

Social Media Strategy Primer

VISION STATEMENT

“How does our book engage, inspire, and change the people it reaches through social media?” This is the question that guides our development of digital book marketing strategies in networked environments. Social media offers us an opportunity to **foster conversations** about our books and the larger themes within them that are **participatory and responsive**. The social media strategy document will help us take advantage of that opportunity. Our goal is to present and make present our books in the world.

The social media strategy document will take the biggest, most meaningful, driving ideas of the book (or event) and distill them into smaller parcels of information that, when they reach the right people, will **result in a sale, a share, or a contribution to the conversation**. The achievement of any of these goals helps us uphold Ooligan Press’s mission to publish (and publicize) books that honor the cultural and natural diversity of the Pacific Northwest.

HOW-TO GUIDE

Social media strategy documents outline objectives for using social media to simultaneously reach more readers (garner sales), build Ooligan’s social media presence, and to foster participatory engagement by creating spreadable content that lends itself to remixing, reshaping, or reframing. Ideally, these documents help the marketing lead, project team, and the social media lead to come up with cohesive, actionable, timely messaging about the book to our audience. By identifying a timeline, big ideas (which connect directly with the mission statement of the organization), secondary ideas worth highlighting, specific ways to use each platform, frequency of posting/messaging, metrics for success, how to track those metrics, partner handles, targeted media handles, sample posts, and relevant hashtags, these documents have the potential to use social media to actively market and publicize our books, rather than to simply distribute information about our press and our program.

The step-by-step process for creating a successful social media campaign is provided in the section designated "workflow." Most importantly, it should be noted that all of this is a collaborative effort, both within each project team and between the project team and the Marketing and Social Media departments. **No single project team member should be given the task of filling out the social media strategy template by him or herself.** The document is meant to be brainstormed, filled out, and referenced *collectively* as an ongoing team effort. The Marketing and Social Media managers will continually strive to be available as a resource during this process.

This How-To Guide is intended to elucidate the [social media strategy template](#). It offers conceptual explanations of pieces of the template that need more explanation than what is offered in italics below each section.

Timeline

In order to most effectively create and share content about our books, we have designated the full social media strategy implementation a “campaign.” Each campaign is separated into four phases. Below are suggestions for the length and suggested content of each phase. This may differ from project to project. A basic book campaign may last 12 weeks.

1. Awareness Phase (two weeks)
 - a. When: Weeks 1-2, four weeks before date of publication (possibly before if relevant)
 - b. What: The awareness phase is intended to introduce the audience to the book. Adjacent content contextualizes, blurbs connect, excerpts/quotes from the book excite, glimpses of the publication process transmit knowledge.
2. Pre-Order Phase (two weeks)
 - a. When: Weeks 3-4, two weeks before date of publication
 - b. What: The pre-order phase should alert the public to the opportunity for pre-ordering the book (i.e. always include the pre-order link), as well as continue to generate buzz and post adjacent content.
3. Launch Phase (four weeks)
 - a. When: Four weeks following the date of publication
 - b. What: The launch phase is intended to publicize launch events, readings, and continue to engage the audience
4. Sustaining Phase
 - a. When: Ongoing
 - b. While each project team functions differently, it is best practice to keep in tune with the social media presence of the book. In whatever way your team decides, keep in touch with:
 - i. How successful your campaign is based on your established metrics for success: how engaged is the audience?
 - ii. Relevant conversations happening online, current events, media trends

Driving Goals of Social Media Marketing

It's important to strike a balance between allowing every campaign its unique utility and representing Ooligan Press's mission and values. For example, the social media campaign for *A Series of Small Maneuvers* helped us actively connect our work to the portions of our mission as an organization that deal with environmental stewardship.

The development of social media strategy documents links the marketing and social media departments, allowing the two to work in concert on behalf of the book. Social media strategy documents will be built out of marketing plans. The strategy will be focused on developing relationships proposed in the marketing plan, rather than proposing new ones. Essentially, it is an detailed expansion of the “Digital Media” section of the marketing plan.

Social media offers our organization a way to connect with readers and communities that is responsive and engaged. Our goal with this sort of marketing is more than sales. It is also increased visibility for our books, authors, and program. Equal to both of those, it is engagement with our networked community: to participate in local and global conversations about the work we do.

What Engagement Means

Imagine walking into a crowded room at a party and, instead of going up to a particular group of people or individual and making or joining a conversation, you repeatedly make loud, self-serving announcements addressed to everybody present: "I have this thing! You should all buy this thing! Look how much people like this thing!" The partygoers may take an initial interest, perhaps even offer a congratulations or two, but after a few minutes of your boisterous advertising, you're likely to be asked to kindly leave. You've kind of killed the vibe.

This is what's known as broadcast messaging: using a medium as a one-to-many means of promoting and distributing a product or idea. The internet is the most crowded room on the face of the planet, and yet this type of messaging is the primary method of communication used by companies to "engage" their audiences. The problem with this methodology is that it invites little to no participation among viewers, aside from "buy this now," thus forgetting one of the cardinal rules of social interaction: if you want someone to like you and engage with you, remove yourself from the equation and take an interest in them instead.

Whether it's an individual person, a local business, or a multinational organization, there is always a human being (bots notwithstanding) at the other end of whatever platform you are using. So, when Ooligan is attempting to engage an audience, we should always keep in mind that people don't care to be beaten over the head with the same information time and time again, especially if the content never goes beyond a broadcast mentality. For every project, we should strive to create spreadable content that cultivates a culture of participation among our followers.

How do you know if your content is participatory?

- It asks questions and welcomes feedback
- It offers the opportunity to remix, reshape, and reframe content
- It is in tune with current media trends, that is, it attends to a conversation that is already happening
- It is created with platform specificity in mind

In addition to being participatory, social media campaigns should also include content that is differentiated between audiences. Media theorist Henry Jenkins sums up the idea of content entering different niche communities nicely: "When material is produced according to a one-size-fits-all model, it imperfectly fits the needs of any given audience." It is for this reason that we ask all project teams, in the strategy document, to write a sample tweet and Facebook post that is representative of each of your campaign's big ideas. In this way, the stage is set for creating content that is not only participatory, but also appeals specifically to each targeted online community.

BEST PRACTICES

Platforms and Methods

- Facebook
 - Always include an image or video when possible. Eye-catching visuals are one of the only things that can cause a user to pause while scrolling through their news feed.
 - Hashtags are not utilized the same way on Facebook as they are on Twitter. If you do choose to use hashtags on Facebook, keep it to one overall, and know that you will likely be the only one using it to keep track of and refer back to your content, unless you are using a hashtag that is currently trending.
 - Vary your post type—users don't engage with every post in the same way. People want to see different types of content, so keep them on their toes.

- Twitter
 - Use hashtags to either keep track of content, tag keywords or phrases, join a trending conversation, or as an interactive prompt or means of engagement for followers (e.g. #RuinaNovelwithSocialMedia).
 - Don't use too many hashtags in a single tweet—you only need to tag the most important word that represents the theme of your tweet.
 - Did you know you can take polls on Twitter and ask people to vote on something? This can be a great way to engage followers.
 - Mention high-profile users—you never know who might just retweet.

Images

- Images should be optimized for web and saved in one accessible folder:
 - Convert images to RGB
 - Image dimensions by platform (in pixels):
 - Twitter (takes up 23 of 140 characters):
 - Shared photo: 1024x512
 - In-stream photo preview: 220x440

- Facebook:
 - Cover photo: 851x315
 - Linked image: 1200x627
 - Image preview: 1200x1200
- Instagram:
 - Post: 510x510
- Resources:
 - [Social Media Image Size Cheat Sheet](#) (2015) from Constant Contact
 - [Optimizing Images for Web](#) from Adobe Creative Suite

Links

- Always include a link in your content that takes users somewhere you want them to go, like a link to buy the book or an event's webpage. If the link to buy for an Ooligan book is not available yet, consider linking them to the book's Start to Finish page.
- Got a link that's taking up too much space? Use Google's [URL shortener](#) to make it easier to share. You can also use this service to track how many people have clicked on your link.

Tips and Tricks

- Content needs to be familiar, timely, or novel if you want it to be shared
 - It doesn't matter if your post gets a ton of reach if you're not creating posts that people want to click. You need to create a variety of posts, with different headlines and lengths of copy, pictures or videos that strike an emotional chord, and links that are valuable to your target audience.
- Organization:
 - Checklist of materials to gather/build and house in one place:
 - A single folder (Book Title_Social Media—see the sample folder [here](#)):
 - Completed Social Media Strategy Document
 - Folder of images created and optimized for web
 - Cover image
 - Web banner of cover (possibly will need to be edited to conform to the dimensions of a Facebook banner, see above)
 - Images/flyers for events converted for web
 - Author photo
 - Any other visuals created to accompany the book
 - Folder of written content in some form:
 - Word or Google document to brainstorm and keep a running list of potential posts
 - Excel sheet of posts formatted to be downloaded as a CSV file and emailed to the Social Media Manager for scheduling

WORKFLOW

1. Marketing Plan Written
2. Template and primer reviewed as a team
3. PM checks in with Social and Marketing Managers
 - a. PM should inform managers that the team is beginning the process and ask for any guidance or clarification they desire. This could be in the form of a meeting or an email.
 - b. Managers and PM discuss
4. Project Team fills out social media strategy document
5. Social Media Manager and/or Marketing Manager attends group meeting to discuss first draft of SMSD
6. Final draft established
7. Strategy Implemented (ongoing)
 - a. Content written
 - b. Visual content created
 - c. Bulk upload document created, populated, and shared with Social Media Manager
 - d. Content scheduled
8. Metrics tracked (ongoing)

FAQ

What is an influencer?

An influencer is an individual who has wide recognition and is greatly respected and/or "followed" within a particular community. Their knowledge and authority, real or perceived, has the ability to affect the purchase decisions of others within that community. This is not to be confused with a celebrity, as they exist in a completely separate sphere of influence, though it never hurts to try tweeting at a few of them as well.

What is adjacent content?

Many sections above mention "adjacent content." This refers to content that is not created by our organization but that is relevant to our own social media presence and to the branding of the book. Interacting with and posting adjacent content is a way for our organization to:

- Connect with other organizations and influencers who might be willing to later share our own content
- Build the public space of the book—to continue to connect the themes of the book with the world outside of it

Examples of adjacent content:

- [This](#) personal essay by Jessi Probus, which deals with the nuance and complexity of marriage and marriage equality for members of LGBTQ communities. Ideally, it would have been posted during a media push for *Untangling the Knot*, and the posts would note the shared themes. It's an acknowledgment of a shared interest and an invitation for sharing or responding. Jessi Probus has over 1,000 followers on Twitter and is a writer for a huge media outlet, BuzzFeed (i.e. we might consider her an influencer).
 - "Loved this piece on #marriageequality by @JessiProbus! Would be right home in #UntanglingtheKnot! (shortened URL to article) (shortened URL to purchase site, if space).
- [This](#) article written by *A Series of Small Maneuvers* author Eliot Treichel in response to the Gold King Mine waste water spill. The article deals with Eliot's experience kayaking on the Animas and the need for better protective environmental protective measures. This post builds the media presence of Eliot, connects him to the book, and tags an outlet with 12,000 Twitter followers and almost 100,000 Facebook fans.
 - "Remember when the Animas River ran orange in August? #SmallManeuvers author Eliot Treichel writes for @CanoeKayakMag/Canoe and Kayak about kayaking on the Animas. (shortened URL to article)
- This post linking *Rhythm in the Rain* to an article published in the PSU Vanguard:



This is a good example of messaging for an awareness campaign. Note how this post contextualizes *Rhythm in the Rain*, links it to the PNW, and connects Ooligan (and the specific project) with another organization that may be a partner in the future. That said, the post either forgets to or doesn't have room to tag @psuvanguard. Tagging the creator of the content (rather than just allowing the link to take viewers to the destination) allows the creator to note, track, and respond in kind to the post. A slightly better post:

- Another beautiful blend of #music and #lit. Perfect parallel to our forthcoming #RhythmInTheRain via @psuvanguard: (LINK)

Further Reading:

If you're interested in reading more about participatory digital culture, networks and media theory, and transmedia marketing, listed below are some of the readings that inform the development and implementation of social media strategy documents.

Spreadable Media: Creating Value and Meaning in a Networked Culture

The complete book can be accessed online [here](#) when logged into the PSU library system.

Especially:

- Introduction: “Why Media Spreads”
- Chapter 5: “Designing for Spreadability”

Jenkins, Henry, Sam Ford, and Joshua Green. *Spreadable Media*. NY: New York University Press, 2013.

Grant McCracken on [Consumers and Multipliers](#):

McCracken, Grant. “‘Consumers’ or ‘Multipliers’?” *Spreadable Media*. spreadablemedia.org.

Ooligan Social Media Strategy Template

TITLE/EVENT

Title:

Author:

Date of Publication:

TIMELINE

CAMPAIGN:

- Awareness Phase:
- Pre-Order Phase:
- Launch Phase:
- Sustaining Phase:

AUDIENCE

Who are we primarily trying to reach, and why will they be interested? Identify primary and secondary audiences.

Primary Audience:

Secondary Audience:

BIG IDEAS

What ideas will be a common thread within our content, and how will they draw in your audience? Think of these like themes in a book.

THINGS TO HIGHLIGHT

Discounts, important info & dates, etc.

IDENTIFYING AND ENGAGING PARTNERS AND INFLUENCERS

How will we utilize and engage potential partners and influencers who might bolster the book's visibility and help Ooligan's existing network to grow?

Partners:

Influencers:

ENGAGING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY AUDIENCES □

Conceptually, how will we use social media to generate interest for this book/event? Discuss how we will use social media to communicate the big ideas listed above to the primary and secondary audiences. Talk about current social media trends, use of hashtags, use of Facebook event pages, and etc.

PLATFORMS AND METHODS

Specifically, how will we use each individual platform to engage the primary and secondary audiences during each phase of the campaign?

Twitter

- Awareness
○
- Pre-Order
○
- Launch
○
- Sustaining
○

Facebook

- Awareness
○
- Pre-Order
○
- Launch
○
- Sustaining
○

(Add any other platform we plan on using)

Frequency

Twitter

- Awareness:
- Pre-Order:
- Launch:
- Sustaining:

Facebook

- Awareness:
- Pre-Order:
- Launch:
- Sustaining:

(Add any other platform you plan on using)

PEOPLE/PARTNERS/INFLUENCERS

List all sponsors, authors, media outlets, partner organizations, etc. Include their Twitter handle and Facebook name.

SAMPLE CONTENT

One sample tweet/post that represents each of our campaign's Big Ideas.

Twitter:

Facebook:

Relevant Hashtags:

TRACKING AND METRICS FOR SUCCESS

How will we track the success of our campaign?