



## Using Social Media to Boost Your Business

As part of several successful efforts to give you the tools you need to grow your business, ClearVision Optical has compiled different approaches to social media from various sources. Our goal is to provide a robust document that may help in your efforts to expand your social media presence. Keep in mind that the following whitepaper is a compilation of strategies, findings, and opinions of several individuals not associated with ClearVision Optical; as such, it does not represent the opinions or directives of our organization.

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By now you're already familiar with Facebook, Twitter, blogs, and the like. But are you using these social media sites to your full advantage when it comes to selling eyewear? Take your social media presence a step further and learn how to turn online followers into loyal customers.

When using social media to capitalize on your business, there are a few guidelines to follow. You should:

- Know your audience
- Let your brand personality shine
- Amplify your existing marketing message
- Create a community of connections
- Have the right quality and quantity of content
- Include a call to action

### **Know your audience**

One of the most common mistakes when it comes to social media is thinking about what *can* be done instead of what *should* be done.<sup>1</sup> Know who your target audience is and which social media sites they use. Are your customers younger or older? Are they glued to their smartphones or tech-phobic? Don't be so concerned about being on every latest and greatest platform – put your effort where it works.

And don't limit yourself to the top social sites – find other places online, such the comment section on a website, where you can generate leads.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://mashable.com/2012/06/08/lady-gaga-strategist/>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.forbes.com/sites/jacquelynsmith/2012/01/13/how-to-use-social-media-to-make-sales/2/>



### **Let your brand personality shine**

Behind your social page is an optical professional. You're the expert in eyewear, so let your voice shine through!<sup>3</sup> Use your posts to share with patients your professional knowledge and opinions. One way you can do this is by highlighting a "product of the week."<sup>4</sup> Explain to customers the features of the frame and why it benefits the user. Or, try a webinar. These web-based seminars are a great informational tool. Create a webinar about eye disorders and special requirements, and the frames you have to meet those needs.

Above all, humanizing your brand is an excellent way to build trust with your followers. Customers who feel you are looking out for their best interest will be more willing to buy from you. Well established relationships are the basis for sales – especially repeat sales.

### **Amplify your existing marketing message**

Social media should be the megaphone for your print and email campaigns – it should echo the same message and distribute it across other outlets.<sup>5</sup> Here are a few ideas:

- Use Twitter to spark a conversation and link back to Facebook where your customers can engage in deeper conversation.
- If you are sending an email blast about a sale, write a post that reminds customers to check their emails.
- Write a social media post telling followers to look for an article about buying new eyewear in an upcoming issue of your newsletter.

One of social media's greatest strengths is its ability to distribute information in real-time. If you are running a coupon promotion and the redemption rate is low, encourage your audience to use their deal before it expires.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://amcon.wordpress.com/2011/06/06/five-reasons-why-social-media-can-help-promote-your-optical-practice/>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/turn-customers-into-increased-revenue/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.mirroinc.com/blog/2011-10-11/eyecare-practice-marketing-social-media-tips-to-enhance-your-marketing-efforts/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.mirroinc.com/blog/2011-10-11/eyecare-practice-marketing-social-media-tips-to-enhance-your-marketing-efforts/>



### Create a community of connections

Social media boils down to one thing: connections. You connect to followers, followers connect to other followers, and so on.

A mutually-benefiting connection is a two way street, and this is something social does better than other marketing channels. When done right, your posts will make conversation, not broadcast news.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, it all starts with consumer involvement. Ask your customers for feedback about your dispensary. What colors and designs do they like best? Which celebrities do they look to for style inspiration? Asking questions makes creating a dialogue ten times easier, and customers will appreciate that you value their opinion. Turn the tables and have customers ask questions too. Answer their questions about fitting, buying, and taking care of frames.

Need more ideas? Have customers post photos of their new purchases and offer contests and giveaways. These actions will boost interest, and sales.

### Have the right quality and quantity of content

When it comes to successful social media marketing, what you post is just as important as *how much* you post.

For quality content that is engaging and well-rounded, consider posts that involve the following<sup>8</sup>:

- **Link to eyewear articles:** Establish yourself as *the* eyewear expert in your local area. Share news, offer your input, and have customers join in the discussion.
- **Photos:** Images are very successful. Upload pictures of your latest lines, and have customers take pictures of themselves in their new frames. Photos of your staff, special promotions, in-store events, and community-service projects are great as well.
- **Push your products and services:** Customers may not be aware of all your practice offers. Occasionally post about your lesser-known products and services. For example: Did you know we specialize in pediatric optometry? Did you know we offer comprehensive eye exams every day?
- **Videos:** Videos are attention-grabbing and a nice change of pace from written posts. Video anything you would write – a special message to your followers, announcements, a customer testimonial, and new product lines.

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<sup>7</sup> <http://www.usatoday.com/money/smallbusiness/story/2012-02-16/small-business-social-media-outreach-smachburger/53122300/1>

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.entrepreneur.com/article/219691#>



- **Thank customers:** Continually show appreciation for your customers. Thank them for their business, especially on your company’s anniversary. If someone writes a nice comment or review on your page, leave a thank you reply. It’s also important to *show* customers your appreciation. Have a “You spoke, we listened” type post. Share some things you’ve heard from customers and what you’ve done to make changes in your business.
- **Incentives<sup>9</sup>:** Offer exclusive perks to your social media followers. Discounts, sales, gifts, specials, giveaways, limited-time offers – everyone likes a little freebie! These keep consumers in your store and out of competitors’.
- **Interest your followers<sup>10</sup>:** Posts should be entertaining and easily engage followers. A simple way is to ask your social media fans to Like your content.<sup>11</sup> For instance: “Like this image if you’d wear these frames this fall season!” Check to see who is Liking your content – you’ll be able to gauge customer demographics as well as their interests, style, and preferences.<sup>12</sup>

Make sure the amount of content you publish is *just* the right amount. Post too little and your social sites are not engaging. Post too much and you risk annoying your followers. Either or can lead followers to click the dreaded “Unlike” button. Aim to post at least a few times each day to keep your business at the top of your followers’ minds.

Timing is key, as well. Be sure to post when your business is busiest. If most people are in your store on Saturday afternoons then post around that time every week.<sup>13</sup>

### **Include a call to action<sup>14</sup>**

Lastly, your social posts should almost always include a call to action. You can’t predict what your followers will do after they consume your content so *prompt* them to take the action you desire with a *clear* call to action (use specific links and destinations when necessary). Here are some examples<sup>15</sup>:

- “Leave a comment, and tell us your favorite style”
- “Use this hashtag”
- “Join us on Twitter”
- “Sign up for our newsletter”
- “Click to redeem your coupon”
- “View our new collections here”

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/turn-customers-into-increased-revenue/>

<sup>10</sup> <http://smallbiztrends.com/2010/05/get-more-from-facebook-status-updates.html>

<sup>11</sup> <http://socialmediatoday.com/samuel-junghenn/635831/what-kind-facebook-posts-generates-most-engagement>

<sup>12</sup> <http://socialmediatoday.com/samuel-junghenn/635831/what-kind-facebook-posts-generates-most-engagement>

<sup>13</sup> <http://socialmediatoday.com/samuel-junghenn/635831/what-kind-facebook-posts-generates-most-engagement>

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.freelancecopywritersblog.com/3466/can-you-really-sell-anything-through-social-media/>

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.nimble.com/blog/2012/03/28/how-to-create-a-successful-social-media-call-to-action/>