

THE **9** MISTAKES THAT WILL **SINK** YOUR CONTENT MARKETING

(AND HOW TO AVOID THEM!)



BrainstormDigital



DISCOVER HOW THE RIGHT CONTENT CAN **WIN** YOU CUSTOMERS

Everyone puts up content on social media. Only a select few make sure it is geared towards attracting and retaining customers.

Those are the ones whose social media activities transform their business.

In this guide, we walk you through the 9 biggest mistakes companies make with their content and show you how to sidestep them, so that you can build a truly effective, and lucrative, social media presence.

For over a decade, Brainstorm has helped hundreds of clients gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to generate leads, boost their brands, and bring in those sales.

We hope you find this guide equally valuable, helpful - and fun.



Miriam Shaviv

Director of Content, Brainstorm Digital



LET'S FACE IT:

There is intense pressure to be on social media. Clients expect it, customers want it – and your competition is probably already there.

For too many companies – 72%, to be exact* – this has meant jumping in without the faintest idea of what they actually want to accomplish, or how they're going to get there.

They wouldn't launch a new product without market research and a marketing plan (at least I hope not) – but when it comes to social media, the attitude is, 'let's dabble a bit and see what happens'.

To get your content pitch-perfect – to make it grow your business – takes focus and planning.

HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY:



Clarify your goals.

Think carefully: **why** do you want to use social media?

Do you need to:

- Increase your brand awareness?
- Launch a specific product?
- Create a better connection with existing clients?
- Drive traffic to your website?
- Or generate actual sales?

Each of these will be approached differently. Be precise: It will be easier to figure out how to 'get 50 people on Twitter to register for my next seminar' than a broader target, such as 'make my seminar a success'.



Develop a strategy.

Consider **how** you are going to use social media. Which platform suits your goals best? Who are you going to target? How are you going to engage them?

*Society for Human Resource Management, 2012

Again, the more precise you get, the better.

Saying that "we'll use Facebook to increase brand awareness for our shoes" is fine.

Knowing that "We'll develop a company Facebook page that will appeal to women interested in hiking boots" is more useful.

Planning to "develop a Facebook page that will draw in women interested in hiking boots by asking them to photograph themselves wearing them, offer them tips about developing trends, and direct them to our website for a boots raffle each week", will set you on your way.

There are 33 million members of Facebook in the UK. 15 million active members of Twitter. 11 million of LinkedIn. 3.2 million on Pinterest. Probably more by the time you read this!

So how do you reach them all?

You can't and you shouldn't.

Social media is all about relationships and personal connections. If you try to speak to everyone, you'll speak to no-one. **That is why this mistake is one of the top three!**

To get the right kind of content, you need to focus, focus, focus on the niche group or groups to whom your product might appeal: Mothers of school kids with mobile phones? Australians who are afraid of spiders? Graphic designers who are crazy about the colour green?

The more you know about what interests them, what information they want from you and what will prompt them to buy your product, the easier it will be to shape your content in a way that appeals to them.

HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY

You probably already know more about your target audience than you imagine.



Tap into your company's knowledge. Start with any demographic information and surveys that have been carried out in the last few months. Then speak to your customer service people, who know your clients best of all!



Try to find out where your clients hang out online. That is just one of the nine insights that will help you target your content directly at them.



The second and third are, what is holding them back from buying your product? And who else do they need to persuade before they can buy from you (for example, do they need permission from their boss – who might have different concerns)?



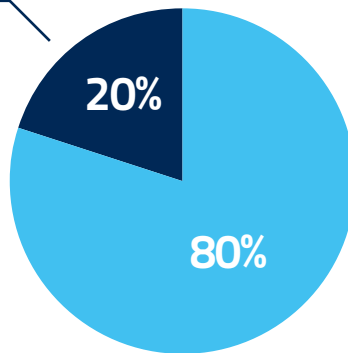
Want to find out the other six? Check out our unbeatable method of getting into your clients' heads at brainstorm-digital.co.uk/personcreation

Some companies think social media is all about them. They talk about their business; their products; their staffers; their events. After all, that's what they're there to promote, right?

The problem is, the people they are trying to reach are also only interested in themselves. They don't really want to hear about your upcoming seminar or the launch of your new basket-weaving kit. They are put off by what comes across as pushy sales tactics.

How do companies bridge that gap? With the 20-80 rule.

For 20% of the time, go right ahead and talk directly about your products and events.



Draw them in with added value, make your brand relevant to their lives, and build an emotional connection for when they really do want to find out about your products.


For 80% of the time, talk about issues that are tangentially connected, but of great interest to your audience. (See why understanding them is so important? We're back to Mistake #2.)

One company that does this really well is Dove, which sells soaps, shampoos and lotions. Once in a while on their Facebook page, they'll explicitly promote their merchandise:


 **Dove**
Blue and white – original beauty you can trust!
Like · Comment · Share · 28 October 2013



But most of the time, they are much more subtly reaching out to their target audience of women, with inspiring photos about friendship...


 **Dove**
Side by side or miles apart, friends are forever close to your heart! Tag your far flung friends to let them know you're thinking of them!

...hard-edged discussions about real-life issues...

 **Dove**
Would you ask a stranger if you were pretty? Louise Orwin examines why scores of young girls take to the net to face judge, jury and executioner? <http://bit.ly/1cbjgmD> We think it's time we educate girls on self confidence – let's make girls unstoppable!



...and some slightly less hard-edged discussions about their beauty regimes.

 **Dove**
Are you a foil on or off kind of person?

HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY

Resist the urge to send out your latest press release on Twitter, and start thinking about what your niche target market wants to hear – rather than what you want to tell them. This can take a big attitude shift, but it's key.

NOT PLANNING YOUR CONTENT AHEAD OF TIME

“I haven’t updated Facebook in 48 hours... What on earth am I going to write about?... I’m completely uninspired!”



Does that sound familiar?

Working on the hoof is a problem that plagues everyone in the workplace. When it comes to social media, the result is that the content of your campaign is not as well thought out as it could be – and does not consistently align with your goals and strategy.

The solution? Create a content schedule, which will map out what themes to follow, and what material you need to produce in the month, quarter and even half-year ahead. You can be incredibly detailed, planning right down to the individual Tweet or YouTube video.

Although this sounds like a lot of work – and is – it will ultimately make your life a lot simpler. You will never have to scramble around for something to write about.

Much of the material can be created ahead, in chunks – for example, why don't you write all your Tweets about your new product in one afternoon, and then spread them over the next couple of months?

Best of all, everything you produce will be on-message and effective.

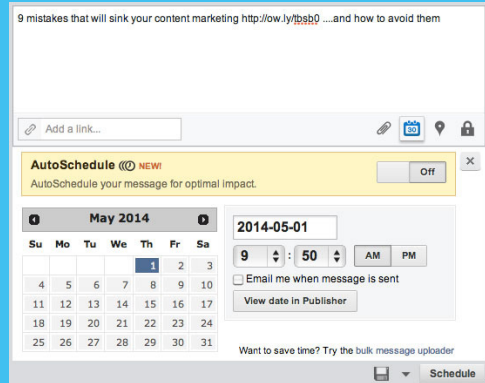
NOT PLANNING YOUR CONTENT AHEAD OF TIME

HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY

Use Hootsuite to upload batches of pre-scheduled Tweets, as well as updates on Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+ and Wordpress. You can programme them to be sent out over a year ahead!

After you compose your message, pick the platforms on which you want to post it. Then click on the calendar icon, and select a time and date.

Hootsuite can even pick the ideal time for you. What an incredible time-saver.



...WHOOOPS!

It was one of the most misjudged Tweets ever. At the end of the work day, Tesco's social media team sent out a message to over 47,000 followers, which read, "It's sleepy time, so we're off to hit the hay!"

Unfortunately, the supermarket giant was right in the middle a national scandal over the revelation that some of its beef products contained large amounts of... horsemeat. The tactless Tweet went viral, the papers picked up on it, and the company was forced to issue a humiliating apology.

It turned out that the Tweet was written several days earlier, before the horsemeat story broke. The moral of the story: If you're going to pre-schedule Tweets, make sure they're reviewed before publication!



Many companies only do one thing on social media: they write. Blog posts, Tweets, Facebook posts. It's words, words, words.

But that's not the best way to go about it. Research has shown time and again that what social media users want is actually images and videos. In fact,

- Facebook posts with images are twice as likely to be shared as text-only posts and links. Those with a clear focal point and strong colours do best. Videos are 12 times more likely to be shared!
- On Twitter, messages containing a picture are 91% more likely to be engaged with than text only.
- Uploading photos is the most popular activity on both Facebook and Google+
- Users are a whopping 85% more likely to purchase a product after watching a video about it.

Turns out it's true: a picture really is worth 1,000 words.

HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY

Start attaching images to all your written content. To attach a picture to your Twitter post, have you ever noticed the little camera icon?



Think, too, when you can use visuals to tell the whole story. Instead of writing up a long interview with your CEO – can you video them? Can the statistics in your latest customer survey be turned into a colourful infographic? They will suddenly seem so much more exciting....

Which would you rather click on?

THIS



OR THIS



I'll be brief about this one – because that's the point.

Across all the social media platforms, shorter content does better. People nowadays just don't have the attention span.

On Twitter, you're allowed just 140 characters – but tweets with 70-100 characters get the most engagement. You need to leave at least 20 characters if you want to be retweeted, so there's room for the re-tweeter's own handle and comments.

On Facebook, posts between 100 and 250 characters get around 60% more likes, comments and shares than posts with over 250 characters. That's less than three lines of text!

On YouTube, 29% of the most popular videos are less than a minute in length.

On LinkedIn, go for 16-25 words.

HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY

When posting links, use a site like bit.ly, tinyurl.com or ow.ly to shorten them, saving valuable space.

Then, whatever you're writing – cut, cut, cut!

Connect with Miriam on Twitter and LinkedIn for more FREE tips on creating content that performs!



[@bstormdigital](https://twitter.com/bstormdigital)



uk.linkedin.com/in/miriamshaviv/

There is no definitive rule as to how often you should post on social media to be effective. But one thing's for sure: if you're only tweeting once a day, and your Facebook page isn't touched from one week to the next, you are never going to build up your readership.

So what should you aim for? As a rule of thumb:

Of the major platforms, update **Twitter** most often – six times a day is ideal.

Keep in mind that because the audience at 9am is not necessarily the same audience as at 3pm, it's okay to repeat some posts. You will also be responding to other people's Tweets.

To maximise the chances of your fans seeing your material on **Facebook**, post two to three times daily, with a gap of at least three or four hours between posts.

On **LinkedIn**, actively participate in forums and groups, but post links once a day.

Blog every day or two. You need to keep your website lively to bring that audience back again and again. It's also great for SEO purposes.

Send out **email newsletters** on a regular basis: Weekly, every two weeks or every month.

Update **Google+** twice a day minimum.

HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY:



A lot of what you produce can be shared across different platforms. Write a short blog post, then tweet the link, ask your fans for their feedback on Facebook, and use it to showcase your value-added content in your next email newsletter. There you go: Four in one!

TIP: Don't update when you have nothing to say. You will just annoy people. This is where your content schedule (Mistake #3) will come in handy!

TIP: Not everything you post to social media has to be original. Don't forget to share great material from elsewhere!

NOT HELPING YOUR USERS TOWARDS A SALE

Ok, I know. Mistake #3 was selling too hard. But that doesn't mean you should forget about selling altogether.

There are subtle ways to nudge your audience towards that buy – or whatever action you want them to take (register for your email newsletter? Join your charity? Visit your website more frequently?). They are called **'calls to action'**.

At the end of every piece of content, you need to figure out what next step you want the user to take. If, for example, they have just browsed a blog post comparing your prices to your rivals', they are probably gearing up for a buy.

Would it not be useful to include a link to your sales page? Or give them the option of a call from your sales team?

Or maybe they have downloaded your useful guide to power tools. Perhaps you can ask for their email address so that you can send them more attractive information in the future – and begin to build a relationship with them?

Always think ahead, and consider how you can encourage your audience to deepen their relationship with you.



HOW YOU CAN EASILY START TODAY:



Make buying easy! You wouldn't believe how many companies make customers jump through hoops to complete that sale.



Check that your contact details are clearly visible on every page of your website and social media pages. Make sure that customers do not have to click through reams of pages just to get to that final sales page.



Don't ask them to fill in lengthy forms before they get information from you.

NOT MONITORING YOUR STATS

No social campaign is perfect from the get-go. Some tactics just don't work. Others need refining. Or perhaps you are not producing enough of your most popular content.

The only way to know for sure is to monitor the performance of your content. Some measures are obvious: How many 'likes' do your Facebook posts receive? Which get the most interaction? Which are ignored?

Others take a little more digging.

How many – and which – of your posts resulted in people clicking through to your website? How many of your new Twitter followers are influential amongst your target market? How many leads did you generate online? Which competitions and offers actually resulted in sales?

Act on this information, and your campaign will become increasingly, and unbeatably, powerful.

HOW YOU CAN START TODAY:



Sign up to Hootsuite, which will give you customised analytics reports about your activity on all the platforms it supports, including Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Google+.

Special offer for my readers!

Get a **FREE 30 day trial** of HootSuite Pro by clicking on the image below



- Schedule and automatically publish hundreds of messages
- Manage and post to multiple social profiles
- Add up to 9 team members to your account
- And, of course, track the performance of your social media campaign!

THAT'S IT!

You have now discovered the top 9 mistakes in content marketing.

Useful? Want to know the next 9 mistakes, so you can avoid making them?

How about discovering an unbeatable way to deliver the exact content your target market is looking for?

To find out how you can achieve success on social media, visit www.brainstorm-digital.co.uk for details of our bespoke programmes, workshops, live online meetings, strategic guidance and blog, where I share with you:

- The top four ways businesses use social media to grow
- Which "quick wins" will make a difference to your social media straight away
- How to find great content in unexpected places (even in your boring company reports – yes, really!)
- How to master using material again and again – without it going stale
- Crucial 'do's' and 'don'ts' for each of the major social media channels, which will save you time and money

Wishing you every success in achieving your social media goals.



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PS. Any questions?
Why don't you email me on
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Enjoyed this guide? Know anyone else who might find it useful?
Please spread the word:

