

How to clean up your social media landscape for better audience engagement.

Optimizing your Social Landscape for Audience Engagement

3 easy steps



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Cleaning up your social scene

Before Snapchat, there was Pinterest and Instagram.

Before Insta, there was Twitter, now X.

Before Twitter, there was Facebook and LinkedIn.

In the ever-changing world of social media, platforms come and go, with new ones constantly emerging.

Platforms like TikTok, WhatsApp, YouTube, WeChat, and Discord continue to gain popularity. And, with more than 5 billion active social media users, according to the 2024 We Are Social and Meltwater Digital 2024 Global Overview report, it's crucial not to overlook any of them.

Despite this, many companies fail to proactively adapt their social media strategies as trends and audiences evolve. Don't miss out on the opportunity to stay ahead in the social media game.

Successful audience engagement requires a strategy that enables companies to quickly adapt and evolve to thrive in the social space.



Is your social field fertile or lying fallow?

Not sure?

Then ask yourself these questions:

- How many Twitter/X handles do we have? And is there an owner and strategy for each of them
- When was the last time the company's LinkedIn page was updated?
- Are all corporate social channel profiles aligned in branding? Voice? Message?
- Are you broadcasting? Or engaging?

If you could answer all these questions without hesitation – well done. If they kicked your fight-or-flight sympathetic nervous system into overdrive, just breathe. You're not alone.

We see this in our content strategy consulting gigs all the time. When we ask about what social channels a company has, who owns (reads: is responsible for them), who manages them, and where they fit into the overall content and customer experience strategies, we often get a lot of “well, that depends” or “blank stare ... pause, ... uhhmm ...” as responses.

The good news for our clients, and you, is that – getting a social media strategy back on track, and keeping it running smoothly, is easier than you think. By following three easy steps, you'll be well on your way to a strong, healthy, and fruitful social presence.

Step 1: Do a social media audit

Audit is a word that can instantly bring a bead of sweat to anyone's forehead, and understandably so. But in this case, no panic is needed. This first step of a recommended social media audit is about getting your arms around ALL the social handles and channels out there representing the company and its brands. And I do mean all. Don't just track down the obvious ones, think outside the box:



Is there an executive or employee who is particularly vocal in promoting the company, its products, services, and/or brand via their personal handle?



Are there social handles or spaces created to support the brand or its offerings that are still live but otherwise dead ... i.e., never used?



Are there rogue or unsanctioned handles or channels that are being used by others that should be shut down? Or at least regularly monitored?



What about social outlets that represent parts of the business that have been sold, shutdown, or discontinued?

Assembling a list of all these, and any others, you can find in a simple spreadsheet (see page 6) is an important first step in laying the path to a manageable and productive social landscape.

Step 2: Track Engagement and Audience

Now that you know where the handles and channels are (at least most of them), it's time to start separating the wheat from the chafe by documenting details on:



Audience: subscribers, followers, community members, etc.



Engagement: clicks, likes, retweets, shares, comments, etc.



Top posts for each channel/handle.

When you are building out your social media audit spreadsheet, if you are capturing data on more than 15 or 20 handles/URLs, you may want to break down the handles to make them more manageable. This is easily done by creating a different worksheet in the master file for each:

- Channel: Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, etc.
- Product line
- Brand
- Geography

Whatever makes the most sense for your business and makes the information accessible and useable.

It's now harvest time.

Step 3: Cull the Sprawl

This is the fun part ... it's time to play a game of Keep It, Want It, Toss It. The rules are simple, review the list of audited social sites to identify what will be active – **Keep It**, put on pause – **Want It**, or sunsetted – **Toss It**.

1. **"Keep It"** handles/channels. These are the social outlets that have a combination of:

- Have high rates of engagement, Large audiences,
- Have the company/brand/product name,
- Trending up accumulating engagement, audience, etc., and/or
- Are part of a strategy that is actively being executed.

Now, just because it has made it to the Keep It list doesn't automatically mean that the channels/handles will stay live/active. You may want to put a pin in some until you have a social strategy sussed out for how each will be used.

2. **"Want It"** handles and channels.

These are the ones that:

- Have potential, growing audience and/or engagement,
- It's in a target-for-growth region's local language, and or
- Has influencer attention.

These outlets may need to be put on hold for a while, meaning not actively maintained, but not sunsetted (read: deleted).

3. **“Toss it”** are whatever is left after you have identified which handles and channels will be actively maintained or kept and (at least temporarily) put on hold.

The Toss It pile often includes URLs and handles that:

- Are not sanctioned by your organization. For example, rogue brand or product handles.
- Have low-to-no engagement and/or audience. Represent brands, products, or people that are no longer part of the organization.
- Do not have an owner and/or an active strategy.

These URLs and handles should be sunsetted* and removed from the content calendar.

To ensure that you have the supporting rationale for the Need, Want, Toss assignments, be sure to add a few more details such as:

- Purpose and roll the handle plays in customer and audience journeys.
- What, if anything, needs to be changed moving forward to keep the content on point and engaging with its primary target audience?
- What are the opportunities and/or threats for the channel? I.E., what is the impact of putting the site on hold or sunsetting it?
- Document the owner, password, ID, email, URL, etc. associated with the handle.

Spreadsheet columns for the 3 Social Audit steps.

Step 1: Social Media Audit

Channel	URL/Handle	Bio/URL in Bio	Verified/Authorized?	On Brand?	Post Frequency	Owner

Step 2: Audience and Engagement

Number of Subscribers, Followers, etc.	Engagement: clicks, retweets, like, etc.	Top Post URL	Top Post URL	Top Post URL

Step 3: Cull the Sprawl - Need it, Want it, Toss it

Need it, Want it, Toss it	Use for/ Purpose/ Journey Stage	What Needs to Be Changed?	Opportunities/Threats	Owner/ID/Password

* Before deciding how to sunset (delete, terminate, permanent redirect) the Toss It handles, check each social media channel's policy on handle reuse – if they can be reused, how long before the handle can be picked up, etc.

The Audit is done, now what?

Then, for the Want It and Toss It piles, you want to make sure that you don't lose any of the connections associated with those URLs and handles.



Let followers know.

For any URL or handle that will be put on pause or ultimately closed down, make sure to post a message that lets people know when the account will be shut down, when (if it will) be back up and active, and include alternatives for getting in touch on other media platforms. Do this for all accounts no matter how many, or few, followers it has.



Leave a breadcrumb.

If there is any chance that you'll want to resurrect an account, or don't want anyone else to use the handle, then don't delete it so that you can retain ownership of the handle. Instead, for those handles that will be sunsetted, make a final post that says where your group will be online and pin it to the top. This way, audiences can find where you are active.



Archive your content

For the URLs and handles that will be shut down check with the legal department or company management on any industry, regulatory, or legal requirements for archiving or retaining communications with customers. Be sure to download and archive a copy of all interactions and content published, as well as the metrics associated with the account. Store this archive in an easily accessible, central location for any potential future referencing required.



And finally, don't lose the login!

Regardless of which list the URL or handle landed on, make sure you keep track of the owner, email, ID, and/or password required to access the channel. Even if it's not active now, you never know if you may need access to the account again. So be sure to put the password, email and phone number attached to the account in a secure place that can be passed on to future staff.

Concluding Summary & Recap

Here's a quick recap on how to clean up your social media landscape and get better audience engagement in three easy steps:



Do a social media audit of all social channels, handles, and URLs that are associated with your company, its brands and products/services.



Assess all channels to understand audience size and engagement levels.



Decide what stays and what goes and why. Determine whether channels and handles should stay active (Keep), be kept for future use (Want), or sunsetted (Toss).



Redirect Audiences to where you want them to go by posting an anchoring message with details on where they can find you.



Analyze and repeat Now that you have a plan, regularly check in on active channels and assess the need/timing to potentially relaunch outlets that are currently on hold.

About TCA

Founded in 2010, The Content Advisory (TCA) helps leaders and teams solve their hardest content problems. Clients rely on TCA for valuable insights on content strategy, marketing, digital transformation, data privacy, and customer experience.

TCA provides strategic content, marketing, and business insights, advice, and tools through customized consulting, training, coaching, and research engagements.

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