



# AIA Michigan

## AIA Michigan's Social Media Marketing Course

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### Welcome to the AIA Michigan's Social Media Marketing Course

You are now officially on your way to getting a strong foundation of how you can market your business on social media. We will be covering a general introduction to social media in this first video. All you have to do is hang tight, sit back and absorb. This video will give you a sense of purpose on social sites, like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram and Tumblr, that will be carried through any platform that you use.

### Why Should You Care about Social Media?

The real potential of social media originates from its sheer number power. So many people in this world use social media and actively search the Internet for businesses' services. For your business not to have an active standing in one of the world's most used online activities is to miss out on opportunities. The people that are on social media are talking about their lives, goals, businesses, purchases and more ... you should be a part of that conversation.

### Social Media Statistics That Matter

- 3 billion active internet users
- 2.4 billion social media users
- 1.7 billion highly active social media users
- 74% of adults in America use social media
- 40% of cell phone users are on social media
- 28% of cell phone users are on social media on a daily basis

### Search Statistics that Matter

- 40,000 search statistics every second
- There are 3.5 billion searches on Google every day and 1.1 trillion searches per year
- 59% of us use Google every month to locate local businesses

- 18 % of local searches lead to purchases within a day – more than double the rate of non-local searches

## **Here's the Real Deal – Social Media has the Power of Being Viral**

- By definition, viral comes from the word “virus,” which is a medical term used to describe a small infectious agent that can infect all types of organisms.
- In terms of the Internet, a piece of content can spread just like a virus if people become “infected” when they see it. The infection usually comes from evoked emotions that spur the viewer to share it, so they can relate with other people and discuss how they feel.

A message, concept or idea – this includes your business – can spread like wildfire on social media. This is where we set our sights, and why we create quality content to disseminate on social media.

90% of us trust peer recommendations while less than 10% of us trust advertisement. Being viral or word of mouth is the most powerful form of marketing. We are now doing this on social media and the key is being present on a platform that has billions of people using it on a daily basis.

## **The Purpose of Social Media is Simple**

It should be used as a marketing tool rather than a sales tool, with the result of high-brand visibility. Relationships are key in social media because of the mere fact that communication between a business and its audience is available on social platforms. It should be regarded as a customer-relationship-management tool, where businesses can harness the power of current customers and network in order to leverage access to their target market.

## **Definition of Social Media**

Social media is the collective of online communications channels dedicated to community-based input, interaction, content-sharing and collaboration.

The most useful definition of social media is this:

- Social media is about people
- Social media is about content
- Social media is about conversations
- Social media is about relationships

Remember: get into the mindset of your consumer on social media. Talk their language, put out content that resonates with what they are already consuming and enjoying. Salesy talk will stunt your ability to get buzz around your brand because

we - as users - have no intention to buy anything when we jump onto platforms like Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, etc. We have the goal to learn, enjoy and discover.

A good rule of thumb to follow is the 80/20 rule with promotional content. 80% of the time your content should be value based (NO SELLING/PROMOTING yourself), and 20% of the time you have full permission to sell, differentiate and promote. If you follow this rule, you open the doors to relationships. Having sales talk present in every post decreases your effectiveness and standing with consumers. Your goal is to inform, education, engage and then promote!

## **Marketing Your Business**

Your most important online asset is your website. Social media is a website traffic generator. If someone likes you on social media, and then doesn't like your website - you may have lost an opportunity. Your website should be established, well designed and be able to communicate to the users who you are and what you do ... calling them to reach out. No website? Do not start on social media yet.

### **Best ways to market your business in general:**

- Website
- Blog
- Portfolio
- Promotional Ads
- Word of Mouth or Referrals
- Social Media

Social media is just one of the critical ways to market and should not replace everything else you are doing. It is the perfect cherry to your marketing sundae and builds a nice cohesive layer to your branding. The best metaphor is you don't drink protein shakes then don't work out and expect to be buff, you have to work out and then when you want those EXTRA results, you drink your protein shakes. Social media is what strengthens what you are already doing right. If you want to enhance your marketing, or increase the strength of your marketing, now you have the perfect excuse to start.

## **How are Businesses Using Social Media?**

The biggest benefit business owners are getting out of social media is the following:

- Listening
- Branding
- Engagement

### **Listening**

The ability to communicate and listen in on your target audience is an amazing benefit of social media. We can scope out competition, hear what users are saying about our industry and address customer feedback. Solving these problems by listening generates leads, generates good will and generates more business.

## Branding

Social media is special in the fact that you can brand yourself and you have total control of your branding. There are no third parties that are filtering your content out like the press. You have your message, your image and your style, so use it! No two businesses are alike, people want to know why you are unique. Showcase your specialties and talents, and let your personality shine through.

## Engagement

Engagement is where the magic happens. It is where you actually influence consumer behavior. By being present, active and aware on social media, you drive action. Engagement is a result of providing valuable content. We have not touched on what you should post on platforms yet, because each platform is unique in itself, but know this ... if it is valuable for your target market, then you have officially engaged them. Engagement can simply be a response - like or follow - but most of the time it leads to altering perceptions on your industry and value.

## Value-Based Content

You understand the value of social media, you want engagement, buzz and business/brand awareness ... how you do this is through providing valuable content to your audience.

The best rule of thumb to follow is this: would you talk about your post? Share it? Comment on it? Like it? If you are not inspired by your own content, how would you expect anyone else to be? Content is KING in social media. We are consuming information while we are casually using it, which is why you should make sure that when you post something it has some kind of value to your audience.

## What is Valuable Content?

- Information or education on your industry
- Humor
- Inspiration
- News
- Updates to your business
- Images of your projects
- Videos of your projects
- Sharing industry information from other sources
- Relatable content
- Holidays
- Offers or special promotions
- Blog posts
- And more ...

## **The Consumer Decision-Making Process That Goes on in Social Media**

The consumer is interested in something – trying to find out more information, inspiration or how to do something – and trusting peer recommendations, they jump on social media to ask. This is just one route we take to make purchase decisions, but it is gaining precedence and momentum.

Once on social media, we ask our peers, do research and draw conclusions. From there we make a decision, learn something and it impacts our final choice. By being on social media you have already made great strides in this consumer's process. Be where the people are! Do not miss out on these conversations! Just your presence makes an impact.

## **The Psychology of Social Media**

**Mere Exposure Theory:** The theory works for us if we give people a positive experience and its premise is that the more you expose your business to consumers, the more likely they will be able to remember you and trust you. It is actually proven that we generate feelings of attraction, desire and strong liking towards things that we see often. Social media puts you in the perfect place to go out there and get exposure and start generating these feelings of trust with consumers.

**Social Consensus:** This theory is seen everywhere in the world, not just social media. It happens when we see a lot of people gravitating towards something; we then tend to want it too. If everyone wants cookies, then you've GOT TO HAVE A COOKIE. On social media, we think that if a business has a high amount of followers they are instantaneously more credible than their counterpart. We think they must be doing something right, or that they do a really great job with people. High numbers and high engagement will build you a strong reputation, no question about it.

### **Conclusions?**

Make sure you have recent posts, and work to get your numbers up. The public rates you higher based on these two things. Kind of simple, right? Your action and numbers matter to those who are scoping you out on social media.

## **Frequently Asked Questions:**

### **Should I be on all platforms?**

No, choose your top two favorites and perfect those.

### **How much time does social media take?**

If you have 15-30 minutes per day, then you can definitely do this. If social media isn't your cup of tea, or you are really busy, then consider having a staff member do it or hire a professional to help.

### **What am I risking using social media ... what if something bad happens?**

Perfection is not required. Do not let fear hold you back from opportunities on social media. No one is perfect and even the BEST of the BEST screw up. Take grammatical errors in stride and keep up your forward progress.

### **What are the best platforms for me to use?**

Facebook and LinkedIn. They are easy to use and can help you get started on social media. Here's the kicker though, if you are a rockstar at Twitter then stick to Twitter. You do not need to dive into platforms you are not comfortable with unless you want to.

### **What is my goal on social media?**

Your goal on social media is to get the buzz about your business out there by increasing brand recognition. High visibility, credibility, and brand awareness will be the result of doing social media well – building a strong network, client base and reputation is a result of having those goals.

### **What can I share on social media?**

Anything useful or shareable about your company – reviews, research findings, presentations, portfolios, surveys, forums, discussions, educational articles, samples, estimates, etc.

### **Can I only post about my business?**

No, follow the 80/20 rule. 80% of the time post interesting – NON SALESY content. This can be inspirational quotes, images, humor, sharing information or ideas and valuable content to your audience – with no strings attached. This means they do not have to do anything in order to receive it.

### **What do I need to do first? How do I start?**

The easiest and best way to start is using the platforms as a user before you use it as a business. Enjoy Pinterest for its many recipes, start following your favorite celebrities on Twitter, share content from your favorite business pages. You will never be an expert in social media if you do not understand what it is like to be a user. Period.

## **Homework**

Build out your Buyer's Persona!

What is a Buyer's Persona?

Buyer personas are fictional, generalized representations of your ideal customers. They help you understand your customers (and prospective customers) better, and make it easier for you to tailor content to the specific needs, behaviors, and concerns of different groups.

The strongest buyer personas are based on market research as well as on insights you gather from your actual customer base (through surveys, interviews, etc.). Depending on your business, you could have as few as one or two personas, or as

many as 10 or 20. (Note: If you're new to personas, start small! You can always develop more personas later if needed.)

Buyer personas are created through research, surveys, and interviews of your target audience. That includes a mix of customers, prospects, and those outside of your contact database who might align with your target audience.

Here are some practical methods for gathering the information you need to develop personas:

- Interview customers either in person or over the phone to discover what they like about your product or service.
- Look through your contacts database to uncover trends about how certain leads or customers find and consume your content.
- When creating forms to use on your website, use form fields that capture important persona information. (For example, if all of your personas vary based on company size, ask each lead for information about company size on your forms. You could also gather information on what forms of social media your leads use by asking a question about social media accounts.)
- Take into consideration your sales team's feedback on the leads they are interacting with most. (What types of sales cycles does your sales team work with? What generalizations can they make about the different types of customers you serve best?)

Great resource for Buyer Persona templates and additional information:

<http://blog.hubspot.com/blog/tabid/6307/bid/33491/Everything-Marketers-Need-to-Research-Create-Detailed-Buyer-Personas-Template.aspx>

<http://www.buyerpersona.com/>

<http://www.petersandeen.com/introduction-to-buyer-personas/>

## **What's Next for this Course?**

LinkedIn and Facebook.

**Get your login information ready and start thinking creatively!**