

Social Media Marketing 101

Social Media platforms have transformed the way our world communicates. According to the Pew Research Center, nearly 70% of Americans have at least one social media profile. These platforms can be a highly effective means of reaching your target market(s) and engaging them in a very meaningful way. And, when your followers engage with your form of social media, you have the opportunity to influence all of their connections as well. When considering if and which social media platforms to use, here are a few tips to keep in mind:

- Understand your target market so that you select the social media platform that will reach the most of them with the least amount of effort. There are several social media platforms for families and mothers of young children such as Famster, Justmommies, Cafemom, and Disney Family Community, but keep in mind while these are highly targeted platforms, their population pales in comparison to the major platforms such as Facebook, or Pinterest.
- Rather than participating in all of the different major social media platforms, think about doing just a few of them really well. Social media can take a large amount of time, so you will want to budget your time wisely so that you can concentrate on other aspects of your studio.
- Post often and with relevancy. If you do engage in social media for your studio, be prolific about posts, and make sure they will be interesting to your intended target audience. Social Media authors can be very creative in what to post and how it links to their business or message. Don't write all of your posts like an ad, so followers don't get turned off.
- When the platform allows for it, use pictures along with words. Color catches the eye, and eyes on faces also grab attention. Just be sure that if you do post a picture of a child on social media, that you have permission from their parent(s), and that you do not provide their name anywhere in the post.
- Pay or not to pay. Often times you can build a group of followers from scratch with interesting, creative, and thoughtful social media posts. If this is the case, then you may not consider paying for ads or "boosts" in social media. These methods can be helpful to get a social media destination off the ground. Consider starting small and seeing what kind of results the buy gets you. Cost per new follower is a good way to gauge the effectiveness of an ad buy or boost.

Here is a brief rundown of the major social media platforms and some tips on how to use them effectively:

LinkedIn - The largest professional networking site, this platform is geared more for B2B or Business to Business marketing. However, don't discount its value as a recruiting tool for studio teachers and/or employees.

- Build a strong business page by tailoring to business professionals, such as working moms, using relevant keywords to boost your chances of appearing in searches.
- LinkedIn allows you to publish articles, so write them about topics that relate to your studio, such as how to balance being a mom and working full time, etc.
- Consider when your audience will be on the platform. Generally, they will be on before work, at lunch, and just after work.

Facebook – Arguably the largest social media platform, Facebook caters to individuals and businesses alike. It also provides very targeted ads based on demographics such as gender, children in the household, etc.

- Post in periods when engagement is highest. For Facebook, that is typically Thursday through Sunday, with highest rates over the weekend. Most popular times appear to be between 9 AM and 3 PM.
- Build a strong business page with a good summary, keywords, and business contact information.
- Keep your page active by regularly posting things that will be of interest to your followers and target audience. Keep in mind that you want to create something that your followers will want to share with their friends.
- Encourage conversations on posts by posing questions that your followers will want to answer and reply to any messages sent directly to you promptly.
- Ask people to follow you, by placing the Facebook icon on your website, blog, newsletters, and even other social media platforms.

Twitter – Known for its low character counts, this platform dominates the headlines in politics and entertainment. The key goal for Twitter is to be prolific, so it requires a larger amount of engagement than the other social media platforms.

- Commutes and breaks are the best time to reach people on Twitter, generally around lunch time, mid-afternoon, and between 5 and 6 PM.

- Twitter moves quickly, like having a conversation, so tweet several times during these peak times rather than just once.
- If you have a tweet that shows good results for your studio, consider reusing it at least once a day, which will help keep your message out there.
- Follow businesses or industries that you think your target audience will find interesting, and retweet those to your followers, using the @ symbol to signal businesses or people directly, and/or hashtags # combined with keywords to make the posts more searchable.

YouTube – YouTube is the second largest search engine in the world behind Google, with videos available on just about every topic imaginable. With video, you get to tell your story through not just pictures, but narration.

- To build viewers for your videos, you need to build a strong channel. YouTube ranks by looking at how the entire channel is performing. So having multiple videos is important.
- Design videos that would be of use to your target audience, such as how to best introduce music into your household with children.
- The longer a viewer stays engaged in your video, the better ranking it will receive, so concentrate on making the first seconds and minute very engaging and interesting.
- Be sure to write very relevant and dense keyword descriptions to get the best search results, and also put keywords in your video title.

Pinterest – Pinterest has over 150 million active users, of which 60% are women and the majority are under 40 years of age. As such, it is not surprising that Pinterest has a very strong influence on retail.

- Pinterest is very visual and design oriented, so create visually engaging pins and share pins created by others.
- Videos on Pinterest are increasingly popular and have been shown to increase engagement over a static layout.
- Promoted pins look just like regular pins but will allow you to showcase your content and attract more attention.
- One-tap pins brings users right to the page where the content originated, so consider this when designing your page.

Instagram – Highly visual, this platform is a great option for highly visual products or industries.

- The most popular times for this platform are Mondays and Thursdays in the morning 8-9 AM and at 5 PM.
- Create a business profile that will allow you to add a phone number to your bio, and then add a link to this area of your profile.
- Use 7 to 10 hashtags # per post with keywords relevant to your studio and your target audience.

Snapchat – This platform is excellent for reaching people in the Millennial generation and younger, as over 70% of users are under the age of 25.

- Snaps, which are images or short videos, can be sent to friends and followers that can be viewed for up to 10 seconds before they disappear. Stories can be created that will last for up to 24 hours.
- Within your Snapchat story, create engaging images that people will want to share while also raising awareness for your brand.
- You can offer coupons or deals that are exclusive to Snapchat, which is a good way to gauge and directly track the effectiveness of the platform.

Google + - About 90% of people on this platform have very limited engagement, but discounting the social media platform by the world's largest search engine would be a mistake.

- At the minimum, create a business page and profile for Google +, with relevant information, address, phone, etc.
- Most active times are Mid-week, between mid-morning and lunch time.

While all of the various social media platforms and their particular rules can be intimidating and daunting, the best thing to do is just jump in and get wet. Choose 2 to 3 platforms that relate best to your target audience, create your pages or profiles, and start publishing. There are many guides out there to become proficient in these platforms, but often the best way to learn is by doing.

Click [here](#) to watch a recorded coaching session with Scott Dickson of Dickson Interactive who goes through each platform and how to use.