



Make a List, **Check it Twice:** A Social Media Manager's Guide to the Holidays



Taking time off in late December is an annual tradition. Some companies close their doors for a few days; others operate on shortened schedules. While it's natural to want time to enjoy the season, it's no excuse to let your social media slack off.

Social media works best when content is kept fresh. Your customers may actually spend more time online during the holidays, and so might your competitors. And in the event of a crisis (or a rare opportunity), they'll look to your social media for a response or statement.

So while you're making holiday plans, **peruse this list** to make sure your social media strategy can survive – or even thrive – this season.

☐ ***Take a look back***

How did you handle your social media last December? What were the results in terms of engagement, clickthroughs and traffic? What types of content performed best? Analyzing the impact of your social programs from both a quantitative and qualitative point of view can help you forge a baseline plan for this season, and make sure you focus on things that will move the needle.

☐ ***Analyze the competition***

You'll also want to examine the holiday social media activities of others in your industry. What did they focus on? What kind of promotions did they engage in? Maybe you can take a cue from their playbook, or at the very least, learn from their mistakes. And remember that a certain level of monitoring is always useful, so keep an eye on your competition as the season unfolds.





☐ *Schedule posts in advance*

If you post daily, aim to have at least 10 approved items in the can. If possible, have options available so you or your designated social media person can choose the most appropriate one for each day. And try to make them relevant. You may not be able to predict what's trending, but you could incorporate an obscure holiday (Pepper Pot Day, honoring a special Revolutionary War soup, falls on December 29) or a weather-related angle in the event of a surprise snowfall. Just remember your audience, and keep it inclusive.

☐ *Break out some holiday flair*

Design an infographic or data visualization to release during the holidays. It doesn't have to be seasonal. Anything new and fresh will likely create a bump of interest, and make your marketing department seem like it's going full-force. And since many sites and blogs are also shorthanded (and short on content) during the holidays, they'll welcome prepackaged content that requires little work on their end. A little preplanning could lead to a lot of exposure -- and a healthy return on your investment.

☐ *Show your personality*

Corporations are people, right? Why not use the holidays as a chance to show your human side? Not everything on your social media channels has to be business-related, especially on major holidays, when most of your customers won't be focused on work anyway. We don't have to tell you to keep it light and neutral, but you can have a lot of fun without being bland.





☐ ***Keep a human at the helm***

Speaking of people, make sure there's a real person reviewing your posts or Tweets before they go out. The last thing you want is an unfortunate coincidence casting your company in a negative light, or revealing that your social media is on autopilot. And make sure this person is able to reach you or another decision-maker if they encounter a dilemma. Better a lapse in your content stream than a hurriedly posted item that could have lasting consequences. And try to monitor things as much as possible so you can swoop in if you see a great opportunity, or a looming crisis.

☐ ***Have a crisis plan in place***

Whether it involves your company, your industry or even your geographical area, a social media crisis can happen anytime. Before you hand over the reins to that junior associate or intern, create and rehearse a protocol for recognizing and dealing with a disaster, and make yourself available if needed. As we mentioned, social media is the first place customers turn in a crisis situation. The earlier you respond, the better.

☐ ***Hint at the future***

The holidays are a great time to whisper in your customers' ears about upcoming plans. Are you planning to launch a new product, open a new division, or even participate in an upcoming event? While you might need to be vague, the holidays can be a good time to start creating buzz for the new year.





☐ *Branch out*

Though your core audience may gravitate to Twitter or Google+, they may be spending more time on sites like Facebook or Instagram in December, checking in on family members or posting holiday photos. You might want to rethink your strategy to focus on sites where your users are temporarily congregating. (A performance audit of your channels from last season can give insights in your users' holiday habits.)

☐ *Zig where the others zag*

If your competitors' social media goes on the back burner during the holidays, consider stepping up yours this year. Or if they're all over one or two sites, you might want to focus on others. If you can cut through the clutter, or make noise in a relatively silent space, it can help your social media gain reach and attention. And this could mean big payoffs down the road, and make it worth it to put in a few hours in between holiday gatherings.

What's your plan of action for the holiday season?

If you've been overwhelmed, let Simply Measured take some of the pressure off. We can get you started with actionable analytics for your own social channels as well as your competitors so you can start strategic planning sooner rather than later. **Request your free trial.**





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