



SOCIAL MEDIA & DIGITAL STRATEGY REPORT



DIRECT SELLING ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

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Direct Selling Association of South Africa

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This report was commissioned by the DSA in April 2015 to ensure that DSA member companies gain an understanding of the social media landscape and are equipped for success in the space.



SECTION 1:

INTRODUCTION AND EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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What has always differentiated the Direct Selling industry is face-to-face relationships. However, almost everyone now has relationships that are partly online, even if it's just exchanging emails with family members. Online only is a tough game. Face-to-face only has a limited future. In order to be successful in the years ahead, direct selling companies and their distributors need to learn how to integrate face-to-face and digital worlds. In particular, they need to learn how to leverage the online networking platforms provided by the Internet.

The transition into a world operated through social media has left many individuals and corporate organizations struggling to make sense of a changing world. This results in high anxiety, unnecessary resistance, and for many Direct Selling Association (DSA) companies, a struggle for survival and increased competition. The social networking approach that benchmarked direct selling in the past will quite simply not work in the future, and many ways in which direct selling companies are using social media right now is counterproductive and even damaging to them. The ways of engaging and relating with your marketing audience are fundamentally different as a result of social media and for the DSA this can be seen as an industry threat or new opportunity (or both).

This report was commissioned by the DSA in April 2015 to ensure that DSA member companies gain an understanding of the social media landscape and are equipped for success in the space. TomorrowToday is a future trends and strategy consultancy that has worked with the DSA for over a decade, and they were commissioned to complete a review of current DSA activity and readiness for success in the social media space, and to provide a report with recommendations for DSA companies. The result is this report.

This report explores the extent to which South African DSA companies are aware of the impact of social media, how they currently utilize social media, the overarching challenges they face which hinder their success and how best to move forward based on international best practice. At present, while some DSA companies are effectively utilizing the opportunities social media has to offer, the majority are not and are being left behind due to three major challenges:

- 1 Lack of knowledge regarding what social media is and how to use it.
- 2 Failure at all levels in the hierarchy to perceive the value and urgency of adopting a social media agenda.
- 3 Limited understanding of the online audience and the contextual issues that inform South African online activity.

While these factors pose significant pitfalls for future growth, they can be, and have been, overcome by exemplar companies both locally and abroad. The key elements to their success have been based on acknowledging the role that social media plays in contemporary society, an acceptance that with social media will come changes to how we understand 'networking' and how we structure our business engagements accordingly, and an embracing of the challenges and opportunities social media holds for organizations who rely so heavily on public engagement for their success. As highlighted through international literature, the world of social media is fast moving, rapidly changing and requires an invested interest by those who represent the brand and want to use social media effectively. The responsibility is on corporate leaders and the Direct Selling Association to create access to these elements, which drive success in social media, thereby enabling their networks to survive in a changing world.

We believe this presents a great opportunity for DSA members. Companies who implement a strong Social Media strategy will quickly see results when embracing their already large and active network of Distributors and Customers. Direct Selling is the original social network – it is what you have done so well over the years. Now you are well positioned to take full advantage of the new Social Network with all the good that Social Media offers. This is your opportunity to surge ahead and significantly position yourself in the direct selling world of tomorrow.

The team from TomorrowToday Global was headed by Graeme Codrington, and included contributions from Vicky Coats, Tamryn Coats (a research psychologist) and Raymond de Villiers (a digital business expert). For more information or interaction, please feel free to contact the team through Vicky at vicky@tomorrowtodayglobal.com

This section of the DSA social media report outlines the systems and structures required to develop a social strategy, and provides an eight step process for deciding on your social media strategy.



SECTION 2:

DEVELOPING A SOCIAL MEDIA AND DIGITAL STRATEGY

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There can be no doubt that social media is a valuable business tool, especially for companies that are built around networking and connecting people to people. But too many people and organisations are using it ineffectively. In fact, some are actively damaging themselves by using social media badly. In order to get the most out of social media, it is important to have a clear strategy and a number of structures in place.

Each DSA company is different, serving different markets in different ways, and each DSA company is at a different stage of their journey towards effectively using social media and digital tools. This report cannot, therefore, provide “one size fits all” recommendations. What this report can do is provide a framework for decision making and strategy for the next few years.

A few years ago, a Harvard Business Review article entitled “Seven Characteristics Of Companies Effectively Using Social Media” received critical acclaim. The seven habits remain true today, and the framework we suggest below will assist you to put these in place.



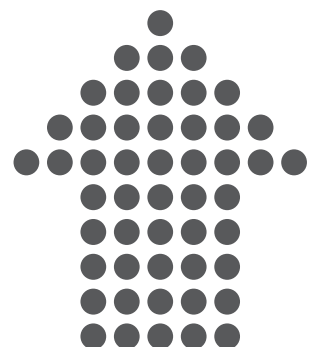
This section of the DSA social media report outlines the systems and structures required to develop a social strategy, and provides an eight step process for deciding on your social media strategy. You will then be much better placed to determine where best to focus your resources for maximum effect in the social space. The next section will go into detail on best practice on each social media platform. These can be used at both a corporate level, and for individual distributors and their teams.

Developing a Social Strategy

Before diving into different social media platforms, it is vital to ensure that everyone in your network (corporate and distributors) has a clear picture of what you plan to do with social (why, what, how, when and who are all important, but especially the *what* and *why*).

A key observation of the social media presence of many of the DSA member companies is that they seem to lack a cohesive social strategy. In the absence of this thinking the social activity is experienced as a directionless “bumbling” that adds little to the brand and risks detracting from it.

We highly recommend you run a workshop on your social media usage, working through the following eight steps to ensure your social strategy is properly developed and understood. Note that you will come to each of these steps over and over again as you develop your social media presence.



1. What Must Social Do For You?

There are many different things that social media would be good for. At the end of the next section of this report, we provide a comprehensive list, with suggestions about which social platforms would be best for which purposes. But there is a danger that you try and use social media to do everything. This will result in brand confusion. It would be even worse if you use a social platform inappropriately – the users of that platform will turn against you. And, as you know in face-to-face interactions, only being in “sales mode” all the time tends to backfire on you quite quickly.

So, the starting point is to define what you want social media to do for you. This question can only be answered by knowing your stakeholders and market.

There are a variety of levels on which social could be useful, but the real questions are:

- What are people in our network using social for already?
- How are people likely to use social to connect with us?

For DSA companies, social can be used for brand awareness, marketing, advertising, sales promotions, selling, promoting the business opportunity, promoting the lifestyle benefits of the product and company, generating interest, for customer service, complaint or query handling, FAQ (frequently asked question) forums and general communication. It can also be used internally or by corporate head offices for team communication, team building, training and motivation. But each of these will only work if you know how people use different social platforms, and connect appropriately.

For most consumers, for example, social media is not a place to go for purchasing. They don't want their social platforms filled with adverts, product plugs or business opportunities. So what are they looking for, in relation to what you're selling? And how do you get their attention?

The “Golden Rule” of selling and advertising on the Internet, and especially on social media platforms, is that people will only buy from you when they're actually in a buying mode. What this means is that the most effective advertising online – by far – is advertising precisely when and where people are looking to buy something (e.g. in search engines, at online shops or on consumer advice websites). The concepts of “brand building”, billboards or broadcast advertising just don't work online. In the social space, you need to clearly understand what your consumers and distributors use social media for.

Research shows that in the social space, consumers will connect with brands in order to:

- Get a quick response to concerns and complaints
 - Find ways to ask questions and give opinions
 - Obtain information about how products are sourced and made
 - Participate in providing feedback and being part of a development and refinement process
 - Investigate a company, especially looking for evidence of a clear mission and purpose at the brand core
 - To see if the company/brand takes a stand on issues the consumers care about
 - Participate in competitions and specials, and receive vouchers and discounts.
 - Build, or join a network of like-minded individuals.
- Note that there is no single network that all things run through: groups are selectively created or joined and the information flowing out of each network or group is a specific stream that may be engaged or ignored, at the user's discretion.

You may need to do some research on your specific target markets, taking into account demographics, geography, socio-economic factors and technology savvy, in order to determine what is possible and what is likely in your social space.

2. Selecting Your Platforms and Integrating Them

Your social platforms may be able to achieve a variety of outcomes for you, but you need to be clear about what you're going to do with each social platform, and how you will get them to work together to achieve your outcomes.

We highly recommend starting with a blog, combined with Facebook and one other social platform (Twitter, LinkedIn, YouTube or Instagram would each be good choices). The selection needs to be based on what your people and your target market are actually using already. Go where the people already are – don't try and create a new space for them. Then, look at the recommendations we make in the next section of this report for the ways in which these social platforms can best be used by DSA companies.

You need to decide how social content will integrate with your other systems, including your website and any other forms of advertising, PR and marketing you do. You especially need to consider how social platforms will relate to other digital platforms, including your

corporate website, distributor websites and ecommerce platforms. Be prepared to suspend some legacy systems if necessary, or to not engage a modern new tool just because it is currently trending. Social is a dynamic environment with new tools arriving and other platforms become obsolete all the time. You need to have a living, dynamic interaction with your social tools, prepared to drop off or onto platforms as the landscape evolves and shifts.

In technical marketing speak, this is being called an “omnichannel” approach. This means that you use a variety of different channels to connect with your customers, but ensuring there is seamless integration between them. You want your people to have a consistent and coherent experience however they connect with you.

Remember to do the simplest integration of all: once you’ve started using different social platforms, make sure you link to them from your main website and promote them through your existing networks. Also make sure that your website and blog have social sharing buttons on every page and post.

3. Governance - Social Media Policies

You need to create at least two levels of social media policy: one for corporate that defines how head office staff will engage with social media, and another for your distributors. These are not just static, dry, legal documents: these define dynamic policies what is allowed and not allowed, and how you will go about ensuring that everyone is advancing the use of social media appropriately across your entire network. They can also provide legal protection for you if something goes wrong on social media.

You should also develop a social media crisis response plan. The easiest way to do this is to create a few scenarios for a social media crisis, and then work out how you would best respond to each. Turn this into a policy and operating procedure, and ensure those people who need to know about it are involved and informed. It is critical that people outside of the network know where to go for credible information. The nature of social is that members of the network may comment in their personal capacities - the space that speaks for the business needs to be a clear point of reference in a crisis, in order to prevent miscommunication.



SECTION 3:

SOCIAL MEDIA GUIDELINES AND PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

The first step in getting the most out of social media is to complete the planning process we outlined in the previous section of this report. This will help you to clarify what you want to achieve with social media, and what resources you will need to be able to do this. It should also help you to select the most appropriate social media platforms to use. Once you know this, you can then focus on getting the most out of each of the social platforms you plan to use. That's what this section of this report is about.

It is impossible to give one-size-fits-all instructions for the use of social media, but there are general guidelines that will be helpful whether you are brand new to social media or experienced users. In this section we will provide a fairly detailed set of guidelines to give you a head start in deciding which social platforms to use, and how to get the most out of them.

Your Social Home Base

You need to start by creating a **“home base” for your social activity**. This is not your website (which tends to be more of an online brochure), but rather a central place on the web where you can position yourself as an expert, where you will upload content on a regular basis (we call this “dynamic content”) and where people can interact with you. Your social media activity can point back to this “home base”. The idea is that all the activity you generate online will enhance the perception people have of your expertise.

We recommend a blog as your home base. This can either be integrated into your main website, or a separate blog site. But you could also use Facebook, YouTube (although be careful, as South Africans are still very sensitive to data prices, and not yet using video extensively) or LinkedIn as your home base. The key to your home base is that you post regular, interesting, informative and useful information for your target market, and encourage them to come back again and again for updates and information. You especially want them to interact with you, asking questions and requesting additional information. This means that you need to ensure that whatever platform you choose has functionality that supports comments, and make sure that the functionality is enabled.

DSA people should adopt this **expert mindset**: you need to be seen as experts on the product range you sell as well as experts on how to turn that selling into a business. Your digital “home base” is the place you will use to demonstrate your expertise and provide valuable information and resources for your followers.

Social Media Platforms

You then will want to make sure you have a social media footprint. This should include a minimum of Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Google+. This will be true for corporate as well as for individual distributors in your networks. We will explain below how to best use these platforms, but at minimum you should have a registered profile on each of these platforms that points back to your home base. At best, you'll be putting content onto multiple platforms regularly and interacting with different people across these platforms. Having multiple platforms also creates channels that move the choice of “how to engage” to the target market individuals.

Depending on the type of product/service you're selling, and the general profile of your target market, you can then also expand to include other social platforms, including Instagram, Pinterest, Reddit and Slideshare.

We also recommend that you use WhatsApp groups for internal communication, and maybe consider a Yammer network for the same purpose at a corporate level.

The Golden Rule of Online

Remember the **“Golden Rule” of social media**: don’t attempt to sell to people when they’re not in a buying mood. The purpose of your social media activity is primarily to convince people of your expertise, and give them reasons to connect with you. If they ask you to sell them something, then they’re in a buying mood and you can go for it. But you cannot hard-sell online. Effectively, social media is used to get people in a space where they are ready to be sold to.

You need to be very clear the purpose for which you’re using each social media platform. This will guide your decisions about look and feel, content and how often you engage.

Engaging the Mavens and Opinion Leaders

Because the social media world is very similar to any other form of networking, it should be clear that a great strategy is to find the opinion leaders and the “nodes” of your network and target them. Get to know them, connect with them, add value to them. If you find someone who has influence in a social space, and they promote you and your posts, you will get a significant bump in your social rankings. This is true in life, and it is even more important in the online world. Part of your strategy should be to identify these individuals, and find ways to connect with them.



Tags and #Hashtags

Tags and hashtags are important, as search engines and people searching for specific topics pick them up. They also connect you to other experts in your field.

A few simple rules will help you use hashtags more effectively:

- Only use hashtags on social platforms that support them (mainly Twitter and Facebook, not in LinkedIn)
- Don't hashtag words that are not keywords linked to your core content – this is a common mistake, makes your content hard to read and connects you to the wrong expertise
- Don't use too many hashtags in a post. One or two are enough
- Don't use hashtags in every post
- Don't hijack a common hashtag unless it is really a core keyword for you.

Grow Your Networks

Use the power of your network to grow your networks. This might sound obvious, but the power of having an existing “real world” network is very useful online. You can get your distributors and colleagues to like your pages and repost your content, and you should do the same for them. The bigger your network, the more valuable it is.

Driving Sales

Although we've suggested you should be very careful to use social media for direct sales, once you have built up a following you can experiment with a few sales strategies. Research shows that competitions and special offers work best. You can also use social media to support any regular competitions and special offers your company is offering.

Some platforms allow you to export your contact or friends list into Excel, or other offline formats. If used with caution and circumspection these are useful resources to support offline sales campaigns or activities, without specifically compromising your social activity.

Remember that most of your followers will never see an update you post, especially on platforms that have fast moving feeds like Twitter and Facebook. So, plan to repeat updates that promote your specials a few times a day for a few days. Build up some anticipation for a “launch” date and time, and be specific about any actions

you'd like people to take. Make sure you engage with your followers in real time while the special is on, and give feedback when it is over. After the promotion has ended, follow up with related posts and updates and positive mentions from your campaign.

Now let's look at some specifics for each of the major social media platforms.

We will cover the following:

Blogs
Facebook
LinkedIn (and Xing)
YouTube (and Vine)
Twitter
Google+
Pinterest
Instagram
Slideshare
FlipBoard, Zite, Pulse, Google Newsstand and Other Aggregators
Reddit
WhatsApp (and other text based messaging systems, like Mxit, SnapChat, WeChat, etc)
Yammer
Other social platforms
Podcasts
Apps

We've also produced a helpful “What to Post Where” checklist guide.

We then also deal with a few general issues related to managing social platforms:

- Managing content and automating posts
- Analytics: Measurement and Intelligence
- SEO
- Watching the social platforms, and listening to what people are saying
- Arguments, Censorship, Dealing with Trolls and Other Rules of Engagement



BLOGS

A blog is a “web log”. Think of it as an online magazine, where each article has its own page. These are called “posts”. Blogs are very easy to set up and manage, and can either be incorporated as part of your main website or can have their own domain name.

Some organisations now opt to make their main website a blog. You can also get a free blog at one of the many blog providers. The key difference between a website and a blog is that blogs are set up to allow readers to add their comments, and blog owners typically encourage this and interact with people who leave comments. Websites also tend to have static content that is refreshed irregularly when the site is rebuilt or updated, generally by a web building professional. Blogs have dynamic content that is updated regularly, and they’re designed to allow non-professional users to easily post content.

Some good examples of different types of blogs include:

The whole website as a blog:

<http://www.jenfongspeaks.com/> and

The blog as an item on the main menu:

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

A blog at a free blog provider:

<http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>

We highly recommend that you consider using a blog as the “home base” of your online social activity. If you have an existing website, you could add a blog section to this site – this is the easiest and cheapest option. You could create a separate blog website, either with a “vanity domain name” or at one of the free blog sites available online (we recommend <http://www.blogger.com>). Be aware that vanity domain sites have less restrictive terms and conditions of use, while free sites will require you to abide by their own terms and conditions with control vesting in them for what is deemed appropriate or inappropriate. When choosing a domain or blog name, either use your own personal name, or consider using a descriptive name that links to the benefits of your products or the business opportunity (e.g. healthyliving.co.za, startyourownbusiness.com, workforyourself.blogger.com, retireyoung.com, etc).

The purpose of this home base is to provide information to your readers/viewers that is of value to them, and to encourage them to come back to that home base on a regular basis for updates, more information and connection. The defining feature of a blog is that it encourages interaction and invites conversation.

Therefore make sure the comments feature is switched on, and also write in such a way that you invite feedback and interaction. Make sure you answer any questions that are asked, or just acknowledge good contributions made in the comments section of your blog.

EXAMPLES:

- A really good example of a blog home base is <http://www.jenfongspeaks.com/> - with valuable resources for technology solutions for people involved in direct selling. Her site is basically a blog. Something similar but simpler, with good social media insights is <http://richardstacy.com/>. See also <http://www.sagoodnews.co.za/> for this approach, but with many more categories and looking a lot more like a magazine.
- You can see a different approach at <http://www.tomorrowtodayglobal.com>, where our company has a blog as part of our website. Just click “blog” on the top menu.
- The blog as a separate website: <http://www.willitblend.com/> (for Blendtec blenders). This is also an example a video blog (using videos as the blog posts, instead of text).
- My favourite free blog provider type blog is that of Seth Godin, an author and expert on the future of work - see <http://sethgodin.typepad.com/>
- For a good example of a YouTube channel as a home base, see <https://www.youtube.com/user/CharlisCraftyKitchen>





TOP TIPS FOR BLOGS:

- Keep blog entries short - 300-800 words, or 2-5 minutes if you're doing videos.
- Use pictures to grab attention, and to break up the text of your blog posts.
- Blog posts with attention grabbing headings do much better than those with boring headings. But make sure you deliver value and give people what you promise in your heading.
- Blog posts that quick and easy to read, with good take away value always do better. Use bullet points, and keep it short.
- Upload a new blog entry at least once per week so that your blog remains active, and there's a reason for people to keep coming back you.
- Have between 10 and 20 different categories on your blog, and assign each post to a few of these categories. This will help people to search your blog archive more effectively.
- Most platforms will allow you to add tags or keywords that supplement the text in the body and heading of the blog. Choose these cleverly to improve the "searchability" of your posts.
- In each post, focus on one issue/topic. Get straight to the point, and focus on the benefits to the reader/viewer.
- Be conversational in your style.
- Encourage interaction by asking questions. And then answer everyone who interacts with you and leaves comments.
- Make it easy for people to subscribe to your blog. This is typically done by an add-on that allows them to provide their email address and be alerted when you upload new content. This is a free feature and is simple to add to a blog site.
- Make it easy for people to share your content to their social media platforms by having "share buttons" on your blog.
- Make sure that you share your blog post across all of your social platforms.

Corporate/Head Office:

- Get your top distributors to write "guest" blog entries, so that once a week you have a different story from one of your people. Write a short profile of them as a bio linked to the blog entry, and link back to their "home base".
- Have an FAQ (frequently asked questions) style blog entry at least once per quarter on your blog.
- Do not directly sell your products via your blog, but rather talk about the benefits of the products, and then link to your ecommerce site, shop or main

corporate webpage. Your blog is not a sales brochure or an extension of your online shop. It is there to prove your expertise in the market you're serving.

- Be generous in linking to and highlighting the content of other experts in your industry. Let readers of your blog see you as a hub for information, not just as a small player trying to flog a product to them. The more links you have to other online content the better your blog will perform in search engine queries.

FACEBOOK

Facebook is the “big daddy” of social platforms with nearly 1.5 billion users worldwide (12 million in South Africa). Facebook allows you to create a profile and upload updates which your friends can see, like and share with their friends.

Updates can be in the form of text, photos or videos. Some people do multiple updates a day, using Facebook to keep a record of what they're doing and to share thoughts, insights, jokes and anything else with their friends, and to have conversations (and arguments too). Other people use it more sparingly, with just an update every now and again for key life events.



There are two different types of Facebook profiles you can have: **individual profile** and a **page**.

01

INDIVIDUAL PROFILES:

Individual profiles are restricted to real people and there is a limit of 5,000 friends. The people you connect with (“friends”) must be approved by yourself. These are the profiles individual distributors should have.



02

FACEBOOK PAGES:

Facebook Pages are more like blogs. In order to see your updates, people must “Like” your page. You don’t get to decide who can do that or not, and there is no limit to the number of people who can like your page.



We recommend that you only have one or other of these Facebook profiles, and not both; and we recommend the normal profile. It is also important to have a policy in place that outlines any restrictions or expectations on the type of Facebook presence distributors may have if the company brand is used in anyway on their page. However, if you would prefer to use Facebook entirely for personal purposes (to interact with your family and personal friends), and don’t want to let your business contacts see what you post on Facebook, then you should probably consider having a more public Facebook Page as well, just so that people can at least find you on Facebook. That page should have your contact information on it, and point to your main website.

Facebook has fairly strict rules about promoting businesses and selling products via your Facebook profile – they don’t allow it. You can talk about your business, your products and services, and you can direct people to a separate website for promotional and sales purposes, but you cannot advertise any business directly on your Facebook feed. You can, of course, buy Facebook advertising.

DSA specific note: Beware of your members flooding the comments function in Facebook with their sales or recruiting information. Educate them on best use of the comments function, or on expected use of the comments function.



EXAMPLES:

- Avon Justine use Facebook very well within the digital marketing space. They specifically plan the content and timing of their Facebook posts according to the perceived LSM of the audience. They also use Facebook to connect audience members to their smaller social media platforms such as Pinterest or their company website.
- Nu Skin distributors also utilize Facebook very well- using it as a platform for highlighting a desired lifestyle which then links back to products rather than promoting products directly. Facebook enables the distributor to 'showcase' the value and impact certain products have had in their lives and generate an interest around their 'lifestyle' before linking this success back to direct selling.

TOP TIPS FOR FACEBOOK:

Facebook has a very useful set of resources for business users that can be found here:

<https://www.facebook.com/business/a/page-posting-tips>.

Here's a brief summary, with our own advice and International DSA best practice added:

- As with all social platforms, make sure your profile picture is good quality. Make sure you also upload a cover picture to the top of your profile that is high quality and captures attention. Don't fill it with text and advertising.
- Complete your About section. It's the first thing most visitors will read. List the website URL of your "home base" in the About section. Put in something descriptive about your brand that conveys what you do and the benefits for others.
- Use a Facebook vanity URL. When you first create a Facebook profile, it allocates a set of random letters and numbers as the page address. You can change this to your name or anything else, but think carefully - once you've changed this, you can never change it again.
- Post consistently and keep your content fresh. Just like a blog, being consistent in the quality and types of posts you create can help people know what kinds of messages to expect from you and how they tie into your business. In fact, you should repost your blog entries onto Facebook, or put a link to it on your Facebook post.
- Posts that are either short (80-100 characters) or long (780-800 characters) receive the most likes on Facebook. Do not post long articles on Facebook - rather put those on a blog and create a link with a short summary on your Facebook feed. For long posts make sure that the first sentence or two is engaging as users will only be able to see this until the opt to read more. If the post is long and the first two lines are boring, the post will not be read.
- The best Facebook content encourages engagement. Catch peoples' attention with questions, provoking comments, interesting facts, powerful pictures, humour, etc. Give people content that they will want to share with their friends.
- Write posts that will cause people to want to find out more information about what you do, and will ask you questions. This will give you the opportunities you're hoping for to promote your products and business opportunity.
- Facebook can be used quite effectively for specials, promotions and competitions. These will capture peoples' attention and are likely to be shared if they are of real value. Run Contests. People like to win stuff.
- Use both words and pictures. The right combination of images and alluring copy that reflect your business objectives can really get your audience interested. Use high-quality photos that showcase your business or products, or lifestyle images of people interacting with them. Photos should be an integral part of your posting strategy. Facebook's research shows posts with photos get 53% more Likes, 104% more comments and 84% more click-throughs than posts without pictures.
- Be human and personal. Your Facebook updates don't have to be a boring, sterile, or business-only. Post in the first person (use "I" and "me" to talk about yourself). The more personal your posts, the better the Facebook identity and personality.
- You can select who can see certain updates and who can't. On Pages, you can even target posts by demographics (for example, only young people can see your post, or only men). See the link above for details of how to do this.
- Test your content and experiment to see what works. Post very similar content, but with different pictures or at different times of the day, and review their performance to see which works best.
- Be responsive. Respond quickly to comments on your posts to let people know you're listening to feedback.
- If you're using a Page, the easiest form of advertising is to use the Boost button for a post. It will cost you a small amount of money, but if you know that it's a good post and gets good results, it could be worth it. Experiment with this, if you have a budget for online advertising and use Facebook regularly.

- o Publicize exclusive discounts and promotions with ads, and target the demographics you know respond best to your posts.
- o Drive urgency with a time prompt like “free shipping, this weekend only” or “12 hour flash sale”. But be careful of hard sells. Make it look like a special and a “favour” to your followers.
- Analyse your activities. You can get a better understanding of who your most engaged audience is by regularly checking your Page Insights (available at the top of your Page). See more information on this at the end of this Section.
- Think about the timing of your posts. Most people do not have access to Facebook during work hours, so posts that will get the most attention go out early morning, at lunch time, in the evening or over a weekend.
- See the end of this section for more detail about what to post on which social platforms, and also on how to deal with comments, arguments and negative issues that might emerge as people engage with your Facebook posts.

Additional useful links to guide usage of the Facebook platform for business purposes:

Facebook for business - intro - <https://www.facebook.com/business/>

Facebook for business - lessons learned - <https://www.facebook.com/business/learn/>

Facebook for business - build brand awareness - <https://www.facebook.com/business/goals/build-awareness/>

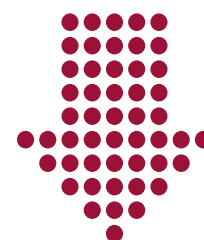
Corporate/Head Office:

- Most DSA companies internationally that feel they’re using Facebook well use it mainly to gather likes through promotions and specials. They even purchase targeted Facebook advertising and boost certain posts to ensure they get Likes. Once people Like your page they have given you permission to send specific content to them. To do this, create a Post and then select the audience you want to see that post on your Facebook page profile.
- You can create groups on Facebook. These can either be public groups or secret ones. Use secret groups for your internal communications if many of your distributors or downline team are on Facebook and would like to use it to communicate and have conversations. Use public groups if you’d like to get your distributors and customers to have discussions in public on particular issues.
- When you have limited the people who can see a post those individuals are similarly constrained on who they can repost to. As with all things Internet there are ways to circumvent this, but for most users your restrictions will apply and be respected.

FACEBOOK

WHAT TO POST WHERE

Here is a quick guide to the most popular social platforms, and what content might work best on each of them.



This is a rough guide – you need to understand your audience and how they use each platform (if they do), and also do constant testing of what works (gets a response) and what does not.

TYPE OF CONTENT	BLOG	FACEBOOK	LINKEDIN	YOUTUBE	TWITTER	INSTAGRAM	SLIDESHOW	FLIPBOARD	PODCAST
General information about your company	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Listing of products and their benefits	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Providing detailed product information	✓		✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Explaining the business opportunity	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
Profiling lifestyle benefits	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
Share your product catalogue	✓		✓				✓	✓	
Promoting products	✓			✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
Demonstrating products	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Demonstrating expertise	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Collecting reviews of your products or the business opportunity	✓	✓		✓		✓			
Sales promotions, special offers and discounts	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Competitions	✓	✓			✓	✓		✓	
Recruitment of new members (offering the opportunity)	✓		✓	✓				✓	✓
Generating qualified leads									
Creating community	✓	✓							✓
Promoting upcoming events	✓	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓
Recording and sharing events	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓		✓	
Online training courses	✓			✓			✓		✓
Training materials	✓			✓			✓	✓	
Support for onboarding of new consultants	✓			✓			✓	✓	✓
Customer service – solving customer's problems and providing answers to their questions	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓		
Case studies of success – profiling your distributors	✓	✓		✓			✓	✓	✓
Highlighting social investments	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
General communication with your team	✓	✓		✓	✓				✓

MANAGING CONTENT AND AUTOMATING UPDATES

The three most important keys to successful social media engagement are:



It is important that you are consistent in your postings. This means posting regularly and posting updates that have a fairly predictable tone and style about them. Your audience want to know what they can expect from you, and then they will want to get it.

You can choose how often you post on each platform. Some people post many things each day on each platform, others post once or twice a month. There's no golden rule, but be careful of the extremes of too many posts and too few posts. For a corporate account, we'd recommend a maximum of twice per day and a minimum of twice per month. For maximum effect, though, these need to be consistent: don't post twice a day for a few days and then not again for another week, for example.

As we suggested in section 2 of this report, to do social media properly, you need to have worked out your content schedule and understand what resources (people and budget in particular) are required to maintain this consistency.

To help you do this, there are a few systems that will allow you to schedule your updates in advance. This way, you can be sure not to miss out on an update. There are many such systems, some free and others requiring a subscription. Have a look at **Hootsuite** and **Buffer** as examples. Most

of these management systems allow for multiple users to queue up content and manage social platforms, which can be a really good way for more than one person to manage your social media presence.

The other part of managing content is to ensure that you engage with your audience. When someone interacts with you, you should respond as quickly as possible. Questions should be answered, conversations entered into and arguments or critiques diffused (see below).

It is difficult, if not impossible, to automate responses to people's comments, questions and conversations, so you do need to put some resource (people and time) aside to do this. Depending on the size of your company and amount of social media presence you're aiming for, you may need to have a dedicated team to managing social media engagement. Some larger companies even outsource this to social media management companies. Smaller companies and individual distributors need to take this into account when selecting which social platforms to work on, what content they put out and how often they post updates. It's no good generating interest if you're not able to handle it when it happens.

CONTACT US



DIRECT SELLING ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH AFRICA

For more information,
go to our website:

www.dsasa.co.za