

# 10 TIPS FOR CREATING A STRATEGIC ONLINE PRESENCE



- 1. Know why it's important.** Your online presence (i.e., the combined existence of information about you on the internet – your “brand”) is influenced by what people are saying online. Whether your online presence is big or small, correct or incorrect, negative or positive, you can either choose to influence what is being said about you or not. Google yourself to find out where you stand.
- 2. Have a strategic plan. Begin with the end in mind by knowing what you hope to accomplish.** Use a SMART goal framework to help guide your actions to achieve results. Carefully consider what platforms will get you there – you'll need to select the right tools to get the job done.
- 3. Evaluate ethical considerations.** Know what relevant ethical codes and standards of practice guides have to say about social media and online interaction. Pay close attention to confidentiality, handling emergencies, netiquette, and spamming legislation.
- 4. Brand yourself, consistently.** Take time to put together an effective profile including a professional headshot, short bio, job title, branding statement or tag line, and unique username. A consistent profile across all platforms is important; these profiles are an extension of your brand.
- 5. Be selective.** Choose platforms (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, Google+) to meet your needs/goals. Create a home base where all other platforms lead back to (e.g., your website, LinkedIn, blog). Learn which platforms your clients, colleagues, and competition are using and make these your priority. Consider creating profiles on sites you don't plan on using simply to secure your username.
- 6. Integrate platforms.** Use virtual dashboard tools (e.g., Hootsuite) that will allow you to manage all your social media platforms from one interface. You'll be able to schedule updates, delegate tasks to team members, and evaluate analytics.
- 7. Engage often.** Make a strategic plan to engage on your top platforms regularly. Although daily is recommended, this may not be feasible for everyone, especially if you're new to social media. Nevertheless, ensure you're consistent.
- 8. Delegate.** Remember, you don't have to do it all. Delegate non-personal tasks (e.g., making website updates, posting status updates you've written), but keep those personal interactions (e.g., Facebook conversations) on your list.
- 9. Ask an expert.** When in doubt, ask a social media consultant to help out. He or she can educate you on best practices and engagement strategies, as well as assist with initial profile set-up, profile management, and analytics reviews.
- 10. Evaluate impact.** You won't know if online engagement is working, if you don't measure it somehow (e.g., page views, number of followers, referral sources). Eliminate what isn't working and try something new. Keep an eye out for what's worked for others and put your unique twist on it.



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