

UP YOUR SOCIAL SAVVY

> For those of us who aren't Gen Zer's, social media can feel quite intimidating. Getting started with a social media presence or even improving the one you already have may take a backseat in priority to the daily demands of your business. No matter where you are on the spectrum of social media savviness, there are steps that you can take *today* to get your social strategy back on track and start creating your most captivating content yet!

If you are just getting started with social media or if you feel like you don't really have a sound strategy, you need to first start by answering a few key questions:

Who is your target audience?

Depending on your business and where you are in the floral industry, you could be trying to market to a wholesale florist, a retail or studio florist or even the end consumer. Furthermore, depending on your business model, you could be marketing to one or more of these audiences. If that is the case, you need to define who your primary audience is to determine what type of content would be most relevant and engaging to them.

What platforms does your target audience use to interact with your brand or brands like yours?

Just because new and shiny social media platforms continue to pop up (hello, TikTok and Clubhouse) doesn't mean you need to be on every single one of them. It is better to prioritize and focus your attention on the platform(s) where most of your audience engages and create optimized content for those platform(s).

The next two questions go hand in hand. What makes you uniquely different from your competition? In other words, what unique value proposition can you offer your audience?

Focus on what you want your brand to be known for and what is unique to your business. Do you work with local suppliers, support your community, have an outstanding customer service team, or have any proprietary or patented technologies or products? These are the types of things that you want to make sure you highlight to make your brand stand out.

What are the goals for your social media accounts? Are you trying to attract new customers and leads, create brand awareness, drive traffic to your site, increase online sales, notify your audience of sales and promotions, or provide your audience education on a certain topic? Developing specific goals holds you accountable for tracking the success of your social media campaigns.

Now that you have defined your audience, your goals, thought about your unique value proposition and determined the social media platforms you are going to utilize, it's time to do some planning. If you don't have one already, you *need* a content calendar to organize your ideas and establish a regular cadence of posting. There are many resources that you can download online to help you. HubSpot offers a free option that is a simple Excel file, or you can use a project management software like ClickUp that has built-in content calendar templates to edit and customize. Create a shared document to serve as a "parking lot" of ideas for future posts or content. This helps keep your social media content pipeline full.

After you have a content calendar in place, it's time to create! Here are five helpful tips to create captivating content your audience will love:

1. Keep it simple. You only have a few seconds to capture your audience's attention, so be sure that your captions and content are succinct and to the point. Keep paragraphs to two or three sentences at the most and use bulleted information or lists to organize your thoughts if possible.

2. Be authentic. Even in the digital age, it is still true that people buy from people. Being authentic on social media and featuring the people and personalities that make up the fabric of your company's brand are more likely to produce an engaged and loyal audience.

3. Use video. Use more video content. Whether it is a 15-second Instagram Reel on social media to let potential customers know about an upcoming sale, or a Facebook or Instagram live session showcasing your seasonal products, video content is much more likely to get noticed by your audience and produce more engagement and interactions.

4. Add a call to action. Make sure you let your audience know what you want them to do. If you have developed a strategy and set goals without having a defined call to action, you will not have a way to measure the success of your campaigns. Some actions you may ask your audience to take are sharing your content, going to your website, making a purchase or providing feedback on a new product launch.

5. Take advantage of free resources. Producing professional looking and engaging content is a lot easier than it used to be. By far one of the easiest apps to use is Canva. However, other free resources such as Animoto, Adobe Spark, Pixlr X and Desygner are also worth exploring to produce scroll-stopping graphics and videos.

Whether you are a social media maven or a novice, it all starts with a solid strategy as your foundation. By setting aside time to identify your audience, your unique brand and plan content, you'll ensure that your social posts have purpose and deliver results. 🌱

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