



How Changes in Social Media Channels Affect Content Strategy

Over the past few years, we've seen some significant shifts in the social media channels. For example, there's Facebook's attempts to crack down on fake news and increased focus on paid versus organic reach, Twitter's clampdown on various APIs that were resulting in overly aggressive and spammy activity, and the introduction of newer channels such as TikTok. How are these changes impacting the use of social media as part of marketers' content strategies?

"In the early 2010s, marketers came to realize it was imperative to have a presence on social media in order to connect with target audiences," says Skylar Whitney, a social media strategist with Dittoe Public Relations. "Today, marketers are realizing that simply posting content to these channels is no longer enough to cut through the noise. We've begun evaluating top performing content on a weekly to biweekly basis to ensure it's living up to our expectations," she says.

It's a continually changing landscape, and content marketers are finding themselves regularly evaluating their approaches and making adjustments. For this column, they responded to my questions about what they're doing to ensure their efforts are getting their desired results.

How have these changes impacted your use of social media as part of your overall content strategy?

Will Azevedo, founder of VloggerPro, is altering his strategy to focus on email. "For us, these shifts in social media are simply more reasons not to rely on any of them in particular," he says. "Instead, what we do is focus all our efforts on building our email lists, since we can make sure we'll never lose our subscribers to a sudden algorithm change or any arbitrary decision we can't control." While Azevedo says he uses some social media channels, he doesn't invest heavily in any of them. "This is what it should mean to most marketers and business owners out there—more reasons to focus on email marketing and making it your number one priority."

Do you rely on social media more? Less?

The changing social media landscape has definitely affected content strategy for Joseph Karasin, director of operations at POSH. He says, "For lead-generation campaigns, we have all but abandoned Facebook. In many industries, it has become an overcrowded platform, and serious consumers are doing far more

research prior to simply handing information to a company." Instead, he says, the company has invested heavily in Google/Bing pay-per-click, which "has been a much more profitable strategy."

But, says Jonathan Chan, head of marketing at Insane Growth, "while the recent social media crackdowns have made it a bit more difficult to organically build an audience, this isn't anything new." Social media companies, he says, have always been pushing paid advertising. Others agree. The trend to more reliance on paid advertising and search is growing.

Are you doing more paid advertising? Less?

Paid advertising on social channels, especially Facebook and Twitter, is the new normal for many content marketers who have seen a steep decline in the ability for organic outreach to have an impact. "Over the past few years, we've seen clients develop an interest in paid social efforts, followed by increased budgets across all platforms," says Whitney. "We're seeing the ROI in real time, and that's enough to further invest in these initiatives."

Whitney is not alone. Anna Caldwell, content manager for The Loop Marketing, Inc., says, "By far the greatest changes that we have had to make as an agency have been a greater reliance on paid ads to see ROI for social media marketing. Organic posts have become fillers." While the firm still uses organic posts to populate client feeds, she says, "if we want measurable data, we rely on paid ads."

Chan agrees: "At the end of the day, paid social media advertising is still incredibly powerful for businesses that are willing to use it—and I don't see that changing anytime soon." In fact, he predicts that more brands will turn to paid advertising as their ability to grow audiences organically continues to diminish. Still, marketers are finding the value of some channels to no longer be worth the effort—or cost. ▶

LINKS TO THE SOURCE

Dittoe Public Relations

dittoepr.com

VloggerPro

vloggerpro.com

POSH

poshdetroit.com

Insane Growth

insanegrowth.com

The Loop Marketing, Inc.

theloopmarketing.com

Have you shifted your focus to different channels? Which ones? Why?

While new platforms such as TikTok are getting a lot of buzz, there is one old stalwart most pointed to by B2B marketers, in particular, as their go-to platform. “Facebook will, more than likely, continue to be the ‘top dog’ when it comes to social media channels, but in the past few years, we’ve seen a large increase in the level of engagements on LinkedIn,” says Whitney. “Whether being used for recruiting purposes or B2B marketing, this platform has grown exponentially and will continue to provide new ways for professionals to connect with one another and brands alike.”

LinkedIn is still a channel that makes marketers feel they are getting value from their organic posts and genuine engagement with connections. However, content marketers are continually monitoring and attempting to predict the next strategy that will help them gain traction—and attention—in an increasingly cluttered digital environment.

What predictions do you have about your future use of social media as part of your content strategy?

Whitney believes that influencers will not only continue to play an important role as part of marketers’ content strategy, but also that their use will become even more widespread. This, she states, allows marketers “to reach audiences in a way that combines paid and organic, as well as public relations and social media strategies.”

Chan agrees that influencers are becoming more powerful in today’s social media environment. “We are definitely going to see influencers, especially micro-influencers, being used more strategically in the future,” he says. But the bottom line for those in the industry continues to be the focus on producing high-quality content that resonates with well-defined, and increasingly narrow, audiences.

LINDA POPHAL (lingreningpophal.com; [linkedin.com/in/lingreningpophal](https://www.linkedin.com/in/lingreningpophal)) is a freelance business journalist and content marketer with a wide range of writing credits for various business and trade publications. In addition, she does content marketing for Fortune 500 companies, small businesses, and individuals on a wide range of subjects, including human resource management and employee relations, as well as marketing, technology, and healthcare industry trends. She also owns and manages a content marketing and communication firm, Strategic Communications, LLC (stratcommunications.com). Send your comments about this column to ecletters@infoday.com or tweet us (@ITINewsBreaks).

