

Beyond Account Setup

29 Ways to Optimize Social Media for Better Results

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Hotel Marketing Strategies

What now?

By now, most of us have set up basic social media accounts.

What's next?

That's the topic of this special report. I'm going to go beyond the basic "*How to get started in social media*" - and share how you can "hack" social media activity for optimal results.

Facebook

Create a custom landing page tab

By default, a visitor to your Facebook page will see *the Wall*: a history of the latest updates and postings. Creating a unique landing tab for your Facebook page gives you a little more control over first impressions. It enables you to focus attention on most important content. For example, you could highlight a special message, feature or promotion.

How: <http://mashable.com/2010/02/22/build-facebook-landing-page/>

Encourage email subscriptions

If collecting email addresses is important for your followup sales and relationship building efforts - *it should be* - then make a point of having a signup form on your page. I particularly like what *Social Media Examiner* is doing:

Example: http://www.facebook.com/smexaminer?v=app_10442206389

Add Like buttons to all important pages

Facebook *Like Buttons* allow visitors to indicate they like your website content, also sharing it with their whole network of friends on Facebook. You may add these to important individual pages on your website, or on every page of your blog or destination guide.

More: <http://developers.facebook.com/docs/reference/plugins/like>

Fan page widget on your homepage

Placing a Facebook *Like Box* on your website allows visitors to become a fan of your Facebook Page without leaving your main website. Additionally, you can share the most recent updates on your page, and show some of the people who are already part of your community. *(The subtle difference between this and the Like Button above is the the Like Button is just for sharing content; the Like Box is for fan page signups.)*

More: <http://developers.facebook.com/docs/reference/plugins/like-box>

Post on Saturday for more interaction

According to [research from Dan Zarrella](#), your hotel will get a lot more interaction on Facebook updates made on the weekend - especially on Saturday.

Not working during the weekend? Just use a tool like HootSuite that allows scheduled future posting on Facebook.

Use Facebook Insights

Facebook provides *Insights* - their dashboard of metrics - for anyone with a Facebook page. While it shows the number of people who have interacted with you, pay special attention to audience demographics. This can help guide your strategy moving forward.

How: <http://mashable.com/2010/09/03/facebook-insights-guide/>

Twitter

Use lists to save time

Anyone starting out on Twitter quickly notices the volume of updates from people they follow can become overwhelming. How can you keep up with the updates that really matter? The answer is through Twitter lists. You can create lists for any number of people you follow.

Read: [How to Use Twitter Lists](#) (Twitter.com) and Mashable's [Twitter Lists Guide](#)

Update with your voice via Jott.com

If you feel you have no time to post to Twitter, it's possible to publish updates with your voice over a mobile phone. I use [Jott Assistant](#) to send emails, text messages, and most importantly, Twitter updates.

Retweet strategically

Retweeting is the act of passing along a Twitter message someone else wrote. Done well, it can expand the range of information you provide your followers. It can help amplify the voice of your supporters: letting customers tell the story for you. Make it your goal to send at least one strategic retweet each day.

More: <http://www.hotelmarketingstrategies.com/retweet-for-credibility/>

Create a background design that sells

Not enough people pay attention to their Twitter background design, but it can be a powerful marketing tool. It's nice to have a layout that matches the rest of your visual identity, but I like to go a step further and include sales information. Provide contact details. Highlight a special offer or promotion.

Write a powerful bio

A well-written *About Me* section in your Twitter profile helps more people find you in search, a good first step towards increasing your number of followers. Include words that are relevant and important to your hotel. Communicate your unique selling proposition.

Ask guests to follow you right after a booking

After someone makes a reservation or checks in to your hotel, you might recommend they follow you on Twitter for service. You can do this in person or over the phone, but I've received great results by putting this request on the "*thank you for your reservation*" page that people see immediately after making a booking. Once someone has made a commitment like this, they are obviously interested in what you offer, and the chances they'll follow you on Twitter or elsewhere go up dramatically.

Sync your RSS feed for automatic updates

Every time I publish a new blog post, I don't go over to Twitter to announce it. Instead, I use Hootsuite to automatically update my Twitter audience. This may not seem to save a lot of time, but it helps ensure consistency and gives me one less thing to think about.

Add a retweet button to important web pages

For an important page on your website, consider adding a retweet button from Tweet-Meme. It will allow visitors to share the information with their Twitter followers with just one click. It also helps you leverage social proof: the button is continually updated to show how many other people have retweeted the page.

More: http://tweetmeme.com/about/retweet_button

Good example: <http://tweetbackup.com/>

Blog

Consider starting with Tumblr

Too overwhelmed by the thought of writing regular articles for a blog? Tumblr may be a good place for you to start. Their service is halfway between blogging and microblogging: a bit longer than Twitter, but often shorter than a feature-length blog post. You can quickly post text, images, videos, links, quotes and audio - making it especially good for creating a multi-media experience.

Source stunning photos from Flickr

The best destination blogs use great photography to tell their stories. If you don't have the time or capacity to take your own pictures, look at the photos on Flickr licensed under Creative Commons. A huge library is available to you there at no cost - you just need to give attribution to the photographer: a simple credits link.

Link: <http://www.flickr.com/creativecommons/by-2.0/>

Use Flickr to find “insider” secrets in your city

Flickr can also be a useful way to identify what visitors may find interesting in your city or destination. It helps to have a fresh set of eyes when creating a visitor's guide for your destination. Searching Flickr enables you to:

- See what visitors are taking photos of
- See what type of photos got the most attention

- Identify the best photographers in your city (and work with them?)
- Locate out-of-the-way points of interest in your neighborhood
- Participate in discussions with photographers to determine the best places to take photos

Demo: <http://www.hotelmarketingstrategies.com/find-highlights-with-flickr/>

Label your images for Google image search

This tip comes from *Future Blog* author Jeremy Silverman. Use image *alternate text* to add a few words of description for each photo you publish. This is easily done when blogging, and your web developer should be doing this for your website as well. Jeremy gets many new website visitors each week from Google image search using this technique - are you?

Do basic keyword research when writing blog post titles

Keyword research is the process of finding which phrases are most popular for users of search engines like Google. Too often, this is something used exclusively by search engine marketers as they optimize websites for higher rankings. But smart bloggers and publishers include keyword research in their writing: they know the words you choose for an article title or video make a difference in how many people will find it through web search.

How: <http://www.hotelmarketingstrategies.com/keyword-research-for-publishers/>

Send an automatic weekly email newsletter with Mailchimp

Email newsletters are something too many bloggers overlook, and that's a shame. Adding an email newsletter to my blog caused readership and loyalty to jump dramatically. I'll often receive 50% of my weekly visitors from the newsletter alone. There's a sharp spike each Monday morning from the newsletter, and I also receive many more visitors from people forwarding the email to their friends and colleagues.

Email can be very time-consuming to produce, though. Fortunately, there's a way to make this easy. Email service provider MailChimp offers a free plan that can be used to send out an automated weekly newsletter with your newest articles. You just enter your blog's newsfeed, select a design, and the rest is done for you.

Do some guest blogging

Once you have the basics of blogging down, I recommend you try *guest blogging*: writing for other blogs and websites. Select a few popular websites, and write high-quality original articles that will appeal to their audience - but still tie back to your offering. If needed, you may reduce your blog frequency, and spend some of the time writing for others.

This is so powerful because you can connect with an audience that others have developed over time.



Publish under a Creative Commons license to increase your visibility

As mentioned earlier, the Flickr *Creative Commons license* gives bloggers and web publishers permission to use images in their own work. From the perspective of the photographer - you in this case - it can be a great way to raise visibility. I recommend releasing every photo you upload to Flickr under this license. Photos of your property are great, but photos of your city or destination are even better.

Embed photos on your website to increase views (and popularity)

Photos on Flickr are often sorted by popularity - and views are one metric that goes into determining this. One way I like to increase views of my photos is to embed them as part of my website. This way, each website visitor I have will increase the photo views.

Use Flickr badges on your website

Even if you don't want to embed a full size photo on your website, you may want to use *Flickr Badges* to share your uploads.

Link: <http://www.flickr.com/badge.gne>

YouTube

Buy a Flip UltraHD Camcorder

Carry it around everywhere, and make it a practice to record everyday scenes and interactions. The Flip costs less than \$150, and makes video production very simple. Too many people I talk with are overwhelmed by video production options, and haven't even taken this simple step.

Embed YouTube videos on your website

This is especially true if you're blogging. Embedding the video directly from YouTube increases views popularity. Plus, it saves you a lot of bandwidth from your web host.

Optimize your videos for search

Many people are surprised to learn that YouTube is the web's second-largest search engine (after Google). Videos uploaded to YouTube should be optimized to increase the chances of people finding it. There are whole articles on this topic, but start with these steps:

- Try to identify which niche search phrases are most relevant to your audience and the video, and then target these
- Use the word "video" in the title
- Write a keyword-rich description - it's the next-best indicator to search engines of the video's content, after the title

- Provide transcriptions where possible (search engines cannot index video content, so this helps them get a feel for what the video contains)
- Tag your video with keywords when uploading (which should go without saying)
- Select an attractive thumbnail image

Close with a call to action

All basic video editors will let you place a simple screen at the end of each video, and I encourage you to use this to recommend an easy next step for the watcher. You may not ask for a sale immediately, but move them a little closer. Perhaps you could recommend they visit your blog, sign up for email offers, or join you on Facebook?

Making email social

Add your latest Twitter updates to your email signature

A service called [WiseStamp](#) allows you to instantly embed your latest tweet or other social media update in every email you send. Even if you don't want to use it for your personal account, it might be a nice touch for customer service or sales emails.

Link: [WiseStamp.com](#)

Begin using Rapportive - social media CRM for email

Imagine how helpful it would be to have the sender's latest social media updates displayed alongside each email you receive. That's benefit of using Rapportive: it displays social media background information and updates in the sidebar of Google email accounts.

Link: [Rapportive.com](#)

What's next?

Go put some of these ideas into action!

If you need any help along the way, contact me:

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Ideas are useless without implementation. And that's my philosophy behind the *Hotel Marketing Strategies Insider's Circle* program:

I know you're smart, and know your hotel better than I ever could. But if you'd like me to join your team and help you turn ideas into reality, we should talk.

I partner with innovative hotel managers to help them use new media and the social web to create memorable guest experiences and increase profits. I'd love to be your technology advisor, showing you how to do your own marketing without an outside agency:

<http://www.hotelmarketingstrategies.com/membership/>