

# Using Social Media to Build Your Practice

By Sandi Smith Leyva, CPA

It was only a few years ago that having a website became a must-have and not a nice-to- have. We're now at that point with social media.



What's great about social media for accounting and other professional services industries is it can propel you to thought leader/expert status in a very short period of time. That means more business, higher prices and happy clients, knowing they are in good hands with a recognized expert.

Profiting from social media still eludes large and small businesses. Here are 10 quick tips to help you avoid costly mistakes, learn where to focus and turn your social media ROI on:

## **Tip #1: Commit for the long haul**

There's nothing worse than setting up your social media accounts and linking them to your website, and then doing nothing. If you have only 14 Twitter followers and 30 Facebook page likes, get your icons off your website until you have a more robust following. That means having a proactive social media plan that you work on once a week – or at a minimum, once a month.

## **Tip #2: Privacy, schmivacy**

I've heard a lot of excuses about privacy from accountants as to why they don't use social media. If you're a business owner and need to market for clients, your need for privacy is hurting you. If you use social media for personal reasons, create lists for your personal vs. business friends, and when you post, share to the correct list. It's easy to hide behind this excuse when it's really fear of change or something else that's holding you back.

## **Tip #3: YouTube is a money-printing machine**

Hardly any accountants are creating videos, and don't worry, you don't need a professional video crew or a lot of money to do this. These days, a webcam, flipcam or even your smartphone is better than a pro because people want it real, not polished. No matter what size business you are, you can do this.

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### Tip #4: Facebook is unexplored potential:

Very few accountants are monetizing Facebook, and yet, Facebook ads are some of the most highly targetable ads in the online space. You can find individuals needing tax work, as well as small business owners needing accounting services.

I have found private, closed groups to be one of the most beneficial parts of Facebook. Accountant's Accelerator members belong to a private Facebook group where they share tips, needs, questions and answers with each other. I belong to two masterminds, and both have robust private Facebook groups where members can collaborate and get amazing ideas from each other. Only the members see the posts.

### Tip #5: Twitter is great for events, deadlines and breaking news

Use Twitter when your marketing or communication is time-dependent. Since our profession is so deadline-oriented, Twitter is a natural for posting reminders to clients.

### Tip #6: Set goals

What do you want to get from your social media efforts? A following? New clients? A boost in your online reputation? Plan your goals so that you can measure your results.

### Tip #7: Have a bias for visuals

The tide has turned in social media: text is boring. Graphics, photos and videos now rule, so when you post, post more of these.

### Tip #8: Integrate with other marketing channels

The real magic happens when you align your marketing and communications plans with your other marketing channels – website, newsletter, blog, events, awards, publicity and more. Use social media as an amplifier for your other marketing messages and channels; it will put online energy into your campaigns.

### Tip #9: Take a formal class

If you have no idea how to get started, find a class that will provide the how-to. I just finished one this month and found it very beneficial.

Now that social media is a must-have for small businesses, it's a great way to connect with them. Try out these tips to get the most return.



### About the Author

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