

# HOW TO INTEGRATE CONTENT MARKETING AND SOCIAL MEDIA

by Samuel Scott

**C**ontent is the fuel of social media, so companies that want to take advantage of the opportunities offered by social media will need to create a complimentary content-marketing strategy.

In a prior post on [how to create a social-media marketing strategy](#), we outlined the basic questions to address when creating a plan to engage target audiences on social and digital channels:

1. How can we use web analytics to track our results?
2. Who is our target audience and where are they on social networks?
3. How should we optimize our social profiles?
4. How should we interact on those networks – and with what content?
5. What creative campaigns can we create?
6. How will we measure results and adjust accordingly?

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# “WHO IS OUR TARGET AUDIENCE AND WHERE ARE THEY ON SOCIAL NETWORKS?”

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Still, the use of social media alone is not enough. Just as the telephone is merely a tool to communicate in ways that are aligned to one’s desired business goals, so are social-media outlets. The major difference is that phones transmit oral messages while social-media networks transmit online content. To use the phone effectively, one must speak effectively. To use social channels effectively, one must create and promote content effectively.

To integrate a content strategy and a social-media strategy, one must answer in detail the questions posed by numbers four and five in the list above. (That is, “What creative campaigns can we create?” and “How should we interact on those networks – and with what content?”) Here are questions to address:

1. What mediums are popular on the targeted social channels?
2. How will the content be aligned with our branding, positioning, and messaging?
3. How will the content be used to achieve our business and marketing goals?
4. What are our capabilities to produce quality pieces of that content?
5. When should we publish and promote the content?

The answers to these questions will depend on the company, its business goals, and its selected social networks. In the example below, we will outline a B2B company’s hypothetical Facebook strategy to obtain more leads for its “widget” marketing software.

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# B2B CONTENT MARKETING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

## A. CHOOSING THE CONTENT

“[Facebook posts] including a photo album, a picture or a video generate about 180 percent, 120 percent, and 100 percent more engagement than the average post, respectively.” So, our company would need to create *images and videos* that would interest people who use “widget” software.


**Question to answer:** What mediums – images, videos, articles, podcasts, and so on – are best suited to your targeted social networks?

## B. POSITIONING YOUR CONTENT

Social-media content is not about direct advertising or hard selling – it is about maximizing personal engagement in line with your messaging and positioning. To engage effectively, it is crucial to humanize your company and communicate your “brand persona.” Take these memorable Apple commercials and how the two actors “branded” Mac and PC computers (to Microsoft’s detriment):



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**“THE GOAL IS  
TO PUBLISH  
CONTENT THAT  
‘GIVES, ADVISES,  
WARNS, AMUSES,  
INSPIRES,  
AMAZES, OR  
UNITES’.”**

Our “widget” company targets vice presidents and directors of marketing at Fortune 500 businesses, so the content would need to be professional, serious, and authoritative – as opposed to, say, the content that a music producer would use to target teenage fans of Justin Bieber.

**Question to answer:** If your brand were a human, how would it sound when talking online?

### **C. USING THE CONTENT**

First, after companies know *how to speak*, they should figure out *what*

to say. Our “widget” company, for example, may both produce videos that show how to use the software to increase sales and create graphics to update people on industry trends. Just remember this rule [from Debbie Hemley at Social Media Examiner](#): “Create content that people want to talk about.”

On Facebook specifically, companies can be more informal than on, say, LinkedIn. So, the goal is to publish content that “[gives, advises, warns, amuses, inspires, amazes, or unites](#).”

**Question to answer:** What original, quality content can you create that people will want to share?

Second, companies need to use the content to accomplish greater marketing goals. In our “widgets” example, the content posts on Facebook would include links that would take people (depending on the exact context) either directly to a landing page with an inquiry form or to a blog post that would redirect (via appropriate calls-to-action) to the landing page.

**Question to answer:** How will the content directly contribute to your

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marketing and business goals?

## D. CREATING THE CONTENT

Once a company knows what networks to target, what medium and tone to use, what content to create, and what marketing goals the content will achieve, then it is crucial to audit the company's content-creation abilities.

If the company does not have a staff member who can use software such as Photoshop, FinalCut, and CorelDraw to create quality, professional graphics and videos, then the business needs to hire a freelancer or an agency that can create such content.

The content creator must also know technical specifications relevant to each social network. As [Miranda Miller notes at Search Engine Watch](#), for example, the best size for a Facebook Timeline post is a 403×403 square (width by height). This way, the photos will appear perfectly both in the News Feed immediately *and on the page itself in the future*. Differently-sized images may be cropped or distorted to fit in the space on the page as in this

random Facebook page's photo we saw:



In addition, it is best to use platforms that integrate seamlessly with each network. For example, YouTube embedding allows people to watch videos directly in Facebook posts.

**Question to answer:** How will you create the desired content?

## E. POSTING THE CONTENT

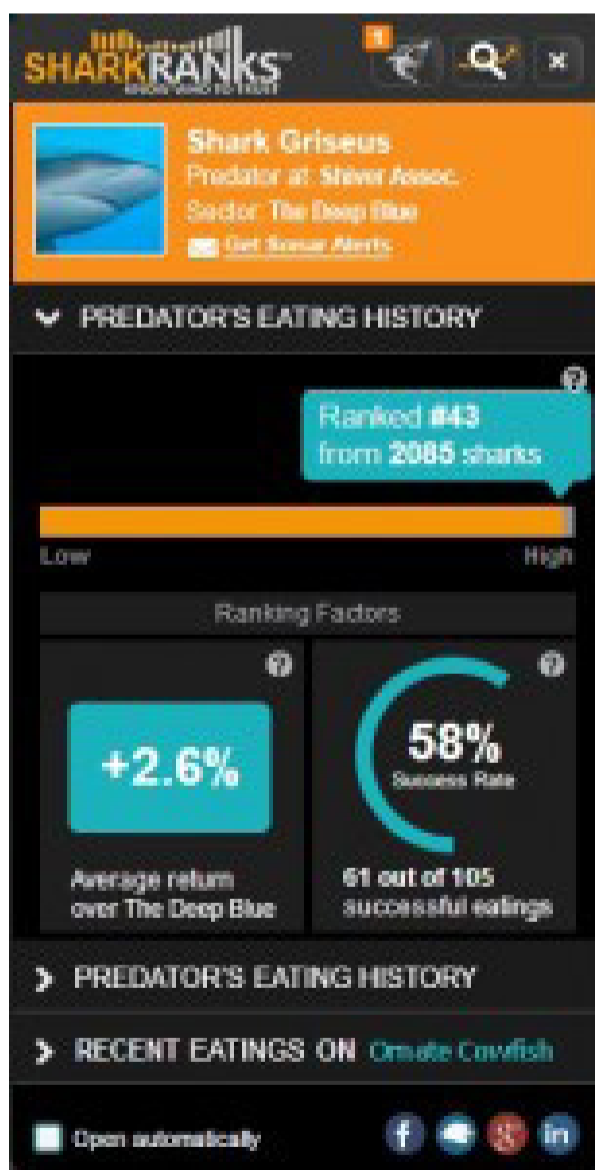
On Facebook, it is not recommended to post something *just to post something* – it is best to have a *reason* to post. Facebook's EdgeRank algorithm determines whether a person sees a page's content based in part on how often that person “likes,” shares, or comments on that

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page's updates. If a page posts too many “random” updates – such as generic news articles that receive little interaction – then fewer people will see the posts in the future.

Instead, brainstorm, create, and schedule future content based on relevant company activity (such as a new product release) or occasional “[newsjacking](#)” (David Meerman Scott’s catchphrase, no relation). One post per week that receives many “likes” and shares is better for long-term brand visibility than a post every day that gets comparatively nothing.

One of our clients, [TipRanks](#), is a financial-accountability engine that ranks the best and the worst of stock analysts. For the company’s new Facebook page, we created this mock-up of their tool and posted it to “newsjack” the beginning of the popular “Shark Week” in the United States:



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Obviously, stock analysts who tend to give bad advice could be deemed the “sharks” of the financial world.

## THE NEED TO INTEGRATE CONTENT AND SOCIAL MEDIA

No company would run a television advertisement without first having an overall marketing strategy and a complimentary “content” strategy (in the context of commercials). And no business should use social-media networks without first having the same plans in place.

From newspapers to radio to television to the Internet, every medium has a collection of best-practices that need to be used for effective marketing. Social media can be extremely beneficial for businesses – but only when it used in a logical, strategic way that combines the *social* (engagement) with the *media* (content).

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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