [www.facebook.com/help/276329115767498](http://www.facebook.com/help/276329115767498).
- You also have the ability to further customize your page, integrate with your website and more—find more details at <https://developers.facebook.com/docs/>.
- Decide who will be in charge of running your company's Page. You can create more than one Page administrator if you have a multiple employees or a team that will be overseeing the Page.

The image is a screenshot of the Coca-Cola Facebook page. It features a blue header with the Facebook logo, the name 'Coca-Cola', a search bar, and navigation links for Home, friends, messages, and a help menu. The main content area shows a large cover photo of a woman holding a Coca-Cola bottle, with a blue 'Cover Photo' label pointing to it. To the left is a sidebar with a red profile picture (labeled 'Thumbnail' in a blue box), the page name 'Coca-Cola' with a verified badge, the handle '@CocaColaUnitedStates', and a menu with options: Home, Posts, Videos, Photos, Locations, About (highlighted), and Likes. A green 'Create a Page' button is at the bottom of the sidebar. Below the cover photo are buttons for 'Like', 'Follow', 'Share', 'More', and a blue 'Send Message' button. The 'About' section is visible, with a 'Suggest Edits' link. It is divided into 'BUSINESS INFO' (showing 'Founded on May 8, 1886') and 'CONTACT INFO' (showing '@CocaColaUnitedStates'). A blue box labeled 'Business Details' is overlaid on the 'BUSINESS INFO' section. The 'STORY' section contains a paragraph of text about Coca-Cola's history and products.

Thumbnail

Coca-Cola

@CocaColaUnitedStates

Home

Posts

Videos

Photos

Locations

About

Likes

Create a Page

Cover Photo

Like Follow Share More

Send Message

About Suggest Edits

BUSINESS INFO

Founded on May 8, 1886

CONTACT INFO

@CocaColaUnitedStates

Business Details

STORY

Here's where you'll find a little bit of everything you love about Coca-Cola, from beatboxing polar bears to bendy straw origami to the one million three hundred and forty thousand (and counting) amazing ways a Coke makes you feel.

[www.facebook.com/CocaColaUnitedStates/](http://www.facebook.com/CocaColaUnitedStates/)



## Tips and Techniques

To improve your company's Facebook Page, consider the strategies below:

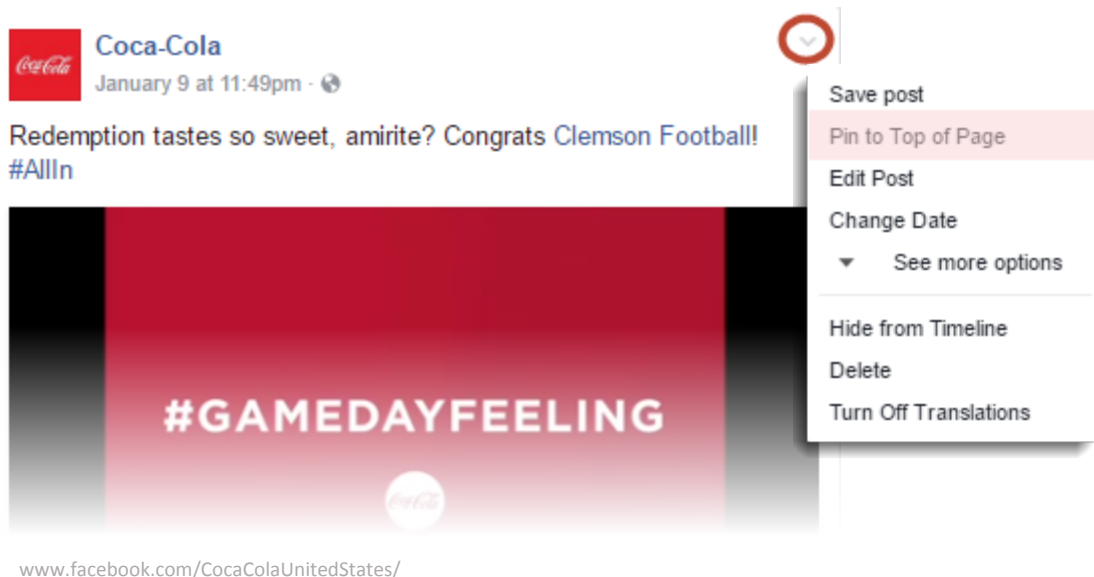
- Facebook allows you to import an email list and invite those contacts to become fans of your Page.
- Give exclusive deals to your Facebook fans in order to bring extra value to your Facebook relationships (e.g., coupons, shipping discounts or contests).
- Engage with Facebook fans; don't just share information. Post interesting updates, ask questions and give people a reason to interact with your company.
  - In your Page settings, you have the option to allow fans to post directly on your "wall"—this can be a great strategy to get fans more engaged, but it takes more hands-on moderation. It is important that you monitor your wall regularly and respond to questions or comments in a timely manner so people know that someone is actively participating on behalf of the company.
  - When others post on your wall or respond to you, comment on their posts to build relationships and encourage their interactions.
  - Post photos or videos of your products, services, employees or company—and encourage fans to do the same.
  - Ask engaging questions to get people talking, even if they're not directly related to your business. For example, if you're a mechanic, try asking people about their favorite road trips or the lowest price they can remember paying for gas.
  - An easy way to encourage a response is simply to ask fans to like a statement if they agree with it. If you choose an interesting statement that people connect with, you'll increase your probability of getting more likes.
  - Ask for company or product reviews from your fans, and display them. If you get a negative review, reach out to the customer and try to remedy the problem or repair the relationship.



[www.facebook.com/CocaColaUnitedStates/](http://www.facebook.com/CocaColaUnitedStates/)

- You have the ability to post milestones on your Page, even ones that happened in the past. Use this feature to highlight big company events or news.
- Promote relevant events that you are hosting or attending, such as conferences, volunteer events, or other community or industry functions. This can show how active your company is in the community or industry.
- If your audience includes specific segments, you can create groups to target your messages. For instance, if you sell multiple products, you could create groups of customers for each one, and target messages specific to each audience. This is particularly strategic because Facebook users are often overwhelmed with images, status updates and distractions—so anything not relevant may be ignored.
- Post subscription information for your newsletters on your Page, and occasionally post teaser content to encourage your fans to subscribe.
- Monitor your success by using Facebook’s analytic feature called Facebook Insights, which allows Page administrators to gauge how the Page is performing. Use this information to identify areas for improvement in your social media efforts.

**If you want to display a post at the top of your timeline, you can “pin” it there for seven days. Click on the arrow icon and select “Pin to Top.”**



## Common Mishaps

Avoid making these common Facebook mistakes:

- Don't post too often. Although it's good to have exposure, over-posting is one of the top reasons people will "unlike" you. Along the same lines, don't sync your account with Twitter. Posting multiple times each day to Twitter is expected, but your Facebook fans may become irritated if they see all your linked tweets.
- Don't use a third-party tool to schedule Facebook updates. Facebook penalizes you with how your updates are displayed (users will only see the most recent one of all the updates posted from the outside platform).
- Be sure to vary your content so readers don't get bored seeing the same things.
- Never delete fans' wall posts! More likely than not, they'll notice and call you out, drawing more negative attention. Instead, talk with unhappy customers to resolve their issues or at least make your best attempt.
- As with other social media platforms, avoid selling your brand or product too much. Instead, many of your posts should be questions or relevant information or news from other industry experts.

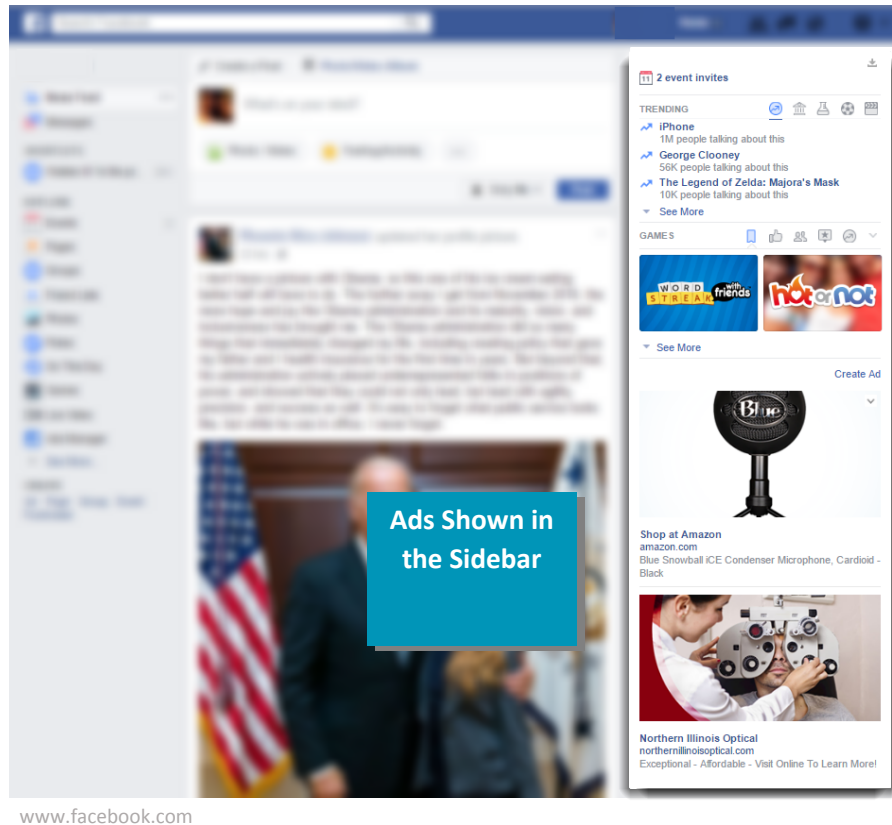


**Avoid using too much text. Facebook research shows that posts with 250 characters or less get 60 percent more likes or comments than longer posts.**

## Facebook Advertising

Another beneficial way to use Facebook is to post ads. Facebook ads appear throughout the site, and you have several options when creating your ad, including identifying your target audience and your call to action (what the ad will link to). Use these tips to help get you started using Facebook ads.

- Be sure to choose the right target audience. This may take some market research or some trial and error to determine your ideal audience.
- Test your ads. Try different targets (one sex versus both, for example) to see which performs best, and then use that information going forward. Try testing different variables so you can develop the best ad for your money.
- Decide what action you want the viewer to take. For instance, do you want viewers to become a fan of your Page, sign up for a newsletter or visit your site? Your ad can link to your Page or external website, or can include a like button for fans to like your page without leaving the Page they're on.
- Make sure your ad stands out. You're not only competing with other ads, but also with photos and updates from the user's Facebook friends. Speak to your target audience and be direct to make sure you are noticed.




More information about Facebook ads can be found on [www.facebook.com/business](https://www.facebook.com/business).

## Recruiting

Facebook can be beneficial for your recruiting initiatives due to the sheer number of people active on this platform. On Facebook, you don't necessarily need to create a separate account for recruiting, as there is more opportunity to target messages to a specific audience. Plus, people who like your Page are already fans of your company, so they might be interested in working for you, making your targeting easier. Here are some tips for integrating recruiting efforts into your company Facebook Page:

- Create a custom tab on your Page called "Careers" or something similar, so that you can post current opportunities and other information for job seekers.
- Post pictures or short videos of recruiting events, new office renovations or other company outings. Highlight your company's culture, perks and benefits in short videos to generate interest in your company.



**Post on Facebook when you are attending a recruiting event, so job seekers know to find you there.**

Another option is the Facebook Marketplace, where you can post a job for free. Within this post, you'll be able to include job details and include a link to the external job posting. Job posts are live for 30 days.



## Sample Facebook Status Updates

**Note:** Some of the following status updates require customization. For an introduction to Facebook, visit [www.facebook.com/business](http://www.facebook.com/business).

- There are some changes to our health plan this year. Here are few of the major ones: [\[insert a short overview of changes to your plan\]](#).
- Open enrollment begins [\[insert date\]](#) and ends [\[insert date\]](#)! If you miss this window, you may not be able to enroll in a plan or change your coverage until the next open enrollment period.
- Open enrollment is officially here! Submit your election forms prior to [\[insert date\]](#) to change or elect new coverage. If you miss the deadline, you can still change your coverage with certain qualifying life events.
- Come learn about 's [\[insert plan or program name\]](#). An informational meeting will be held on [\[insert date\]](#) at [\[insert time\]](#) in [\[insert location\]](#).
- The meeting for 's [\[insert plan or program name\]](#) is today at [\[insert time\]](#)! Come to [\[insert location\]](#) then for more information.
- is now offering a high deductible health plan (HDHP) with a corresponding health savings account (HSA). For more information about how this new plan can save you money, visit our blog at [\[insert blog URL\]](#).
- is proud to announce the acquisition of [\[insert company name\]](#)! Read all about it at [\[insert blog URL\]](#).
- Jane Smith, VP of marketing at , will speak at the 2016 Small Business Marketing conference. Come check it out!
- Congrats to [\[insert name\]](#) who recently won the excellency award for his outstanding work on 's community outreach project!



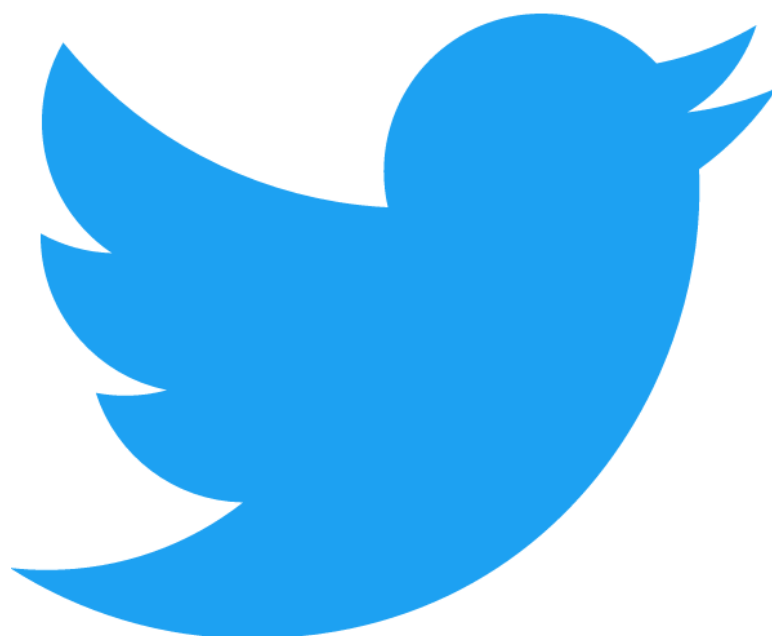
[www.facebook.com/careerbuilder/](http://www.facebook.com/careerbuilder/)



## Twitter

Twitter can be a helpful communication tool for growing your business. It allows businesses to connect with customers, prospective clients, industry experts, competitors and more. It enables you to gather market intelligence and build relationships with people who are interested in your company.

In all likelihood, there is probably a conversation about your business already happening on Twitter. By creating an account, you can monitor what is being said about your company and gain insight into customers' opinions.



### Definitions and Examples

The first step to understanding Twitter is learning the language. Here are some of the basics about Twitter:

- **Tweet:** A tweet is a post or status update, with a maximum of 140 characters.
- **Follow:** On Twitter, you follow people to see the tweets they post. For others to see your posts, they must follow you (unless your profile is public). This is not a reciprocal relationship like on Facebook—each party can choose whether or not to follow the other. You can also follow accounts via text message. For more information on this feature, visit [goo.gl/sKHByO](https://goo.gl/sKHByO).
- **@Username:** This is the Twitter naming convention for an account, sometimes called a “handle.”
  - For example, your company Twitter name could be @XYZcompany.
  - Usernames are used to communicate with one another. For example, if a customer wanted to reach out to you, he or she might tweet “@XYZcompany, please tell me more about your services.”
- **Retweet (RT):** Information that someone else has already tweeted.
  - For instance, if @JonSmith posted “Check out this interesting study” you could repost it by tweeting “RT @JonSmith: Check out this interesting study.”
- **Reply:** Another way to communicate with someone (besides writing a tweet using a @Username or retweeting) is to reply to a tweet that you were mentioned in.
- **Direct message (DM):** Use a direct message to send a private message to someone who is following you, or has a public profile. This can come in handy when exchanging contact or other

personal information, since all other Twitter communication is public. In addition, there is no 140-character limit when sending DMs.

- **Hashtag (#):** Categorize your post based on keywords using a hashtag (#). Users can search for posts with a particular hashtag.
  - For example, if you specialize in selling energy-efficient products, you may want to use the hashtag #energyefficient in some of your tweets, to attract people searching for that term.
  - Or, let's say you are a mattress store and are looking to find others who are talking about or selling mattresses. If you type #mattress into the search bar, you can view all recent tweets with that hashtag.
- **Trending:** The most popular topics being talked about on Twitter within a certain geographic area at a certain time. Trending topics often have to do with news or events occurring on that particular day.
- **Link shortening:** With only 140 characters, space is limited in a tweet, so you may not have room for a long URL. However, there are many link-shortening services available that can quickly convert any URL into a compact link for Twitter, such as [ow.ly](#) and [bitly](#). In addition, many of these services track your click-through rate—allowing you to gain insight into user engagement.

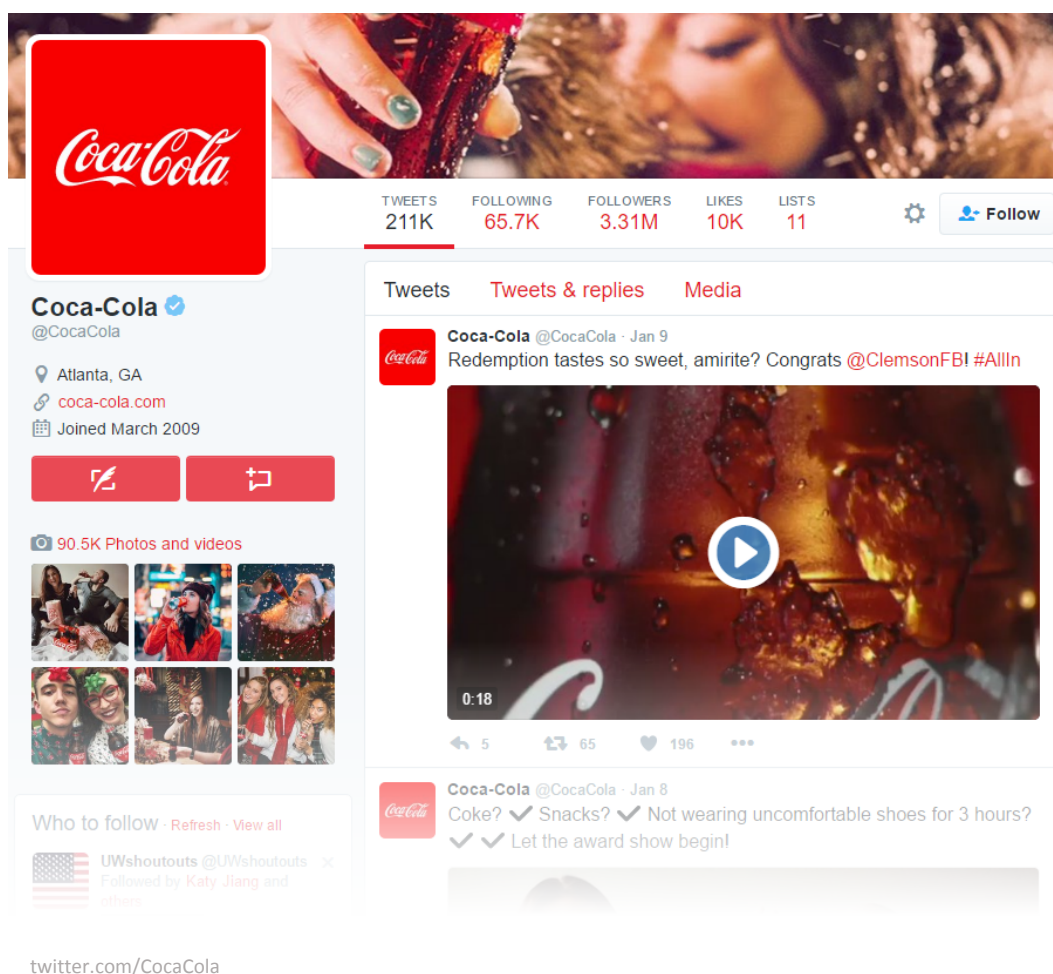
To add more value when retweeting, include your own insight. For example, "These stats are surprising. RT @JonSmith: Check out this interesting study."



## Suggestions and Best Practices

Once you've mastered the lingo and created your Twitter account, use the following tips to gain influence in the Twitter sphere:

- Include a photo in place of the default Twitter avatar. Upload a photo, even if it's your logo, to lend credibility to your account.
- Search for clients, competitors and people in your industry to follow.
  - If you have a database of client email addresses, you can import them into Twitter to find any matching Twitter accounts. Find instructions at [goo.gl/TbpY2f](https://goo.gl/TbpY2f).
  - Use the search feature to find people. Try various keywords related to your industry, niche or related topics to find companies, prospects, customers or others that would be useful to follow.



- Make your content easy to retweet by keeping it shorter than the 140-character maximum, so people have room to retweet and add a short comment of their own. A good guideline is to keep

your tweet under 140 characters. When you want extra visibility for a tweet, ask your followers to retweet (“please RT”).

- Use the search function to look for leads. Search targeted phrases that match your location and product or service, and then reach out to people who have tweeted about your topic (for instance, send a DM about your offerings).
- Remember to use meaningful hashtags to reach a broader audience than just those who follow you, particularly when tweeting useful information and expertise. Hashtags can attract people to your company who are interested in your topic, which can lead to future sales. You can also add hashtags when you retweet someone in order to bring value back to your company.
- Engage your followers. Don’t just spit out information—post interesting questions, fun facts, contests, etc. For example, ask customers to submit pictures of themselves using your product or to share success stories.
- If someone mentions your brand, whether talking directly to you or not, respond. Answer a question, address a concern or find another way to continue the conversation in a timely manner. In today’s digital world, people expect quick responses. Ideally, you should respond within an hour or two of a tweet.
- Respond to negative comments. You may be tempted to respond via a DM, but it may actually be in your best interest to respond publicly. Followers will view your company as responsive and willing to listen to clients and resolve their issues.
- Have a system in place to pass comments, questions and criticism along to the appropriate people in your company. Gather the information you need to respond to a customer, or let customers know that their input was given to the right person in your company.
- Try to post (or retweet) several times each day to stay in front of your audience. Try to tweet every two to three hours during the business day to reach the most people, but be sure not to overwhelm your followers.

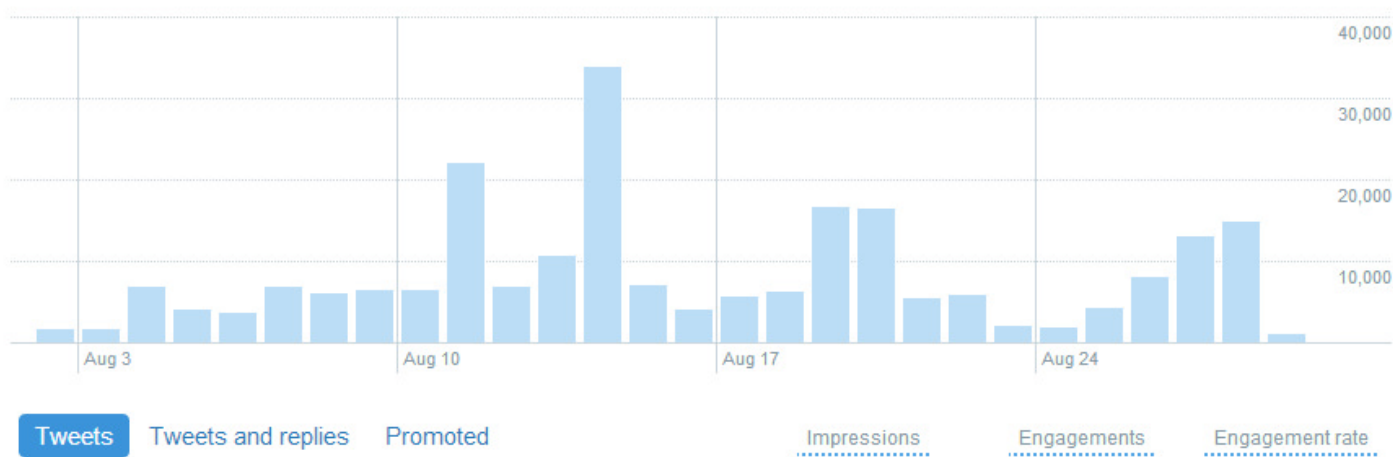


- Offer something of value in your tweets. One example would be to offer exclusive deals to your Twitter followers to bring value to your Twitter relationship and to make them feel special—and encourage them to share the deal with their friends and family.

## Tweet activity

Your Tweets earned **227.9K impressions** over the last 28 days

That's **15.2% more impressions** than the previous 28-day period



Twitter Analytics dashboard. Labeled for reuse. Source: [flickr](#)

- Use analytical tools like Twitter Analytics or TweetStats to measure engagement and identify ways to make your tweets more successful.

## Common Mistakes

Avoid these common Twitter mishaps:

- Be careful not to offend your customers. When sharing advice, for instance, do not make followers sound unintelligent.
- Don't use a company Twitter account to talk about your personal life or personal opinions.
- Don't over-promote your products or services. Instead, focus on your customers. Offer solutions, information and advice they will find valuable, rather than simply trying to sell your brand.



## Recruiting

If your company is already on Twitter, you'll want to create a separate Twitter account for recruiting purposes, since you'll be targeting a different audience with a specific message.


As with your normal company Twitter account, avoid simply promoting your company and its job offerings. Instead, offer information that will be valuable to job seekers, such as the following:

- **Job-seeking tips.** Use the knowledge and experience of your human resources department to share helpful hints, such as common resume mistakes, interviewing best practices and more.
- **Relevant articles or blogs.** Find other materials related to job seeking and succeeding in the hiring process, and share valuable content with your followers.
- **Meaningful retweets.** Keep an eye on your own Twitter feed, and retweet tips, articles and other relevant information to job seekers.

In addition to sharing helpful content, mix in tweets with your open positions and other relevant company information. You might also share employee reviews about your company, details about your hiring process or any other recruiting information.

Consider these other helpful hints for recruiting through Twitter:

- Use the search feature to find recruiters, industry experts, schools or career centers to follow and content to retweet.
- Ensure your content reaches a wider audience by using appropriate hashtags in your tweets, such as #job, #jobpost, #recruiting, #hiring, #career or #jobseeker.
- Keep in mind that it's vital to be responsive with your account. If someone responds to a tweet or sends you a direct message with a comment or question, make sure you reply in a timely manner. People searching for jobs are also evaluating your company, so how you respond on social media can shape their impressions of your business.



**Remember that recruiting is different than marketing. Think about what kind of candidates you wish to target.**



## Sample Twitter Tweets

**Note:** Some of the following tweets require customization. For the basics of Twitter, visit [business.twitter.com](https://business.twitter.com).

- Remember, open #enrollment begins on [insert date]! If you miss this window, you may have to wait an entire year to change coverage.

- During open enrollment, save a tree by making your elections #online! Visit [insert portal URL] to select your coverages.



- Open enrollment starts today! Enroll in a new plan or change your coverage by [insert date].
- Only [insert number] days left until the open #enrollment period ends! Act quickly to enroll in a plan or change your coverage!
- Open enrollment ends today! Get your completed enrollment forms to [insert contact name or office] by [insert time].
- A reminder to all new hires: You must enroll for most #benefits within 30 days of your date of hire or be left without health coverage!
- Interested in a #[insert program or plan]? An informational meeting will be held on [insert date] at [insert time] in [insert location].

- Tomorrow, come see how a [insert program or plan] can help you! A meeting will be held at [insert time] in [insert location].



- Enroll in 's #401(k) program! Not participating is like turning down free money!
- The [insert program or plan] meeting is #today! Anyone interested should come to [insert room] at [insert time] for more info.
- Check out the newest post on the #blog, "[title of blog post]," at [insert blog URL].


## *LinkedIn*

Unlike social networking sites, such as Facebook and Twitter, LinkedIn is exclusively intended for professional networking. LinkedIn is the largest professional network in the world, with more than 450 million members in over 200 countries and territories.

LinkedIn is used by professionals for a variety of reasons. For example, some individuals create profiles in the hopes of advancing their careers or to strengthen their reputations as experts within certain industries. Human resources professionals, on the other hand, can use LinkedIn to advertise job openings or assist with recruitment efforts. With more than 39 million students and recent college graduates on LinkedIn, this site can help your company connect with new, top talent.



While it may seem overwhelming at first, this section offers tips and strategies for building and maintaining a LinkedIn profile that can help take your business to the next level.

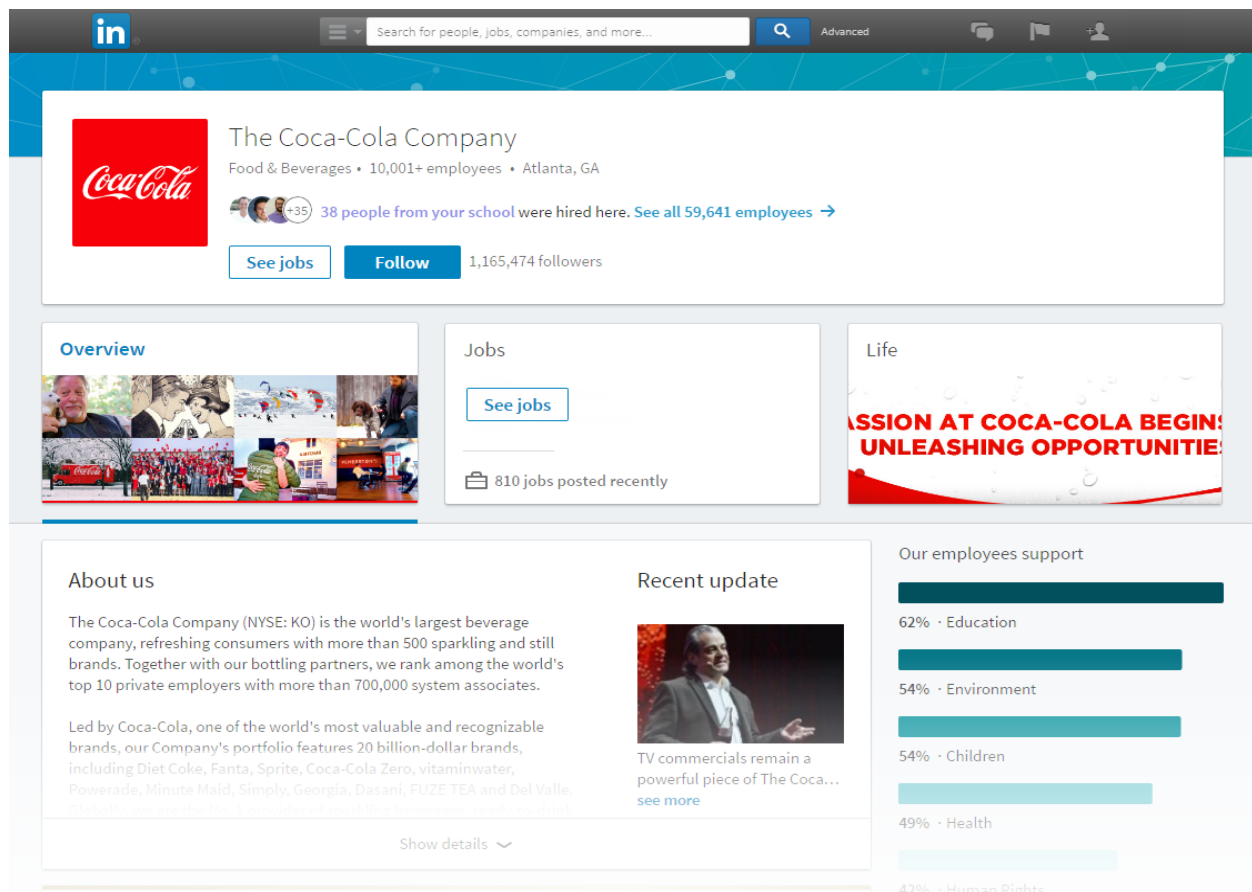


**Use LinkedIn to leverage your company as a professional resource and industry leader.**

## Creating and Maintaining Your LinkedIn Presence

First, you must create your company's LinkedIn page. Visit <http://marketing.linkedin.com/company-pages/get-started> for step-by-step instructions on how to create a company profile. When building your page, consider the following strategies:

- Include a profile image. Profile images are the first thing people see when searching for your company or viewing your profile. Upload a picture, even if it's just your logo, in order to lend credibility to your page and drive more traffic.
- Add "connections," or people to your network. Before you send someone an invitation to join your network, LinkedIn will ask how you know this person—for instance, as a colleague, classmate, business partner, friend or other.
  - When you create your company's page, connect with clients, employees, friends, family and other colleagues. Don't just assume people will add you. As you meet new people or do business with new companies, connect with them in order to continue to build your professional network.
- Complete the "About us" section on your profile as thoroughly as possible. Include images of your current products and services and add a description, a list of key features or even a short video, in order to encourage followers to learn more about your business.



The screenshot shows the LinkedIn profile of The Coca-Cola Company. The header includes the LinkedIn logo, a search bar, and navigation icons. The profile banner features the Coca-Cola logo and the text "The Coca-Cola Company", "Food & Beverages • 10,001+ employees • Atlanta, GA", and "38 people from your school were hired here. See all 59,641 employees →". Below the banner are buttons for "See jobs" and "Follow", and a follower count of "1,165,474 followers".

The main content area is divided into three sections: "Overview" with a collage of images, "Jobs" with a "See jobs" button and "810 jobs posted recently", and "Life" with a graphic that says "PASSION AT COCA-COLA BEGINS UNLEASHING OPPORTUNITIES".

The "About us" section describes the company as the world's largest beverage company, refreshing consumers with more than 500 sparkling and still brands. It mentions that the company's portfolio features 20 billion-dollar brands, including Diet Coke, Fanta, Sprite, Coca-Cola Zero, vitaminwater, Powerade, Minute Maid, Simply, Georgia, Dasani, FUZE TEA and Del Valle. It also states that the company is the top 10 private employer with more than 700,000 system associates. A "Show details" link is at the bottom.

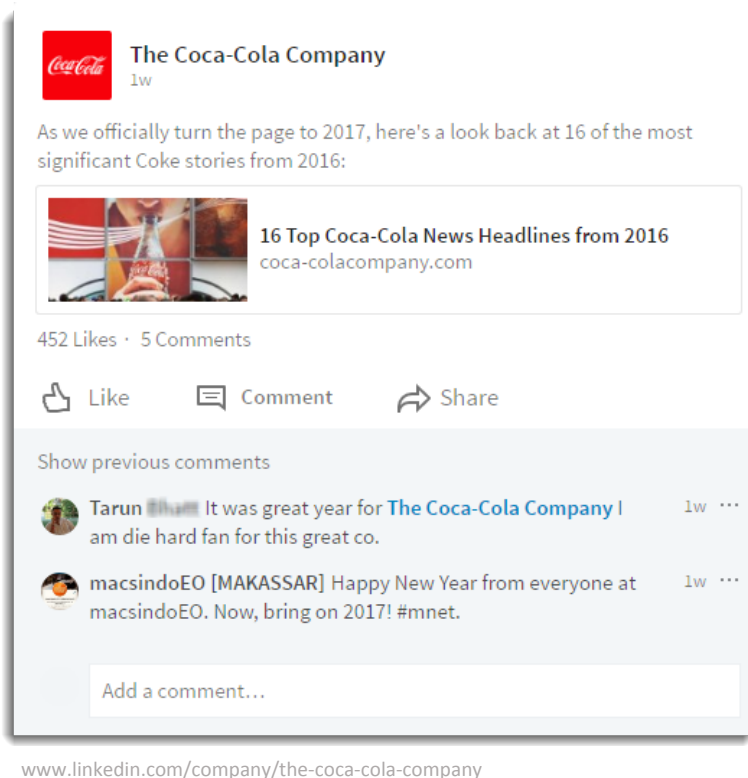
The "Recent update" section features a video thumbnail of a man speaking, with the text "TV commercials remain a powerful piece of The Coca..." and a "see more" link.

The "Our employees support" section displays a horizontal bar chart showing the percentage of employees who support various causes:

Cause	Percentage
Education	62%
Environment	54%
Children	54%
Health	49%
Human Rights	42%

## Suggestions and Best Practices

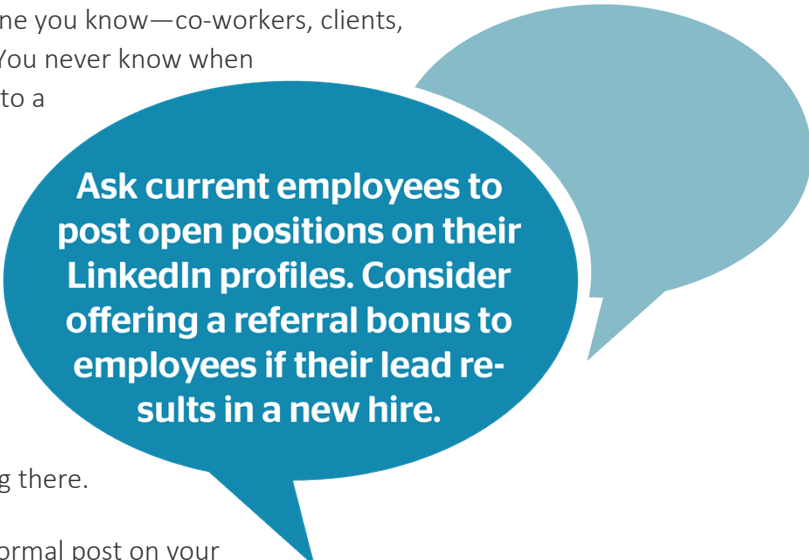
- Ask customers to leave reviews of your products or services that can be featured on your company's profile. Also consider creating a "careers" tab to help direct talent your way.
- Post articles, advertise job openings and share updates to increase your company's visibility. Update your page regularly, but make sure your page is not too self-serving.
  - LinkedIn allows you to share an update with all followers or with a targeted audience (based on geographic, industry, etc.). Tailoring your message to specific audiences can help increase engagement.
- Make it easy for users to interact with your company. Consider adding plug-ins, which allow users to follow your page or share your posts simply by clicking a button. For more information on plug-ins, visit [developer.linkedin.com/plugins](https://developer.linkedin.com/plugins).
- Interact with others. Use LinkedIn to explore other people's pages, view business pages and join industry-relevant groups. Being successful on social media involves more than just updating your own page and sharing your own updates. Pay attention to what others are posting and be engaged.



## Recruiting

LinkedIn is the most popular social media tool for recruiting new candidates. There are paid solutions on LinkedIn, such as the ability to purchase a 30-day job posting, but there are also various free resources available on the site. Use the following strategies to jump-start your recruitment efforts on LinkedIn:

- Make connections with anyone you know—co-workers, clients, vendors, friends and family. You never know when someone may be connected to a great candidate for your company.
- Join groups where you might connect with potential candidates. For instance, if your company hires a lot of IT consultants, look for a relevant group on LinkedIn and start networking there.
- Post job opportunities as a normal post on your page, for free, in order to tell your connections about a new opening at your company. Encourage people to contact you if they know someone who would be a good fit.
- Use LinkedIn to research potential candidates. See if anyone has recommended them, how many connections they have and how active they are in their industry. This is valuable information that you likely won't find on a resume.



**Ask current employees to post open positions on their LinkedIn profiles. Consider offering a referral bonus to employees if their lead results in a new hire.**

## Google+

Google+ (“Google Plus”) is a social media platform that combines the key components of other social networking sites into an easily navigable online experience. While not as popular as Facebook or Twitter, Google+ is a cost-effective way to enhance your social media initiative.

### Advantages of Google+

If your organization already has a social media presence on other platforms, you may be wondering what makes Google+ unique. While it has a similar structure to many social networking sites, Google+ has a number of features that differentiate it and make it a valuable resource to any organization:

- **Easily searchable** – Google+ is indexed by Google Search, so clients can find and connect with your organization easier, expanding your online presence.
- **Segmenting followers** – The site allows you to arrange your followers into different “circles” or groups. Consequently, you can reach out to different portions of your followers, making it easy to share certain content with specific audiences.
- **Powerful analytics** – Google+ has some of the best analytic tools available on any social media site. These will help you better understand who is following your organization, what they are saying about it and why.
- **New markets** – Because Google+ is still considered by some to be a specialized social networking platform, you may be able to contact audiences that you otherwise wouldn’t be able to reach through other mediums or sites.





## Create Your Google+ Page

While there is a similar structure to Google+ and Facebook, the process for creating a company page has a few differences. In Google+ there is a distinct difference between an individual's account and an organization's account. The former is called a Google+ **profile** while any business account is considered a Google+ **page**. There are a number of privileges that differ depending on the type of account. For example, pages cannot add people to circles until the page is first added or mentioned, and pages can have multiple administrators while profiles cannot.

plus.google.com/pages/create

Fill out the required information in its entirety and in a professional manner. Underneath your company name on the page, write a descriptive and engaging blurb about what your business does, and then expand on that in the “About” section. You can also add photos and videos to make your business page more engaging and add a visual component to your brand.

To set up your organization's page, visit [plus.google.com/pages/create](https://plus.google.com/pages/create).

## Sharing on Google+

Posting and providing information for your followers is standard for any social media site, but Google+ allows you to share specific information with certain people and takes customer interaction to the next level.

- **Circles** – When a person follows your organization’s page on Google+, you can add that person to one or more customizable groups. This is useful when you segment followers based on similar characteristics.
  - For example, if you were to break down your followers into two circles based on gender, you could pose questions to only the female group about a new product marketed toward women.
- **Hangouts** – Google+ Hangouts are video chat sessions that allow up to 10 people to have a conversation, with the option of publishing a recording online. Many businesses are now taking advantage of this feature by getting face-to-face customer feedback, holding interactive press conferences and even using it as a customer service portal. Hangouts can also be used internally as a video conferencing service.

## Measuring Data

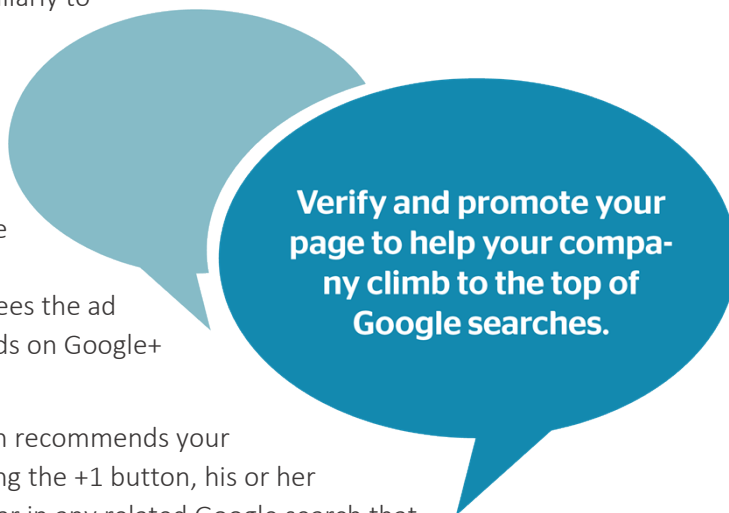
For other social media sites, gathering and analyzing data proves to be a difficult chore, but Google+ has a powerful system of analytics built directly into the application as well as a way to monitor how your organization’s content is being used.

- **Google Analytics** – Because this powerful analytic tool is linked with Google+, Google Analytics can generate social reports that show how recommendations on your organization’s page affect engagement, as well as telling you who is interacting with your page and how.
- **Ripples** – This feature lets you see how your posts spread across Google+ and who is sharing your organization’s content. It also helps you to identify heavy users that you can add to circles and share content with.

## Promote Your Page

Because the Google search engine takes into account the popularity of Google+ pages when it produces results, it pays to promote your organization's page.

- **+1** – The “+1” feature functions similarly to liking something on Facebook. It allows users to publicly recommend web content that is then promoted on their Google+ profile. Consider adding the +1 badge to your website or any online advertisement. This will allow any person that visits your website or sees the ad to recommend it to his or her friends on Google+ simply by clicking the button.
  - Additionally, when a person recommends your organization's site by clicking the +1 button, his or her recommendation will appear in any related Google search that the person's friends on Google+ make—an instant endorsement from one of your followers.
- **Direct connect** – Consider verifying your organization's Google+ page. Doing so will allow people seeking your organization's Google+ page to be brought there by simply typing “+” before your organization's name when executing a Google search. For example, running a Google search for “+ABC Company” would bring you immediately to ABC Company's Google+ page, if that page was verified.



To learn more about verifying your organization's Google+ page visit <https://support.google.com/business/answer/2911778>.

For more tips and tricks on incorporating Google+ into your social media initiative, visit the Google+ Your Business page at <https://www.google.com/business>.

## Snapchat

Snapchat is a mobile app that allows users to record and send video messages, photos, text and drawings directly to other users or post them to their profiles. Unless posted to your profile, the messages that you send can only be viewed once, making Snapchat unlike any other social media site. The fleeting nature of Snapchat taps into the societal “fear of missing out” and is a large reason why the app is so popular, especially among young adults.

Since its launch in 2011, Snapchat has surpassed Twitter in average daily users, which indicates that it is a viable way to reach your audience. Snapchat’s easy-to-use, highly interactive and engaging format makes it popular among individuals and businesses alike. Read on to learn more about how to get started and how your company can use this free app to enhance your marketing strategies.



### Before Getting Started

Prior to launching your Snapchat campaign, be sure to do the following:

- **Learn the lingo.** Similar to likes on Facebook and retweets on Twitter, Snapchat has its own terms to describe interactions.
  - **Snap(s):** A “snap” is a picture or video message that you record to share with followers. You can send snaps to specific users or post the snap to your “story.” Before you hit send, be sure to select the viewing duration (between one and 10 seconds), and, if desired, save it to your phone’s photo gallery.
  - **Snap story:** A snap story creates a narrative out of the snaps that you post. Your story will be active for 24 hours, and, depending on your privacy settings, can be viewed by the public or by only your Snapchat friends.
- **Study your target audience.** The majority of Snapchat’s users are between the ages of 18 and 34, so designing content to appeal to this age group will be essential to your campaign’s success.
- **Decide who will run your Snapchat account.** Because Snapchat must be run on a mobile device (cellphone, tablet, etc.) you will have to decide if you will create and manage the account on an employee’s device or a company-owned device. Also, consider who will run your Snapchat account. It is often best to limit your social media endeavors to a smaller group of individuals to retain the same “voice.”

## Creating Your Snapchat Account

When you're ready to start creating your Snapchat account, download the Snapchat app from either the Google Play Store for Android or iTunes App Store for iOS (whichever is compatible with your device). Visit <https://support.snapchat.com/en-US/article/getting-started1> for in-depth instructions on how to set up an account.

When creating your account, consider the following suggestions:

- Choose a username that is professional, easy to remember, and, if applicable, the same username you use on other social media sites.
- Add an account image or collection of images that reflect your brand. While you should remain professional, don't be afraid to get creative with your account image. Keep in mind that you can change your photo at any time to reflect company events, holidays, etc.
- Configure your privacy settings for who can send you snaps and view your story. Because you are a business, you might find it best to keep your account public in order to gain as many followers as you can. You can always update this setting if problems arise.

**Cross-promote your social media sites to encourage followers across platforms.**



## Examples of How to Use Snapchat for Your Business

Snapchat is a versatile tool, since it can be used in at least five different ways:

1. **Teasing product releases**—If you have a new product launching soon, use a series of snaps to generate excitement and anticipation for the release.
2. **Providing access to live events**—If your company is releasing a product, use your Snapchat account to deliver real-time marketing.
3. **Sending a coupon or discount code**—Consider sending a promotional code directly to your followers. It is important to note that Snapchat does have a set of promotions rules, so be sure to check them out and make sure you are in compliance.
4. **Documenting company-sponsored events**—If your company is hosting an event, whether that be a company outing, happy hour or an average Friday afternoon, giving your followers a behind-the-scenes glimpse into your company's lifestyle can increase engagement and show off your culture.
5. **Introducing new employees**—If you have a new hire, use your company Snapchat to introduce him or her to your followers to help increase internal engagement and further instill a sense of transparency among your external followers.

## Suggestions for Building Your Snapchat Following

The process of building your following is not something that happens overnight. It will take dedication and strategic moves to make your Snapchat campaign successful. Use these suggestions to help:

- Promote your account on other social media platforms.
- Share your exact username so that people can find your account.
- Encourage your employees to follow and spread the word about your account.



## *Blogging*

Blogging can be useful for almost any type of business. Like other social media venues, blogging requires a commitment and a fine attention to detail, but it can yield significant benefits for your business.

A blog is an ongoing collection of posts written in a more informal style that is updated regularly by an individual or group of people. Unlike other social media sites, a blog is something you create on your own and is not part of a broader site like Facebook or Twitter. Blogs can help a company gain exposure and become a thought leader in an industry.

Similar to other marketing and social media strategies, blogs can support goals such as building your brand, generating leads or sales, or creating ad revenue. The first step to starting a blog is deciding which goals will apply to your blog, so that you can formulate a strategy based on your objective(s).

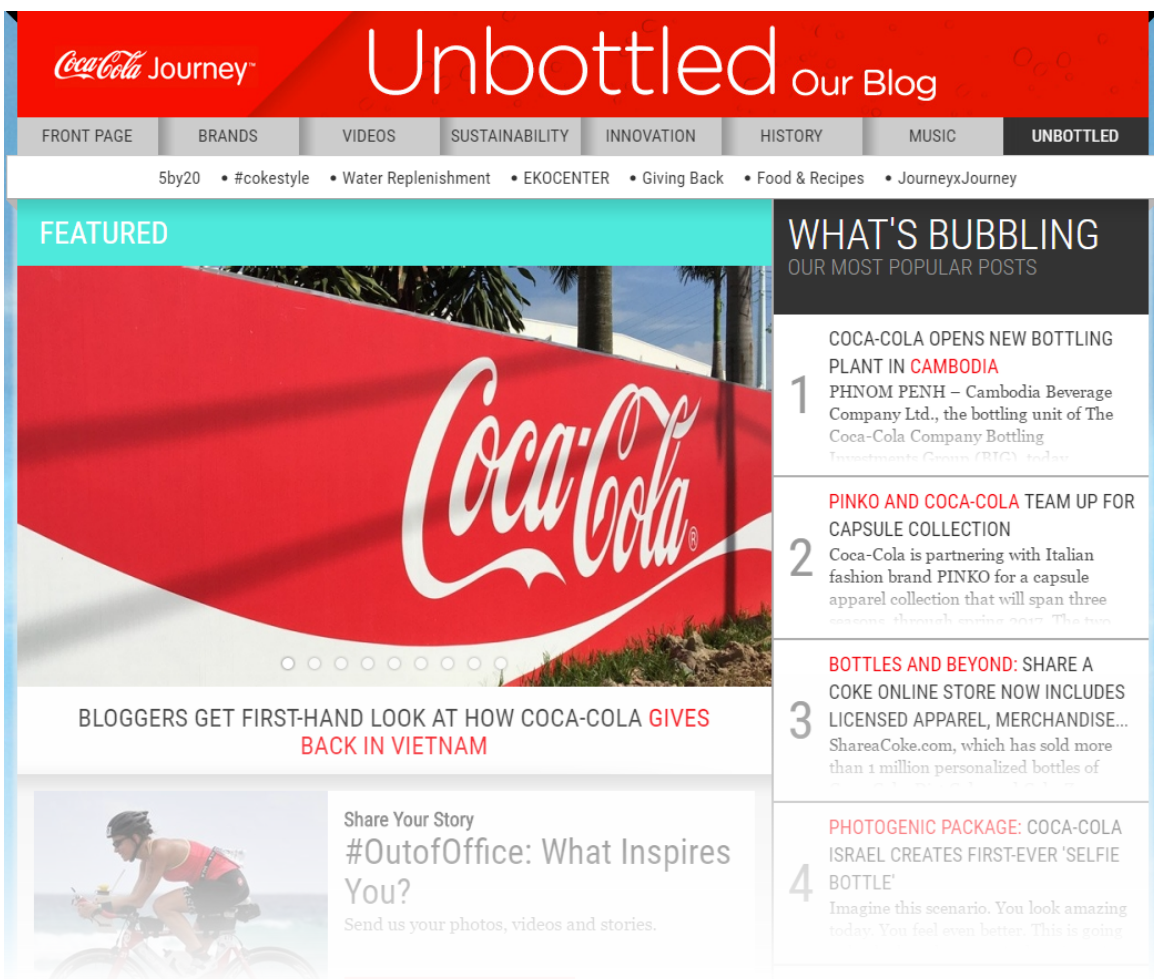


## **Getting Started**

Consider the following questions when starting a blog:

- What will the topic or niche of your blog be? Who is your intended audience? It is better to focus on a more specific topic than one that is too broad, as this will allow you to appeal to a more specific group of people.
- How often will you write? Frequency will depend on your resources. The more often you post, the more traffic you'll likely get, but don't commit to a frequency that you can't maintain or readers might lose interest.
- Based on the niche or theme of your blog, think about what specific topics you will write about. Brainstorm a list of potential ideas.
- Decide how to organize your blog posts within your site. It may make sense to do some chronologically or by topic categories.
- Plan to integrate important calls to action into both the content and design of your blog. For example, you may want your readers to join your email list, buy your product, request a consultation or connect with you on another social media site.

- Emphasize your desired calls to action (with links) within your blog when appropriate.
- Determine your blogging process. Who will scope ideas and write each blog? Will blogs be reviewed by an editor or manager? If so, what will this process look like?
- Choose a design and software for your blog. If your company doesn't have the resources to design a blog yourself, you can find free or paid pre-designed templates online.
  - Decide whether you will host your blog on your existing website or create a different one. Keeping it under the same domain name as your public site can enhance search engine optimization (SEO) value, but it may be complicated depending on the type of software your site is built on.
  - When choosing blog software, think about what features are important. For instance, the ability for users to comment, share links and connect to social media sites are all potential features of blog software.



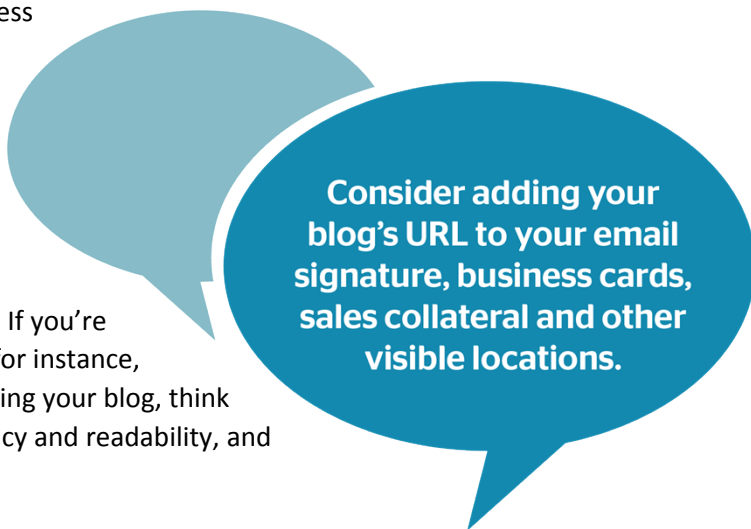
<http://www.coca-colacompany.com/coca-cola-unbottled>

## Launching Your Blog

Once you're ready to launch, promote your blog using the following tips:

- Create an email campaign to inform customers and prospects of the new blog and the value it can offer them.
- Take advantage of other social media sites you're on, like Facebook and Twitter. Promote your blog there initially, and continue to highlight new blog posts periodically on those sites.
- If you have an e-newsletter, include links to your blog posts within it.
- Promote your blog on your company website. Even if you host the blog under the same domain, it can be hidden for people just visiting your general site. Promote the latest blog on the home page with a link to the full blog site to help drive traffic.

In addition, be sure to establish a process for monitoring blog traffic and analyzing goals so you can make changes as needed. Simple analytics software often comes free with your blog hosting account, or Google Analytics is another option (another free solution). If certain topics are not popular, consider changing your focus. If you're getting a lot of traffic from Facebook, for instance, expand your reach there. When assessing your blog, think about your audience, content, frequency and readability, and adjust your efforts accordingly.



**Consider adding your blog's URL to your email signature, business cards, sales collateral and other visible locations.**

## Blogging Best Practices

You don't need to have a journalism background to be a great blogger. Consider the suggestions below to improve your writing:

- Read other blogs. You'll learn from others' successes (and mistakes) and sharpen your own skills in the process.
- Always keep your audience in mind and write content for them, not for you.
- Try to offer a unique opinion or point of view. No one will have a reason to read your blog if your content is similar to other articles they can find online.
- Avoid overtly plugging your products or services. Instead, discuss trends, offer expertise or provide your insight on recent news.
- Include statistics and links to other resources or blogs (assigning appropriate credit) to give more credibility to your blog.
- Make sure your content is easy to read. Don't write in long blocks of text. Instead, use bullets, numbered lists, subheadings, bold and italics, and short paragraphs.
- Spend time on each headline. Make sure your headlines are worthy of the great content you write. Also, keep your headlines searchable by including relevant keywords about the blog post topic.
- Always proofread your blogs. If possible, have someone else review them as well, to check for typos and to make sure it reads well.

## Common Mistakes and Roadblocks

Avoid the following mishaps with your blog:

- Don't treat your blog as your press center. If you do mention a business or product announcement, do it casually and sparingly—it should not be the main topic of your post.
- Make sure your blog allows people to leave comments so that others can start conversations and leave feedback. Participate in this conversation when people leave comments.
- Don't expect overnight success (and make sure upper management doesn't have those expectations). Establishing a readership takes time and hard work. You should see results if you continue to create valuable content targeted to your audience. Give your blogging efforts at least a year before considering if it might not be the right choice for your business.
- Not blogging regularly can hurt readership, so strive to maintain the frequency goal you established (or change the goal if it's not feasible). One strategy is to plan and write posts in advance, so you're never scrambling at the last minute.

## Topic Generation

Some companies find it easy to start generating content, but run out of ideas after a couple months. Here are some ways to keep content flowing:

- Always be on the lookout for potential blog ideas. Keep a file on your computer to save links and ideas as you come across them.
- Ask more people at your company to blog so you can expand content and have multiple points of view.
- Explore the idea of guest bloggers, with people relevant in your industry.
- Ask others in the company to submit blog ideas as well. Consider incentivizing blog submission ideas with a small gift card or a raffle.

FRONT PAGE > UNBOTTLED > NEW BOTTLING PLANT PART OF COKE'S PLANNED \$74 MILLION INVESTMENT IN BANGLADESH

### NEW BOTTLING PLANT PART OF COKE'S PLANNED \$74 MILLION INVESTMENT IN BANGLADESH

By: Journey Staff | Jan 18, 2017

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SHARE:



Bhaluka, Bangladesh – International Beverages Private Limited, a division of The Coca-Cola Company, today inaugurated a new plant in Bangladesh as part of a planned \$74 million investment in the country.

The Bhaluka plant, which began operations in December, will initially run two lines producing Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Fanta, Sprite and Kinley water. The facility will employ more than 150 people and create approximately 1,000 additional indirect jobs through industries throughout Coke's value chain, from transportation and manufacturing to packaging supply.



<http://www.coca-colacompany.com/coca-cola-unbottled>

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Build a content calendar to scope out content in advance. This approach could also help generate ideas based on timely topics or seasonal events.



# Marketing with Social Media

## Overview

Consumers are continuously sharing their opinions about brands, companies and services through social media. While people have always shared their positive and negative business experiences with others, social media allows those comments to reach a much wider audience than was once possible. Social media has a wide and powerful reach, and you can harness and direct that power by joining social media and launching your marketing efforts.

## Purpose of Social Media Marketing

The purpose of entering the world of social media is to promote the positive things that are being said about you and to promptly address the negative issues. You can build relationships with customers and prospects and share relevant stories and information.

A huge benefit of social media marketing is that it puts you and your company's news in places where customers are already looking. Whether you choose Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or any other social media platform, you're reaching out to customers instead of making them come looking for you.

## General Principles for Social Media Marketing

Social media marketing is a unique avenue for promoting yourself to customers. However, you don't want to alienate customers with a heavy-handed sales approach. Follow these tips as you build your social media marketing campaign:


- Don't blatantly try to sell your services or products.
- Share stories and helpful information to engage your audience.
- Consider posting videos and images, as well as personal customer stories, to create more interest.
- Know your target audience and where to find them—Facebook, Snapchat, Twitter, Google+, LinkedIn, etc.—and join the social media platforms that are most relevant to your business.
- Write catchy headlines and post effective images that will draw in your audience. If you have good content but bland headlines and no images, it won't engage your audience.



## Challenges of Using Social Media

Although social media is practically a necessity for today's marketing strategies, there are still challenges in using it. If you know the potential hurdles, you will be better able to address them. Here are a few of the most common difficulties that may arise when starting and managing a social media presence for your company:

- With so many choices for social media platforms, selecting which ones to use can be confusing and overwhelming. Keep it simple and stick to one or two platforms until you are comfortable with them, then consider adding another platform or two. Typically, exceeding three or four platforms will make it difficult to produce quality content and respond to comments. Remember, it's better to have a strong, quality presence on a few social media platforms than to have a "barely-there" presence on every social media site imaginable.
- Engaging in social media marketing requires a commitment of time and resources. Social media sites typically need to be posted to and monitored on a daily or even hourly basis. The challenge is dedicating the time and resources necessary for someone to monitor all social media accounts and respond to customers, clients and other interested parties.
- Social media posts and comments cannot be taken back once published. You can delete a tweet, but if it was somehow damaging, inflammatory or insensitive, you can be sure someone has already saved a copy of it and is gearing up to share it with the rest of the world. Always assume that what you post is permanent and can be seen by anyone.



**It takes time to build a following, and for social media marketing to provide a return on investment. Be patient, keep at it and you will see results.**

## Benefits Communication with Social Media

Whether it is promoting open enrollment, explaining plan changes or educating on how to use benefits, communicating benefits information to employees is a constant challenge for employers. A fast-growing trend among leading companies is to include social media in their benefits communication strategy to extend their reach.

### The Benefits of Social Media

Social media provides potential solutions to some of employers' toughest benefits communication challenges.

#### HealthAffairsBlog

HOME TOPICS JOURNAL BRIEFS EVENTS PODCASTS ARCHIVE

ASSOCIATED TOPICS: COSTS AND SPENDING, INSURANCE AND COVERAGE, PUBLIC HEALTH

#### Interstate Insurance Sales: Wishful Thinking, Or A Viable Policy Option?

John Marchica  
January 18, 2017



Anyone who followed the recent election cycle knows that President-elect Donald Trump made "repeal and replace" a cornerstone of his campaign — referring, of course, to the Affordable Care Act (ACA). He, like Mitt Romney and John McCain did in their respective bids for the presidency, has proposed permitting insurers to sell insurance plans across state lines as a possible alternative to the ACA, or at least as a component of a potential alternative.

In this post, we'll take a look at the possible advantages of allowing interstate insurance sales, as well as the reasons opponents say such a policy simply won't work. First, though, let's take a closer look at the current situation.

##### The ACA Already Allows Interstate Insurance Sales

A provision in section 1333 of the Affordable Care Act allows states to establish what are called "health care choice compacts," which permit insurers to sell policies to individuals and small businesses in any state that participates in the compact — provided they abide by specific rules. And several states have explored the possibility. In fact, a few have even enacted statutes pertaining to interstate compacts.

<http://healthaffairs.org/blog/>

- One difficulty employers have is reaching a diverse audience of employees. Social media helps companies expand their reach. Although some employees may still expect printed materials, many would prefer reading a post online or watching a video. Plus, considering the amount of personal time employees spend daily on social networks, it makes sense to target them there.
- Budget can be another hurdle for benefits communication efforts and social media is a way for employers to do more with less.
- Benefits information can be overwhelming and complex, making some employees more likely to skim over or ignore it. Using social media, such as posting videos to Facebook or tweeting reminders, makes benefits information more relatable and personable—meaning employees are more likely to pay attention and understand.
- Benefits communication must encompass many topics. Employers need to promote open enrollment, educate employees about plan changes, explain how to use the plan, promote consumerism and more. Social media helps

break down this overload of information into easy-to-digest posts and reminders—using a place where employees are already spending time.

- Posting updates year-round can provide valuable reminders to employees about using their benefits wisely.
- Social media offers two-way communication, so employees can easily ask questions about their benefits or interact with other employees.

## Getting Started

To get started, think about how you want to use social media. Facebook and Twitter are good places to start, as they are likely the most popular among your employee population.

Whichever platforms you choose, create separate accounts from your external company accounts. Consider using employee-facing accounts not only for benefits communication, but also for wellness and other internal communications.

To get off to a strong start, you need to promote your new social media efforts widely among your employees. Your strategy won't work if your employees don't follow your online accounts. Add a tagline in email signatures, post links on your intranet site, post announcements around the office, etc. Emphasize the benefits for employees, such as the following:

- Timely benefit enrollment reminders
- Easy-to-understand information on plan changes that simplify enrollment decisions
- Plan utilization tips that help save time and money
- Ability to ask questions about plan changes or benefit details
- Quick access to information anytime that can be shared with spouses and families



**As you're getting the message out about your new social media presence, promote it in several areas.**

## Suggestions for Content

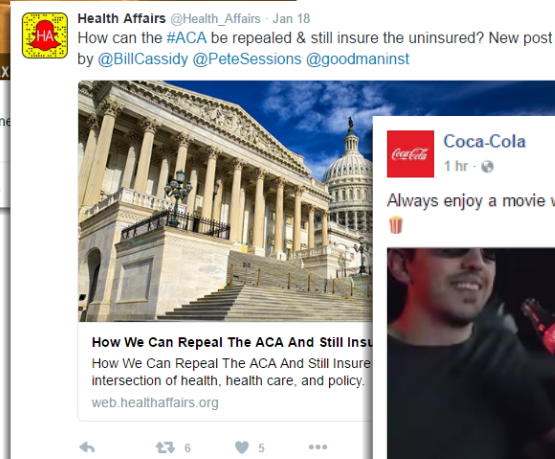
There are countless ways your company can take advantage of social media to communicate your benefits. Here are some suggestions to get you started:

- Reminders about open enrollment deadlines
- Short videos, blogs or posts explaining plan changes
- Tweets or Facebook posts about frequently asked questions or definitions
- Health care and prescription money-saving tips (e.g., choose generics and only use the emergency room for a true emergency)
- Reminders about free preventive care available to them
- Tips on how to use a health plan (e.g., how to submit a flexible spending account claim)
- Retweet or link to relevant documents about consumerism or general benefits education
- Education about voluntary benefits, such as long-term care or dental insurance

Don't forget to interact! Encourage employees to ask questions, and ask them to share their own experiences or tips for better plan use. And as with any social media initiative, be sure to reply if an employee contacts you—engagement is a vital component of social media sites.



twitter.com/IRSNews



twitter.com/Health\_Affairs



twitter.com/CocaCola

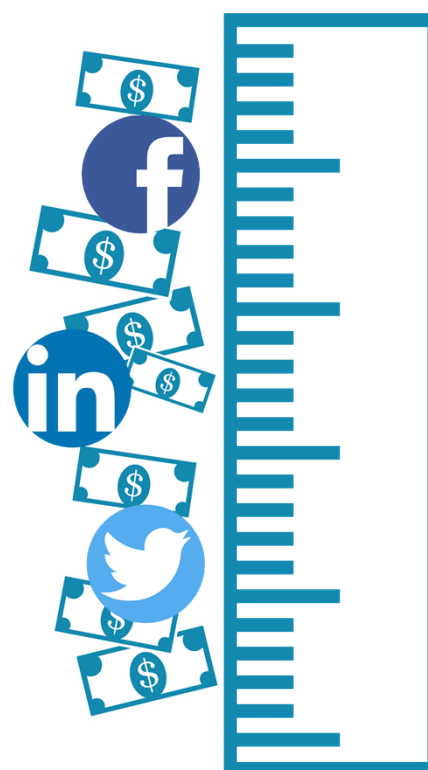
## *Measuring ROI*

As with any business initiative, upper management will want to know the return on investment (ROI) for social media. After all, it is a considerable time commitment, but it can also reap significant, measurable benefits for your business.

### **What to Measure**

Measuring your ROI for social media can be monetary, but it doesn't have to be. Think about what is valuable to you—your followers, your visibility or your reputation. Some nonfinancial outcomes you can measure include the following:

- Increase in unique website visitors
- Change in positive or negative mentions
- Net new Facebook fans or Twitter followers
- Net new requests for information
- An increase in RSS subscriptions
- An increase in visits to your store or location
- Increased time spent on a website
- Increase in video downloads
- The number of times an article was liked or shared
- The number of comments on a blog post



Although these measurements don't relate to a concrete financial outcome, you can attribute them to other value, such as increasing your brand's exposure, strengthening customer relationships, increasing interest in your company, expanding your online presence within your industry or widening your pool of potential prospects.

Of course, you can also measure monetary factors, such as an increase in sales or retention rates attributable to a particular social media campaign or strategy.

## Choose Your Tools

There are countless social media measurement tools available. Some are free, while others can be costly. What works for one company may not work for you. Start by reviewing your social media plan and the business objectives you identified.

- What did you want social media to accomplish or help you accomplish? What social media strategies did you put into place? You want to measure the results of those strategies to tie your social media efforts and outcomes back to your overarching business goals.
- For instance, if one of your business objectives was to increase your brand awareness using various social media channels, then you should initially focus on measuring that. While there isn't one single tool that can measure brand awareness, factors such as website traffic, followers and subscribers can be indicators of increased brand awareness.

Decide what you specifically want to measure and choose a program that is really good at measuring those metrics or factors, rather than a program that measures a little bit of many metrics. Using the example of brand awareness, let's say you decide you want to measure visits to your website, searches for brand-specific terms, content or video views, and the number of followers and/or subscribers. Look for software that measure these specific factors, rather than being seduced by a tool that is a jack-of-all-trades.

Remember, just because you can measure something doesn't mean it's important to your company. Measure what matters—and work to find the tools that do that particularly well (within your budget).

Do your research—don't just choose the latest trend or big name software. You may need to explore several software options before you find the right fit that works for you. Many companies offer demos or free trials, so take advantage of these options. Explore tools that fit your needs, test them out, read customer reviews and be open-minded. Rather than one "premium" tool that measures 10 different factors, you might settle on several specific systems that measure exactly what matters to your company.

Sometimes, you can collect the best data yourself. For instance, if you ran an educational Facebook and Twitter campaign about the importance of proper lawn care, and your landscaping business saw a jump in recent business, you may wonder if the two are connected. Below are two strategies you can use to gain insight into your social media efforts.

- Have your employees ask new clients how they heard about you. If you make this a required activity for your employees, you can learn where new business is coming from. Word-of-mouth can be a simple but accurate way to solicit data from clients.
- Create a simple survey asking clients how they heard about you. In the survey you could also ask a few more questions about their experience with your company or if they would be interested in receiving more information from you. Offer a small participation incentive or a contest, and promote it on all your client invoices (and train employees to draw clients' attention to the survey).



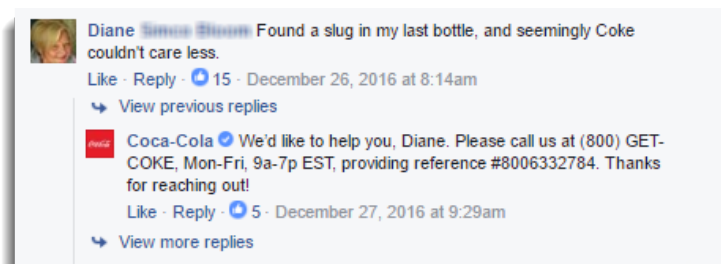
## *Protecting Your Reputation in Social Media*

In today's digital environment, it's difficult to control everything that is being said about your company. Don't let that deter you from joining social media, though. In fact, it's a compelling reason to get involved. People will talk about your company regardless of whether you have a presence online. But, if you're not online, there's no way for you to hear what is said, and you may risk even bigger reputation problems. Being active on social media allows you to contribute a positive voice on your company's behalf.

### **Manage Your Reputation**

Instead of avoiding social media, manage your online reputation by taking proactive steps when something negative is said.

- Keep communication open. If someone is complaining publicly about your brand, company or product, respond publicly. It can be tempting to move the conversation to a private channel (or ignore it), but publicly addressing the issue will earn your company points for responsiveness and increase credibility.
- Don't delete negative posts or comments from your social media platforms (unless they violate the site's policies or are extremely inappropriate). Deleting posts will only cause more backlash; instead, address the problem head-on.
- When your customers are having an issue and voicing it online, don't wait to respond. The sooner you can address the issue, even just with an apology and a promise that you're working toward a resolution, the more trust you may be able to restore.
- Don't be afraid to admit you made a mistake. People will appreciate your honesty much more than your attempts to cover things up or shift blame.
- Work proactively to establish a good reputation and be influential in your industry through your social media channels, speaking engagements, etc.
- Don't bring problems on yourself. The smallest joke or comment taken the wrong way can spark a firestorm of criticism. Think about everything you write—and everything you encourage your followers to share—to evaluate if it could be damaging to you or backfire.




[www.facebook.com/CocaColaUnitedStates/](http://www.facebook.com/CocaColaUnitedStates/)

## Your Social Media Crisis Response Plan

Don't be caught unprepared when a crisis hits. Establish a social media crisis response plan now so that you are ready to handle situations that may occur.

1. **Monitor your online presence.** There are a variety of free and paid tools and resources to "listen" online. Start with these suggestions:
  - a) Set up Google Alerts ([www.google.com/alerts](http://www.google.com/alerts)) for your company and product names. Once you've set up an alert, you'll get an email whenever your specified terms are found online, helping you find positive and negative mentions you may have missed.
  - b) If you are on Twitter, regularly conduct a search for your company name to find tweets that mention you, even if they don't use your username or a hashtag.
2. **Create policies and plans for the possibility of a crisis,** so that you can take action immediately. Have a team assembled (which may include management, marketing, communications, IT and/or legal), and make sure everyone is trained on how to respond to a social media crisis. Have procedures mapped out in advance, including the following:
  - a) How you'll decide upon your response (who will craft it and who must approve it)
  - b) How you'll communicate your response (you may have a number of options depending on the scenario)
  - c) Who will be responsible for various tasks
  - d) Which shareholders or internal departments will need information about the issue
  - e) How you'll manage any additional press
3. **When a crisis occurs, you'll need to decide your response and execute quickly.** Who do you need to share information with, internally and externally? Should your response target one audience or span all your social outlets? What is the message? As you rollout your message, analyze if it is reaching the appropriate people and having the desired results.



**Don't be afraid to tweak your strategy during your crisis response, if necessary.**

After a crisis, evaluate your response and the entire process. Identify any weaknesses, discuss how to improve in the future and modify your social media crisis plan as needed. You may also want to discuss a new marketing or PR campaign to bring positive attention to your company following a negative situation.

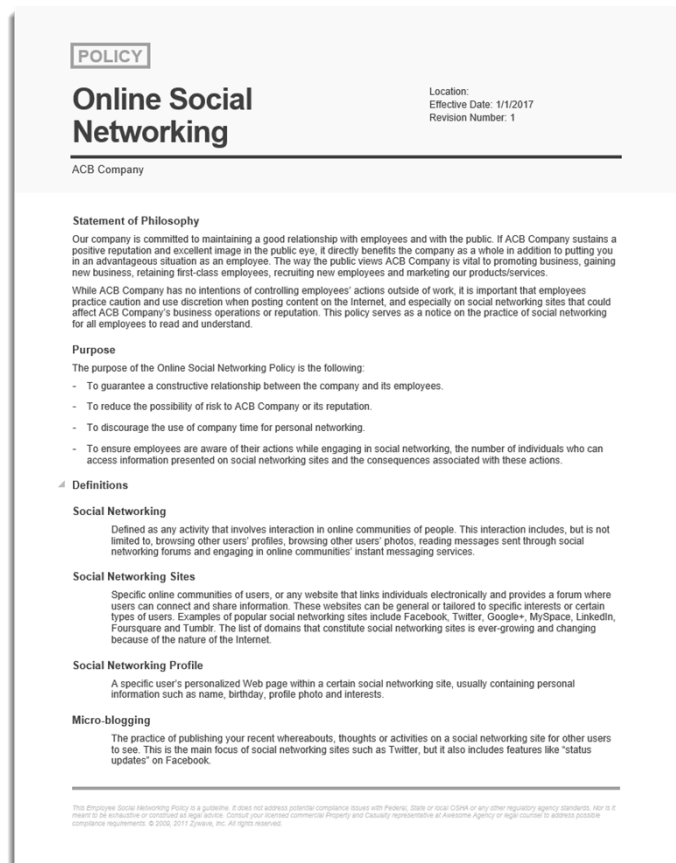
## Protect Your Company

As with any social media business initiative, it's important to protect your company. This is even more vital if you have employees blogging, tweeting and posting on behalf of your company. Therefore, before implementing a new social media strategy, create a comprehensive policy for employees so that all expectations are clear. (A sample policy is included at the end of this toolkit.)

For instance, will employees use work or personal accounts for their blogging or tweeting? There are implications for both types of account. Personal accounts can seem more relatable and personable, which could help attract and retain more followers. On the other hand, any followers employees gain while working at your company will likely leave with them if they leave the company.

If you allow employees to use personal accounts to also post work information, consider setting guidelines about the type of personal things that can be shared. Once this person represents your company, anything he or she says can reflect on your brand. Be sure to establish other clear guidelines, such as what constitutes acceptable or unacceptable social media behavior.

**There are many considerations needed for a successful social media policy. Continue reading to view a completed sample.**



After you have a policy developed, distribute it to all employees and have them sign a form stating that they have read and understand the policy. This will help protect your company from potential legal liabilities in the future.

# Appendix

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## *Legal Considerations with Social Media*

The internet is full of legal concerns, and social media is no exception. Even if your company does not participate in social media, your employees undoubtedly use it in their free time, creating potential liabilities. For companies that do engage in social media, various risks should be considered—including who owns a Twitter handle and what happens when an employee bad-mouths a superior on Facebook.

The law is still developing, so companies should proactively protect themselves. One option is to purchase additional insurance coverage. There are various types of cyber risk policies available, and some include social media liabilities. Talk to Casimere Insurance Services about insuring this risk.

The best way to protect your company is to have a comprehensive, clear policy addressing all relevant social media concerns for employees.

## **Drafting a Social Media Policy**

When you start thinking about your social media policy, don't think of it as a punitive document that outlines a framework for disciplining various infractions. Instead, think of it as a set of guidelines to help employees understand the issues and risks, and how to stay away from them. Consider including the following components in your policy:

- **Employee bill of rights.** This is a good place to start so that employees feel their personal rights are valued by the company.
  - Emphasize that all employees have the right to use social media for self-expression on their own time.
  - Include a right to digital privacy that states the company will not bypass the security or privacy settings of a social site to see employee content that is not available publicly.
  - Explain what online harassment and bullying is, and that it is not considered acceptable by the company.
- **Internal usage guidelines.** This clearly defines usage rights during work hours.
  - Specify whether social media is allowed during work hours and on company equipment. A compromise may be allowing employees to use social media during lunch and break times.
  - If personal use is not allowed during work hours, specify what constitutes acceptable use for business purposes only.
  - Include security rules and protocols for downloading files, videos, third-party software, etc.

- **External usage guidelines.** This can be a complicated issue, as is any issue regarding employee conduct outside of work hours. The law is still developing, but there have already been several high-profile lawsuits about whether a company can punish an employee for what is posted online. Consider including the following guidelines in your policy:
  - For employees with a social media role in the company, the line between business and personal use can easily be blurred if they use the same account for both. Remind these employees how their social media activity will always affect the company's reputation.
  - For employees with personal social media accounts, urge caution. Tell them to think twice about anything they post about the company on a social network, because there is a chance a colleague, manager or client could see it. Encourage employees to use good judgment to avoid risking their reputation—or their job. Because this area is especially problematic, be sure to have legal counsel review this language.
- **Social media confidentiality and nondisclosure guidelines.**
  - Revealing any confidential company or client information online should be prohibited, even in a “private” forum or message, as the security of the site could be compromised.
  - Emphasize that your company policies related to confidentiality and nondisclosure apply to social media as well.
- **Official communication guidelines.**
  - Have a policy in place regarding ownership of accounts and followers for all employees using social media for business purposes. Lawsuits have sprung from this issue, as employees leaving companies tried to take their accounts and followers with, and companies have sued. Develop a policy now so it is easier to enforce later.
  - Discuss what is expected of employees when they represent the company on social networks—and be specific. Include policies, procedures, and do's and don'ts, so that employees know their expectations and responsibilities in their social media role.

After your policy is developed, make sure it is distributed to all employees, and have employees sign a form verifying that they received and understand the policy. You may also consider requiring social media employee training to supplement this policy.

As with all employee policies, be sure to have legal counsel review your social media policy in full before finalizing. Remember that the National Labor Relations Act limits your ability to retaliate against an employee for protected concerted activity. If an employee uses social media to address certain employment concerns, disciplinary action could potentially violate federal law, even if a union is not involved. If you're still not quite sure what your social media policy should look like, please see the sample provided at the end of this toolkit.

## *Sample Social Media Policy*

THE FOLLOWING IS A SAMPLE POLICY MEANT TO BE USED AS A REFERENCE FOR DEVELOPING YOUR OWN SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY, TAILORED TO THE UNIQUE NEEDS OF YOUR ORGANIZATION. THERE ARE CURRENTLY VERY FEW LAWS REGULATING SOCIAL MEDIA IN THE WORKPLACE, SO IT IS **HIGHLY RECOMMENDED THAT YOU SEEK LEGAL COUNSEL** PRIOR TO FINALIZING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY.

ABC Company is committed to maintaining a good relationship with its employees and the marketplace. The way the public views ABC Company is vital to maintaining business, gaining new business, retaining first-class employees, recruiting new employees, and marketing our products and services.

While ABC Company has no intention of controlling employee actions outside of work, employees should practice caution and use discretion when posting content on the web. Employees have the right to use social media for personal expression on their own time and ABC Company will not violate employee privacy by attempting to access content that has not been made available publicly. This policy serves as a notice on the practice of social networking for all employees to read and understand. As more concerns develop and legislation is released, this policy is subject to change.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of the online social media policy is as follows:

- To guarantee a constructive relationship between the company and its employees.
- To manage risk and preserve the company's positive reputation.
- To discourage the use of company time for personal social media activities.
- To promote awareness among employees of the number of individuals who can access information presented on social networking sites.



## **Definitions**

### ***Social Networking/Social Media***

“Social networking” and “social media” refer to any activity that involves interaction in online communities. This interaction includes, but is not limited to, browsing profiles and photos, reading messages sent through social networking forums and participating in instant messaging services.

### ***Social Networking Sites***

A “social networking site” is any website that links individuals electronically and provides a forum where users can connect and share information. These websites can be tailored to specific interests or to certain types of users. Examples of popular social networking sites include Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Snapchat, Instagram and YouTube. The list of social networking sites is constantly growing and changing because of the nature of the web.

### ***Social Networking Profile***

A “social networking profile” is a user’s personalized page within a specific social networking site, usually containing personal information such as name, birthday, photo and interests.

### ***Microblogging***

“Microblogging” is the practice of publishing your recent whereabouts, thoughts or activities on a social networking site for other users to see. While not all social networking sites use microblogging, this is a primary focus of sites like Twitter and Facebook.

### ***Business Purposes***

“Business purposes” means using a social networking site for the company’s gain, usually as a task or assignment given by a manager or supervisor. This can be done either through a specific company account on a given social networking site or through a personal account set up for the purposes of recruiting or marketing for ABC Company.

### ***Working Hours***

“Working hours” include any time employees are being paid to conduct company business. Standard working hours are from [insert hour] to [insert hour], Monday through Friday. This time frame may vary based on job type and responsibilities.

## **Procedures**

### ***Prohibited Use***

It is important that employees use their time at work for business purposes. Employees are not blocked from access to social networking sites on ABC Company computers because, under some circumstances, social networking is a powerful business tool that can be channeled to gain positive publicity for the company and to connect with clients. However, access to such sites should follow company policy. The following actions are prohibited during working hours:

- Using social networking sites to conduct personal or non-company business with a company computer or device.
- Browsing social networking sites for non-company business on company time with a company computer or device.
- Reading email alerts regarding personal social networking account activity or using ABC Company email to correspond with personal social networking contacts.
- Updating information, uploading photos or otherwise engaging with one's personal social networking profile for non-business purposes with a company computer or device.
- Microblogging for a non-business purpose on a social networking site throughout the day, whether or not it is on a company-provided computer.

### ***Prohibited Conduct***

Having your own individual social networking account and using it on your own time is certainly permissible. However, keep in mind that some actions on your personal site are visible for the entire social networking community and may no longer be considered private matters. ABC Company has put in place a set of conduct guidelines to protect its brand and prevent the unwanted disclosure of confidential information. Please follow these guidelines:

- Do not use microblogging features to disclose trade secrets, publish internal reports, provide tips based on inside information or participate in other activities that may be considered insider trading.
- We urge you to consider resolving workplace grievances internally. If you choose to address a grievance using social media, refrain from posting comments and materials that could be viewed as malicious, obscene, threatening, intimidating or that could create a hostile environment on the basis of race, sex, disability, religion or any other status protected by law.
- Refrain from posting any reckless or maliciously untrue comments. These communications may not be protected by law.
- Do not impersonate ABC Company or its employees, make statements on behalf of ABC Company without authorization or make statements that can be construed as establishing ABC Company's official position or policy on any particular issue.

### **Conclusion**

As stated above, the purpose of this policy is to protect the ABC Company brand and prevent the disclosure of confidential information. It is not the company's intent to interfere with its employees' legal rights. Whenever state or federal law governs an area of social media participation, ABC Company policies should be interpreted as to comply with those laws.

## *Conclusion*

Social media is an ever-expanding realm of possibilities for your company. Use this toolkit to bolster your campaigns and help establish a strong social media presence.

Utilize the tips and tricks included here to keep your business top-of-mind with your customers, while also creating a buzz for potential new hires. There is no limit to how successful you can be when properly implementing a social media campaign. It's wise to look to other social media leaders and see how they are leveraging their businesses—feel free to borrow their tactics.

And remember, word-of-mouth knows no barriers with social networks, and the possibilities for spreading content or ideas are endless. Social media creates influence and scale in a way traditional media simply cannot, for a fraction of the cost.

Casimere Insurance Services is equipped to support your social media initiatives and can provide informative articles, resources and programs to assist you every step of the way.

