



How to build a SOCIAL MEDIA CALENDAR



Introduction

A social marketer's secret weapon is his or her calendar. A solid social media calendar tells you what's coming up, which events are important, and what to expect from past months and years. These pieces of information ensure that when unexpected circumstances pop up, you're never unprepared.

If you're building your social media calendar and want to know how to put together the right roadmap for your brand, check out our step-by-step process for stress-free planning. We'll walk you through planning your calendar with larger marketing initiatives in mind, researching and including events external to your company in your calendar, analyzing past successes and "opportunities for growth," and, finally, laying your calendar out.



I

Look at the Big Picture

The first thing you need to do is get a good look at the broader marketing initiatives within your organization: the product releases, projects, and content pieces you're going to have to support during this month, quarter, or year.

Use these initiatives as the foundation you build your calendar upon. For instance, if you know a big product is set to release in February, make sure you know the specific deadlines of that product release: when the product will be finished, when the press release goes out, and the actual product release date. Make sure you have big pieces of social content ready for each of those dates, and supporting, buzz-building content set to go for the days in between those major dates.

II

Research External Events

Take a look at the events external to your brand that you should be paying attention to and prepared to craft social content around. For instance, here are some major events you should consider planning content around, whether you're a B2B social marketer or B2C social marketer:

YOUR CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Meet with the primary stakeholders for each of the organizations within your marketing department to make sure you understand all the dates and needs of these parties
- ✓ Build out the content on your calendar leading up to, during, and after each major marketing initiative
- ✓ Send this tentative calendar to the primary stakeholders to make sure you're on the right track and haven't missed any major marketing events
- ✓ Once you have approval, set up follow-up meetings with the primary stakeholders for each campaign to make sure you have all the materials you need from them to craft your best creative social content -- and gain behind-the-scenes or on-site access as necessary

SAMPLE 2016 SOCIAL CALENDAR

JAN

1: New Year's Eve / Day
1: 2016 NHL Winter Classic
6: People's Choice Awards
10: Golden Globes Awards
18: Martin Luther King Day
30: SAG Awards

FEB

2: Groundhog Day
7: Super Bowl
14: Valentine's Day
14: NBA All-Star Game
15: Grammy Awards
28: Academy Awards

MAR

13: Daylight Savings Time
15-April 4: NCAA Men's Div. Basketball Tournament
17: St. Patrick's Day
19-April 5: NCAA Women's Div. Basketball Tournament
27: Easter

APR

3: iHeartRadio Music Awards
3: MLB Season Begins
7-10: Master's Tournament
15: Tax Day
23: Passover (1st Day)
27: Admin. Professionals Day
29: Arbor Day

MAY

5: Cinco de Mayo
6: National Nurses Day
7: Kentucky Derby
8: Mother's Day
22: French Open Begins
26-29: BMW PGA Championship

JUN

5: Doughnut Day
7: Ramadan (1st Day)
16-19: U.S. Open
19: Father's Day
23: NBA Draft
27: Wimbledon Championships Begin

JUL

July 2: Tour de France
July 4: Independence Day
July 7: U.S. Women's Open
July 12: MLB All-Star Game

AUG

5-21: The 2016 Summer Olympics Begin
26: Woman's Equality Day

SEPT

5: Labor Day
8: NFL Season Begins
11: Patriot Day

OCT

9: Chicago Marathon
12: Yom Kippur
17: Boss's Day
31: Halloween

NOV

6: NYC Marathon
8: Election Day
11: Veterans Day
24: Thanksgiving
25: Black Friday
28: Cyber Monday

DEC

24: Christmas Eve
25: Christmas Day
26: Kwanzaa (1st Day)



Research External Events (cont.)

Here's a checklist for making sure you're looking at external events in the right way:

YOUR CHECKLIST:

- ✓ Branch out by attaching your brand to events on social that you previously haven't: if no one else in your industry is doing it, all the more reason for you to take advantage of that green field
- ✓ Remember to stay true to your brand: don't waste time on social content that is irrelevant to your audience. Need help identifying who your audience actually is? Check out our [Complete Guide to Audience Analysis](#)
- ✓ Especially when dealing with sensitive events like Patriot Day, don't obviously push your product or brand profile: simply honor the day in an eye-catching (and non-offensive) way
- ✓ Once you've chosen the holidays you'll try to build content around on your calendar, make sure you're connecting with the right teams to build the assets you'll need well ahead of time, from Twitter cards to longform content to web dev.





Analyze the Past

To do better in the future, you must first understand what has worked well for you and other brands in your space in past years.

Here's a checklist for making sure you're looking at the past right:

YOUR CHECKLIST:

- ✓ [Run a report](#) on your brand activities to find out which campaigns worked best for your brand over the past year, and where lulls occurred. Mark those spikes and dips in your calendar for next year so you know when to replicate successes and when you should expect (and plan accordingly for) a downturn in social activity
- ✓ Remember to check on your competitors: analyze competitive performance on your social content, wins, and losses over the past year. Check out how your competitors have done when compared to your brand, learn from their

successes, and take advantage of their weaknesses when planning out your fresh calendar. Need help? Check out our [Complete Guide to Competitive Analysis](#)

- ✓ Don't limit yourself by replicating campaigns which created short-term spikes in engagement, impressions, share-of-voice, or whatever other metric you're focusing on: look at the larger picture by paying attention to sustained brand lift. For instance, if your brand received a big follower boost thanks to a well-executed campaign last January, but lost half that number of followers over the course of the year, something went wrong and needs to be changed. Need help figuring out the long-tail results of a one-off campaign? Check out our [End-of-Year Social Audit Guide](#)

JANUARY 2016 SOCIAL CALENDAR

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
					Campaign GOES LIVE 1 (See 2015 success at app.simplymeasured.com/viewer/9803)	Winter Classic Mini-Campaign GOES LIVE 2
Reminder post about 20% off 3	Reminder post about 20% off 4	Reminder post about 20% off 5 Pre-post for People's Choice	Reminder post about 20% off 6 Post for People's Choice	Reminder post about 20% off 7 People's Choice Wrap-Up	Reminder post about 20% off 8	Reminder post about 20% off 9 Pre-post for Golden Globes
Reminder post about 20% off 10 Post for Golden Globes	Reminder post about 20% off 11 Golden Globes Wrap-Up	Reminder post about 20% off 12	Reminder post about 20% off 13	Reminder post about 20% off 14	Reminder post about 20% off 15	Reminder post about 20% off 16
Reminder post about 20% off 17 MLK Post - Approval from CMO	Reminder post about 20% off 18 MLK Post	Reminder post about 20% off 19	Reminder post about 20% off 20	Reminder post about 20% off 21	Reminder post about 20% off 22	Reminder post about 20% off 23
Reminder post about 20% off 24 FINAL WEEK REMINDER	Reminder post about 20% off 25 FINAL WEEK REMINDER	Reminder post about 20% off 26 FINAL WEEK REMINDER	Reminder post about 20% off 27 FINAL WEEK REMINDER	Reminder post about 20% off 28 FINAL WEEK REMINDER	Reminder post about 20% off 29 Pre-Post for SAG Awards	Reminder post about 20% off 30/31 Post for SAG Awards/ SAG Awards Wrap-Up

Conclusion

Once you have a solid social media calendar on deck, you're no longer wondering where you're going -- you already know! You won't have that "Oops, the Olympics start in one week...Should I be doing something about that?" moment, because you'll already have thought it through and seen it coming up on your calendar if you did decide to leverage the event for your brand.

Of course, this doesn't mean you won't have spur-of-the-moment requests from other departments or even your own, but you will have your major campaign pieces ready and in place. We hope your calendar in the year ahead is jam-packed with fun, learning, and success.



About Simply Measured

Simply Measured is the most complete social analytics solution, empowering marketers with unmatched access to their social data to more clearly define their social strategy and to optimize their tactics for maximum impact.

Our goal is to put the tools to understand business data in the hands of business users. We think reporting should be simple, attractive, and accessible for everyone – not just data scientists. Our software streamlines the process from data to deliverables and eliminates the countless hours spent on everyday reporting tasks. We do this by putting cloud data sources at your fingertips, providing a marketplace of best practice reports, and allowing you to generate beautiful solutions on the web, in Excel, and in PowerPoint with a couple of clicks.

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