



Best Social Media Practices 4 Step Process

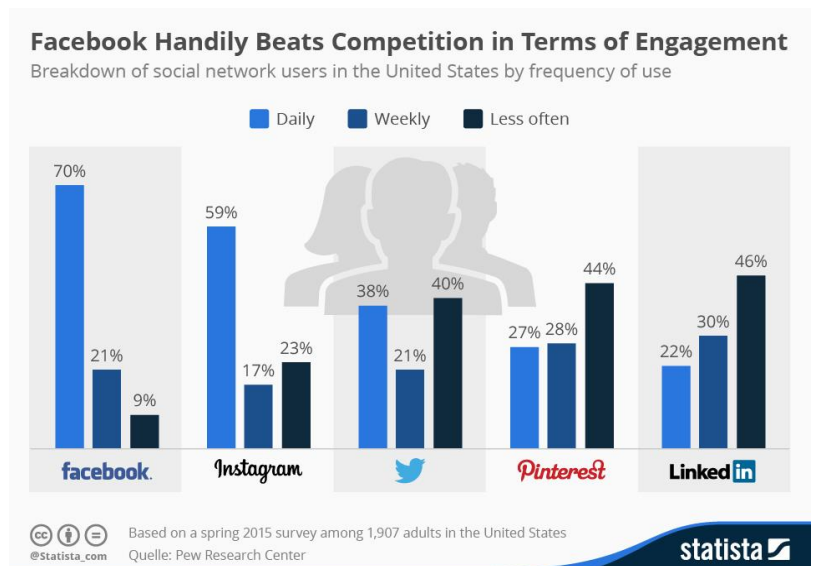
The purpose of social media posting is to inspire travelers to share positive stories about a destination.

Step 1: Create a Strategy

- Create an online calendar to follow
- Select a strategy and promote around *seasons, events, and themes*
- Posting strategy:
 - Follower base is optimized when posting at least 1-2 times a day
 - Pinterest, Instagram, and Twitter are built for frequency, so add more!
 - Posting on the weekend will give you more exposure

Step 2: Engage

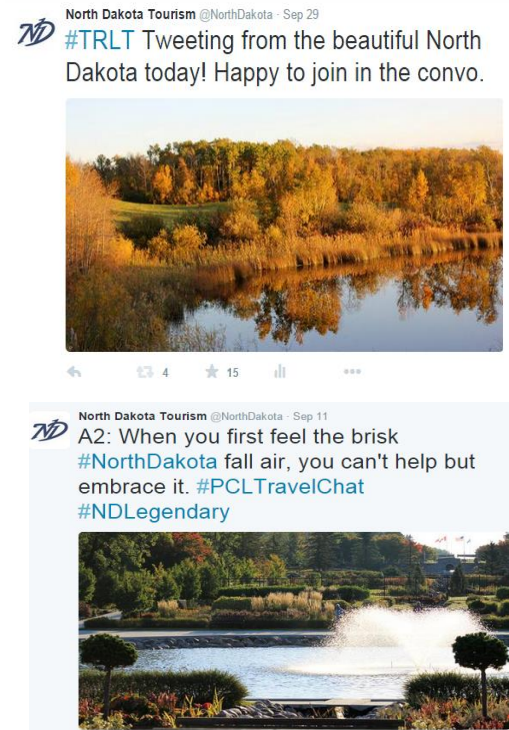
- Post to give information of **value** rather than to self promote
- Engage with followers
- Search by hashtags & tag others to boost engagement
 - #Parks
 - #Travel
 - #TravelTips
 - #TravelTuesday
 - #WhereToNext
 - #TheGoodLife
 - #TravelGram
 - #TravelFriendly



- Engage in **Travel Chats** on Twitter for
 - Increased followers
 - Communication with other travel writers
 - Relationship building
 - TRLT (The Road Less Traveled)
 - MWTravelChat (MidWest Travel Chat)
 - TTOT (travel talk on twitter)
- Post Quality
 - Keep content *original* and *organic*
 - Content:
 - Topics with numbers: “Top 5”
 - Photo Friday
 - Be authentic and creative



- Ask questions that encourage “pass it on” opportunities and allow interaction
- *Listen* and *join* in on comments
- Be responsive
- Ask the following **questions** before posting:
 - How will this post influence people to share information about this destination?
 - How will this post change existing negative perceptions formed about this destination?
 - How will this positively enhance the image of this destination?
 - Would this be interesting to someone who is not from this destination?
 - Is there an image I can pair with this post to showcase it better?

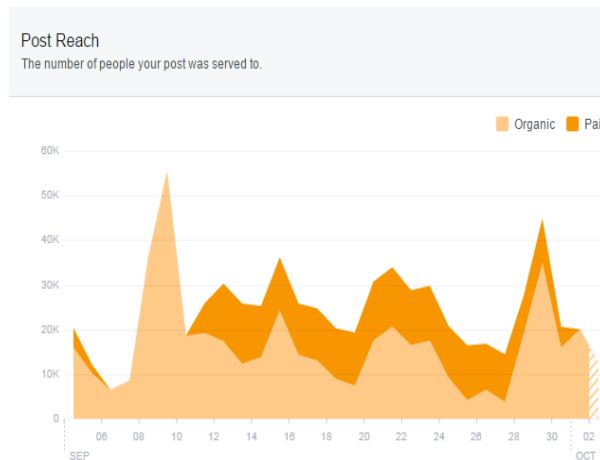
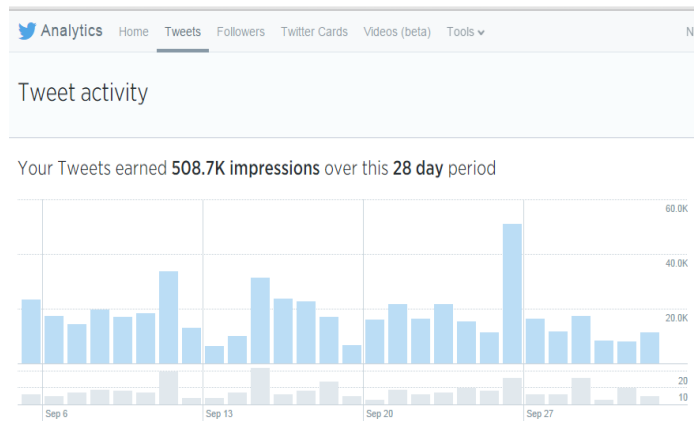


Step 3: Execute

- Frequency
 - Consistent posting will help keep audiences engaged and expand reach
 - Variety is important to engage new audiences
 - Best Practices:
 - **Facebook** - 2-3 per day (including shares)
 - **Twitter** - 5-7 per day (including retweets)
 - **LinkedIn** - At least 3 times per week, with at least one job opening feature
 - **YouTube** - This channel is currently not part of our overall post strategy, but may have greater focus in the future if video creation opportunities arise.
- Content Creating and Scheduling
 - Current events such as breaking news, sporting events, and business expansions about the destination will improve feed content
 - Integrate spontaneous posts to stay relevant to what is occurring
- Tagging/Linking
 - Remember to use tags and links in status updates
 - This will engage a more diverse crowd to your sites
- Language and Tone
 - Remain **consistent** in tone and language
 - Describe experiences to the audience as if they have never been to this destination
 - Include a **ton** of detail
- #Hashtags
 - They actually do matter!
 - Trending hashtags can be found on Facebook and Twitter on the right sidebar
 - Remember: they are useful to allow your sites to be easily discovered
 - **#TBT** (Throwback Thursday) used when referring to things that happened years prior
 - **#FF** (FlashbackFriday) used to showcase partners and others you think would be of interest to your followers
- Photo and Video
 - Pairing posts with photos or videos gives them greater engagement
 - When posting a photo, make sure to give the photos a *description*
 - Sharing or creating video boosts the variety of post types to showcase different areas of the destination
 - Quality images should be authentic with an un-staged feel
 - Your page should feel uniform and professional to the outside eye
 - When posting photos that are candid or taken with your phone, make sure it is well-lit and flattering to the subject being featured

Step 4: Analyze

- See how well your post performs
- What is resonating with your audience
- Impressions and engagements
- Know your audience
 - Demographics
 - Lifestyle
 - Location



HELPFUL HINTS:

Social Tools and Shortcuts

- Manage multiple accounts from desktop, web, mobile
- Track links (bit.ly, owl.ly)
- Schedule postings (hootsuite)

Be Mobile

- Accessibility is important to your followers
- **40%** of Americans book travel reservations on mobile devices. Expected to be **60%** by the end of **2015**. (Moxie)
- **47%** of the traffic to **NDtourism.com** is accessed from a mobile device.
- Social Media referrals to **NDtourism.com** increased **121%** over 2013.

Social Advertising

- Don't be afraid to utilize *social ads*!
- Promoted posts on Facebook
- Facebook ads
- Promoted "Tweets" on Twitter

QUICK GUIDELINES:



- Look and feel should be uniform in posts.
- Use a variety between longer posts, questions, and shorter posts.
- Post videos and photos within status updates to keep a variety of types of posts and keep the look of our wall interesting.
- Post current media (TV and radio commercials, press releases, etc.).
- Link and tag when appropriate. There are opportunities to connect with news/media outlets, people, partners, and other organizations that can create more traffic to your page.

Best Times to Post

- Facebook has its strongest engagement on weekdays.
- Posting in the late afternoon when the workday winds down gives you a better chance to engage with your audience.
- The three biggest usage spikes tend to occur on weekdays at 11 a.m., 3 p.m. and 8 p.m.
- Fans are less active on Sunday compared to all other days of the week.
- Experiment with the frequency and consistency of posts to find best times of days/weeks to post for best engagement and reach.



- Look and feel should be uniform in posts.
- Engage in #FF (Follow Fridays). This is a great way to increase followers and there are a lot of relationships that could be built just by "Follow Friday-ing" someone. Suggestion: Pick out people to #FF that can be linked into groups (Ex: Bismarck #FF that lists businesses and people in Bismarck).
- Thank people who retweet you and help push out your message.
- Find the channels where your target market is. You want to create conversation as well as go where the conversations are already happening.
- Follow people with similar interests and goals. They are more likely to pass on your message and will help you reach your target audience.

Best Times to Post

- Twitter engagement goes up 30% on the weekends.
- Post in the afternoons for better chance to be retweeted.