DEVELOPING A
SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR

DEFINE YOUR CONTENT MIX

Understanding what you're going to publish on social media starts with a content strategy. Content is the fuel that you will use to engage with your audience. In this section, we'll examine how to develop an editorial calendar that's engaging.

As you assess and develop content for social media, it's important to think about it in a framework of how you will distribute it. One example of a common framework that is used on social media is the 4-1-1 rule. At Marketo, for example, we not only aim to share valuable content for our audience, but focus on educating and providing value first and selling second. Because of this philosophy, we follow a 4-1-1 rule. This rule states that for every four educational or entertaining posts (infographic, blog, awareness-level ebook), you can share one soft/midlevel promotion (a more solution-focused asset) and one hard/late-stage promotion (a demo, for example).

This mix allows you to offer value that far outweighs the sales element of your mid- and late-stage promotions and educates and entertains your audience so they are more welcoming to the later stage

messages when you do share them. We've found that this approach works in email marketing, on our blog, and in social media marketing. It lets us engage in conversations with our audience and build awareness, credibility, and trust and keep in touch with our followers—without coming across as pushy or sales-y.

So even if one of your top priorities is "announcing new products," we don't recommend limiting your posts to only information about your new releases. Likewise, if you want to acquire new customers on social, it's still not the best venue for advertising deals.

You can certainly mention promotions on occasion, but do so with caution. Your audience's trust— ultimately your most powerful selling tool—hangs in the balance.
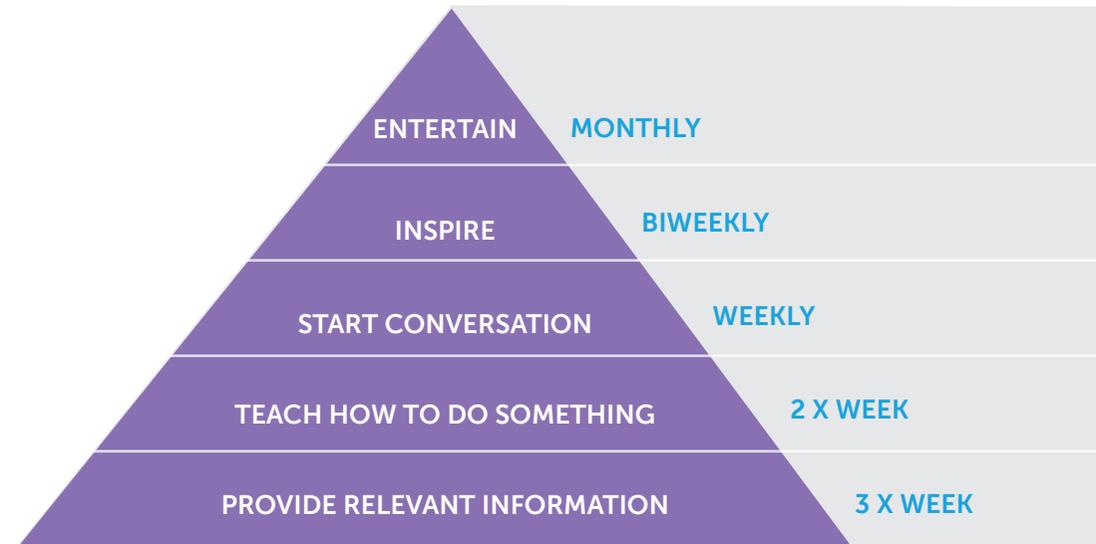
Content Marketing Institute's diagram explains content purposes and how often each type should be shared on your social channels.

"The 4-1-1 rule applies to brands on social media, in part because it fundamentally reminds us that being a resource to others is the best way to market. (It's a good rule for life, too, isn't it?)"

ANN HANDLEY Chief Content Officer, MarketingProfs

Setting Your Cadence

In our experience, companies tend to have one of two problems with social: either they can't think of anything to post, or they've got so much material that they overwhelm their audience. Regardless of where you fall on the spectrum, the question of what (and how often) to post on social is a very important one.

To help you answer the cadence question, we'll share our own posting schedule for each social network. But to figure out the right mix for your own business, you should start with your priorities and answer the question: what do you hope to accomplish with your social presence?

You probably have several objectives (which likely map to your objectives for each stage of the customer lifecycle) that might include:

- Sharing relevant content
- Showing off your brand's personality and culture
- Promoting events
- Establishing thought leadership
- Staying on top of industry trends
- Announcing new products
- Gathering new names for your marketing database
- Acquiring new customers
- Building/nurturing relationships with your buyers
- Increasing traffic to your blog/website/landing pages

"The process of editorial strategy starts with identifying the right cadence of publishing. The goal should always be to maximize engagement with quality updates without overwhelming the stream of each channel." **MICHAEL BRENNER** CEO, Marketing Insider Group

Setting Your Cadence

At Marketo, we prioritize promotions that our marketing team has specifically requested to be promoted, our marketing blogs, and our newest educational content. Create an editorial calendar based on your priorities. Use this to inform the topics and stage that you want to address on each individual social media platform.

USE THIS WORKSHEET FOR EACH PLATFORM TO CREATE AN EDITORIAL CALENDAR. FILL IN YOUR PRIORITIES BELOW.

Priority 1: _____

Priority 2: _____

Priority 3: _____

Priority 4: _____

Priority 5: _____

Social Request Form

We use a company-wide Social Promotion Request Form, which we created in Google Forms. Anyone in the company can request for a particular event, asset, or announcement to be promoted over our social platforms.

Once a team member fills out the form, the information automatically populates a "Responses" document, which our social team then reviews.

For example, our content team might fill out the form to promote a new ebook, while our events team might request promotion for a speaking appearance. Once a request appears on our responses document, we add it to our editorial calendar. This gives our social team a "big picture" view of our upcoming posts and ensures that our important promotions are properly scheduled.

SOCIAL PROMOTION REQUEST FORM
Here's what our form looks like; feel free to tweak for your own company's needs:

1. What would you like us to promote?
(Please include any applicable links)

_____

2. When do you want this promoted?
(Ex. "3 times in March," "1 week before the event," "1 day before the webinar")

_____

3. If you'd like your post to go on Twitter, please write the exact message below:
(Make sure that the messaging is under 140 characters, link included. Don't forget to include Twitter handles or hashtags if applicable.)

_____

4. If you'd like your post to go on LinkedIn, please write the exact message below:

_____

5. If you'd like your post to go on Facebook, please write the exact message below:
(Don't forget to include hashtags if applicable.)

_____

6. Anything else we need to know about?
(Please write any comments, details, or notes that we should be aware of.)

_____

Posting Frequency on Social Networks

Each social network requires a content mix and frequency that matches the expectations of its audience.

At Marketo, to help us schedule content ahead of time and give our audience an idea of what to expect each week, we repeat themed posts on certain days of the week. Of course, these mini-themes align with our overall theme—marketing!

For example, on Monday, we post a "Monday Motivation" quote with an inspirational message. On Thursdays, we post fun "Throwback Thursday" facts about moments in marketing and advertising history that made an impact on our culture. And our "Friday Funny" cartoons add a little marketing humor to our audience's last workday.

Let's explore some of the benefits of each of the top networks to help you define your posting frequency.

FACEBOOK

With over 1.5 billion active users, it's practically guaranteed that your audience (or a segment of it) is on Facebook. **We recommend posting to your Facebook page no more than twice per day**—most people get annoyed when a close friend floods their Facebook feed, never mind a brand.

But even though we aim to post only twice daily, our social team tends to have Marketo's Facebook page open all day long. That's because if your audience is engaging with you, via comments, likes, shares, and messages, it's important that you join the conversations. If someone has a question or complaint, you want to be on hand to address it immediately. (Also, an unfortunate truth is that visitors may use Facebook as an opportunity to post inappropriate or offensive content to your feed. If you aren't monitoring closely, you might not "hide" the post from your feed in time.)
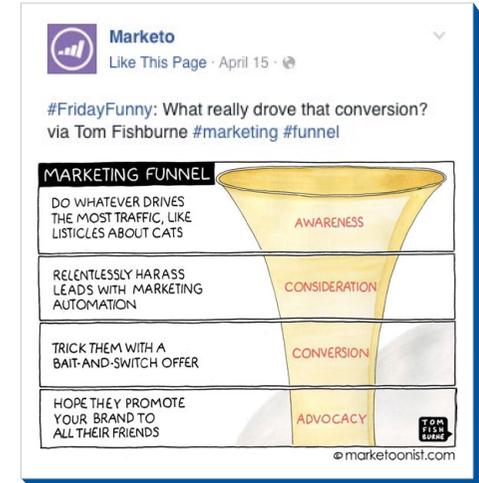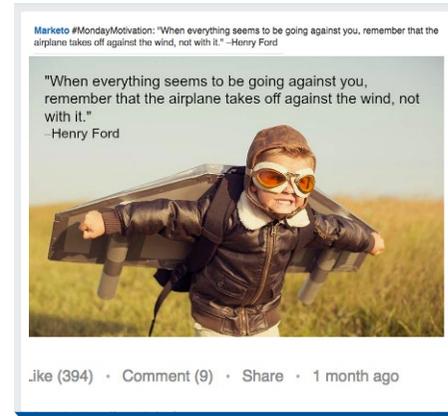
"Learn the language, guidelines, and etiquette for all the social platforms that you want to be a part of. Being nice is always in style."

PEG FITZPATRICK Social Media Strategist and Co-Author, The Art of Social Media: Power Tips for Power Users
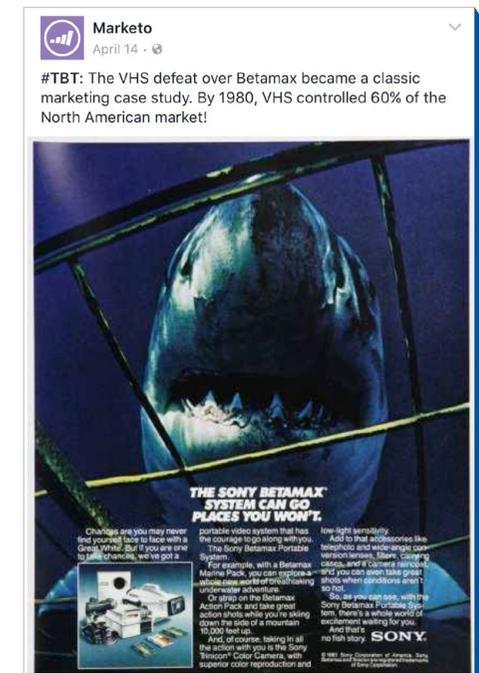
Themed posts on Marketo's social platforms

Posting Frequency on Social Networks

TWITTER

Unlike Facebook, you can post to Twitter many times a day without overwhelming your audience. In fact, **we recommend posting roughly once per hour**. If that sounds time-consuming, that's because it is. But it's the only way you can stay top-of-mind as your tweets get pushed down in the feed by other activity from your audience's network. That's why we highly suggest using a tool that allows you to preschedule your tweets with the help of a social media management platform. But just because you can tweet frequently doesn't mean you can afford to be self-promotional; keep the 4-1-1 rule firmly in mind.

Take advantage of the variety of ways you can engage your audience on Twitter. You'll want to be continually "favorite"-ing, retweeting, and responding to tweets from your audience. We always schedule at least one tweet per day linking to an interesting or educational article or study (one not written by us), and typically retweet external links throughout the day.

LINKEDIN

Because LinkedIn is a professional networking site, we typically use it to share articles and blog posts, new educational content, and upcoming events. Unlike Twitter, which is highly interactive (and therefore time-consuming to maintain), or Facebook, which is best for fun/entertaining content, LinkedIn is the most "serious," straight-to-the-point social network. It's also a powerful recruiting tool—you can post job openings on LinkedIn, and it's probably one of the first things potential employees checkout. LinkedIn followers aren't likely to check your page as often as Facebook or Twitter, but **we generally post to our LinkedIn page 1–2 times per day**.

INSTAGRAM/SNAPCHAT/PINTEREST

For the social media platforms that rely heavily on images as the main method of communication with your audience—namely Instagram, Snapchat, and Pinterest—it's OK to post more often. Of course, any guidance on posting amount or timing should always be taken lightly since they are both something that is specific to your audience and your brand—so test what works best. As long as you have the bandwidth and are not flooding your audience's feeds with your content, **it's safe to experiment between 3 and 7 posts a day**.

"Spend 90% of your time and effort helping your audience. When you share other people's great content most of the time, your own great content some of the time, and sprinkle in some 'helpful' promotions, your audience will reward the kindness."

MICHAEL BRENNER

CEO, Marketing Insider Group

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Posting Frequency on Social Networks

SOCIAL NETWORK POSTING FREQUENCY WORKSHEET

Fill in the following information to build your own calendar for each social network (you can print or use this page multiple times for different networks).

Who is responsible for posting and monitoring the brand page?

_____

_____

How many times per day will you post for each social media platform?

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM:

___ x times per day
___ Monday through Friday
___ 7 days a week
___ Other

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM:

___ x times per day
___ Monday through Friday
___ 7 days a week
___ Other

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM:

___ x times per day
___ Monday through Friday
___ 7 days a week
___ Other

What upcoming releases, company/industry events, announcements, and content do you want to share?
(You may have to check with other teams—PR, content, product.)

_____

_____

List any holidays, national/international events, and trends that you want to post about:

_____

_____

"Anything posted on social media can be considered global content. It's a challenge to plan and execute social media campaigns across time zones, so be patient and careful to make sure your messages go out at the right time and day." **PEG FITZPATRICK** Social Media Strategist and Co-Author, The Art of Social Media: Power Tips for Power Users

Posting Frequency on Social Networks

We also look at each day's and week's posts as a whole. Using our social editorial calendar, we can clearly see if we're overposting about a certain topic or failing to support one of our core competencies.

Depending on your answer to the previous questionnaires for your different platforms, your content calendar can look very full. For example, here is a week's worth of posts from Marketo—and this is just across four of our social media platforms (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, and Instagram).

Paid Promotion

Depending on the size of your team, the person managing your social media marketing may not be the same person running your social paid advertising. It's important to develop and define a process between these people and teams to ensure there is not only a consistent flow of organic posts, but also social paid advertising.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
⬛ INSTAGRAM	✔✔✔	✔✔	✔✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔
🐦 TWITTER	✔✔✔✔✔	✔✔✔✔✔	✔✔✔✔	✔✔✔✔✔	✔✔✔✔	✔✔✔✔✔	✔✔✔✔✔✔
f FACEBOOK	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔✔	✔
in LINKEDIN	✔	✔✔	✔	✔	✔✔	✔	✔✔

SOCIAL MEDIA DAILY CHECKLIST

A helpful item to consider when you're trying to make sure you dot all your i's and cross your t's is a checklist.
Use this to help ensure you're on track to meet your goals and set your cadence correctly.

Social marketing has a lot of moving parts. Print out or copy this checklist to make sure you're completing the necessary daily tasks:

- ☐ **Check any incoming tweets/FB comments/LinkedIn mentions from yesterday.**
  - ☐ Refer any support questions to the appropriate team
  - ☐ Reply to any comments
  - ☐ "Like," "favorite," or "retweet" where appropriate

- ☐ **Check for friend requests and new followers; accept and follow back where appropriate.**

- ☐ **Double check the tweets/posts you scheduled last night.**
  - ☐ Check for relevance (situations can change overnight!)
  - ☐ Check all links
  - ☐ Check for typos

- ☐ **Check for new social promotion requests from your team, whether this is done via a dynamic form or an email alias.**

- ☐ **Check your paid promotions.**
  - ☐ Are you still within your budget?
  - ☐ Is your audience engaging?

- ☐ **Check your editorial calendar and colleagues to confirm any events, industry news, or announcements you'll need to monitor.**

- ☐ **Send tomorrow's tweets, Facebook posts/LinkedIn posts around for review.**
  - ☐ Check all links
  - ☐ Check for typos
  - ☐ Check your tracking parameters
    (if using marketing automation or tracking platform to collect data)