



# How to Become a Social Media Manager

The Essential Social Media Skills Checklist



Like any senior marketing role, a good Social Media Manager needs a wide range of skills for creating engaging content that converts as many followers as possible into loyal customers.

If you're an aspiring Social Media Manager but you're not sure where to start, this guide will help you to identify the essential skills you need to hone for a successful career in social media management.

Before we dive into the key skills you need, let's explore the role and what it entails.

**“Globally, more than four billion people now use social media every month, with around two million new users joining them every day.”— Hootsuite**

## **What is a Social Media Manager?**

A Social Media Manager is the person within an organization who is typically trusted with monitoring, executing, filtering, measuring, and running the overall strategy of the social media presence of a product, brand, corporation or even an individual.

The voice of the company, this senior role may also be referred to as 'Community Manager' (though this title has become slightly outdated). Before the internet, the most similar role was 'Public Relations representative'.



## What Does a Social Media Manager Do?

Social Media Managers create and maintain brand promotions, company information and marketing campaigns for their company across several different social media networks. They also monitor social media analytics using free or paid tools and respond to questions and comments according to the company's voice and guidelines.

Social Media Managers work daily to produce new content for their companies, constantly innovating to push new ideas and formats and measuring how well those ideas perform.

Typically reporting to a Social Media Director (in larger organizations) or the Head of Content or Brand, they work with other creative groups such as marketing and public relations, as well as the legal department, to coordinate campaigns with ongoing company initiatives and execute current marketing campaigns.

Most Social Media Managers are also responsible for external collaborations, mainly with industry influencers—with the aim of diversifying a brand's content offerings while expanding commercial reach across platforms.

It is a position that typically requires a bachelor's degree in marketing, public relations or similar. According to recent surveys, Social Media Managers earn an average salary of [\\$51,222 in the U.S.](#), [\\$86,306 in Australia](#), and [£31,019 in the UK](#).



## What Does a Typical Day Look Like?

Every day, a Social Media Manager might be responsible for setting the strategy for an upcoming product launch, creating a video, designing gifs, coordinating messaging with internal communications teams, running paid advertisements, and much more.

This infographic shows all of the tasks that you may need to manage in just one day.

### The Hectic Schedule of a Social Media Manager

**5:30 AM - 12 PM**

**EMAIL CHECK**

Immediately checks e-mails and alerts missed during the five hours of slumber. Remember, the social media world never sleeps.

**REPLY & RETWEET**

Checks alerts for negative mentions and addresses any issues immediately. Then engages with brand evangelists and replies, retweets, favorites and likes tweets.

**POST**

Posts a video to Instagram and Vine, followed by a status update to Twitter and Facebook.

**PUBLISH**

Publishes a blog entry or status update based on current news.

**SCAN**

Scans news sites and favorite blogs for interesting articles, blog posts or videos to share.

**...FOLLOW UP**

Follows up with the sales team to see if they've delivered the customer testimonial video requested five weeks ago.

**12 PM - 7 PM**

**LUNCH**

Grabs lunch with someone from marketing to discuss how to cross-promote events, ideas and happenings within the company on social. Remembers to take a pic of the amazing sandwich and posts to Instagram.

**REC & UPLOAD**

Records an impromptu video with the CEO, managers and fellow employees, and uploads it to Instagram and Vine.

**WRITE**

Writes another blog entry.

**SKYPE**

Skypes into a conference about corporate microblogging.

**REVISIT**

Revisits the usual social media haunts for follow-ups and supervises periodically throughout the day to make sure things are going smoothly.

**PRESENT**

During the weekly department meeting, provides a crash-course presentation on the importance of RSS feeds, Facebook and Twitter.

**7 PM - THE NEXT DAY**

**BRAND AMBASSADORS. CONTENT MANAGERS. EVANGELISTS.**

These are all words that are often used to describe the constantly evolving social media manager of today. In order to be a successful one, he or she must take on a pretty demanding schedule of constant updates, meetings and tweets — all the while maintaining an effective online presence. Here we offer a glimpse inside a hardworking social media manager's day....

**REVIEW**

Reviews traffic volume, bounce rates and other relevant metrics on Google Analytics.

**SIGN UP**

Registers and marks calendar for the next anticipated Social Media Strategies Summit.

**SCHEDULE TWEET**

Schedules tweets to go out overnight to promote the brand to night owls and those in other countries.

**CHECK**

Checks e-mail one last time on the smartphone before going to bed.

**ZZZZZZ...**

The Hectic Schedule of a Social Media Manager. Credit: Buffer



**“A Social Media Manager will communicate with customers on a daily basis and 99% of that will be in writing.”—Forbes**

## **The Key Skills Checklist**

Now that you know what the role of Social Media Manager involves, let's look at 10 essential skills you will need to be effective in this role.

### **1. Copywriting**

Social Media Managers do a lot of writing; sometimes more than a dozen posts each day.

Each different social network requires a slightly different style of writing or tone of voice. LinkedIn, for example, requires a more professional tone, while Facebook is more light and fun.

SEO copywriting knowledge is also helpful to know. You must be able to create messages that your audience can understand with ease while promoting a positive sentiment for the brand.

Some important forms of writing include:

- Short and effective headline writing
- Engaging introductions
- Structuring text for easy reading (as consumers will skim and scan making subtitles, bullet points and numbering a necessity!)
- Storytelling-style content for long form social media posts
- Digestible statistics in visual formats e.g. infographics



## **2. Research**

Social Media Managers must stay up-to-date with the ever-changing world of social and digital media, the new measurement tools others are using, and what competitors are posting on a daily basis.

Smart managers set up Google Alerts on popular topics and use tools like Feedly, Flipboard and BuzzSumo to keep up with trending content. The dedicated Facebook IQ website, and Twitter's 'What's happening' trending sidebar are also effective ways of keeping up to date with trending topics—and hashtag research can help, too.

Keeping up with trends will help identify areas to focus on that may catch the eye of prospects and cement your company's social media platforms as the place to go for cutting-edge content.

## **3. Search Engine Optimization (SEO)**

Though SEO is often considered a separate department in organizations, it often has a significant amount of influence on other areas, particularly content and social media.

A great Social Media Manager knows this and strives to optimize content on social networks with SEO in mind. When you embrace SEO as part of your social media strategy, you attract a larger audience, leading to more potential customers.

**57% of SEO experts rank content creation and content marketing as the number one way to drive the best results in search marketing. And social media marketing, as well as the use of backlinks, rank as second and third most effective ways to increase traffic in 2020. — [Safari Digital](#)**



When thinking about combining SEO and social media, consider the following questions:

- Do you understand the connection between exposure on social media and increased rankings in the SERPs?
- How will you promote your blog content on social media?
- Do you know how driving traffic to your company's website impacts revenue?

#### **4. Social Media Expertise**

It may seem obvious, but a Social Media Manager needs great social media skills.

Although you can learn these skills over time through research and experimentation, if you're aiming for a job at a large company, you'll need a few years of experience under your belt.

The type of knowledge needed includes:

- Knowing what type of content works best on what platform
- Understanding how to optimize content based on platform
- Ability to engage an audience through social posts
- How to analyze the effectiveness of campaigns across various platforms
- Knowledge of A/B testing
- Demonstrable abilities to produce content with external collaborators and forming valuable social media influencer relationships



It's a good idea to top up your skills on a regular basis through online or micro-learning or by taking advantage of any training initiatives that a company may offer in the area of social media or content marketing.

On average, people have [8.6 social media accounts](#) and spend [two hours and 24 minutes a day on social](#).

## 5. Customer Service Skills

When [54% of customers](#) refer to social media as their customer care option, Social Media Managers need to make sure they have the skills to match.

Customers often look to social media accounts for help answering questions about products and services, and if no one is there to answer those questions (even on nights and weekends), their impressions of that brand will likely sour. The importance of customer service and social media is evident in the numbers:

- **86%** of consumers stop doing business with a company because of a bad social media experience. And, according to VisionCritical, the overall impact of bad customer experiences in the United States is more than **\$537 billion**
- **71%** of online customers recommend a brand to friends and other contacts after a great customer experience
- **80%** of companies think they are delivering superior customer service, where only **8%** of customers believe they are getting one
- Customer experience is emerging as the main brand differentiator, surpassing price or product in terms of value





While a Social Media Manager role is often defined as 9-to-5, it's important to respond to customer comments, questions or requests at any time.

Most managers keep access to their company accounts linked to their mobile devices so they can respond when necessary. Tools such as Buffer or Sprout Social can schedule posts after hours and on the weekends.

## **6. Visual Intelligence**

While much of the content you'll put on social media will be written, visual content is also crucial.

The right gif or photo can be shared hundreds or even thousands of times, and you need to understand the types of images that work well on each social network. It's valuable to have general knowledge of design to create visually appealing graphics to complement posts.

Video is becoming an increasingly important component, so if you can gain skills in that area, it will be extremely helpful. A good manager will know great video when they see it, and most importantly have a firm grasp of social video trends and how they fit into each major network.

## **7. Analytics and Reporting**

Results are key in any industry. Therefore, being able to prove a return on investment is a key skill.

Whether it's organic, owned, or paid media, managers need to accurately measure the ROI of social media. It's possible to do this by using various tools and platforms, and the trick is to implement



systems that can aggregate and integrate social data with the rest of your business metrics.

Understanding how to prove and improve return on investment is also a huge selling point when it comes to landing a job as a Social Media Manager.

## **Defining ROI for social media remains the top concern of 55% of social marketers — Sprout Social**

### **8. Paid Social**

Understanding the relationship between organic and paid social is a huge asset for anyone working in social media, particularly management. After all, one of the most powerful marketing tools at your disposal is your organic social presence.

The beauty of communicating on social media is that it's easy to find out what your customers think, what they expect, and where your company is going wrong. This provides you with a platform to test new ideas and products and put your advertising budget behind the one that will perform.

Whether you're running a paid social ad campaign or just trying to figure out which posts to boost, understanding how you can use social ads to increase your reach or boost your organic ads is a powerful skill for any social media marketing professional.

### **9. Building Connections**

As you may have noticed, we've mentioned influencer marketing and external collaborations—and for good reason.



Not only do social media users trust the opinions of industry influencers, but **89% of experts** state the ROI from influencer marketing is comparable to or better than additional popular marketing channels.

Reaching out to the right collaborators or influencers is an essential skill for any Social Media Manager, particularly when it comes to delivering valuable content to your audience while boosting brand awareness.

In addition to making external connections, Social Media managers must work closely with a host of external departments—from customer service and sales to content marketing and even HR—to deliver successful initiatives or campaigns.

## **10. Adaptability**

Flexibility is important in any marketing role, but even more so in social media management. The social landscape moves so quickly that being adaptive is no longer a professional add-on, it's essential.

It's not enough to be able to schedule posts. You must be able to try out new features and change things up based on new trends as well as the continual testing and analytics that you should be running on your posts.

Once you have the analytics, you also need the flexibility to try new things to make your social media work best for you. A/B testing can help you quickly determine which types of images and copy are working for your company— and those that aren't.



## Conclusion

A career in social media is exciting and fast-paced as social media platforms continuously change while new networks come online on a weekly basis.

The attributes required for becoming a Social Media Manager are based around having a genuine passion for social media, a desire to keep up with new trends & developments, and a positive, adaptable, and experimental approach to your work.

The ten skills outlined in this guide will help to advance your social media career and help you become an in-demand social expert.

Good luck.



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