

The 7 Cs of building a social media strategy

By [Matthew Royse](#) | Posted: August 14, 2012

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After using social media for a while, a lot of people and companies decide that they need a strategy. Of course, that approach is like putting the cart before the horse.

To ensure success, think about your social media strategy in the context of the seven Cs.

1. Community

Like all good communication, it is best to start by determining your target audience. Where do they spend time online? What social media channels do they use? Before your social media efforts can take shape, you should listen and learn about your community.

For example, one of their top social media communities for a business-to-consumer brand such as Oreo is Facebook. Its [recent salute to the Mars landing](#) was a huge hit with their 27 million Facebook fans. Meanwhile, a job seeker will most likely find a community on LinkedIn. According to a recent survey, [93 percent of job recruiters use LinkedIn to find qualified candidates](#).

Finding out where your community interacts on social media is the first step of a successful social media strategy. It's important to determine what type of conversations are taking place about your brand and in your industry before engaging in a community or building a community from scratch.

2. Content

After you figure out how your community engages with social media, you should determine what content you're going to share with your followers.

For example, if you want to grow your personal brand, what articles are you going to share to highlight your expertise about your job or personal interests? If you are a company, how can you show your clients and prospects that you are a thought leader or that you are trying to make their lives easier?

To learn more about the importance of content, you may want to read the [Content Marketing Institute blog](#).

3. Curation

You can't think about content without mentioning curation. Curation is a way of sharing other people's content. According to [Beth Kanter](#) in her post [Content Curation Primer](#), content curation is the process

of sorting through the vast amounts of content on the Web and presenting it in a meaningful and organized way.

In his post "[Manifesto for the Content Curator](#)," [Rohit Bhargava](#) defines a content curator as someone who continually finds, groups, organizes, and shares the best and most relevant content a specific issue. Content curation is one of the easiest ways to share content because you don't have to create anything. This leads well into the next "C": creation.

4. Creation

Creation is the act of producing content online, whether it's in the form of text, images, or video. If you have published a blog post, uploaded a video to YouTube, or taken a picture and posted it to [Instagram](#), you are in the creation business.

One of the ways to help you create content is to start an [editorial calendar](#). It may be helpful to use this [editorial calendar template](#). If you don't like spreadsheets, you may want to consider using an application like [Divvy](#). For the more advanced content creators, using a content marketing software platform such as [Kapost](#) should be something you consider.

5. Connection

After you have either curated and/or created content, the next C is the physical act of sharing content. This C is about connecting with your community and gaining a deep understanding of what your target audience likes about your social media activities and strategy.

By looking at measurements and data, determine the kind of content your communities are attracted to and willing to share with their friends and colleagues.

Many brands have created [buyer personas](#) so they can better understand and connect with their target audience. In other words, personas are fictional representations of your ideal clients, based on real data about demographics and online behavior, along with educated assumptions about their history, motivations, and concerns.

On the personal branding side, use [these five tools](#) to manage your relationships online.

6. Conversation

This C is all about having a conversation with your community. This C is similar to the community, but the difference is the actual engagement part of communicating with your communities. To help you with this concept, learn the [3 key social media conversation starters](#).

7. Conversion

The seventh C is conversion. You can't talk about social media without having a return on investment (ROI) conversation. Remember, [your social media strategy should be tied to your business strategy](#). To help you get started, you may want to look at these [14 social media ROI metrics](#).

When thinking about this from the company perspective, it is important to remember to look at it two ways: the external view by your clients and prospects and the internal view by your employees. To develop a successful social media strategy, it is important to communicate, convince, and most importantly, convert social media into action, both externally and internally. Your social media metrics should boil down to three main categories: awareness, sales, and loyalty.

On the personal branding side, social media is a way to help you advance your career—whether it be climbing the corporate ladder or launching a successful business. You can judge the success of your personal social media strategy by whether you're top of mind with your network and whether it helps you get that interview or land that perfect job.

For ways to maximize conversion with your social media strategy, you may want to learn about the social media maturity model. According to Forrester, there are [five main stages](#) of social media maturity and adoption.

For more resources, visit the author's blog, [Knowledge Enthusiast](#).

(Image via)
