

# BECOME A SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Six winning strategies for social media success.

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**S**ocial media is one of the fastest growing ways to drive sales, build customer loyalty, and increase brand awareness.

Creating profiles on a few networks isn't enough. To make the most of your social marketing, you need to be active, create sharable content, and engage your audience.

Here are six winning strategies for social media success:

**1. Choose quality content.** Short, catchy titles or phrases combined with appealing graphics will help your post stand out. Once you capture the viewer's attention, you need to hold it long enough to garner a click, comment, or share.

The most shared social posts are:

- Lists, such as "Top 30 skincare products of 2017"
- How-to articles and videos
- Posts that answer questions and explain things
- Explainer videos, infographics, and promotional images

**2. Start a conversation.** Introduce ideas that encourage discussion and comments. Interactive content, such as quizzes or games, is another great way to draw in your readers.

**3. Eavesdrop.** Conversations don't always start on your wall. Engage with people who are talking about your practice in groups, on other pages, or on their own walls. "Like" or favorite shares of your content. Comment and thank those who mention you in a positive light, and share some of those posts.

**4. Add hashtags.** On Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and many other networks, add the pound sign at the beginning of a word or phrase that others may be searching. Multi-word hashtags cannot include spaces, but you can mix capitalization for greater clarity such as "#StopAgingNow."

Use hashtags to promote your practice:

- **Trending topics:** Facebook and Twitter provide lists of the most popular topics. You can also use tools such as Hashtagify, Trendsmap, or Hashtags.org to find additional hashtags relevant to your niche or location. Once you have found them, join the conversation.
- **Brand tags:** Create your own hashtag using the name of your practice, the tagline, your name, or something similar. Acronyms are often used for multi-word phrases. Add your hashtag to all content discussing your practice, and encourage followers to use it. Keep it consistent so that it is always associated with your practice.
- **Contests and promotions:** Some hashtags are created for short-term use. If you are holding a special event or launching an exciting promotion, give it a hashtag of its own. Add the tag to your posts, and encourage others to

use it. For example, Instagram contests often require participants to post a photo using a specific hashtag to enter.

- **Twitter chats:** Build your Twitter following and gain professional exposure by hosting an "ask the expert" chat on skincare or another relevant topic. Choose a date, time, and appropriate hashtag and promote the event. When the time comes, you (not a staff member) need to be on Twitter and ready to answer questions.

**5. Respond ASAP.** Your social media manager is a customer service representative. About one third of people prefer to contact a business on social media rather than by phone, and more than two-thirds are likely to recommend a product or service after a positive experience with the company on social media, according to Ambassador, a referral management company.

Inquiries should be answered accurately, politely, and very quickly. People usually expect a response within minutes—messages should be answered promptly. If swift replies are not possible, it is better to disable direct messaging.

**6. Use the right tools.** Manually managing a variety of social media accounts can be overwhelming. Neither you nor your staff has the time each day to repeatedly check direct messages, look for comments, post fresh content, and search for mentions of your practice on each network. There are many tools and applications to make the task simpler and more effective.

Social media management services such as Hootsuite or Sprout Social combine multiple platforms into one dashboard. You can manage Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and many more from one location. These programs allow you to schedule posts, view and respond to messages, and manage followers. They also provide some analytic information. If you have multiple people who need access to your accounts, choose a subscription that allows you to add team members.

Smart social media strategies can ensure that your presence is known, your voice is heard, and your marketing message spreads far and wide. ■



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