

Module 1. Identify short-term goals and long-term objectives

Introduction

Without a strategy, you might be posting on social media platforms for the sake of posting. Without understanding what your goals are, who your target audience is and what they want, it'll be hard to achieve results on social media.

The first reason you need a social media strategy is it will help you build a strong, organic presence online. You'll be able to plan out posts in advance and get them scheduled and set. All of this, in-turn, will help you stick to social media rule number one: posting consistently. Failure to maintain consistency is one big reason social media accounts stop growing.

The second benefit to creating and implementing a social media strategy is that it will help you save time –and who wouldn't want more time on their hands?

Yes, getting everything together to create a content calendar and content archive or folder is a big task at first, but getting your post needs sorted and scheduled for the next week or month will greatly reduce the time you spend on actually posting each day.

No more staring at a blank screen scrambling to figure out what to post; you'll now be able to spend a little more time on other tasks and on analysing what's working.

Having a social media strategy in place will ensure that your social media efforts are more fruitful and are working to support your broader business goals.

Putting a strategy together includes outlining your business goals so that you can work backwards to create posts which reinforce them. You'll also want to outline some social media goals (and track them) so you have something to work towards and to validate that the work you are doing is paying off.

How does a social media strategy enable you to target your audience more effectively?

Part of your strategy can include plugging in audience engagement elements (like polls or open-ended questions) into your updates so you can get a better handle on your audience's pain points and on the way you can provide value to solve them.

A social media strategy brings to light the elements, methods, and networks which are working for your business, as well as the ones which are not.



A strategy in line with your business goals will facilitate creating content that resonates with your audience, gives you the opportunity to refine the quality of your material and enables you to think about how you can get creative with social posts.

This can include using the more dynamic tools available on the social media networks; perhaps you'll have the bandwidth to develop live videos on Facebook or Instagram Stories. You might be able to participate in Twitter chats or even create your own, among other possibilities.

Whatever it may be, you'll be able to dive in and show your audience you know what you're doing.

The last reason why you need a social media strategy is that it will help you stay ahead of the competition.

Tying everything we went over in this article, with daily posts planned, you can concentrate on those fine details which help you stand out from everyone else in your niche. You'll be able to analyse what's working, start developing your brand story and voice, establish a distinctive look and feel for your accounts, and all while remaining consistent and providing value to your audience.

So, besides stopping you from going crazy or leaving your accounts dormant for days on end, there are so many benefits to creating and sticking to a social media strategy.

Unit 1.1 Considerations

Our common goal is to take your social media presence to the next level with strategic principles. To do this, we give you the basics of the social media strategy as a set of tactics in order to achieve the set goal: the effective management of social media content that appeals to users and contributes to the achievement of your company goals.

Why? Because the demands of users for informative, well-researched and professionally prepared content are higher than ever. It is no longer enough to simply copy content from one medium to another. What is needed is relevant and channel-specific content that caters to the needs of the target group and provides them with answers to their questions and solutions to their problems. In order to achieve this, a strategic alignment of the content production is required.

The key questions of a social media strategy

A comprehensive social media strategy is very multifaceted and different in its form from company to company. It ranges from discussions about addressing the target group to design guidelines and community management. In this article, however, we will focus on



the foundation on which your strategy is built and, in this context, we ask ourselves the following questions:

- What do I want to achieve with social media?
- Who do I want to address with my content?
- On which platforms and via which content do I want to communicate?
- How does the content production process work?

The questions represent the following four pillars that support a social media strategy, as illustrated in the following graphic:

Figure 1: The four pillars that support a social media strategy



Adapted from *Die 4 Säulen einer Social-Media-Strategie*, by M. Kröpfl, 2018. Crowd Media. <https://www.crowdmedia.de/4-saeulen-einer-social-media-strategie/>

Top-Layer: Social Media Strategy

Pillar 1: Target

Pillar 2: Target audience

Pillar 3: Platform & Content

Pillar 4: Team & Processes

1st pillar: Set yourself realistic goals

What about your course direction? Are you already sailing full speed ahead in your team with your social media channels and are you familiar with your destination, or do you let the wind whip you and nobody really knows where the journey is going? For a team to pull together, it needs a common goal.

The following applies: all goals should contribute to the overarching corporate goals and correspond to the needs of the customers. However, always keep an eye on your resources when planning. Unrealistic goals demotivate you and your team in the long run. The following ones are, for example, possible goals for your social media presence:

- Brand awareness
- Image
- Range
- Service
- Customer loyalty
- New customer acquisition and conversion
- Sale
- Knowledge transfer
- (And much more)

It is best to work out the goals together as a team or organization. In the first step, these can also be formulated generically. Once the goals have been set, it is important to specify them. A tried and tested system is the SMART formula. It ensures that your goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timed.

Figure 2: SMART formula

S	Specific	Spezifisch
M	Measureable	Messbar
A	Achievable	Erreichbar
R	Relevant	Relevant
T	Timely	Terminierbar

Adapted from *Die 4 Säulen einer Social-Media-Strategie*, by M. Kröpfl, 2018. Crowd Media. <https://www.crowdmedia.de/4-saeulen-einer-social-media-strategie/>

Failure to define or imprecisely formulate goals is a common reason for an efficient social media presence to fail. So that you and the team remain motivated and do not lose sight of the path to the overall goal, it makes sense to break down the defined goals into sub-goals. Plus, don't forget to celebrate small successes and always keep in mind on your way that every piece of content should contribute to one of the goals. In order to be able to evaluate success or failure, it is necessary to make your goals measurable using key figures.

Figure 3: Defined goal broken down in sub-goals



Adapted from *Die 4 Säulen einer Social-Media-Strategie*, by M. Kröpfl, 2018. Crowd Media. <https://www.crowdmedia.de/4-saeulen-einer-social-media-strategie/>

Your content can contribute to the achievement of goals in very different ways. Social media content can do the following:

- inform your audience,
- convince your audience,
- create a dialogue with your target group,
- support in the decision-making process,
- integrate the audience into company processes,

- teach the audience something,
- entertain or
- improve the image.

If you and your team know where you want to go, a big step has been taken. The following step is to turn our attention to the next pillar of a social media strategy: the audience.

2nd pillar: Know your target group

No matter how much time and money you can invest in creating content; if it doesn't meet the interests and needs of the target audience, the effort is in vain. In order to entertain, inform, influence or instruct users, it is necessary to know their needs, wishes and concerns because that's how you get in touch with them.

A common mistake when developing content is paying too much attention to whether the text, photo or video pleases the creator, the team or the manager. It is forgotten for whom the content was created and who is to be addressed with it. Often, the content creator simply does not put himself in his target group.

In order to make the target group tangible for you and your team, creating prototypical profiles of them can help. These profiles are known as “personas” and represent user profiles that contain detailed information about the target group. This includes demographic data such as age, place of residence, education, income, shopping behaviour, interests, but also information about a person's needs, problems and motivation. The more you point out and then describe your target group, the more human it becomes. It also helps that it is given a name. All of this is to see them as real characters who are always present during content creation.

For example, one of our crowdmedia personas is called Stefan Prentz, is 47 years old and heads the PR Department of a medium-sized company. Below, you can see an excerpt from Stefan's personal profile.

Figure 4: A crowdmedia persona's profile



PERSONA STECKBRIEF

„Eine Persona ist eine fiktionale Person, die repräsentativ für eine bestimmte Zielgruppe steht und stellvertretend Eigenschaften der Zielgruppe in sich vereint.“

Stefan Prentz



Demographie

Alter 47.
Wohnort: Frankfurt (Umland).
Ausbildung: Studium der Ingenieurwissenschaften.
Beruf: leitender Angestellter bei einem Mittelständler
Lebenssituation verheiratet, 2 Kinder, ländlich lebend.

Anforderungen & Bedürfnisse

- Kein klassischer Marketing-Mann.
- Führungskraft eines spezialisierten Mittelständlers.
- muss er seine eigene Branche und die Branchen der großen Kunden, denen zugeliefert wird, tennen.

Weltanschauung & Haltung

Arbeit und Beruf sind für ihn wichtig, genauso wichtig sind für ihn aber auch Familie und Hom.

Device

Tablet. Handy. PC.

Selbstbild

„Immer up to date zu bleiben ist nicht einfach. Computer erleichtern einem aber das Arbeitsleben und bieten viele Möglichkeiten.“

Charakteristika & Interessen

- Wirtschaftliche Themen.
- Impulse zu Fragen der Mitarbeiterführung.
- Einblick in große Marketingthemen.

Motivation

- Knappe Ressourcen in einem immer komplexeren Set an Maßnahmen.

Informationsquellen

Er hat sein festes Set an Quellen aus denen er sich Newsletter abonniert oder die er regelmäßig besucht. Zwischen Terminen, in der Bahn, auf dem Weg nach Hause hat er Zeit ausgedruckt oder auf dem Tablet zu lesen.

Adapted from *Die 4 Säulen einer Social-Media-Strategie*, by M. Kröpfl, 2018. Crowd Media. <https://www.crowdmedia.de/4-saeulen-einer-social-media-strategie/>

You can obtain information for developing such a persona from market research, studies, customer surveys, colleagues from customer service, Facebook or Twitter statistics or from questions or complaints received via the social media platforms themselves. Another possibility is to participate in discussions, for example, in forums or Facebook groups, and thereby receive information.

With defined goals and knowledge of your target group in our luggage, we are a big step closer to a good basis for your social media strategy. Next, we'll talk about the appropriate channel selection.

3rd pillar: Choose your channels based on your topics

At this point, the following applies: on the one hand, the channels should be checked for their suitability for achieving the defined goals when they are selected; on the other hand, they should be selected based on where the target group is. It makes no sense to be present on platforms if the target group is not there.

Remember that content should contribute to the overall goals and not just meet the requirements of the respective channel. As an agency, we first consider topics that then result in the appropriate format such as text, image, or video. Only in the last step is it decided which channel will be used for distribution, because we produce content for our customers, not for Facebook, Twitter or Instagram.

At the same time, you need an overview of the platforms on which your company is already active and the content you publish there. Once all the content has been collected centrally in a table, it is easy to see how the distribution is going to take place. Such a content inventory could look like this, for example:

Figure 5: Content inventory of platforms a company is active in

Content-Touchpoints	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	Website	Newsletter
Blogartikel	X	X		X	X
Pressemitteilungen		X		X	
Produktinformationen	X		X	X	
Rabattcode	X		X		X
Stellenausschreibungen				X	

Adapted from *Die 4 Säulen einer Social-Media-Strategie*, by M. Kröpfl, 2018. Crowd Media. <https://www.crowdmedia.de/4-saeulen-einer-social-media-strategie/>

Think about which formats you can use to stage your content on the individual platforms. If your brand communicates primarily through visual imagery, the Instagram and Pinterest channels come into question. So, your job is to find out which platform is the most suitable for achieving your goals and where your target group is located. There are also channels that require more maintenance and, thus, more resources than others, which is why you should keep this in mind when choosing a channel.

Figure 6: Some social networks and their characteristics



Twitter

Textgetrieben und schnellebig, Einsatz von Hashtags.

Formate: Text, Link, Bild und Video.

Zielgruppe: allen Alters, stark Presse & Journalisten.

Werbung: Ja, mit eingeschränkten Targeting.

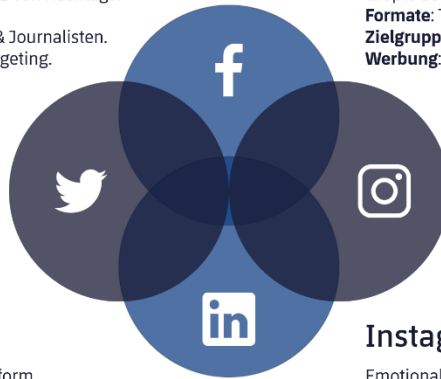
Facebook

Größte Social Media Plattform.

Formate: Text, Link, Bild, Video, Karussell, Canvas, usw.

Zielgruppe: junge sowie ältere Zielgruppe.

Werbung: viele Formate und umfassende Einstellungen.



LinkedIn

LinkedInInternationale Business Plattform.

Formate: Text, Link, Bild, Video und Karussell.

Zielgruppe: jung bis alt, beruflicher Kontext.

Werbung: spezielles Targeting auf Berufsgruppen.

Instagram

Emotionale und ästhetische Inhalte: Einsatz von Hashtags.

Formate: Bild, Bildergalerien, Videos, Stories.

Zielgruppe: jüngere Zielgruppe.

Werbung: über Facebook möglich.

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<https://www.crowdmedia.de/4-saeulen-einer-social-media-strategie/>

4th pillar: Work as a team and know the processes

A social media strategy involves numerous workflows. Numerous people, some from different departments, are involved, responsible for developing the strategy itself, creating content and evaluating it. It is absolutely essential to clearly define roles and assign them work tasks and responsibilities. You also need someone who wears their hat and has extensive decision-making powers.

You may be responsible for creating the various text, image and video content formats on your own or with many different people such as editors, video staff and photographers. It should be noted that the content created pursues the content goals and complies with the design guidelines. Such guidelines are particularly important when external employees or freelancers are involved in the content production process. The guidelines ensure that the content is of uniform quality regardless of the production model and that the customer experience is consistent across all channels.

When developing your social media strategy, keep the following points in mind:

- Who is responsible for what?
- Which skills are available internally?
- Where do freelancers or agencies have to be called in, if necessary?
- What guidelines are needed for content production?

- Which tools can help?
- How do controlling and optimization take place?

Editorial calendar as a content control center

Do you have an overview of the content mix on your social media channels? Do you know the main topics and the status of individual contributions? Then, you seem to have everything under control and maintain an editorial plan, because this helps you with the daily organization and planning of content, regardless of whether it is controlled by a software tool or a self-created document such as an Excel table. An editorial plan ensures that articles are handled in a structured and planned manner. If you look after it carefully, it will point out any gaps in the planning and show you how the main topics are distributed. For example, it contains information such as this:

- Date of publication
- Social media channel
- Topic of the post
- Content format
- Responsible for content
- Responsible for approval
- Deadlines
- Status of the processing

The list can be expanded with further aspects, depending on the field of application; however, too much information leads to confusion. For this reason, we recommend prioritizing the aspects and avoiding information with a low priority. You can download a template as an example for an editorial calendar [here](#).

The content lifecycle

What is your perspective on content production? Do you see it as a one-way street, the end of which is reached with publication, or as a cycle with no beginning and no end? The publication of content is far from over –not even with social media content. From the generation of ideas to the measurement of success, content goes through several processes that are all intertwined.



Figure 7: The content production process



Adapted from *Die 4 Säulen einer Social-Media-Strategie*, by M. Kröpfl, 2018. Crowd Media. <https://www.crowdmedia.de/4-saeulen-einer-social-media-strategie/>

After some ideas have been generated, it is important to prioritise them and assess them according to the effort. Hand in hand, you plan the individual contributions in the course of your editorial planning. The planned formats go into production and are prepared for specific target groups and channels. Not to be forgotten at this point is that your content should be recognizable. A uniform imagery and colour scheme, matched to the corporate colours, help. When publishing your content, tools with the ability to schedule posts, like Hootsuite, can also make your work easier.

Social media has also a lot to do with testing. So, find out what days and times your community is most active and provide them with content at the right time. In order to spread the content, it is also worth investing a little budget in order to increase the reach of the content. Try it out here too and start, for example, with a budget of 5 to 10 euros per contribution. Cooperation with, for example, other Facebook pages are also helpful to spread your content on the social web.

Last but not least, it is absolutely essential that you measure success! This is the only way to find out which content works well and what can be dispensed with in the future. It will help you and your team to gradually adapt the content to the needs of your target group. When setting metrics to measure your success, it is important that they are always related to a goal. However, it is not enough to define measured values. The results must also be prepared in an understandable and clear manner in reports and regularly discussed in meetings.

You now know the most important basic pillars of a social media strategy and can assess whether your social media presence is on a solid foundation.



2. Short-term goal – Long-term objectives

Rome was not built in a day, and developing the perfect social media strategy will likely take years. As with any good strategy, there should be a combination of short-term and long-term objectives and goals.

Yes, activities like pushing sales, driving up website traffic and creating brand awareness are important. However, they should only make up a small percentage of the content that a brand puts out on social media.

Focusing on a longer-term strategy and developing things like meaningful relationships with followers and improving customer satisfaction online is a lot more important to the long-term health of a business online.

Short-term considerations

Here are three key short-term social media objectives to consider:

1. Stimulate action (trial or purchase)

This type of short-term objective is centred around getting as many people to engage in a trial or purchase as possible. This will usually come in the form of a short sale or an ad campaign. It will have a lifespan of no more than a couple of weeks. A sense of urgency is created with the idea of getting as many desired actions across the line as possible.

2. Generate new leads and driving traffic to the website

These kinds of objectives are similar to stimulating a trial or purchase, but there is less urgency present to take an action immediately. Instead, the objective is to gain awareness and consideration and get additional eyes on the website. The metrics that will track these objectives are things like click-through rate and cost per click.

For example, Nissan might create an ad with images of their brand-new electric car, the Leaf. They are not expecting purchases to occur directly from the ad, but they are placing the new car in the mind of the consumer. They have also included a link to the Nissan website where someone who views the ad can get more information.

With the correct targeting, each time this ad is viewed could be a potential new lead for Nissan.

3. Increase brand awareness

Increasing brand awareness could also be considered a long-term objective, but we are including it in short-term objectives, instead.



This type of brand awareness usually comes in the form of paid ads or boosted posts. A business will spend money on getting a piece of content in front of a large number of potential consumers.

In short, it consists of getting the brand name out there to a much larger audience via social media. These boosted posts and ads typically only last a couple of days and are designed to satisfy short-term objectives. They will be tracked and measured by metrics such as reach and impressions.

Long-term considerations

Here are four key long-term social media objectives to consider:

1. Build meaningful relationships

As a business, you should always be looking to interact with your followers. We would recommend any business to take 30 minutes daily to check social media to see what kind of chatter is going on online about their business. This is especially important for businesses that might not have a physical presence and exist solely online.

The opportunity to interact with followers and customers exists on every single platform you decide to be active on. Each of these platforms represents a brand-new touchpoint for your followers and customers.

Let's see an top tip in relation to how to treat followers online, provided in the website Escalate3:

If someone has taken the time to follow your business on social media, you should treat them like you would your friends on your own personal social media accounts. Interact with them. Repost their content that is related to your business. Comment on their content that is related to your business. Treat them like a friend. (Social media objectives – short term v long term, 2021, p. 28)

Would someone only interact with their own friends on Facebook just to try to sell them products or a service? Nope! So, why would someone treat the fans, followers and customers of a brand any differently?

2. Build organic awareness

As mentioned previously under "Increase Brand Awareness", a boosted post on social media can boost brand awareness. However, what is more important is that brands



create content that will be shared organically, in short, content that can be shared and viewed by large audiences without the business having to pay for it.

A piece of content that receives re-shares to the story feature, people tagging others in the comments or a high number of saves show that this content is resonating with followers and they are engaged in a higher level of intention.

This kind of content is receiving more impressions and engagement, with the followers doing the heavy lifting. They are essentially acting as unpaid brand ambassadors for the business. People who get a recommendation from a friend are more likely to act on it as well, as opposed to trusting an ad that they have been targeted with.

This might take years to get just right. However, when content begins to receive these kinds of reactions, it will be clear the right kinds of followers are being reached. The number of followers will then organically grow day-by-day and week-by-week.

3. Improve audience satisfaction

Social media can be viewed as a double-edged sword in many different aspects. One aspect is to do with when a fan publicly complains about a product or service failure on social media. When this happens, businesses are faced with a choice.

A recent study showed that 67% of customers will take to social media to try to resolve a grievance that they might have.

A business can ignore the complaint and hope it just goes away. This is not advisable.

4. Foster an online community

Any brand has the opportunity to foster an online community and conversation surrounding their product or service. This will appear in the form of online users who will advocate a brand out of pure brand loyalty. This is usually built-up over a period of years.

A great example of this is the website NikeTalk. It was created by Nike fans online in 1999 as a place where they can have meaningful conversations about the brand. Pictures are posted of the latest releases. Industry news is discussed and dissected. Honest opinions are given in relation to all Nike things.

These online communities that are loyal to a brand are potentially very useful to that brand. Nike could use NikeTalk as focus groups or as a way of soft launching a new product. These people will also be the first to let Nike know if they are not happy with any particular aspect of online activity.



If a brand begins to develop an online community like with NikeTalk, the best thing to do is leave it alone: let it grow organically, interact with it occasionally and, most importantly, keep a very close eye on it.

So, in referencing our own 80/20 rule that we mentioned at the beginning of this blog, the four points that we have just spoken about should make up at least 80% of a brand's social media content. These long-term social media objectives should strive to the following:

- Build meaningful relationships with followers
- Develop relatable and shareable content to drive organic awareness
- Publicly improve customer satisfaction
- Foster an online community loyal to the brand



References

Social media objectives – short term v long term. (2021). *Escalate*.
<https://escalate.ie/types-of-social-media-objectives/>

