

# Manage All Your Social Media in Less Than 30 Minutes a Day

Welcome to this section on how to manage all of your social media platforms in less than thirty minutes a day. Hopefully by now you have read all the excellent articles in this book on the various social media platforms, and now realise why it is essential for any business to be online and active on the major social media platforms. But just in case you are still not completely convinced, here are a few statistics which should sway you:

93% of marketers use social media for business. Do you really want to be one of the 7% who don't?

83% Of Twitter users expect a Same-Day Customer Service response to a complaint.

More than 88% of consumers are influenced by other consumers' online comments.

For online retailers, Facebook accounted for 79% of social logins during Q2 of 2013.

So you do need to be active on the social media platforms in 2013, because your competitors surely will be, and you will get left behind if you aren't. But how do you find the time to become active on all the major social media platforms?

One of the most common complaints we receive from small business owners is “Yes, I know we need to be using Twitter and Facebook, but where are we going to find the time, we are already working twenty-five hours a day, eight days a week just running our business. We just don't have the time to spend all day on Facebook like my niece does.” Well that is where we come in, and we are going to show you a method of keeping up to date and active on all the major social media platforms, and do it in well less than half an hour a day, and all done using free programs and tools.

In order to save a bit of time, we are going to make a couple of assumptions:

[1] You have already done your keyword research, and have a list of the most popular keywords and phrases for your business/industry, and a list of your direct competitors;

[2] You have already signed up for accounts at all of the major social media platforms relevant to your business, and followed best practices in setting up the accounts, as outlined in the other sections of this book.

If you haven't done these yet, then please go ahead and do them first, then read on.

## ***Summary of the Marketing Game Plan***

We will be using three tools for this game plan, all are available as free versions as well as paid versions, but we will only need the free versions for this exercise. Later on, you can decide for yourself whether or not you want to upgrade to the paid versions, but for now all you want are the free versions. The programs we will be using are [HootSuite](#), [Evernote](#), and Flipboard.

[HootSuite](#) is an all-in-one program, which lets you see all of your social media accounts in one dashboard, and you can post to all platforms at once, post to only selected platforms, and even schedule your posts to be published at a later time, which is a huge time-saver. There is much more available inside HootSuite, but we will cover the details later.

[Evernote](#) is a cloud-based archiving platform where you can store articles and blog posts to read later, and organise them into categories. And Flipboard is a mobile phone app which lets you store articles and blog posts, and read them later in a magazine style, but a magazine where you dictate

exactly what the content is.

All three of these tools are available for all the major desktop computers, mobile phones and tablets, so you can literally use this system anywhere, any time.

## **Marketing Game Plan**

Please note that the initial setting up for the game plan is a right royal pain, but it only has to be done once, then you are ready to go. We suggest putting aside a half of a quiet day like a Sunday to setting everything up. It **won't** take you that long, but if you commit the time to doing it you will be less likely to rush through it and balls something up.

## **Evernote**

[1] Sign up for a free Evernote account. Go to [Evernote](#) and download the program for your computer. While you are there, install the bookmarklet from <http://evernote.com/webclipper/> for your favourite web browser, this is an important part of the game plan.

[2] Using your mobile phone, and tablet if you have one, install the Evernote app on every mobile device you have, then sign in to Evernote on all devices. This will synchronise all of your notes so you can read and edit everything on all devices.

[3] Set up separate folders inside Evernote for all the popular keywords in your business, and you are ready to go with Evernote.

## **Flipboard**

[1] Install the Flipboard app on all of your mobile phones and tablets, and activate your account. Create a magazine for your industry (call it 'Industry News' or whatever you like). You can also set up magazines for your hobbies and anything else you are interested in as well if you like. Then sign in to Flipboard on all of your devices, Flipboard will synchronise all devices automatically, and Flipboard is now ready to go.

## **HootSuite**

[1] Sign up for a free HootSuite account. Go to [HootSuite](#) and sign up. Download and install the web-based application for your favourite web browser at <https://hootsuite.com/features/extensions> and go to the app directory for your mobile phones and tablets and install the HootSuite app for all of your devices. Then open up the Plugins/Extensions option in your favourite web browser and find and install the HootSuite bookmarklet – it is normally just a matter of clicking on the app, or dragging it up to your browser toolbar to install.

If you go to <https://hootsuite.com/app-directory> you can see a list of most of the applications that HootSuite supports, and the list is growing all the time. But for now, we will just be concentrating on the major platforms.

Sign in to HootSuite on all devices, and they will all be synchronised automatically.

[2] Go into the HootSuite dashboard on your desktop computer and connect all of your social media platforms. Set each platform (Twitter, Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn, Pinterest) up on a new tab.

Within each tab, set up a separate stream for wall posts, pages, groups, mentions, direct messages, etc, depending on the options available in each platform. A stream in HootSuite is just what it sounds like, it is a stream of information (sometimes more like a river!), and is displayed in a column in a tab.

[Insert image HootSuiteDashboard.jpg]

The idea is that when we click on the Twitter tab, we can see everything to do with the Twitter account in one place, but in separate columns, so that we can scan through them quickly. The way that we recommend setting them up is with the most important streams to the left, and the least important towards the right, so Direct Messages would be in the left-most column, then Mentions, Groups, Pages, etc, across to wall posts on the right.

[3] Go to Google and do a series of searches for the following, and make a note of the results:

- the main keywords for your business/industry
- your business name
- your personal name, and those of your top employees (not much good if your name is John Brown or Fred Smith)
- your main competitors' business names

[Insert image: GoogleSearch.jpg]

For each search, look around the menu and find the links to 'News' and 'Blogs' and click on them.

[Insert image: GoogleNewsRSSFeed.jpg]

Find the RSS feed for each search and copy down the URL of the feed.

[Insert image: GoogleNewsFeed.jpg]

Now go back to HootSuite, add a new tab, find the HootSuite Syndicator app in the App directory and install it on the new tab. Then install each of the RSS feeds from your searches into a separate stream on the new tab. You can re-name each stream so that you can keep them organised, but now, every time someone mentions your name, your business name, your competitors' names, or keywords related to your business, Google will index them, you will know about them, and be able to respond quickly.

[4] In your Twitter tab, do a similar search as the google searches above, and save the results of each search into a separate stream in your Twitter tab. To search for your Twitter name, just put the @ sign in front of your Twitter name, like @PortMacOnline in our case, and search for that. Now whenever you, your business, your competitors, or keywords related to your business are mentioned anywhere in Twitter, you will know about it immediately, and you can respond quickly.

[5] If you have any websites or blogs that you read regularly, whether they are business related, or pleasure, you can also set up a separate tab for them, go to the websites and find their RSS feeds, and add all of them in separate streams on the new tab. The RSS Feeds will usually be marked with an icon looking like this

[Insert image: RSSIcon.jpg]

or a button with 'RSS' or 'XML' on it. Sometimes the RSS icon will show up in your web browser's address bar instead of on the page itself, but it will usually look like the icon above.

Now whenever the websites are updated, the new articles will be instantly available for you, all in your HootSuite dashboard. You can also add the RSS feeds to your Flipboard account by simply clicking on the 'Flip it' bookmarklet on your web browser's toolbar when you are on the website, so you can read them whenever you have spare time.

Hopefully by now you are starting to see the power of this system. Now we have everything set up, here is the daily, and weekly, work plan

## **Daily Work Plan**

[1] Each morning, open the HootSuite dashboard in your browser or the desktop program, and quickly check each account for Direct Messages and Mentions, and answer these immediately.

[2] Then check each account for any posts related to your industry keywords, and reply to these immediately. Don't be pushy, just offer expert advice to the person who put up the post or enquiry, and people will quickly notice that you are always helpful and giving, and this will build up the whole KLT (Know, Like, Trust) factor for you and your business.

[3] Next, check all RSS Feeds for any breaking news related to your business/industry. If you see something that looks like it might be important, you can click on the headline in HootSuite and it will take you to the website itself.

From the website, you now have the options to 'Flip it' to your Flipboard via the Flipboard bookmarklet you installed, save it to Evernote via the Evernote bookmarklet you installed, or send the web page directly to HootSuite via the HootSuite bookmarklet you installed. Do you see how quick and simple this makes things?

[Insert image: [Bookmarklets.jpg](#)]

If there is something that is important to your industry **and** urgent, you can compose a message describing the news, select the platforms that you want to send the message out to, then send it out immediately by simply clicking on the HootSuite bookmarklet.

If it is important, but **not** urgent, you can compose the message, click on the Calendar icon, and schedule the message to go out later in the day.

If it is something that sounds interesting, you can copy it to Evernote using the Evernote Web Clipper bookmarklet and save it away in the relevant folder that you set up earlier, and read it later when you have some time to spare. Then you can always compose a message later and send it if you think that your readers would also be interested in the article.

[4] Finally, **briefly** skim through the rest of the posts in each account and see if there is anything interesting that you missed first time around. **Be absolutely ruthless with this** – quickly categorise each post as [a] Read Now, [b] Read Later (and save it in Evernote), or [c] Not Interested, and move on. Remember, time is money.

If you come across a website that is interesting and relevant to your industry, you can find and save the RSS feed into your Flipboard using the 'Flip it' bookmarklet. In my case, it is Social Media Today and Social Media Examiner, in your case it might be Butchers Gazette or Greengrocers Weekly, but you will quickly build up a library of websites like this in your Flipboard. Now you have your own industry magazine, made up entirely of articles from your favourite sources, no ads or boring bits, absolutely free and best of all, available on all your mobile devices whenever you want to read it.

As time permits, you can go back to Evernote and read through any articles or blog posts that you saved there, and decide whether you want to compose a message to your readers about it. Once you start looking for them, these opportunities will pop up all the time – you might be standing in a queue at the bank or post office, sitting down having a coffee, waiting for a bus, or your spouse or kids. Normally all of these would be dead time for your business, but if you have your mobile phone or tablet with you, you can now make use of this dead time to keep up with your accounts.

You can also use this dead time to briefly check your HootSuite dashboard for any new messages.

Then after work, you can relax over a beer, or a coffee, and browse through your Flipboard and keep up to date with your industry that way. Once you get used to the system it should only take you ten to fifteen minutes a day to check through your dashboard and compose new posts, either for immediate or scheduled posting, plus whatever down time you have during the day.

## ***Weekly Work Plan***

Now for the real magic of HootSuite! Inside the Compose window, as we have already mentioned, you can click on the Calendar icon to schedule posts. But there is also an option to use the 'Bulk Message Uploader', and this is what we are going to do, once a week.

[Insert image: HootSuiteComposeWindow.jpg]

I normally do this on a Sunday afternoon (before the football starts), but you can do it any time when you have a spare half hour or so. Set up a spreadsheet, with the following fields, in this format:

**DATE,"MESSAGE","URL"**

or download the sample file from the link in the Bulk Message Uploader window.

[Insert image: HootSuiteBulkUploader.jpg]

Then simply fill in the date and time that you want each message to go out, being careful of the formatting (there is a full list explaining the format in the Bulk Message Uploader window), the message that you want to send, and optionally, the URL of the page if applicable. Make doubly sure that you don't use commas in the message, because the file uses commas to separate the fields – use a semicolon (;) or a dash (-) instead, whichever makes more sense in the context.

Once you have done that, save the file (I save mine as Weekly Quotes), make sure that it is saved as a CSV file, and upload it to the Bulk Message Uploader window. Select the file, check the appropriate date format (DDMMYYYY, or MMDDYYYY), select the accounts you want to send the messages to, then hit 'Submit'. If everything is fine, you will get a message saying “xx messages scheduled” and you are done. If you get an error message, just correct the problem and submit the file again.

## ***Timing***

Research shows that you will get best results from social media platforms if you post between 9am and 3pm Monday to Wednesday, so try to schedule your most important posts between these times and days. If you are a local business then this won't be a problem, but if you are selling globally it can be. Try to schedule your best posts between the above times in the time zones that contain the majority of your customers, or potential customers. That doesn't mean that you won't post outside those hours, but just be aware that they are your 'Golden Periods', so keep your best posts for those times, and the less important posts for Thursdays to Sundays.

How often should you post? This is one of the most heavily debated subjects in social media, and the opinions vary from 'not more than once a day per network', to 'the more the merrier!' The best answer I can give you is to monitor your own posts, and those of your competitors in your industry, and try to work out what works best for you. But here are some general guidelines that we recommend to our local business clients:

### **Twitter**

Try to send out at least two posts a day, and up to about six maximum.

### **Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn**

No more than one or two a day.

## ***General Guidelines***

### **Twitter**

Try to keep messages below 120 characters, and if you can, keep them below 100 characters, the

shorter the better, but don't use too many abbreviations, like CU l8r, gr8, etc. Keep the messages short, fun or entertaining, but readable. Always use the link shortener in the Compose window of HootSuite to cut down the length of URLs. If you use the bookmarklet it will usually shorten any URLs automatically.

### **Facebook, Google+**

Try to include a photo or graphic in the post, preferably close to the top of the post where people can clearly see it. This improves open rates and comment rates dramatically.

### **LinkedIn**

Try to keep posts focussed on business, and use a business-like tone. Most of the people on LinkedIn are business types, which is why LinkedIn is the most popular B2B (Business to Business) platform, but the LinkedIn regulars can get a bit uptight and buttoned-up compared to Twitter and Facebook regulars, so stick to business topics.

Always include a 'Call To Action' in all of your posts (Retweet this, Like this, Comment on this).

As well as regularly posting general information relating to your industry, and general personal information about you and your business, ask questions, ask for opinions, set up quizzes or surveys.

**Don't** do what most businesses do when they first get on social media platforms and send out message after message screaming "BUY THIS", "BUY THIS". This will kill off your followers faster than anything else on the net.

The recommendation we give our clients is the 5-4-1 formula:

- 5 – general interest messages (can be anything at all, something you saw that day, a motivational quote, a trivia answer, a funny sign you saw recently)
- 4 – general interest messages related to your industry (this is where the various streams in HootSuite, Evernote and Flipboard come in handy)
- 1 – only one message in ten directly related to your business (maybe you are having a sale, or an important milestone in your business, like your tenth birthday, or 100th Facebook follower).

This formula isn't set in stone, and you can experiment with the ratios a bit to see what works best for you in your industry, but if you stick to the 5-4-1 formula you won't go far wrong.

Note that this is just a simplified version of our Game Plan, but it is more than enough for most small business owners. Once you get familiar with the system, you can incorporate further platforms like YouTube, Instagram, Vimeo, etc, through apps in HootSuite.

You can also look at the options that Evernote provides, like Evernote Hello which lets you save business cards into Evernote, and apps like Penultimate and Evernote Clearly.

You can also include Google Alerts for your business name, your competitors' business names, and your relevant keywords. These can also be included in HootSuite.

Then when you get really serious, you can look at tools like IQTELL at <http://iqtell.com/> which lets you incorporate all of your email accounts with a contact and productivity system. It can then be linked to Evernote as well.

So now you know what to post about, when to post, and how to keep up to date with all of your social media accounts in fifteen minutes or less a day, plus maybe half an hour a week to schedule posts for the following week, and a way to fill in your dead time, so you are all set. Now go out there and get started! :-)