

Best Practices for Improvement on Share Rocket

Things you can do on social media to increase your Audience and Engagement:



Grow Audience by inviting post “likers” to also like your Page

If not already done, all Facebook handles must be professional “Pages” (not “Profiles”) to be compliance with FB’s Terms of Service. It’s easy to convert Profiles to Pages without losing existing followers. Once you have a Facebook Page, one of the best ways to grow its audience is to invite people who have already “liked” your content! Navigate to your FB Page, click on the number of likes listed on any post to see the full list, and a light box will pop up. Next to each person’s name, you’ll see the option to invite the person to like the Page if they haven’t already. We should note, however, that this option only works for Pages with fewer than 100,000 total likes.



Put more time and effort into Facebook

Twitter is a fantastic, useful tool that connects journalists to sources, to one another, and to a global audience where information can spread like wildfire. However, it is the least effective of the social sites Share Rocket tracks at driving engagement. Out of Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram, Twitter is growing the slowest and its reach per post pales in comparison to Facebook. Because it is often a place news first breaks, journalists feel tied to it. That is understandable, but that doesn’t mean it’s the best weapon in your arsenal. The same content you post to Twitter would more often be more effective as a Facebook post, if you want to get the highest return on investment for the time you spend on social media. Instead of tweeting about breaking news, snap a quick photo from the scene (or grab a generic station breaking news graphic from your main page, or use a photo with credit that you are allowed to use) and post the same text you would’ve put in the tweet. Thankfully, Facebook doesn’t have a character limit, so you can even include more detail and nuance.

See which one goes further. In our recent experience, the majority of the time Facebook will win. Plus, it offers opportunity to go back and update or connect with your followers in the comments to get the most from a single post in a way Twitter does not. Although a newer platform, Instagram is also an effective platform in generating engagement and typically garners higher engagement numbers than Twitter.



Get good at Facebook Live (and Instagram Live & Periscope)

Since the launch of Facebook Live, Facebook has made move after move to increase the amount of eyeballs on content creators' live video offerings. There is an awesome map view on the site of where live videos are taking place at that moment around the globe, there is a tab for them in Facebook's mobile app, and users are receiving notifications on their profiles when creators go live. It is no mistake – that is where the largest revenue possibilities lie for advertisers and Facebook is conditioning its audience to think of it as the best place to find live, breaking news video. Facebook Live videos are more likely to appear higher in News Feed and one of our customers found that while videos were live, they garnered more than 3.5X the engagement of a standard video post. Broadcasters around the country have set up streaming systems so they can switch between video content sources in ways similar to the on-air control room, and it has revolutionized breaking news coverage. The engagement numbers we see on that content show just how well it's working. For individual reporters and anchors, Facebook has published a useful best practices guide for Facebook Live. Listen to those folks – they know what their algorithms reward. Many of those best practices are equally useful on other social live video formats. Mix it up now and then to reach slightly different audiences.



Monitor “Top” and “Trending” content

Use Share Rocket's top and trending boards and other tools to see how your posts are performing relative to your peers, but also keep tabs on the competition to see what they're doing well. If you constantly monitor what is performing well in your market, you'll know what's trending well before it's on Twitter or Facebook's trending lists. If a competitor beats you to posting a good piece of content, try to find a way to make it your own. The people at a station with the closest eye on social media need to keep their reporters and anchors aware of when a hot topic is taking off. Provide them with content from your site or a news source you partner with, and encourage them to share it on their page with a question or their own comment. Likewise, if a post from a reporter or anchor on their personal page strikes a chord with their audience, other talent and the station's main and/or sub-brand pages should share that post. If it worked for them, chances are it will drive engagement elsewhere.



Keep Interacting

Post regularly across all social sites, and when appropriate, respond to fans/followers comments. Get your audience involved on your page. Share good photos they send in. Ask them for help, and if they provide an answer that works, thank them and share it! Refer to them directly in comments and in live videos. Wish them happy holidays and let them see how you're celebrating. Followers also enjoy seeing (within reason) your personal life; pictures of your vacation, funny anecdotes, pics of your pet, etc. Just try to foster an accommodating vibe and you'll find that followers become fans and will support you with likes, comments, and shares.



Repurpose, repurpose, repurpose

If you post a piece of text that gets a good response, repurpose it for easy engagement. Many popular tweets are stand-alone text quotes, often from a speech or news conference. You can pop that quote onto a picture of the speaker or even a stock image and tweet it again. Not only that, simple photo posts do a great job driving engagement on every platform – use it on Facebook and Instagram, too. Share video between the three platforms. If viewers give you permission to share their photos, post them (with credit) on all platforms. Make video into gifs. Make viewer photos into simple video slideshows. Schedule top-performing content to post again when you're not working as an "ICYMI" post or with a new spin on it in your description. When a social media page is doing a public service (such as police/fire/military/schools/gov't pages) or posting press releases, they often just want their content or information shared quickly. Credit and tag them in the post and publish it to your page, with additional information for your audience or just thank you for their hard work or service. Think of other local pages who post good content and ask share it – with credit and a tag, of course – zoos and aquariums, hospitals, parks, stadiums, landmark buildings, etc.



Be responsive to followers

It's not always fun (there are too many trolls in this world), but try to block out a little time each workday to provide thoughtful response to legitimate questions, concerns, and even complaints. Everyone appreciates a quick response, but anything is better than nothing at all and it builds respect between you and the audience. Keep your cool and don't get in fights with followers on social media. Remember, you are serving a much larger audience than one person who disagrees with you online – try to focus on keeping the majority happy and remember you just can't win 'em all.



Content is still king, no matter what the platform

All good journalists aim to create content that is interesting, timely, and (most importantly) of value to your audience. If there is big breaking news in your market, share it whether it is your beat or not. Whether it is politics, weather, traffic, sports, or something else entirely, take advantage of the topics people in your market are discussing. Within reason, share your opinions. Be honest and authentic. Posts that hit upon an emotional cord often do very well and can even go viral. If a particular topic or hobby is a passion of yours, don't be afraid to discuss it in detail in your posts. You'll often find others share your interests, or it may be the key to opening up a new audience to you on social media. However, also be cognizant of not posting content for the sake of producing more voice. Think quality over quantity. As one of the Social Standouts, Frank Somerville, once said, "If you have nothing to say, don't."



Set goals

To improve social performance for individual contributors, you must provide direction based on the Share Rocket data. Look at how often they post on each of the social sites we track and how much engagement they are getting from those posts. Go over their "report card" page on Share Rocket with them to see where and when the top performers in the market are posting. Steer them towards what is most effective, and work together to determine what is a fair and reasonable goal for improvement. The goal is not to work harder – it's to get individuals to see they can work smarter on social and get more from less.