Social Media Strategy: The 6 W's

A simple framework to plan, manage, and measure business communication on social platforms.

Social media isn't just about posting content – it's about delivering the right message, to the right people, in the right way. The 6 W's framework helps you design a strategy that drives engagement, strengthens relationships, and protects your brand.

Why: Define Your Purpose

What to Ask: Why are we using social media?

Examples:

- Generate sales leads
- Build brand awareness
- Support customers
- Manage reputation during crises

Key Tip: Every post should connect directly to your overarching goals.

Who: Identify Your Audiences

What to Ask: Who are we trying to reach?

Examples:

- Customers (segmented by buyer personas)
- Potential recruits
- Investors or community partners

Key Tip: Use audience personas tounderstand demographics, needs, & motivations.



When: Schedule & Respond

What to Ask: When should we post and engage?

Examples:

- Schedule content around peak engagement hours
- Use ephemeral content (e.g., Instagram Stories) for urgency
- Maintain staff or AI agents for real-time responses

Key Tip: Social media is a conversation — timely responses are as important as scheduled posts.

Where: Select the Right Platforms

What to Ask: Where will we connect with our audiences?

Examples:

- LinkedIn B2B and recruiting
- Instagram/TikTok visual storytelling and younger audiences
- Twitter/X real-time updates and crisis communication

Key Tip: Tailor content to each platform—don't just repost the same material everywhere.

What: Craft Your Message

What to Ask: What content will resonate with them?

Examples:

- Stories and testimonials
- Infographics and explainer videos
- Interactive polls and Q&As

Key Tip: Follow the "Rule of Thirds" — promotional, curated content, audience engagement

How: Choose Creation and Distribution Methods

What to Ask: How will we create and deliver the content?

Examples:

- Use AI tools for drafts, edited by humans for tone and accuracy
- Employ scheduling platforms like Sprinklr or Hootsuite
- Establish a content approval process

Key Tip: Balance automation with authentic human oversight.

Example: Coca-Cola's Create Real Magic

- Why: Celebrate creativity and embrace generative AI
- Who: Millions of global fans and digital artists
- What: User-generated art using Coke's iconic brand assets
- How: Provided a custom AI-designed platform
- Where: Instagram, TikTok, and global digital platforms
- When: Timed around major cultural events to maximize impact

Result: Millions engaged, reinforcing Coca-Cola's reputation as an innovator in digital branding.



Business Communication Today, 16th Edition. See Chapter 8, Social Media.

Key Insight: *Business Communication Today,* 16th Edition, empowers students to apply the 6 W's framework—Why, Who, What, How, Where, and When—so they can design social media strategies that build engagement, strengthen brand credibility, and adapt communication effectively across diverse platforms and audiences.

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