



“Content is the fire. Social media is the gasoline.” Ryan Kahn

HOW TO BE A “SOCIAL” ACCOUNTING FIRM

“More and more C-level executives do business via social media than any other seniority level customer-side.

Almost two out every five respondents (39%) to the State of Inbound 2017 Survey indicated they preferred to communicate for business purposes via social.”

Source: <https://www.luminate.digital/blog/marketing-for-accountants-reasons-to-use-social-media>



Why social media?

Why should an accounting firm owner consider social media in their marketing mix? Here are seven reasons:

- Competitive advantage
- Connect more on a “human” level
- Positively impact the firm’s bottom line
- Increase leads
- Gain email subscribers
- Brand exposure
- Increased search ranking

What’s most important to think about is the “human” factor. What are you sharing about your firm that draws in people? Are you sharing photos about your day-to-day culture; events your team is participating in; and training programs to help keep your team on their toes?

Take all forms of social media into account when you’re thinking about sharing information, such as the post types, format, images, and hashtags.

Each of those items will be covered in this booklet.



Posts

What can be used in a social media post to create the “human” factor and draw in people, who will like, comment, and share your content?

There are dozens of things you can use to help increase engagement on your social media company pages, but the hardest part is knowing what to use. Here are a few samples of content types you might consider:

- Ask questions to engage followers.
- Vary content media (text, images, video, polls, tips, comments, trivia, etc.)
- Make it personal
 - Feature staff members
 - Highlight humanitarian/organization support
 - Stories or answers from staff
- Inspirational business quotes
- Infographics
- Unusual statistics
- Hashtags

In the following examples, I use a bit of accounting humor to draw in readers; then, ask them a question to create engagement.

Example – Facebook

The screenshot shows a Facebook post from the page 'Traphagen Financial Group'. The post content includes the company name, a question 'Be audit you can be. One of our favorite mantras. What's one of yours?', and a photograph of a dark blue t-shirt with the text 'BE AUDIT YOU CAN BE' printed on it. The interface includes a search bar at the top, a navigation menu on the left with options like Home, About, Reviews, Photos, Events, Videos, Posts, and Community, and a 'Create a Page' button. Below the post image are icons for Like, Comment, and Share.

Example – LinkedIn

The screenshot shows a LinkedIn post from the company 'Traphagen Financial Group'. The post content includes the company name, a question 'Be audit you can be. One of our favorite mantras. What's one of yours?', and a photograph of a dark blue t-shirt with the text 'BE AUDIT YOU CAN BE' printed on it. The LinkedIn interface is visible, including a profile card on the left with the company name, profile image, and follower count (273 updates • 294 followers), a 'Following' button, and a follow prompt. Below the post image are icons for Like, Comment, and Share.

Here are some real examples from existing accounting firms that you can see on their Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Each has a “human” factor to it, either by mentioning a staff member, or asking people to register for an event.

Example – Withum (LinkedIn and Facebook)

withum WithumSmith+Brown
7d

Congratulations to Liz Ritacco for her Withum Community Strength Award nomination! While she has certainly done a great deal to assist others, most notably, Liz and her husband Michael co-founded the GEMMA Fertility Foundation, an organization that financially assists families dealing with infertility. In addition, Liz has been an active member of the Ocean County community for well over a decade, volunteering her time and resources as a member of the Board of Directors for both **21 Plus Inc** and the Greater Chamber of Commerce Foundation of Toms River. She has also helped raise over \$40,000 for the **@National MS Society**, even being named the Inspirational Walker in 2017. Congratulations, Liz, on your well earned nomination! Visit <https://lnkd.in/d5H3NRz> for details on how to nominate someone who helps their community or cause! **#StrengthStory**



22 Likes

Like Comment Share

withum WithumSmith+Brown
November 6 at 2:25pm

Congratulations to Liz Ritacco for her Withum Community Strength Award nomination! While she has certainly done a great deal to assist others, most notably, Liz and her husband Michael co-founded the GEMMA Fertility Foundation, an organization that financially assists families dealing with infertility. In addition, Liz has been an active member of the Ocean County community for well over a decade, volunteering her time and resources as a member of the Board of Directors for... [See More](#)



Like Comment Share

38

Write a comment...

Jen Bennett Congratulations...simply amazing.
Like Reply 1 · November 6 at 7:13pm

Michelle Miraglia-Scutti Congrats!!!!!! 🎉
Like Reply 1 · November 6 at 4:18pm

View 13 more comments

Example – BeachFleischman (Facebook and LinkedIn)

In the Facebook example, a congratulatory message was shared about the firm’s owner and award he won. In the LinkedIn example, the firm is promoting a seminar they are hosting.



You may be wondering what could you possibly have to share that would be of interest to people? Here are 20 content pieces that can help drive traffic to your site, that don't take a lot of time to develop. Remember, content doesn't have to be lengthy to be valuable.

1. How-to Articles
2. Advice Columns
3. FAQs
4. First-Person Anecdotes
5. Definitions
6. Trends
7. News Compilations
8. Reviews / Recommendations
9. Success Stories
10. Personal Profiles
11. Popular Facts / Figures
12. Lists
13. Where to find...
14. Legislative Briefings
15. Wish Lists
16. Quotes
17. Partnerships with other organizations
18. Leadership Perspectives
19. Survey Results
20. Fact vs. Fiction

You might say, "That's all good, but what will generate more leads?" And, that's a great question. Here are several things you can use among your monthly posts to help draw in leads. The trick to increase engagement and sharing is to use every day, conversational language.

You want leads, not just visitors to your website. Here are the top five types of content you can use to help generate leads. But wait, there's a catch.

What's the catch?

You won't get leads by just placing this content on your website and sharing it in social media. The content must make the consumer do something to generate the lead. For example, if you have a blog post, rather than just ending it, use a call to action to make the reader complete an action, such as fill out a form.

Landing pages with forms are key to gaining new leads. Here are some content pieces you can use to draw in the lead, but be sure to capture information from him or her before letting them slip off into the web.

Content Formats

Video: Yea, video is cool and trendy. However, simply showing a video with no call to action is like watching a super bowl commercial and not laughing. You won't remember it. Here are several ways to use YouTube to generate leads, including tips on how to create a call to action.

Blogs: They are a lot of maintenance, but if you don't have one that's up to date, how are you driving readers to your site? Blog content is a great way to create short articles with tips, how to's, and bullet points to provide solutions to clients burning questions. Remember to write for the reader and not the search engines. Download the "How to Write Like a Blogging Pro" activity sheet to help you get started.

E-Books: A quick way to make an eBook is to take your best blog articles from the year and put them into a PowerPoint or Keynote slide deck using a beautiful theme. Save the file as a PDF, and voila you have an eBook you can put on your website. Share that eBook on social media and in client emails. Be sure to add a landing page with a form for visitors to complete to get the book (that's the lead generation piece).

Case Studies: You have clients and they have problems. Case studies are often about the client, their challenge, and the solution you provided. It's written in an old-school format, kind of like a term paper. To spruce it up, add graphics to point out statistics, include interview quotes about the issue the client was having. Also, consider including a short video interview to supplement the written piece. Once the piece is published, share it with your client for them to post on their website and share in social media, and you should do that same. Use a landing page with a lead generation form on your site to capture people's name, email, phone, company, and potential issue.

Webcasts: It's a well-known stat that only about 35 percent of registrants actually attend a webinar. But the ones who do, are golden. Why? Because they are more likely to convert to a lead than non-attendees or casual visitors to your site. One of the things people like about webcasts is they are short; can be attended from anywhere with a strong phone/Internet connection; and are often recorded for sharing and replay. For a business, the best part is you have a captive audience. What better way is there than to add a call to action at the end (or throughout) to get people engaged? You might offer a discount on an upcoming conference, or a coupon code off a product you're promoting, or a 15-minute free consultation. Another fun tip is to create Tweet-able moments throughout so they can share the experience on social media. After the webinar, be sure to send a survey to capture additional data about the event.



Hashtags

This may be the most difficult part of social media for you, but it doesn't have to be. There are online tools to help you find the right hashtags to encourage your content to be shared with trending topics (e.g., #InspirationalQuotes, #Holidays, #ThrowBackThursday or #TBT, etc.), within industry topics (e.g., #Manufacturing, #Construction, #RealEstate, etc.), and more.

Hashtagify.me (that's the actual URL) is a great tool to help you determine the best hashtags to be included with search terms, phrases, & topics of conversation.

Post hashtags in Facebook and LinkedIn, but don't put them within the statement, use them at the end.
Use consistent hashtags you want to be found for, e.g., #TaxReform #AuditTips #AccountingTips #Business #Investing #Money

If you're not comfortable with hashtag usage, look up hashtags before using them.

The Power of Hashtags

A hashtag is referenced by a hash or pound sign (#) within a social media platform. The word or phrase that follows the symbol corresponds to a stream of conversation around that topic. For example, the hashtag #EstatePlanning offers searchers a way to find the stream of conversation easily and comment on it; share it; or read more about the topic.

What makes them so powerful?

When someone clicks on a hashtag, he/she can see your profile—you. They can also see other content you have shared. You're now creating an engagement opportunity you may have never had before.

Example: Your firm specializes in construction accounting and tax management. Rather than just using hashtags about accounting content, also consider using hashtags often found in construction-related conversations, such as #construction, #homebuilding, #heavyequipment #excavators, etc. Remember the hashtag should coincide with the content you're sharing. Avoid using them on social media posts that have nothing to do with the construction industry.

Not only is it a powerful way to inject yourself into a conversation, it's also a great way to see who else is in the conversation. It may offer you some opportunities to Follow/Friend/Like/Share content of a potential prospect. If you find an alignment with someone on your social channels, begin building a relationship with that brand/person. Then, move them through a more traditional sales funnel as you would a word-of-mouth lead.

Lastly, connecting to influencers by topic/hashtag may also elevate your influence on the topic. For example, when sharing content provided by the AICPA, you're sharing information from a reputable resource. People trust the source, and thus assign the trust to you as well.

How To Use Hashtags

Major social platforms allow hashtags, whether it's Facebook, Google Plus, YouTube, Instagram, Pinterest, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.

Leverage a hashtag in each social media post you create and share from others. For example, if your firm specializes in wealth management, you might share a story like the following from another source on platforms like Facebook, LinkedIn, and Google Plus, using the hashtag #WealthManagement:

7 Surprising Truths About Very Wealthy People

They say the first million is the hardest and that they could do it again if they lost it all. Read more about the very wealthy. What strikes you as the most interesting? [link: <http://www.inc.com/quora/7-surprising-truths-about-very-wealthy-people.html>] @Inc #WealthManagement

If your firm hosts its own blog, consider the same format with a link to the blog source—your website.

In most cases, hashtags may be used in the originating social media post, in a repost or share, and also in comments.

When creating a new hashtag, be somewhat specific. For example, the hashtag #Accounting is very broad and may encompass many areas. However, the hashtag #ForensicAccounting is more specific and narrows the conversation to just that topic.

If your firm's goal is branding, consider creating a unique hashtag based on its tagline. For example, the firm Lang Allan CPA, located in Colorado, uses the tagline "Move Your Company Forward." That phrase is fairly long and may be hindrance in platforms like Twitter, but on occasion it makes sense to use it to aid in the firm's branding, e.g., #MoveYourCompanyForward. It would be most useful in platforms, such as Facebook, Google Plus, and LinkedIn.

Hashtags may also be used for lead generation. When combined with a keyword, hashtags aid in prospecting research. Before you begin searching, however, it's important to know what you want to access.

In this example, the firm wants to expand its reach within the women-owned business sector of St. Louis. You would conduct a hashtag search to find the top terms related to the geography—St. Louis. In your search engine search box, enter "st. louis hashtags." You will be rewarded with a search result listing "stlouis-top hashtags," "10 Twitter hashtags popular for stlouis," and more. Top hashtags include #stlouis and #stl. Write those down.

Next, in your search engine look for women-owned-business hashtags. For this case, be sure to use quotes around your search, e.g., "women-owned business hashtags". In the results, you will find #WomenOwned, #WOSB (woman-owned small business), and #WomenWOW (Women on Wednesday). #WomenWOW was designed to celebrate women entrepreneurs and women-owned businesses. Leverage this hashtag on Wednesdays to promote your social media posts targeting women. Also leverage it to share content from that day with your followers and to get involved with the conversation.

Sample Posts

Twitter

Don't wait. 5 Tips to Keep Your Small Business Accounting on Track. #StLouis #WomenWOW #STL

Facebook/Google Plus

5 Tips to Keep Your Small Business Accounting on Track

When it comes to owning a business, doing the accounting might be the last thing on your mind. Here are five tips you can implement today to keep your books on track.

#StLouis #WomenWOW #STL

LinkedIn

5 Tips to Keep Your Small Business Accounting on Track

When it comes to owning a business, doing the accounting might be the last thing on your mind. Here are five tips you can implement today to keep your books on track. What's your biggest accounting challenge?

#StLouis #WomenWOW #STL

In Summary

In the end, your goal is to find or create the conversation, to engage with those in the conversation, and to generate a soft lead by directing them to your online resource, i.e., website. It's also about branding and targeting your ideal clients through social media.



Social Media Schedules

Now that you have the strategy, how do you plan to post all the great, new content you’ve created? Use a scheduling tool!

There are about a dozen really good, sometimes free, social media scheduling tools to help you plan out our social media posts. Each allows you to choose the channel (Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, etc.), time of day, and day of the week. Scheduling content helps to free up your day, while still engaging on social media. However, it’s not a set-it-and-forget-it tool. If you plan to be on social media, it’s important to review, engage, and share.

Here is a short list of current, popular scheduling tools:

1. Sendible
2. AgoraPulse
3. eClincher
4. Hootsuite
5. Sprout Social
6. Mav Social
7. TweetDeck
8. Tailwind

If you want to build your plan out even more, download our “Social Media Activity Book for Small Business Owners” at <https://penheel.com/social-media-activity-book-for-small-business-owners/>.

Penheel Marketing helps CPAs and small business owners to build muscle – marketing muscle – to increase their online search factor.

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