

Promote! Promote! Promote!

THE BASIC SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

by Peter Miller, Literary Lion



This guide about social media and brand building is a reminder for all authors to entrench themselves in the world of social media, communities, and followers on a daily basis. It's possible that some of you who read any of the previous versions know a lot of what I'm sharing with you, but it's my hope that I will inspire you in some way so that you will continue to build your brand. Good luck!

Peter Miller, Literary Lion

To be commercially successful, all authors need to embrace social media and keep up with the constant changes taking place in the publishing world today. Adapting to and accepting this ever-changing environment is vital for establishing a fan base and attracting the attention of the most important people in every author's life—agents, editors, and especially readers.

Although this can be daunting to some - self-promotion is much different than writing, after all - look at it as another opportunity to be in touch with readers and build up your community online. Taking ownership and prioritizing your social media outlets puts you in a position to properly manage your brand, voice, and vision. It is a free, accessible means by which to improve yourself as an author and gain a greater understanding of the people who are interested in your work.

As recently as the early 2000s, having your own personal website was enough to make you seem "hip" or "cool," and professional. With all the digital content surfacing on the internet and new social media options popping up by the second, it is not only important but an absolute prerequisite to have a brilliant, state-of-the-art website and also to develop and engage in using major social media marketing tools such as:

Facebook
YouTube
Instagram
Twitter
LinkedIn

Reddit
Pinterest
Tumblr
Tiktok

Remember, social media marketing is 100% free publicity! Also note that knowing how to navigate the internet or having someone who can do it for you is an essential component of publishing in the "modern world."

Every major corporation and public figure has an Instagram profile, Facebook business page, and "Tweets" on Twitter. If you wish to reach any level of success, it is critical that you do the same. If you're not on this bandwagon, not only does it make you look *un*-hip and *un*professional, it more importantly translates that you lack dedication to both yourself and the success of your work. Your website, along with your social media content and pages, initially speaks for you even more than your work or your words in the digital world; it gives the audience a chance to get to know you. After all, audiences are drawn to the people behind the brand. This is the current paradigm of the new digital world in which we live, let's embrace it! Once these platforms are set up, you can use them to leverage your presence and ensure your voice is heard while building your brand in this modern online world.

All social media sites require setup, along with daily dedication to add content that engages readers to ultimately gain more 'LIKES,' followers, or other such demonstrations of interest. The number of 'LIKES' essentially indicates how far your voice and presence travels in the digital world. The great news is that once you understand how to leverage these media outlets, they can become your best friends and work to your advantage with just a few simple clicks. You can learn to do this or hire someone else to manage it for you. So, you must prepare and train yourself to invest time, energy and money in building your brand on a regular basis. Building your brand and online community will tremendously benefit your career in the long run.

Today when publishers look at a new author, they are evaluating the strength as well as the "reach" of the author's existing social media presence. In fact, building this online presence should be the first step that every aspiring author takes. Publishers are reluctant to work with an author today who has not invested both time and energy to build an online identity.

**TIP: It may seem silly to point this out, but be sure to remind yourself that the people you communicate with online are as real as anyone you would meet in person, and should be treated with the same respect and courtesy you would give people normally. Perhaps more; also remember that anything you say through your social media lasts forever, even if it is subsequently deleted. If one off-color comment or meltdown can destroy full-fledged celebrities, it can do the same for your burgeoning career in writing.*

Here is a basic explanation of the current important social media platforms to develop:

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

1. YouTube

"Youtube is the world's second-most visited website." (Ref: Hootsuite 2020)

"Users view more than 1 billion hours of video each day on YouTube." (Ref: Youtube 2020)

"Viewers retain 95% of a message when they watch it in a video, compared to 10% when reading it in text." (Ref: Insivia 2020)

Video platforms such as YouTube, Vimeo, Dailymotion etc. also require your attention. In order to improve your ever-important rankings with search engines like Google, it is vital that you embrace video content on the web—both through your website and social media. Search algorithms weigh video content on the web as being more important and/or interesting. Thus, it will increase your business visibility.

YouTube Pros

- **Improve SEO.**
- **Ease of use.**
- **You can get a large amount of information to many people in a short period of time.**

YouTube Cons

- **Because videos are public, anyone can access them.**
- **It is possible for others to download your videos without your permission (Vimeo allows you to have a secure password restricting access.)**
- **No longer able to generate passive income at previous levels due to advertisers pulling out. Now, more people must watch a video for longer durations to generate income.**

2. Instagram

"Instagram currently has 200 million monthly active users." (Ref: Our Social Times 2020)

"Engagement rates on Instagram are 15 times higher than Facebook and 20 higher than Twitter." (Ref: Our Social Times 2020)

Instagram is primarily an image focused platform. Primarily used for photo-sharing, Instagram (now owned by Facebook) has become very popular. Photos and videos

can be added to your profile and shared with followers. Although there are limited features, people love the content shared on it.

Instagram Stories is a feature that allows users to take photos, add effects and layers, and create a story. This feature basically enables you to share multiple photos and videos, and they appear together in a slideshow format. Images uploaded to a user's story expire after 24 hours.

Instagram Pros

- Reach those who rely more on visual than anything else.
- Many Instagram users don't pay a great deal of attention to Facebook, so you will reach a new audience.
- Your followers will do most of the work if you post an appealing photo.

Instagram Cons

- Instagram users are, for the most part, younger.
- Algorithms often make it difficult for posts to be seen.
- Not as malleable in terms of posting anything, anywhere. For instance, URLs cannot be posted in a description's body.
- Controversy about pornography, executions, shootings, etc.

3. Facebook

"Facebook is the world's third-most visited website." (Ref: Hootsuite 2020)

"1.62 billion users visit Facebook daily." (Ref: Sprout Social 2020)

Most people have a Facebook account and use their personal timelines to keep in touch with distant relatives or reconnect with long-lost classmates. Some people even use Facebook as their main source of web interaction, and Facebook Messenger often serves as their email account. Facebook has in excess of two billion monthly active users worldwide.

Regardless of the enjoyment your personal Facebook timeline may provide, this is not where you want to post or maintain your business presence. It is essential to build your Facebook business page(s) separately from your personal timeline. One reason is because Facebook limits the number of friends you may have on your timeline to 5,000 (although there is no limit to the number of followers you may have). Facebook allows an unlimited number of likes on a business page. Also, integrating your personal life with your professional life is never a good idea. It is wise to keep your personal contact information and images separate from your business page. If you must combine them, do it tactfully.

Set your goal to make your Facebook business page the most important and active page on the internet. Your page is designed to keep people visiting and information

accessible, and it is easy to customize it to serve your needs. Your page is where people get to know more about your writing, view your updates, and receive invitations to participate in the activities and events you create. In the past, personal websites and blogs functioned as the main venues on the internet. In today's business world, to prove you are a serious professional on top of your game, you must keep up with the growing online digital interaction.

Facebook Pros

- **Creates a professional look.**
- **Customize applications, link blog posts, and/or tweets in one place.**
- **People can easily like or follow your page from either Facebook or your website.**
- **Once your page is set up, updates are easily manageable with some tutoring or by outsourcing social management. (i.e., photo/video upload, etc.).**
- **You can easily target potential followers with Facebook advertising and even target more specific groups by age, gender, interests, and location.**
- **Facebook helps improve your SEO (Search Engine Optimization) for your website when linking them. This is easily accomplished and will result in increased traffic. *[Note: Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the concept of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results.]***

Facebook Cons

- **Your total likes and followers are public on your page. Hence, people will judge you based on how many likes and followers you have (recommended minimum is three digits; 1000+ is ideal). Note that this is true for most social media platforms.**
- **As the page owner, you are responsible for daily updates and content. A page without input appears stagnant or "dead," offers no incentive to return, and ranks less in the algorithm minimizing visibility to your audience.**
- **Likes and followers will not automatically grow; it is your job to increase those numbers.**

**TIP: There are several ways to increase your likes and followers. At first this may seem to be a tedious task; however, performing consistent daily strategies designed to strengthen your Facebook presence is a process that will enhance your overall brand.*

A few examples of how to grow your likes and followers:

- **Connect with Other Page Managers/Administrators**
Finding other pages that are in your field or share your interests can be helpful. Contacting the managers/administrators and offering to cross-promote each other is a powerful tool to increase your visibility on Facebook.

- **Routinely Post Original, Trending, and Interesting Content**
When Facebook users share one of your posts, your page name and brand visibility travels with it. Users will be more apt to share your posts if they are interesting and original. Posting videos and photos will help engage and build your audience.
- **Tag and Link Your Page to Your Personal Timeline**
Because pages are not seen as much in news feeds, it's important to post occasionally about your page on your timeline. (Note: Typing "@" before your business page name will tag it and make it easier for users to click on it and go directly to your page.)
- **Add Facebook to Everything**
Your website, your email signature, your blog, your other social media accounts, etc. That way it will always be visible to possible followers. You may use images that Facebook provides and link your page address to the image when you post it on your website, to increase visibility and access.
- **Participate on Facebook as your Facebook Business Page**
Using your page to react to, comment on, and share posts of others (rather than your personal timeline profile) will increase the visibility of your page.
- **Run Contests**
For example, "If you like or follow my page, you will be entered into a drawing for a signed copy of my new book."
- **Advertise on Facebook**
There are many tools and options available to advertise your business page on Facebook, which will definitely help increase your visibility. Facebook provides detailed instructions on publishing tools, promotions, insights, and lots of help to publicize your page. Note that there is a cost for some of these options.

4. Twitter

"Twitter boasts 330 million monthly active users (as of 2019 Q1). Of these, more than 40 percent, or more specifically, 145 million, use the service on a daily basis." (Ref: Twitter, 2019).

Although not as elaborate as Facebook or your website, a Twitter account is a must when developing an online presence. Creating your account and tweeting is actually quite simple. Growing your number of followers is the more challenging task; however, this can be achieved using effective strategies. Here are a few tips:

- **Use a short user name: Tweets are limited to 280 characters now (twice as much as previously), so even a few extra characters in your user name can make a huge difference.**

- **Use anything besides the default background:** Just like cookie-cutter websites, a default background can make a Twitter page seem lazy. Get creative!
- **Although not as effective as they used to be, hashtags allow people to categorize their tweets. Make use of hashtags to draw people interested in your chosen topics, such as #writing, #horror, #bibliophile, etc.**
- **Engage the community:** Being active on Twitter cultivates more followers and prevents your Twitter feed from becoming nothing but a long list of self-promotion posts.

Twitter Pros

- **Smart, simple, sexy, and informative.**
- **Text heavy content style. Immediately able to attach photos, make announcements, and release information.**
- **When used correctly, Twitter is a very effective marketing tool.**
- **Followers can retweet what you have posted.**
- **The easiest way to get your ideas and thoughts online.**

Twitter Cons

- **Growing your followers is not necessarily simple or easy.**
- **Finding a balance: Too much tweeting is annoying. Not enough tweeting diminishes your online presence.**
- **Echo chamber**

5. Pinterest

"Pinterest has more than 320 million monthly active users." (Sprout Social 2020)

"89% of US Pinners use Pinterest for inspiration in their path to purchase. And it's not just inspiration that consumers are looking for. 47% of Pinners log onto the site specifically to shop, making it nearly four times more effective at generating sales than other social platforms." (Ref: Sprout Social 2020)

Although frequently thought of as solely a platform for sharing pictures, Pinterest can be used to both access new groups of potential readers and to maximize your SEO potential. Here are a few tips that can help you make maximum use of this platform:

- **Always categorize your boards:** Doing so helps both people and search engines find your content.

- **Pin images from your website or blog:** Users clicking these images will be directed to the source website.
- **Immerse yourself in the community and pin a wide variety of users:** The more you see and share, the more other people will have the opportunity to see your content.
- **Be sure to link and reference your other social media outlets, such as Facebook or your personal blog.** Conversely, be sure to mention Pinterest on your other outlets.
- **Pin images relating to your book, such as historically accurate clothing or architecture.**
- **As always, post frequently and communicate with your followers to let people get to know you.**

Pinterest Pros

- **The half-life of a pin is 3.5 months, meaning it takes a pin 3.5 months to get 50% of its engagement. (In contrast, the half life of a tweet is only 24 minutes and the half life of a Facebook post is only 90 minutes.)**
- **Allows for selective following:** Images are part of separate boards rather than all grouped together. People can follow as many boards as they like, which makes it easier to appeal to more people. All boards are open: Users can view any image pinned anywhere
- **There is no pressure to leave comments:** Users can simply follow boards and re-pin images.
- **Pinboard images are hyperlinked to their source, which helps drive traffic from Pinterest to external sites. Pinterest's traffic to other platforms outranks both Twitter and YouTube.**

Pinterest Cons

- **Pinterest attracts a very specific audience.**
- **High-quality images are required.**

6. LinkedIn

"LinkedIn now has over 500 million members." (Ref: Foundation.Co 2020)

"LinkedIn makes up more than 50% of all social traffic to B2B websites & blogs." (Ref: Foundation.Co 2020)

LinkedIn is a great networking tool in today's business world. By building your resume and cultivating your network, you have the opportunity to increase your

business visibility online. To an author, LinkedIn may not initially appear to be as prominent a social marketing tool; however, industry professionals interact and exchange information here on a daily basis. Remember, the internet is a continuously-growing platform where the *business* of publishing books takes place.

One great benefit that LinkedIn offers is the option to expand your network. You can enroll in one or more existing groups to meet new contacts. Additionally, you may choose to create your own group to encourage other like-minded people to join you.

LinkedIn Pros

- Expand your business network.
- Meet industry professionals.
- Allows others to recommend/endorse you.

LinkedIn Cons

- A lot of LinkedIn users are salespeople from companies who bombard you with “Link with Me” requests that are purely “sales” pitches. This can become annoying.
- Other than the “Answers” section, LinkedIn provides limited interactivity when compared to other social networking sites.
- “Request to Be Linked” process is slow and time consuming, and not as easy as the “like” or “follow” buttons on Facebook and Twitter.

7. Other Social Media Sites: Reddit, Tumblr, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.

These sites also help to build your fan base and establish you as an author. Though these are less conventional as some of the others, they may be useful for reaching out to people who visit these platforms more frequently than others.

8. Blogging

Bloggging (online article writing) is a great way of getting promoted through online publications. This comes in handy when trying to reach an audience through Google. If your aim is to hit a more wide-scale audience, you may want to consider blogging and start using websites that allow article submissions.

By submitting your well-written articles to many different channels, you are guaranteeing yourself a lot of followers because your online work will reach its intended readers, from those who do a simple Google search on the topic about which you just composed an article. The more articles and websites that you submit to, the more renowned your writing will become online and the more you will continue to build a strong following.

WordPress may be a well-known blogging platform, but it is not the best for those looking to attract a lot of like minded readers. WordPress limits your interaction by only spreading your content to your inner circle. Below is a list of websites that you should start submitting your full-length articles to in order to start gaining major insight:

Goodreads*	http://www.goodreads.com/
Indie Writers Support	http://indiewritersupport.com/
Yahoo Group	https://groups.yahoo.com/neo
Google Groups	https://groups.google.com/forum/#!overview
Quora	https://www.quora.com/
LiveJournal	http://www.livejournal.com/
EzineArticle	http://ezinearticles.com/
Hubpages	http://hubpages.com/
Bukisa	http://www.bukisa.com/
ArticleBase	http://www.articlesbase.com/
Blogger	https://www.blogger.com
Wordpress	https://wordpress.com/

* Goodreads, a literary social media website owned and run by Amazon, can be extremely useful for speaking with other authors and marketing your book, particularly in regards to marketing and publication on Amazon itself. There are many resources available via Goodreads. For example, Listopia (<https://www.goodreads.com/list>) allows people to create and vote on lists of books, ranging from lists like “Funniest Books of All Time” to “Characters That Most Closely Resemble Don Draper.” It is easy to include one’s own book on applicable lists and can both increase exposure and encourage new readers to decide for themselves where your work should rank on the list.

Blogging Pros

- Increases your SEO.
- Engaging content can grow your brand.
- Is easy to setup and maintain.

Blogging Cons

- Requires a consistent time commitment—daily, most preferably.

ENDORSEMENTS

An important, frequently neglected aspect of building a personal brand is the endorsement of authors, celebrities, and personalities. Even if you do not personally know any people who match that description, remember that each of those people was once in the same position as you and may be inclined to support promising work if you show it to them. In addition to garnering additional attention from people who

respect the people endorsing you, this also speaks well of the quality of your work and further entices publishers to take a closer look at your writing.

OTHER RESOURCES

There are countless tools and resources online, many of which are free, that can assist in your understanding and application of social media. Please note that I am not endorsing or suggesting that you purchase these specific products or services, as your personal needs and preferences will require independent research to find the best match for you. Here are a few examples.

Auto Video Creator

Auto Video Creator is an inexpensive alternative to programs like Powerpoint or Animoto is. It offers simplified tools for creating speaking slides. For more information, visit <http://www.readersbooks.info/wp-content/plugins/oiopub-direct/purchase.php?do=custom&item=14>.

Quantum Leap Webinars

Web seminars (Webinars) are another means to learn what people are talking about regarding self-marketing, and determine what strategies are effective. Quantum Leap Webinars are only one such example. There are numerous webinars and video lessons on these topics. This website requires registration, as many do, but it has an ongoing series on digital marketing and promotion. For more information, visit <https://attendee.gotowebinar.com/register/5805771402333970946>.

PROMOTIONAL SUGGESTIONS

In an age in which digital media is a constant barrage of information, it is important to stay on top of all social media. Although many of you have already published your works, keep the following ideas in mind while gathering reviews and/or working on your next work.

- **When you get an idea for your book, create a short video or blog post about the book idea with an email sign-up form. Months down the track, when the book is actually written, you will have a group of consumers who are already excited about it.**
- **Before you debut your book to the world, you need some reviews. Reviews are vital to authors because they are your “social proof” that will legitimize your work to new readers. Before the book’s release, send out a copy of your book to friends, family, and those that follow you online who would be willing to review your work. If you don’t know anyone who is willing to review your**

book, there are websites that enable authors to get free, ethical reviews, such as <http://www.goodreads.com/>.

- **Once your book is published, encourage your early readers to leave reviews. Expect less than 50% of readers to submit a review. They don't all have to be rave reviews; in fact, a few honest critiques of your work will give more authenticity than a bunch of superficial praise.**
- **The only form of compensation you are allowed to offer for a review of your book, if any, is a free copy of the book being reviewed. The reviewer is also obligated to disclose that they received a free copy of the book in exchange for a review. While some people may not take solicited reviews as seriously, it is a good way to both generate reviews and get reviews from people you know are capable of reviewing the book well.**
- **Although it is great to have the support of friends, family, and other people close to you in your writing efforts, keep in mind that people who have a close personal connection to you are not allowed to leave reviews on Amazon. Instead, these people are encouraged to participate in the book discussion page and recommend or promote the book other places online.**
- **It's always good to promote your book on Amazon a few days before the book is published. Amazon only allows reviews a few days before the book is published. You can circumvent this by publishing your book a week before you tell anyone about it. By doing it this way, you can build up a decent amount of early reviews. This can help you sell your book to new readers. On the date of the "official" release, people viewing your page will see some of the good reviews on your book.**

LAUNCHING YOUR NEW EBOOK

After you gather some reviews, it's time to launch your eBook. Although you want to regularly schedule time to make sure that each book launch is unique, there are a few things that you can uniformly do each time:

- **Offer an incentive for those who buy the book. This can be a time-sensitive offer or ongoing opportunity. Michael Hyatt, author of the article "How to Successfully Self Publish an E-Book," mentions Andy Traub, who made over \$20,000 in 90 days with an eBook because he gave away the audiobook, a 30-day email course, and exclusive membership to an online community with his book.**
- **Promoting is the key to an e-book success. Clicktotweet.com is a great source of sending out messages that people can easily share. Hootsuite.com also gives**

you the capability of sending out messages from your Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram accounts simultaneously. You can also use a team of volunteers to help promote your work.

- **Share your book with online forums and book directories. Kimanzi Constable is another success story mentioned in Hyatt's article; he was able to sell over 80,000 copies of his book by using online forums.**
- **People love freebies! Another strategy to achieving eBook Success is to give the book away. Authors who have struggled with selling more than a few hundred copies of their book have decided to give away a free e-book version for a limited time. Studies conducted by Amazon indicate that there is often a rise in paid units sold after a book has been offered at a discount or for free.**

THE PRICE IS RIGHT

Statistics show that a large percentage of people who read eBooks are extremely sensitive to price. New authors are especially under the scrutiny of price. For example, Darcie Chan, eBook author of the bestselling novel *The Mill River Recluse*, states, "I only wanted to get my work out there over time and gauge people's responses to it. For that reason, I lowered the price to \$0.99. I think it is true that readers are more willing to take a chance on a completely unknown author at that price point, and I definitely wanted to encourage people to take a chance on me."

Lowering the price will give people a chance to give your novel a try and will establish a fan base. Keep in mind, however, that books on Amazon have to be between the range of \$2.99 and \$9.99 to qualify for the 70% royalty rate—Books outside this range will only earn 35% royalties.

OTHER ADVICE

A good strategy when planning to market your book online is to research what strategies have been or are currently successful for books that are similar to yours. Strategies can vary greatly based on the audience and competition unique to each subject and genre, which influences price, desired social media, and numerous other aspects of your approach.

While constant activity on your social media is definitely a must, it is advisable to sometimes engage other people in topics not related to your book. If the only updates on your outlets are constant reminders that the book exists, people will grow tired of the content. It alienates people who have already purchased the book and is not compelling to potential new readers. Talking about other topics, such as the writing process, interests, or reader questions, can keep people coming back to the site and generates interest in you and your work.

BUILDING YOUR BRAND

The wide variety of social media outlets and their rapid evolution can certainly be overwhelming, even to people who have grown up immersed in this technology. Although your social media presence is unquestionably necessary, you do not need to be a part of all of them. Begin with the basics, establish what you are initially comfortable with handling online, and determine what social media outlets would be best for presenting your work. Much like writing, your presence online is an extension of yourself—effectively communicating who you are will let people know what to expect from your book, captivating the audience you’re looking for and encouraging those people to share it with others.

We wish you the best of luck in establishing your social media presence and hope that this guide has been helpful and informative!

Remember every author’s four favorite words: **“The End”** and **“Bidding War.”**