

Creating a Social Media Calendar

By Elizabeth Strehl

Who: Although the social media calendar is the primary responsibility of the Social Media Manager (That's you!), it involves everyone in the class and the adviser. It should be something that—together as a team—we agree upon and are able to help maintain. You and your committee will put one month together and share it with the class for discussion. Based upon that discussion, you can make adjustments, if needed, and, with the help of your committee, finish the calendar for the year.

What: A social media calendar is an organized list of what will be posted to social media and when. We have Instagram and Facebook accounts, and we have access to YouTube and Twitter. Our Instagram is the most popular with students and can be the focus, but you can choose to incorporate others and try to grow their presence.

When: By creating a social media calendar at the start of the year, you're doing the hardest part of the work upfront. Although adjustments might be needed (and that's fine!), you're basically mapping out the bulk of your job for the next nine months. Then, by using a resource like SocialChamp, you can schedule posts, freeing up your time for the fun part: content creation.

Where: The calendar should be visible to all. I recommend creating a spreadsheet of some form and sharing it with the class. (I have templates for you to work from.)

Why: Several reasons! Although time-consuming at the start, it will save you time and stress later. Also, if you're out for any reason, our social media accounts can keep flourishing because you've done the legwork needed. This will also allow us to keep our content consistent, and better marketing means better sales.

This task will be the hardest this year because it's the first year. Next year's Social Media Manager will have your hard work to base their calendar upon.

This is a legacy you're leaving the program.

How: Ah! Now for the fun part!

Directions

This is a lengthy document. I opted to give you more than you could use rather than too little. As you work through, keep the following in mind:

1. You were chosen for the role of Social Media Manager because you have a good head on your shoulders, work well independently, and have the skills needed to do this task.
2. That being said, you are not alone. You have a committee, other Multimedia Communications minors, the editors, an adviser, and a yearbook rep. Use your people. They are just as much a resource as any website.
3. You do not need to reinvent the wheel. If you see something you like, STEAL it. Templates are called templates for a reason: they are there to be followed.
4. I mapped this out by days, but I've not had a student do this before, so my map might be wrong. The days are a guide, not a mandate. **Don't stress if you're "off-schedule" as long as you're making progress.**
5. You might create something wonderful the first time trying. You might not. Don't be afraid to start over, to revamp, to reassess. You were in my class last year. How many times did we restructure? It's OK.

To get started, click the "Day One" link below. Make sure you review what needs to be turned in or completed each day.

Day One: Get familiar with the concept.

Turn in (handwritten or Google Doc):

1. What value do you see in having a social media calendar?
2. What concerns do you have about having and/or creating one?

Day Two: Strategize.

Turn in (Share a Google Doc.):

1. Write at least three S.M.A.R.T. goals for our social media plan.
2. What "rule" or ratio will our posts follow: 4-1-1, 70-20-10, Rule of Thirds, or something else? Explain your reasoning.

Day Three: Brainstorm.

Turn in (Share a Google Doc or Google Sheet.):

What ideas did you come up with? Turn in a list! If the name/label isn't self-explanatory, include an explanation.

Day Four: Organize your brainstorm.

Look at the list you created for Day Three and consider the rule/ratio you selected for Day Two. **Time to color code!**

Choose categories that make sense for you and your plan. They might include educational, promotional, video, interactive (quizzes, polls), contests, etc.

Do you have enough of each type to follow the rule/ratio selected? Feel free to add new ideas.

Make sure to include a key so we know what each color stands for.

Day Five: Pick a template.

Turn in (handwritten or electronic):

1. Of the seven templates shared, which do you like most? Why?
2. Which do you like least? Why?
3. What is your plan for our calendar? Will you use one of the templates or create your own? Explain.

Day Six: Create a calendar.

Turn in (Share a Google Doc, Google Sheet, or Google Calendar **OR** create directly in Social Champ.):

Plot out the month of September. Just September. We'll review this as a class, discuss, and see if the hive mind can make it even stronger. After that, you can work on the other months.

Day Seven: Familiarize yourself with SocialChamp.

Turn in (handwritten or Google Doc):

1. What value do you see in using SocialChamp?
2. What concerns do you have about using SocialChamp?

Day One: Get familiar with the concept.

- a. Watch [the video here](#) about what a social media calendar is. This video is by HootSuite and there's quite a sales pitch going on. Ignore that part. The information given is good.
- b. Lots of companies have social media marketing tools for sale, so each has their own article. They quickly become redundant, so there's no need to read each closely, but skim through them just to acquaint yourself with the idea and to see what's out there. There's some good but basic information in [this article](#), but you'll need to ignore the sales pitch from Class Intercom. There's also [this article](#) by SemRush and this one by [Social Media Examiner](#). Ignore their sales pitches, too.

Day Two: Strategize.

- a. In the video you watched, the speaker references a Social Media Strategy Template. I've linked that for you [here](#). It doesn't completely apply to us, but read through the slides. They will give you some good questions to think about as you plan. We don't really have competition, but we do want to increase how many followers we have. More followers means more readers and more sales. Pay special attention to the section on S.M.A.R.T. goals and on completing a social media audit.

S.M.A.R.T. goals are really common in education and business. For more information on them, refer to [this site](#) from Indeed.com.

- b. On the calendar you create, we will rotate through types of posts, so before creating that calendar, you need to figure out what types of posts to have.

In essence, every post is promotional. We want our name out there. When people see it, it's a reminder that we're here and we have a product they want. Every post doesn't need to be a blatant sales pitch, though. We want our audience to engage and interact with us. [This article by FinalSite](#) has three different "rules" under Step 2: 4-1-1, 70-20-10, and Rule of Thirds. Decide which seems to best fit our needs (while ignoring yet another sales pitch). You don't need to follow any of them EXACTLY, but use one as a rough guide.

Unlike what that article suggests, we don't need to post multiple times per day on every platform, by the way, so think ratio of types of posts rather than quantity of posts. For us, it's quality over quantity.

One GOOD post per day is better than multiple weak posts.

Days Three and Four: Brainstorm!

Now that you know the types of posts and have an idea of a ratio to follow, it's time to determine content.

The [Walsworth social media calendar](#) has a list of several types on its first page.

This [calendar from FinalSite](#) has lots of great ideas and tips.

Holidays always make for fun and there are some strange ones out there. [This calendar](#) lists all the holidays for each day. These could serve as inspiration for yearbook spirit days and school contests.

HootSuite has a blog that might be very helpful: [“29 Creative Social Media Ideas You Should Try.”](#)

You don't need to be overly specific. At this point, just a list of types of posts (Throwback Thursdays, Spotlight Saturdays, Photo Share, Student Poll, etc.) will suffice. Write down every good idea you have.

Day Five and Six: Templates:

[This model is by Walsworth](#). If you like the set up, you can make a copy and then it's completely editable. [I'm sure there will be a 2022-2023 version. I will share that with you when it's released.]

Pros:

1. Color-coded and sorted so there's a page per month, making it easy to navigate.
2. Very specific. Each day has detail so there's no question about what the task is.

Cons:

1. It's from last year, so dates would need to be changed.
2. It's not all social media but includes live events and reminders. (This could also be considered a pro in some ways. Coordinating live events isn't part of your job description, but you can use social media to help promote such events.)

[This template is by Hootsuite](#). They are seeking customers, so ignore the ads and free trial offers. If you like the set up, you can make a copy and then it's completely editable.

Pros:

1. Very straightforward.
2. Allows you to assign content creators.
3. Has a notes section for each post, so you could track effectiveness. Reflecting as you go is always a good thing.

Cons:

1. Designed more for a newspaper than a yearbook.
2. Set up for four posts per week, but that can easily be changed.

[This template is also by Hootsuite](#). They are seeking customers, so ignore the ads and free trial offers. If you like the set up, you can make a copy and then it's completely editable.

Pros:

1. Color-coded and organized by the four most common types of marketing posts (Promotion, Education, Entertainment, and Inspiration).
2. The Strategy page is great for brainstorming. It has a space for you to write goals and then design the types of posts that will help you reach those goals. It also lets you pick different tactics (Facebook, Instagram, Influencers, Video, Twitter Threads, etc.) All of these can be adjusted to what you want our social media to be.
3. The Evergreen Content Library is a good place to keep notes and links to recurring elements.

Cons:

1. Because this is for a full business and not a school, there are elements that don't fully apply to us, but those can be deleted or ignored.

[This template is by CoSchedule](#). This is the free version of SocialChamp's social media management calendar.

Pros:

1. It integrates with Instagram and Facebook.
2. It's live and interactive, and you can color code.
3. It comes with directions to help you. Here is the [online guide](#).
4. We can use this to schedule posts. Although they do integrate with Google Sheets and Excel, building the calendar directly into the program may be the most efficient.

Cons:

1. Because it's the free version, we are limited to three social media accounts.
2. It is what it is. You won't be able to modify it to make it what you want it to be.
3. It says free forever, but companies come and go. There is a risk that they will go out of business, change policy, etc., and your work could be lost.
4. Not every student will have the password, so class access will be limited.

[This template is by Social Media Examiner](#). If you like the set up, you can make a copy and then it's completely editable.

Pros:

1. Very straightforward calendar.
2. Easy to edit.

Cons:

1. Very general. This is both good and bad. You can add color-coding and such, but that gives you more to do.
2. It's only a one-month calendar, but you can duplicate as needed.

[This template is by Biteable](#). If you like the set up, you can make a copy and then it's completely editable.

Pros:

1. [It comes with a blog that gives some direction](#). Even if you don't choose this template, there is some good information in the blog.
2. It separates the pages by social media platform, allowing you to really cater content (if you want to do that).
3. It has space for links and notes so you can keep a really solid record of what has been done and how well it worked.

Cons:

1. There's a lot of scrolling involved. The first page goes to column AI. This might be more than you want or need.
2. Some of the columns don't really pertain to us, but you can edit the document to make it what you want it to be.

[This template is by SemRush](#). It's a basic spreadsheet. It's a bit of a mess to look at, honestly, but if you like the idea, you can replicate it in a neater form.

Pros:

1. Easy to create.
2. Straightforward.

Cons:

1. The template is a bit of a mess formatting-wise.

Day Seven: Familiarize yourself with SocialChamp.

SocialChamp allows us to upload posts ahead of time and they are automatically posted to social media. This means you don't have to post school content on weekends or holidays and our social media can be updated on a consistent and predictable basis. This does not mean every post needs to go through SocialChamp. Special events and such can always be posted directly.

Why did I pick SocialChamp? Because there's a free version. If you do not like it and can find a better version that is either free or very inexpensive, please share that site with me and we will see what we can do. Or, if you're against using an automated social media posting service, that can also be discussed.

To access our SocialChamp account, [click here](#).

We are registered using the Eclectic gmail account: thelvaeclectic@gmail.com.

The password is the same for SocialChamp as it is for the gmail account.

There's a guide available [here](#) to help you set up our account.

We're allowed three social media integrations. I recommend Instagram Direct, Facebook Page, and Twitter Profile, but you have the options of Instagram Stories and YouTube, as well.