

Determining Your Social Media Voice and Purpose

1. Find your “name” – use something descriptive, easy to remember, and relative to your purpose/business.
2. Use that name across all platforms, from your Blog, FriendFeed, Twitter, Ning, and all other Social Media outlets. Associate it with your Linked-In and Facebook pages (keeping in mind the purpose of those two platforms).
3. Ask yourself what your “voice” will be. Your “voice” is the tone and purpose of your Social Media being. Most often this is not 100% of who you are, but just a portion, and you must always remind yourself that everything you post on Twitter will be indexed and in Google, there really are not “deletes” or “take-backs” in Social Media, so choose your words CAREFULLY.
4. Write down your ideal user perceived purpose, how do you want to come across to your “reader” or Follower?
5. Using that sentence, determine your “goal” for Social Media, is it to build a reputation, build new clientele, or become a persona, or information source, these are not the only options. Write it down here:
6. Create your Social Media Bio. This should be clear, concise, and interesting if you want to attract people. Try to keep it under 3 sentences, and it will be significantly small for some sites. Write eight key words which would help you create that bio or identity here:
7. Now find an image, or Avatar/Gravatar, which will be the uniformed visual image you will use. You can use a photo of yourself, a logo, or another image that is NOT copy protected and is NOT someone other than yourself. Truth is important in creating credibility and a solid reputation in Social Media. Vanity is fine, but should not be the determining factor in your choice.
8. Now start USING the Social Media, schedule time to Blog weekly, or to write blogs, brainstorm topics you want to share, having a list is good. Keep a microcassette recorder available for those times when an idea hits you and you want to expand upon it but can’t write it up.

9. Do not plagiarize. Do not copy other peoples posts or blogs, this is easily discovered and can quickly destroy your credibility and Social Media reputation. You can repost a blog with permission and proper credit, you can Tweet someone's blog if you enjoyed it, comment on it, and link back to it, but never try to take someone elses writing and pass it off as your own. It is always discovered and isn't accepted.
10. Social Media Etiquette: It is important to understand the dynamic rules of the media and determine what lines are drawn in the proverbial sand, and do not cross them. "Re-Tweeting" is acceptable, but it should not be ALL you do. Auto-Tweeting is a personal choice, some view it as awful, some use it in conjunction with personal tweets, to share information they enjoy on a regular basis. Finding a balance and finding the rules can be difficult. Ask questions if you are uncertain of how something works.
11. Have Fun! And remember – the typed word has no inflection, and no intonation, do not read into something if it is not there, be patient, tactful and understanding.