

What should every entrepreneur know about social media?



CAPITAL IDEAS

[More from Capital Ideas \(HTTP://CALGARYHERALD.COM/AUTHOR/CAPITAL-IDEAS\)](http://calgaryherald.com/author/capital-ideas)

Published on: February 25, 2016 | Last Updated: February 25, 2016 6:00 AM MST

Capital Ideas members were asked what every entrepreneur should know about using social media for their business. Here's what members of our community of Calgary business owners helping business owners had to say:

“Don’t fall into the trap of having to be on every single social media platform. Pick the ones that feel comfortable to you and are a good fit for your business — (ones) where your clients already play. Take the time to invest in social media and your business. You’ll see results over the long term.”

— *Dana Goldstein (@chicflicks* (<http://twitter.com/chicflicks>), CEO and chief producer at *Chic Flicks* (<http://chicflicks.ca>)

“Make it a point to follow companies similar to your own on every platform. See what they are doing and make it better for your own audience. Content is king, so whenever possible use eye-catching images or video, incorporate your website URL and appropriate hashtags. Finally, always double-check before posting for typos to prevent embarrassing mistakes.”



Dana Goldstein, CEO and chief producer at Chic Flicks

JANET HUGHES /
VISUAL HUES
PHOTOGRAPHY

— *Melissa Ramkissoon (@officeguardians*
(<http://twitter.com/officeguardians>), president of Office Guardians
(<http://howtostartmy.business>)

“Social media is not a magic bullet for getting customers. Social media is just like any other medium where you need to know who you are marketing to, that they are using that medium and that you have a compelling message that engages your audience.”

— *Ave Peetri (@ave372**(<http://twitter.com/ave372>), coach and director at*
Confident Marketing Coach (<http://confidentmarketingcoach.com>)

“Remember digital is forever and use grandma and billboard filters before posting — particularly with responses. If you wouldn't want your grandma to read it or you wouldn't want your message to be plastered on a billboard (personally or professional) ... don't press send. Do learn how to use each of the networks you plan to be on. Know why you're there and what you're trying to accomplish. Be present and committed to the networks you choose. As a general rule, LinkedIn is good for business to business, Facebook is business to consumer, Twitter can be a mix and Pinterest is business to consumer or even consumer to consumer.”

— *Paul Boucher (@paulboucher**(<http://twitter.com/paulboucher>), president*
and bilingual voice actor, paulboucher.com (<http://paulboucher.com>)

 **“Above all else, be helpful. People remember those that helped them in a time of need.”**

— *Re Carlson (@abtekweb**(<http://twitter.com/abtekweb>), Abtek*
Web Design (<http://abtek.ca>)

“Every entrepreneur should know what not to do on social media. We see so many people spamming Twitter and Facebook with a constant

stream of what could easily be considered spam, or worse something that's actually offensive. It's also difficult for people new to social media for business to separate their personal opinions from what should be the voice of their brand and company."

— *Spencer Goldade (@spencergoldade (<http://twitter.com/spencergoldade>))*, senior designer at *Post and Beam (<http://postandbeam.is>)*

“Social media is in no way a substitute for building a strong relationship with clients — just a step along the way. It is a connection point to your existing and potential clients and a way to share your business values and the activities you are undertaking that tie back to your values.”

— *Michelle Phaneuf (@workfairnessab1 (<http://twitter.com/workfairnessab1>))*, co-director of *Workplace Fairness Alberta (<http://workplacefairness.ca>)*

“Being on social media is a double-edged sword that even the smallest companies need to prepare for in advance. If your company is using social media you need to have a policy (or plan) in place to guide what will be posted, by whom, and how a social media crisis will be handled.

Everything you post online becomes part of your reputation so it is critical to plan ahead and reduce the risk of a social media disaster that could follow you well into the future.”

— *Suzanne Ferguson (@canaglobe (<http://twitter.com/canaglobe>))*, vice-president of *CanaGlobe Compliance Solutions (<http://canaglobecompliance.com>)*



Neil Zeller, owner of Neil Zeller Photography.

SEAN PHILLIPS /

[HTTP://WWW.RIVERWOODPHOTOGRAPHY.COM](http://www.riverwoodphotography.com)

“Social media is an incredibly powerful tool to build your business in a positive way. How you portray yourself on social media is directly related to the type of people who follow you. If you are positive and a champion of your city/town/arts scene/sports team, etc., you will attract a following of like-minded folks. Positive people

are the ones making positive change and are more apt to spread your message. It takes years to build a positive social media presence, but only a moment of anger or complaint to undo your efforts.”

— Neil Zeller ([@neil_zee](https://twitter.com/neil_zee) (http://twitter.com/neil_zee)), owner of [Neil Zeller Photography](http://neilzellerphotography.com) (<http://neilzellerphotography.com>)

“**Social media creates new** ways of connecting with clients and finding new ones but remember: don’t believe all the hype; the process takes a while, like making friends and growing trees. Give it a few years before you see results; if it becomes a mission critical activity, move it in-house; and when somebody brags they get instant results, run the other direction.”

— Mark Ruthenberg ([@mark_ruthenberg](https://twitter.com/mark_ruthenberg) (http://twitter.com/mark_ruthenberg)), editor-in-chief and general manager of [Found Locally Media](http://foundlocally.com) (<http://foundlocally.com>)

“**When you add your** personal opinion behind your company brand be prepared for (feedback and) consequences. Understand that your brand will inherit that opinion. It’s not wrong to have an opinion but wording is everything and many topics are very emotional. When trying to engage in a hot topic be sure to set boundaries on people’s comments (in a thread) and make them aware of your expectations with regards to language, name calling, threats and so forth. Let them know their feedback will be removed in order to have a mature debate or discussion.”

— Lois Jones ([@airdriescoop](https://twitter.com/airdriescoop)) (<http://twitter.com/airdriescoop>), CEO of [Here’s the Scoop](http://heresthescoop.com) (<http://heresthescoop.com>)

“**The days of debating** whether a business should be on social media are over. Social media is an integral part of the marketing strategy of any business. Entrepreneurs should know who their audience is, what social media platforms they are on and how to use them effectively. This can be achieved by providing value for your customers and establishing yourself as an industry expert. Use social media to inform, educate and share content by following an 80/20 rule: 80 per cent information, 20 per cent promotion.”

— Christine Salberg ([@innov8iveplanit](https://twitter.com/innov8iveplanit) (<http://twitter.com/innov8iveplanit>)), founder of [Innovative PlanIt](http://innovativeplanit.com) (<http://innovativeplanit.com>)

“**Every entrepreneur should know** who their target audience is on

social media. Understanding your target client will ensure you select the platforms appropriately (and know) how frequently they like to hear from you and how they prefer to be engaged. If you aren't sure, talk to your current clients and find out how they use social media — a cup of coffee can go along way to help you understand your clients better.”

— *Amanda Schewaga (@amandaschewaga*
(<http://twitter.com/amandaschewaga>)), owner of *The Marketing Girl*
(<http://themarketinggirl.com>)

“How to use (social media)

effectively for your brand. If your services are local, be local. If you sell to other cities, regions or globally then be global. Narrow down your specifics and plan your daily activities. You need to ask yourself quality versus quantity and be honest to you when asking if your current tribe or following helps pay the



Trena Olfert, CEO and makeup artist at Trena Laine Makeup Artist. *SUPPLIED*

bills, the employees, etc. We focus on always engaging those we work and play with as everyone likes to feel like a celebrity. That one post can really make someone's day. Social media may be free, but it's not to be taken lightly. It's a powerful tool.”

— *Trena Olfert (@trenalaine*
(<http://twitter.com/trenalaine>)), CEO and makeup artist at *Trena Laine Makeup Artist*
(<http://trenalaine.com>)

“First and foremost, professionals need to drop the buzzwords on social media and create a genuine conversation. Social media users, whether they realize it or not, are incredible at cutting through the usual sales rhetoric. Be yourself, be polite and respect the intelligence of your audience.”

— *Susie Ehrhardt (@cdndiscovery*
(<http://twitter.com/cdndiscovery>)), marketing co-ordinator at *Canadian Discovery*
(<http://canadiandiscovery.com>)

“The sales model is changing from cold calling and qualifying leads to engaging and educating through social networks. For many people, social media is a useless buzzword until they understand why it’s important to their business and how powerful it can be in creating and maintaining customer relationships. With dozens of types of social media at your disposal it’s important to research them, and to speak with an expert to learn what’s a good fit for your business and wise investment of your time and money. Regardless of the avenue you choose, social media is very powerful in creating relationships of mutual benefit. Learning this skill should be a top priority for any entrepreneur.”

— *Ryan Jorden (@bizbrokercgy (<http://twitter.com/bizbrokercgy>))*,
managing partner at [VR Business Brokers](http://vrcgy.com) (<http://vrcgy.com>)

“Social media is a marketing and communication channel. Before jumping into the fray and setting up various social media profiles and accounts, you need to be strategic — not only in selecting which channels speak to your target customers or community, but also when determining what role you want social media to play in your overall marketing and communication strategy. Don’t start what you can’t sustain. Remember, it’s a tool — use it when and if appropriate.”

— *Laura Bechard (@bechardl (<http://twitter.com/bechardl>))*, *business coach at [Bexco Business and Executive Coaching](http://executivecoachcalgary.ca) (<http://executivecoachcalgary.ca>)*

“Find your story — one that tells your customers, your employees and your stakeholders exactly who you are and what you have to offer. How you tell the story determines who will listen. Use the power of social media channels to get your story out to the world.”

— *Kris Hans (@krishans (<http://twitter.com/krishans>))*, *strategist at [Market Grade](http://marketgrade.com) (<http://marketgrade.com>)*

“You have to have a strategy and you have to pay attention to results. There are lots of baskets, so plan on having plenty of eggs.”

— *Rob Gilgan, alumni development co-ordinator at Red Deer College (<http://rdc.ab.ca>)*

“**Being on social media** for the sake of being on it because people say you have to be is simply not what is needed for success. What entrepreneurs really need to know and understand is how social media works and how people use it for daily communication. They also need to understand it requires daily attention and nurturing. If staff members, interns or suppliers (managing social accounts) are not given direction and parameters, the results can be unexpected. All information published online needs to be taken as seriously as the business itself in order to succeed.”

— *Trina Lo (@freshink (<http://twitter.com/freshink>)), chief creative officer at FreshInk Communications (<http://freshink.ca>)*

“(1) **Which social media** platforms your audience is actually on. As business owners, we are overwhelmed by the marketing options out there so you have to know where your audience is before you invest your time. (2) When is your audience on social media? Daily on LinkedIn, I see people pour time and effort into things like writing articles only to publish them at 8 p.m., meaning they will disappear unviewed from newsfeeds by the time their customers are on again. (3) The appropriate tone for each social media. Memes and cat pictures don’t belong on LinkedIn, Twitter isn’t (wasn’t?) the place for an essay and your personal Facebook profile shouldn’t be open to the world unless your brand is you.”

— *Dave Byrnes (@easiernetworks (<http://twitter.com/easiernetworks>)), owner at Linking Leads (<http://linkingleads.com>)*

“**At its core social** media is about relationships. There are no exact answers to which social network/platform to use, how much to post or what content to post. Every business and their clients have a unique relationship. The perfect social media strategy is about delving into that relationship to determine the best platforms and the most comfortable and beneficial (types of) communication.”

— Jack Zenert ([@jackzenert](http://twitter.com/jackzenert) (<http://twitter.com/jackzenert>)), marketing specialist at [Zed Biz](http://zedbiz.com) (<http://zedbiz.com>)



*These answers are in response to a question posed to our community by **Donna McTaggart**, (@donnamct), co-founder of Social Media Breakfast Calgary (smbbyyc.com) and Egghead Labz (eggheadlabz.com). Her advice:*

“Social media is also a communication toolbox and each social tool has a purpose, even if it is not always used. It has changed how we communicate with each other. Conversations have become real time and have the potential to strengthen existing relationships and build new ones. It’s about engagement — with

customers, industry, supporters and community. To engage with your audience, find where they are and join them. Social media is a commitment, so selecting one or two networks helps to limit your time investment and uses that time effectively. Post content that is interesting, consistent with your brand’s values and authentic.”

Get Involved!

Answer our next question: **Is your business social enough?**

Submit your answers at the [Capital Ideas website](http://capitalideascalgary.com/home/latest-question/?source=CH1001) (<http://capitalideascalgary.com/home/latest-question/?source=CH1001>) by Monday, Feb. 29. We’ll publish the best answers, along with your business name and website URL, in the Calgary Herald (and here!) on March 3, 2016.

This article was produced by [Capital Ideas](http://capitalideascalgary.com/?source=CH1001) (<http://capitalideascalgary.com/?source=CH1001>), a product of Postmedia Labs, in collaboration with ATB Business.



POSTMEDIA

([HTTP://WWW.POSTMEDIA.COM](http://www.postmedia.com))

© 2016 Postmedia Network Inc. All rights reserved.

Unauthorized distribution, transmission or republication strictly prohibited.

Powered by WordPress.com VIP (<https://vip.wordpress.com/>)