



Visit Lake Charles & Southwest Louisiana Detailed Tourism Partner Q&A

This is a follow-up to questions from a 2015 SPROUT workshop by Sheila Scarborough from [Tourism Currents](#) – [go here for more details, plus her slide deck](#).

General info for everyone – [demographics of each social media platform](#).

**** We use G+, are branching into Vine, and may implement a Snapchat.**

Congratulations, that's very ambitious! If the customer you want to reach is active on those social media platforms, and each one fits your business strategy and goals, AND you have the resources to do them all well, more power to you. 😊

For most businesses, the “**Digital Marketing Big 4**” for reaching just about any sort of customer are Facebook, Twitter, your email list, and a blog.

**** How often should I post on social media?**

There is no magic number, but here are some rules of thumb:

Facebook: The most important thing is to respond quickly when someone tags your Page on Facebook; use the Facebook Pages Manager app so you're not tied to your desktop but can still be responsive and helpful from your phone. That interaction “counts,” too.

For general posts, links, etc., **aim for daily** if possible, but at least a few times a week. Don't over-do it on Facebook, or you'll clog your follower News Feeds.

Post when your Page followers are most likely to be on Facebook. To see that, go to Page Insights -> Posts in left sidebar -> When Your Fans Are Online. *Note that activity patterns change for each day of the week.*

Twitter: The most important thing is to respond when someone tags you in a tweet; use an app on your phone to get notifications and answer when you're away from your desktop. That interaction "counts," too. Many people use Twitter for customer service requests, so it's more important to be responsive than to just pump out tweets for the sake of tweeting.

For general tweeting of info, links, etc., you can get away with lots of tweets per day because the "stream" keeps moving, but **aim for daily** or every few days if at all possible. You can repeat info a few times, since different followers are on at different times.

Use a tool like [Followerwonk](#) to see when your followers are most likely to be on Twitter, and tweet then to increase opportunities for interaction and click-throughs.

Blog: Short and more frequent is better than long and infrequent. Aim for **one post per week**, but if one post per month is all you can handle at first, that's fine. Just be consistent.

To start, create a batch of evergreen posts, the "gift that keeps on giving" in terms of bringing traffic to your blog and website. To do that, take a close look at two sections of your website Google Analytics & Webmaster tools:

- 1) the most popular pages/posts over the last year or so, and
- 2) search queries that people use the most that land them on your site.

For #1 - Write more blog posts about the stuff that's already popular.

For #2 - Make sure there's at least one blog post that directly answers the top 10 most popular search queries. Bonus: ensure you have a blog post that answers the top 10 questions customers ask, whether in your business or over the phone.

Consider a plan to re-share those evergreen, still relevant blog posts over time; people will miss things! Here's how to do it:

<https://blog.kissmetrics.com/double-your-social-media-traffic/>

LinkedIn: Things seem to “hang around” for awhile in the LinkedIn News Feed, so plan to post **every few days** on a LinkedIn Company Page.

**** How to change the name of your Facebook Page**

1. Click **About** below your Page's cover photo
2. Click **Page Info** in the left column
3. Hover over the **Name** section and click **Edit**
4. Enter a new name and click **Save Changes**

You can only change the name once. Go here for more info on Facebook Page naming: <https://www.facebook.com/help/271607792873806>

**** I am "social media illiterate" and would like to learn about the recommended social media platforms that should be incorporated in my business plans, websites, etc.**

Remember the top items we covered in the 2015 training – [here's the slide deck on the Visit Lake Charles SPROUT page](#) – and that includes knowing your business goals for the next few years, thinking through how your marketing communications can support them, and then drilling down to how social media can support each marketing goal.

Do your research and know the answer to these questions, in detail:

Who is your market?

Where are they on social media?

What's the **best way to connect** with them there?

Since Facebook is the biggest social network and cuts across all demographic lines, that's probably your best place to start.

Look back through the slide deck from SPROUT for examples of good Facebook Page interaction. Think through what you can post on Facebook (text, photos, video, Sharing posts from other Pages) that would appeal to the market(s) you want to reach, and make a plan to post consistently.

Finally, budget for a few Facebook ad campaigns to grow your Page followers and Boost the visibility of some of your posts in Facebook's News Feed.

**** What types of videos do well on Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube? Should they have a different focus on each platform?**

Any good video is going to be short, punchy, and tell a great story.

You can get away with longer videos if they are captivating enough, but that can be a tall order. People are often unwilling to sit through more than about **two or three minutes**, so keep things moving.

Video can certainly be shared on **Twitter**, which also owns **Vine** (6.5 second videos.) They don't seem to get much engagement there, however. Twitter is such a "read and skim" platform that it's hard to get people to pause.

Video uploaded **directly to Facebook** – not a URL shared from YouTube, Vimeo, etc. – does very well because it plays automatically in people's News Feeds, which is hard to ignore. If you capture those eyeballs, though, don't expect them to pay attention for too long; there's a lot of competition in the News Feed.

Livestreaming video apps like **Periscope** are growing in popularity, and you can save the video file on your phone to edit and/or post elsewhere later.

I still see **YouTube** as a great place to "park" your videos even if you share them on other social platforms. Some data also shows that people are more willing to watch longer video on YouTube, IF it is engaging enough.

The other benefit of YouTube is SEO (Search Engine Optimization.) If you title, describe, and tag your videos, they can help people find you more easily over time because there is less search competition compared to text, plus **YouTube itself is the number two search engine in the world.**

Some video marketing resources:

- Social Media Examiner is always good - <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/use-video-to-boost-your-social-media-marketing/>
- ReelSEO - <http://www.reelseo.com/video/marketing/>
- 12 Stars Media (you send them raw video, they edit it to a final product so you don't have to – yay!) - <http://12starsmedia.com/>

**** What is the best social media to promote a fishing charter business? How do I get the word out? What if the customer doesn't use social media, what is the best way to market to them?**

The “best” social media to promote any business is the social media where they spend most of their time AND are willing to interact with you.

If **Facebook** user stats fit the profile of your typical customer, that's probably the best place to start. Make a plan to post regularly about things that would interest customers.

There are the obvious things, like the types of fish they can catch, plus details about your boat(s,) gear, and tours, including safety and experience. You can also share local knowledge about your town (including which restaurants will cook their catch,) local weather conditions, best times of year to book a charter, and of course photos and/or video of your current customers with what they've caught.

Don't forget to simply Like, Comment, and Share what your customers are already posting on their own Facebook accounts about their trip with you (if their privacy settings allow it.)

To connect with those who don't use social media, focus on getting great **word-of-mouth referrals including online reviews**, and make sure your (mobile-friendly) website and blog are helping people find you through SEO. When people Google "fishing charter near Lake Charles LA," are you at the top of the results, with plenty of reviews to build confidence and all the info they seek on your website? Your website Google Analytics and Webmaster Tools will tell you what search terms people use to find you.

Although a strong social media account profile or two can help your visibility in search engine results (especially if all of your About information and bios includes keywords like fishing, boat, charter, and your Lake Charles/Louisiana location) do [claim your business listing on Google](#). It helps people to more easily search and find you, especially on a mobile device.

Here are some helpful fishing marketing posts on Lazy Catch, including online marketing: <https://www.lazycatch.com/blog/category/advice-to-businesses/>

Here is a Destin, Florida charter company that normally does an excellent job on social media, although they've been quiet lately: [Destin Vacation Boat Rentals](#)

**** Other than the length of posts, what are some guidelines on tailoring posts on Facebook versus Twitter?**

Sure, there's more room available for a Facebook post, but in today's rush-rush world I'd say that the more "tweet-like" and short your updates, the better. There are Twitter-ish things to avoid on Facebook – hashtags, for example, are more effective on Twitter.

You can incorporate video more effectively on Facebook than Twitter, since it auto-plays in follower News Feeds and you can get more continuing engagement as people interact and leave comments.

The "perfect" Facebook post grabs people's interests and emotions, usually has some sort of visual element, and builds strength and visibility over time as more and more people Like, Comment, and Share it. People can also see you interacting in the post comments, which builds relationships and trust.

Hubspot has some good ideas here on such posts – note that **a fabulous photo is almost always part of the formula**, so hire a pro photographer more often or work to up your own game -

<http://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/anatomy-of-a-facebook-post>

The problem is, a great puppy or pie photo may go wild for you, but does it help you meet any of your marketing goals? Engagement and reach, sure, but beware buzz for the sake of buzz.

One mistake I've made in the past is not drilling down through Page Insights to see which 5-10 posts truly resonated with our followers over, say, the last 6 months, and then consciously setting out to post more like that.

We're also doing more to put advertising money behind posts that take off on their own organically, which is built-in market research that, hey, there's a winner here, so let's help move it along even further.

**** I deal primarily with our webpage. Got any tips on that ancient media?**

I'm glad that you have a website! Too many businesses try to make do with a Facebook Page as their business website. A Page is a fine thing to have, but that means that you do not own your own domain name or your own web real estate at all. I don't trust Mr. Zuckerberg that much. ☺

Advice for any website:

- Keep it fresh and update it often. Google likes to see new content frequently; that tells it you are active and in business. A **blog** will do wonders for you IF it is information that your customer wants and is updated regularly (try for posting once a week or every other week.)
- Be sure that the **information people want the most** is easy to find. Where are you located? What are your operating hours? What do you sell and what does it cost? How can people contact you? If you're a restaurant, what is on your menu (and no one likes PDF menus on a phone.) Be vigilant about broken links and outdated information.
- **Design** matters. It doesn't have to be super-sophisticated, but please do not have 8 billion different colors, fonts in all shapes and sizes,

weird music or videos that auto-play at top volume, or tons of pop-ups/sliders asking for email addresses. Today's designs tend to fill the screen and include high-quality images. If your website is squashed in the middle of viewer screens, with smallish font, a bunch of over-stuffed information boxes from 2002, and dinky images, it's time for a redesign.

- You've got to be **mobile-friendly**, both for increasing numbers of smartphone-toting humans and for Google, which is starting to penalize non-mobile-friendly sites in search results. **Today there are more searches on mobile devices (the computer in your purse or pocket) than on desktops.**
- If you have a blog or other social media channels, make sure that their **icons** are visible on the website and that they go to the right places.

**** How can we increase fan engagement/involvement across the various social media platforms?**

The short answer: check your marketing communications goals, see what's already working and do more of it, level up your photography and graphics, try video, and be prepared to put money behind what's working so that it resonates with your perfect customers.

The checklist:

1. **Review the market(s)** that you're trying to reach and the platforms where they spend most of their time. Are you in the right places to begin with?
2. Nail down the types of information and insights that you think will appeal to them. **Start with the questions that they ask of you;** maybe take a survey. Note that Facebook users don't want to get all heavy most of the time; show off your personality and have a sense of humor!
3. Make sure you're already responding and providing **helpful customer service** to people on social media who tag you, ask questions, etc. (That's probably even more important than pumping out more/better content.)

4. Review the analytics for each social media platform to see which of your posts had strong engagement over the last 6-12 months. Make a plan/editorial calendar to **publish more of those** types of posts. Make sure you tag the people and brands that you mention in your posts, so they'll know that you're talking about them, and increase interaction.

5. Confirm that your **publishing timing** is good by using analytics to see when your followers are most active on each platform (publish at times when followers are likely to be online to see it!)

On Facebook, go to Page Insights -> Posts in left sidebar -> When Your Fans Are Online. *Note that activity changes for each day of the week.* For Twitter, I like Followerwonk.com

6. **Up your visual game.** Blurry photos taken with a finger-smearred phone lens are not going to cut it with followers who've become accustomed to gorgeous pics on Instagram and snazzed-up graphics made on (free) design sites like [Canva](#). If you can't afford to hire a pro or talented amateur, learn yourself – there are a lot of helpful tips on [Digital Photography School](#), for example.

7. Experiment with **short video**; it's very engaging, especially on Facebook where it auto-plays. If you're new to video, try 6.5 second Vine or 15 second Instagram videos to learn how to visualize a story, plan shot sequences, and do a little basic editing.

8. Budget for **social media advertising**, and give a monetary nudge to social posts that are doing well organically (they've already proven that they're engaging.)

More here: <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/boost-facebook-engagement-for-small-businesses/>

**** How do we get more people to see what is going on with our Page. Do we share it on other sites, and how do we do that?**

Facebook is much more of a pay-to-play environment these days; you certainly shouldn't give up on creating the best, most interesting posts that

you can, but you will need to budget to occasionally increase visibility in follower News Feeds.

Not all of them, and not all the time, but giving a **\$5-\$10 Boost to an already-popular post** a couple of times a month will mean that a lot more people will see it. Our Tourism Currents ads do well when we only show them to people who've already Liked our Page; these are people who've said that they'd like to hear from us.

It helps a Page's visibility a lot **when personal accounts interact with a Page post**, like Sharing it to personal Facebook Wall.

Make sure that all of **your employees** know that it helps when they periodically Like, Comment, and Share your Page updates over to their personal accounts, if they are willing to do so. The buttons to do that are right at the bottom of each post.

Be sure that you're answering comments and thanking people for sharing.

Facebook updates shared to other social media sites aren't usually very effective.

Auto-sharing of Facebook updates to Twitter is particularly useless, since most of them get cut off due to Twitter's 140 characters restriction.

You can, however, share the same nugget of information across more than one social channel, but craft the content to fit the channel (just like you wouldn't run a radio spot on TV.)

**** What is the best way to create content and drive views to Pages?**

See the previous two answers above. 😊

**** Is there a way to get "alerts" on posts about your property or destination on TripAdvisor so we can appropriately respond?**

TripAdvisor sends **review alert emails** - make sure that you have your preferences set to get them, and that you're registered as the correct Owner - <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Owners>

There is also an Owner's Forum to get help with questions.

**** How do I bring more followers to be involved with my pages?**

Short answer: be interesting enough to be worth following (see the post above about engagement/involvement,) and make it easy for people to find and follow you.

You can run inexpensive Facebook ad campaigns to increase your followers, but why pay twice – once to get them following and again so they actually see your updates?

If your Page is new, it may be worth it to spend a little money growing your follower numbers at first, but ideally you'd like organic growth that happens because people want to hear from you, and others refer them to you.

Some brands run **contests** to increase their follower count, but frankly, many people just want to get the freebie or chance to win, and they won't stick around. I'm not saying that contests are useless, but you've got to have a plan to keep those new fans (plus previous ones) interested in what you have to say over the long haul.

Review the **integration basics**....

Does your **email list** know about your Page? Try this – at the bottom of every email out to your list, put a link to your most popular Page update that week or month.

Is it in your business **email signature** and on your **business cards**?

Is your Facebook Page link up and working correctly on your **website** and blog? I'm surprised how often I find broken website links to social media accounts, or I click through to the account successfully but see that it hasn't been updated in years. YEARS. Looks really bad....

Is there clear **signage** in your store, business, restaurant, hotel, or attraction about how to find you online? Don't just put up the Facebook logo and say, "Find us on Facebook," expecting them to go find you. Won't happen, especially when Facebook's search doesn't cooperate. Give people the actual URL and name used on your Page.

Periodically announce on your **other social channels** that you have a Facebook Page, and give people the direct link to it.

Join forces with other businesses and organizations on your block, street, neighborhood, Chamber, or Merchants Association to give shout-outs to each other's Pages. The CVB will help, too!

**** How much should I be spending on ads for my FB page?**

Start really small, like \$5-\$20 per campaign, to learn how Facebook ads work. I make it a game to narrow my targeting and see how low I can get my costs per click (CPC,) to stretch my ad campaign budget.

I know some fairly large organizations that only spend \$50-\$100 per month.

**** As a self-employed artist and author, I wear all hats of my business from the creative side to bookkeeping and advertising. How can I utilize all media options available to me in a very small space of time?**

Take a look at the advice above for the person with a fishing charter; most of the fundamentals of social media for business certainly apply to you.

Focus attention where your arts and literary customers spend most of their time. You do not need to try to be everywhere; **pick one thing**. It's better to do really well on one social channel than to spread yourself too thin and be marginal at a bunch of them.

You have an advantage as an artist because people are so drawn to visuals, so if you have the resources to devote a little time to **Instagram or Pinterest**, I'd consider that.

Do some **hashtag research** to see what resonates with art enthusiasts on Instagram and Twitter – it will be driven by your medium. #art is pretty obvious, but there are people who look for specific types of art, using #drawing, #painting, #decorativearts, #blackandwhite, etc.

This is a good post, although I think the press release advice is off the mark: <https://www.americanexpress.com/us/small-business/openforum/articles/6-social-media-tips-for-artists-and-gallery-owners/>

For your author work, the Write Life has good marketing resources: <http://thewritelife.com/category/marketing/> and there are active Twitter chats for specific genres of books. Follow [@LitChat](#) for one of the big ones.

Final note: my Tourism Currents co-founder Becky McCray has a site that many of you may find helpful, about small business entrepreneurship in a small town – [Small Biz Survival](#).

We have [Tourism Currents blog posts](#) with marketing tips, which are also in our [email newsletter](#).

Thanks!
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