

BEST PRACTICES FOR SHARING

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After you've created or curated material, **it's time to share** it through your company's social media accounts. Here are the basics of sharing that are generally accepted as "best practices."

Be brief

Brevity beats verbosity in social media. You're competing with millions of posts every day. People make snap judgments and move right along if you don't capture their interest at a glance.

My experience is that the sweet spot for posts of curated content is two or three sentences on Google+ and Facebook and 100 characters on Twitter. The sweet spot for content that you create, such as blog posts, is 500 to 1,000 words.

Be visual

Every post—literally every post—should contain "eye candy" in the form of a picture, graphic, or video. According to a study from Skyword, "On average, total views increased by 94% if a published article contained a relevant photograph or infographic when compared to articles without an image in the same category."

Be early

The best time for me to share posts is mornings Pacific time because that's when most of my audience is awake and on the computer. Try some experiments to see if mornings are good for your posts, too. Automate your posts so scheduling is easy to do, and experimentation is possible too.

Be thankful

every post with curated content should link to its source. Here's what these links accomplish:

- › Enable readers to learn more from the source
- › Send traffic to the source as an act of gratitude
- › Increase your visibility and popularity with bloggers and websites

When you find content because of someone else's post, use this protocol: Compose and share a post with a link to the source and then add a "hat-tip" or "h/t" to the person who brought it to your attention.

Be bulleted

If your post on Google+, Facebook, and LinkedIn is longer than four paragraphs, use a bulleted or numbered list. This makes it easier for people to read because the information is organized into smaller chunks and reduces the TLDR effect (too long; didn't read).

Be sly

Posts that are titled “How to...,” “Top Ten...,” and “The Ultimate...” are difficult to ignore. Something about these words says “This is going to be practical and useful.” The folks at [Twelveskip](#) compiled [a list of 100+ great titles](#), so be sly and use it. My favorites from this list are:

How to Rock . . .	Essential Steps to . . .
Quick Guide: . . .	Most Popular Ways to . . .
A Complete Guide to . . .	Tips for Busy . . .
Questions You Should Ask Before . . .	Tactics to . . .
Rules for . . .	What No One Tells You About . . .

Be found

Hashtags are a beautiful thing. They connect posts from people all over the world and add structure to an unstructured ecosystem. When you add a hashtag to a post, you are telling people that the post is relevant to a shared topic.

Consider adding two or three hashtags to your posts. However, if you use more than that, and you look like an #idiot who's trying to #gamethesystem. Also, don't use hashtags on Pinterest because people hate them there—perhaps because hashtags interfere with the minimal-text sensibilities of Pinterest posts.

Be promotional

I hardly ever do this as a matter of pride and principle, but paying to promote posts on Pinterest, Facebook, and Twitter can work. This ensures that more people see your posts. Facebook, in particular, is becoming a “pay to play” platform.

The decision comes down to a calculation of whether the revenue justifies the expense of paying for these views. For example, you could promote a post with a call to action to buy your product. Then the additional sales (and perhaps brand awareness) are either worth it or not.

If you refuse to promote your posts, you can “pin” your posts to the top of your page on Facebook and Twitter. This means that the post remains as the first visible story at the top of your Timeline. This isn't as effective as paying for promotion, but it's free.

Be analytical

You can improve the relevance of your content by analyzing the characteristics of people who follow you. For example, [Facebook's analytics](#) are a rich resource to find out who your fans are, and this is a great place to start for planning future content for Facebook.

[LikeAlyzer](#) is useful to check your Facebook Pages and tweak the content, types of posts, and when you're sharing.

For Twitter, you can use a service such as [SocialBro](#) to get reports on who follows you, find new people to follow, and determine how your content is doing. You can also get similar reports in [Sprout Social](#) and [Hootsuite](#).