

STRATEGIC THINKING FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

RESEARCH, PLANNING, AND EXECUTION FOR BETTER RESULTS



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THE CURIOUS CASE OF CROCKPOT

If you've never seen a Crock-Pot advertised, it's likely because the company hasn't done a ton of marketing in recent years. Crock-Pots sell well. Most newly-married couples get them as wedding presents.

In 2018, the popular show "This Is Us" did Crock-Pot dirty.

SPOILER: It killed the beloved lead character Jack Pearson by starting a fire in the family kitchen.

A faulty switch was blamed. The scene embedded on the right shows the history of the Crock-Pot's acceptance into the family. The neighbor warned off the switch problem.

Clearly the Crock-Pot was malfunctioning before the Pearson's got it. That didn't matter to social media.

8am. Turn on the heat.

6pm. Turn up and eat.

With a Prestige Crock-Pot slow electric cooker, a delicious hot meal will be waiting for you when you get home.

Whether it's a tasty casserole, a fish dish, curry or any one of the 100 mouth-watering recipes contained in the free cook book.

All you do is place the ingredients into the pot before you go out. Then turn on and leave for 4-12 hours, depending on which heat setting you choose.

It cooks food slowly and gently in its own juice to bring out the full flavour. It won't spoil, even if you turn up late.

And it'll save you money.

Because the long cooking times tenderise less expensive cuts of meat, while the low heat element only uses about as much electricity as a light bulb.

Prestige Crock-Pot
A good idea made better.

Serves 6-8
Serves 4-6 With removable inner crock pot
Serves 1-2

PUBLIC UPROAR

People were mad. It didn't matter that Jack was a made-up character on a television show. Or that his smoke detector was also partially to blame (change your batteries regularly).

The public had spoken: **Crock-Pot killed Jack.**

Crock-Pot started a Twitter account to respond.

Crock-Pot's marketing team was not expecting **#crockpot** to be trending.



CROCKPOT RESPONSE

Crock-Pot was unprepared for the backlash against the brand. But it took the damage in good spirits.

The brand turned lemons into lemonade, telling consumers that it would “be happy to tell you more about our safety standards.”

While the **#crockpotkilledjack** Tweets kept coming, how Crock-Pot handled the crappy product placement was lauded across the industry. The company could have gone on the defensive. It didn't. It kept it's playful nature through serious response.



The screenshot shows three tweets in a vertical list. The first tweet is from 'The Crock-Pot® Brand' (@CrockPotCares) dated Jan 24, 2018. It is a reply to @rdaus1 and @NBCThisIsUs, expressing sympathy for a recent episode and assuring consumers of safety standards. The second tweet is from Robin Allen (Strutton) (@timminschic) dated Jan 25, 2018, expressing skepticism about TV events and stating her loyalty to the Crock-Pot brand. The third tweet is from Julia (@JuliaBDavidson) dated Jan 26, 2018, replying to @CrockPotCares and @shantel575, praising the original Crock-Pot and mentioning a humorous incident.

The Crock-Pot® Brand @CrockPotCares · Jan 24, 2018
Replying to @rdaus1 @CrockPot and @NBCThisIsUs
We're  over last night's episode, too! But don't worry, you can still make your favorite meals in your #CrockPot with confidence. We want to assure all consumers we rigorously test our products for safety. DM us & we'd be happy to tell you more about our safety standards.
23 92 194

Robin Allen (Strutton) @timminschic · Jan 25, 2018
People are idiots if they believe EVERYTHING that happens on TV can happen. TV is fantasy. Don't believe everything you see on it. #CrockPotIsInnocent #CROCKPOT I Use my crockpot WEEKLY and have NEVER had an issue... Crockpot is the only brand I will buy. #ThisIsUs
1 4

Julia @JuliaBDavidson · Jan 26, 2018
Replying to @CrockPotCares and @shantel575
I love my CrockPot. Only the original will do. I never dreamed that it's use as a device to move a drama forward would cause such a stir. #crockpot
1

THINKING STRATEGICALLY ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA

The Crock-Pot story provides a good example of reactive response to social media. The hope for all who interact in the digital sphere is that there wouldn't be a need to be reactive. We want you to be proactive, anticipate what's coming, and guiding your presence responsibility.

We are going to hit on three areas in today's session:

- **Research:** Understanding your “why” and who you are trying to reach helps you tailor your content for better research (and surplus audience).
- **Planning:** Failure to plan is planning to fail. If you don't have a roadmap for your social media, you will likely end up simply posting rather than building community or engagement.
- **Execution:** Create, post, repeat. Right? Not necessarily. We'll look at ways to make content decisions and a model to consider.



RESEARCH: CRAFTING A 'WHY' STATEMENT

A “why” statement focuses on your purpose. This is usually rooted in personal philosophy for a creator. As Delta College faculty, my “why” statement is connected to my experience as a first-generation college graduate: **To enable critical thinking in my students in order to prepare them for the next step of their educational journeys.**

Traits of a ‘why’ statement:

- **It should be timeless:** Products and delivery change (think evolution of social media), your “why” should be transferable.
- **It should include your contribution and an impact:** The statement needs to be compound in including both those things.
- **It should be structured:** Most “why” statements are shaped with “To _____, in order to _____.”



RESEARCH: IDENTIFYING TARGET AUDIENCE

A **target audience** is the audience you intend to reach with your social media presence.

Target audiences are different based on who you are trying to reach, specifically so you can **tailor your content**.

Consider the following examples:

- A daycare provider may work to create content and messaging specifically for parents ages 24-34 years old
- A nonprofit may cater media to 35-50 years olds who have additional income to donate
- A social media influencer may try to target like-minded individuals with similar interests



RESEARCH: IDENTIFYING TARGET AUDIENCE

Audience selection will come down to demographics. Pew Center for Research is a good source for a regularly updated [Social Media Fact Sheet](#). You can also look at **native analytics** within your platforms.

The biggest pitfall is not identifying a target audience by simply stating that you want to target everyone. Why? The goal is **spread**. We want people to spread content. To do so, it first has to appeal to them.

Once you identify a specific audience, you can also work to engage your **surplus audience** with content.

Who uses each social media platform?

Usage of the major online platforms varies by factors such as age, gender and level of formal education.

% of U.S. adults who say they ever use ___ by ...

AGE	GENDER	RACE & ETHNICITY	INCOME	EDUCATION	COMMUNITY	POLITICAL AFFILIATION
			Ages 18-29	30-49	50-64	65+
Facebook			67	75	69	58
Instagram			78	59	35	15
LinkedIn			32	40	31	12
Twitter (X)			42	27	17	6
Pinterest			45	40	33	21
Snapchat			65	30	13	4
YouTube			93	92	83	60
WhatsApp			32	38	29	16
Reddit			44	31	11	3
TikTok			62	39	24	10
BeReal			12	3	1	<1

Note: Respondents who did not give an answer are not shown.

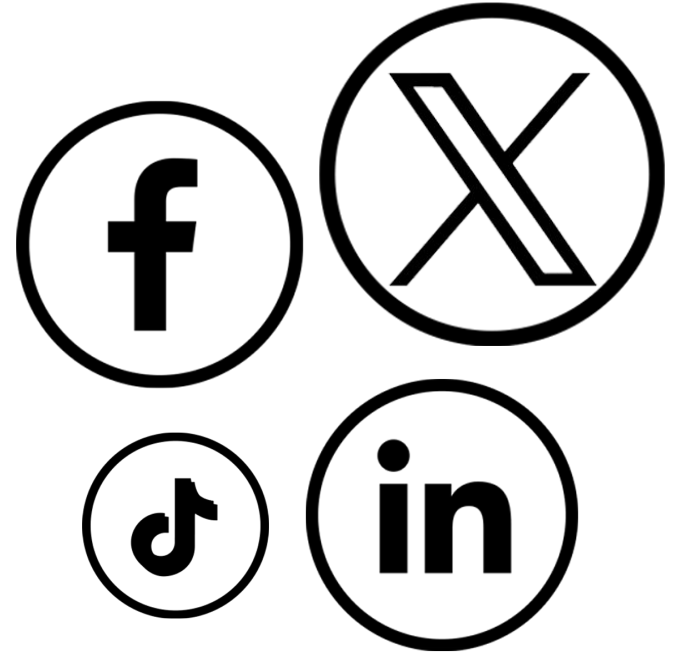
Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted May 19-Sept. 5, 2023.

RESEARCH: CHOOSING PLATFORMS

Identifying your target also allows you to meet your audience where they are at, which may not be the platforms you are using. The [Social Media Fact Sheet](#) is again a great place to start when making these decisions.

Most businesses once simply went for what we considered the main three: Facebook, Twitter (now X), and Instagram.

There is a big push to engage in TikTok these days, but if you are trying to reach a 55-65 year old clientele, it's more likely you will need to be on Facebook. If you want a young demographic of late high school, early college students, TikTok is a best bet.

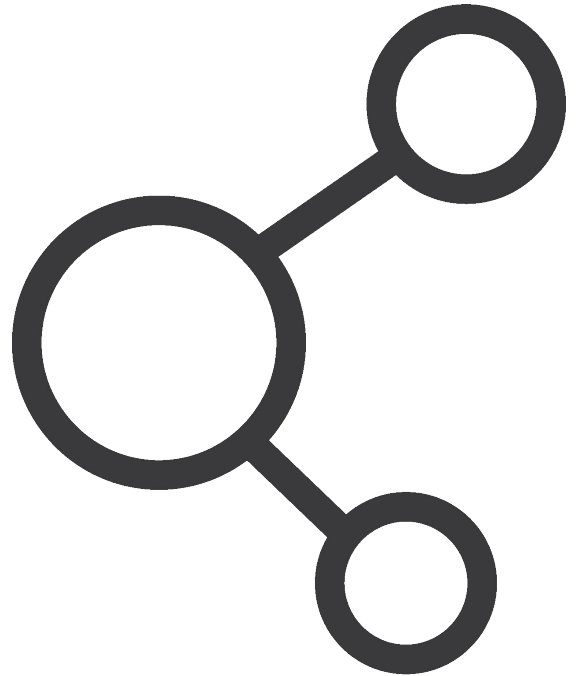


PLANNING: USING RESEARCH TO INFORM CONTENT

Connect your research to your content development, specifically through tailoring.

If you have identified a target audience of beginning college students right out of high school, how would make content that appeals to that specific group:

- Focus on messaging that uses lexicon or theming popular with that population
- Use visual design that is appealing or links to that group
- Identify and implement hashtags that connect to this audience, but also **shoulder audience** (people just outside your target audience zone)



PLANNING: ENGAGEMENT

Consider how to get your audience interacting with you in a way that goes beyond low-level actions (a simple like or love). Think instead about content and actions that:

- Hit at an emotional or familiar level in a way that make people want to share with their sphere of influence
- Push people to comment or respond, as a way to prompt **meaningful participation**
- Consider content that brings people back, as an **appointment model** (a schedule can help with this)

This is often where social media accounts fail.

Don't just post and ghost.



PLANNING: COMMUNITY BUILDING

The secret to social media is that the end goal is always about **building community**. You need to consider your social media platforms as an extension of your organization. You need to think of social media as if it is a virtual outreach event all day, everyday.

That may sound exhausting, but it hits on a bigger concept: **Social media takes time**.

Community building looks like:

- Engaging with your followers
- Answering questions, following up
- Providing reasons for them to come back through content



PLANNING: VALUE

One way to build community is to provide **value**. Value gives your audience a reason to return, even when there isn't a pressing need for whatever services you offer.

Consider that normal consumers only purchase cars every 5–10 years. Yet [Toyota](#) has more than 4.3 million Facebook followers. Why? It has built a community based on similar interests and value.

Answering these will help you create more valuable content that keeps viewers coming back:

- How are you helping the viewer?
- Who are you trying to reach?
- What actions do you want them to take?
- What problems are you trying to solve?

Value for your viewer is embedded in how you answer those questions.

EXECUTION: CONTENT SCHEDULING

Sometimes the most basic strategy is to simply make a commitment to posting regularly. Start there. Making a content schedule is as simple as noting the type of content you are posting and the days you are posting.

An example for a nonprofit would be:

- Every Tuesday you post about a service your nonprofit provides and offers a story about how it has helped someone
- Every Friday you post about other nonprofits you partner with and tag those accounts (this creates a new audience for you)
- A series is created to showcase staff members and what they do, which you publish every Saturday for a few months

The biggest thing is **being consistent** once you create a schedule.

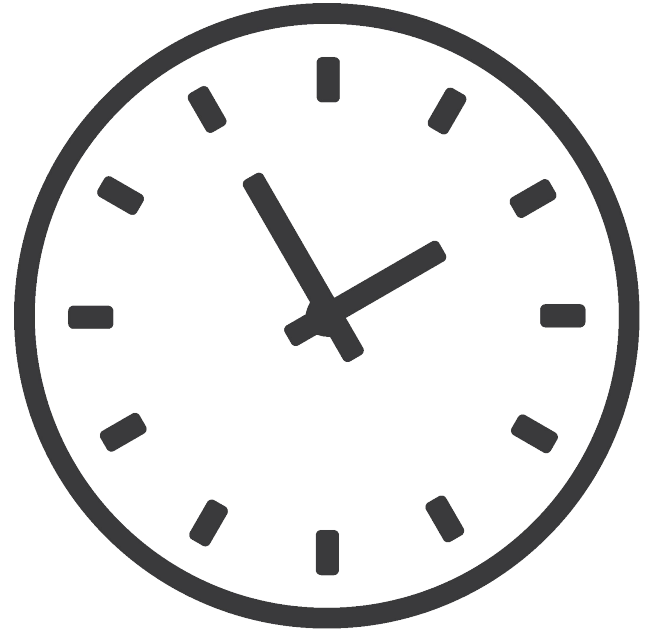


EXECUTION: CONSISTENCY

We've talked about the **appointment model** briefly, but here's why it's important: Once your viewers know you will have content posted on specific days, they look forward to it. This is a tactic that many influencers and creators use.

YouTube creators in particular usually launch two videos a week, under models like this one:

- One video posts midweek, one posts on the weekend.
- Wednesday is a popular posting day because it is past the hustle and bustle of Monday and Tuesday when people work the most.
- Friday to Saturday video rollovers are popular because viewers have more free time on the weekend.



EXECUTION: 60-30-10

If you aren't quite confident in your own posts yet or crafting a consistent schedule, consider engaging 60-30-10 rule that combines original, shared, and promotional content:

- **60 percent of content should be original, engaging:** This will be content you create, based on your target audience, and utilizing your chosen platforms. This content should aim at building community within your audience, with intent for followers to share and spread your messages.
- **30 percent will be shared content:** This gives you a way to engage other similar creators. Be sure to only share like-minded accounts and messaging that aligns with your “why” statement and brand values.
- **10 percent of content will be promotional:** Even if you don't consider your social media channels as a marketing tool, you still need to affirm value and provide reasons for people to follow you. That will mean regularly reminding people about what you represent.



EXECUTION: CONVERSION FUNNEL + CALL TO ACTION

Even if you don't consider yourself a marketer, you need to consider what action you want your followers to take. It could be donating to your nonprofit, it could be sharing your posts with family members to build your business, it could be to come to a community event.

What is your **call to action**? Answering that question will help you discern your **conversion funnel**. Every creator is trying to get the audience **to do** something, including:

- Hitting the “like” button
- Making a purchase
- Signing up for an email newsletter

You need to understand exactly what action you want your users to take and push them toward that action. If you want them to like, you may end every video with “smash that Like button” like YouTube creator Safiya Nygaard does.

EXECUTION: CRISIS COMMUNICATION

This all brings us back to being proactive rather than reactive, specifically when you encounter a follower that may not post the nicest things about you.

Have a plan for when social media goes bad.

This includes:

- Developing Community Rules or policies that dictate when and if you remove content from your channels
- Training staff on how to interact with the public (when in doubt, practice kindness)
- Remembering that social media is public facing and bad actions can result in changes perceptions

