

# SOCIAL MEDIA POSTING AND PLANNING



Association  
of Virtual  
Assistants

## INTRODUCTION: WHY YOU NEED A PLAN

My all-time favorite quote is credited to Benjamin Franklin: “If you fail to plan, you plan to fail”. These few words can be applied to absolutely any area of your life but they apply especially to your social media marketing. Fly-by-the-seat-of-your-pants social media marketing won't get you the consistent results you're looking for. You'll waste time, energy, and money, and you'll find yourself frustrated at your lack of results. A good plan makes social media fun again.

**1. Eliminate writer's block.** No more sitting in front of your computer confused over what to put on social media. With a plan – ideally in calendar format – you'll know when to mention your holiday specials, promote live events, or tell your followers about your new podcast episodes. You can also plan out daily themes, similar to the #ThrowbackThursday posts you see on Facebook every week. Choose daily or weekly themes for your posts and the topics and products you're promoting will simply fall into place.

**2. Avoid gaps in posting.** What happens when someone posts daily for two weeks then disappears for a month? Basically, people will forget about them and they'll have to start from square one to develop those relationships again. How often you post is entirely up to you but if you know you'll have spotty internet service while on vacation, plan ahead and either schedule those posts or enlist a virtual assistant to publish posts and engage on your behalf while you're gone. Don't just hope for the best and then be surprised upon your return that your engagement stats have plummeted.

**3. Ensure you're promoting the most important products/offers.** Promoting affiliate offers should definitely be part of your passive income strategy but are you promoting the best products for your audience? Knowing your ideal audience is paramount to choosing affiliate products but that doesn't mean promoting everything that comes across your feed. Be choosy; one coach I know said she'll only promote something if she would recommend it to her mother and sister. Adding these products to your social media plan allows you to be picky and choose only those programs that will benefit your client.

**4. Brand awareness.** Plan out when you want to go live on Facebook so you can promote those events. What will you talk about? Will you host monthly Q&A sessions? If so, when? You'll likely come up with dozens of ways to develop your brand awareness and it's easier to schedule these things on your social media calendar. Not only does it save you from not knowing what to say but your virtual assistant will also be in the loop and can help keep you on track.

**5. Social growth.** We all want huge followings on social media and more name recognition but it takes time and patience to grow that following organically. Yes, there are people who will offer you quick ways to accomplish this (usually by using bots or other unsavory techniques) but to really get a grip on what your audience needs and wants, you personally have to interact with them to some extent. Block off time on your calendar to personally interact with your audience, even for 30 minutes a day. Choose a time of day when you KNOW your audience will be online for best

## Social Media Posting and Planning

engagement. If you want to offer a treat for your social media audience, adding that to your social media calendar will allow you enough production time as well as promotion time. Create a buzz about this gift and gain even more followers!

When you have a social media plan in place, you're taking out all the guesswork of what to post, what to chat about, and what your audience wants to hear from you. Follow the steps in this planner to get started but keep up that momentum by planning more weeks into the future. As you finish one week, go to the end of your calendar and add another week's worth of plans. Or get bold and start scheduling a month at a time. No matter how you fit this task into your day, planning your social media will be a lifesaver for you.

***Exercise: Write down your social media goals, categorizing them as Small, Medium, Large***

<b>Dream Big!</b> (large goals)	
<b>Stretch Yourself</b> (medium goals)	
<b>Within Reach</b> (easy goals)	

### **STEP ONE: KNOW YOUR PLATFORMS**

Talking to an empty room isn't productive, and neither is posting on social platforms your ideal client abandoned a year ago. Be smart about the platforms where you spend your time by comparing them in advance. To get started, make a simple comparison chart and list the pros and cons to each platform.

### **Why Use Multiple Platforms?**

Simply to expand your reach and find more of your ideal audience. Not everyone will use the same platform so why not reach out across the board to connect with all those who use Twitter, Facebook, Pinterest, LinkedIn, etc.

However, let's be realistic: you can't be everywhere at once, engaging on every single platform. Otherwise you'd be your own social media manager and wouldn't have time for your clients! All the more reason to choose platforms where you'll get maximum engagement from your audience.

### **Get Started By Focusing On Your Ideal Client**

Which platform is the most popular or most important to this person? What time of day are they online? You should know the answer – or at least have a vague idea – if you created a Client Avatar. Or simply look at the user statistics from each of the platforms themselves.

If you're trying to reach single moms, early morning or dinner time are the worst times for you to be online because they're either getting the kids ready for school or they're engrossed with homework and dinner. Later in the evening is when most single moms would hop online, after the chaos of the day has worn down.

Here's another example: Teens and college-aged kids are all about Instagram and SnapChat at the moment, so if that's your ideal audience, you won't find them on Facebook too frequently. The opposite could be said about the parents of these teens and college-aged kids: Facebook is exactly where you'll find many of them.

If you're hesitant to learn a brand new platform at the moment, hire a social media manager or do some market research on the platform you currently use. Actively work to find and grow your audience without getting distracted with your personal feed. Check in at regular intervals during the day to engage your followers or to answer questions. Take note of your insights and the engagement on your business page. Look at this platform as an objective business owner because if after a few weeks your engagement is low, consider the possibility that this platform is not where your ideal audience is hanging out.

And if you're wondering why we're talking so much about when your audience is online, it's twofold. First, if you're online at the same time and someone comments on your post, they will be notified of your response, which opens up the door for a conversation. Second, if you schedule your posts for when your audience is most likely online, your audience is more likely to SEE those posts instead of running the chance of missing them altogether if they were posted 8 hours before they logged in. Again, place the focus on your ideal client instead of what's most convenient for your schedule.

## Social Media Posting and Planning

### Think about Your Posting Strategy

When making your comparison list, remember to think about posting strategy for each platform. Twitter and Facebook yield best results when you post several times each day while LinkedIn is recommended to post once a day or less. Research these strategies or best practices for each platform. It's quite possible to find your audience on platforms that do not require daily or multiple posts, which will make your planning that much easier.

***Exercise: Conduct some market research and determine the social media platforms your ideal audience uses.***

Social Media Platforms	User Stats	Posting Strategies/Tips
<a href="#">Twitter</a>		
<a href="#">Facebook</a>		
<a href="#">Instagram</a>		
Social Media Platforms	User Stats	Posting Strategies/Tips
<a href="#">Pinterest</a>		

## Social Media Posting and Planning

<a href="#">Snap Chat</a>		
<a href="#">LinkedIn</a>		
<a href="#">YouTube</a>		

### Brainstorming Notes

Start jotting notes about the subjects/topics you want to share with your audience.

## STEP TWO: CREATE YOUR EDITORIAL CALENDAR

Never again wonder "what should I post today?" An editorial calendar means you'll never waste time or miss opportunities, because you'll always know what's coming up next. An editorial calendar is an easy way to keep your thoughts in order as well as keep your team updated as to what you're promoting and what deadlines you're aiming to meet.

### What to Include on an Editorial Calendar

- Start out by indicating any monthly or daily themes.
- Mark down any product launches you're participating in – either your own, as a JV partner, or as an affiliate.
- Mark the launch date first, then schedule posts leading up to the launch to build buzz and excitement.
- Delegate tasks to team members, such as graphic production, copywriting, scheduling in your chosen scheduling platform.
- Add other dates, such as blog post titles, seasonal promotions, affiliate promotions, and email topics.

Your editorial calendar should be easy to read with an overview of what's happening on social media every day of the month. If you get overwhelmed seeing too many entries on a calendar, consider making separate calendars in Google Calendar: One for social media themes, one for blog post ideas, one for launches, etc. Google Calendar also allows you to color code each calendar so they stand out. You can also indicate which calendars to show at once. All of them will give you a clear idea of what's happening on any given day while showing just one will allow team members to focus on just their tasks without the distraction of other tasks.

[Trello](#) is another popular option for those who prefer seeing lists as opposed to a calendar view. With Trello you create Boards (ex: Social Media Planning) and within each Board you then create Lists. Here is where you have all the creative power! You could name your lists the calendar months OR whichever platforms you currently use (ex: Facebook, LinkedIn, etc.)

Next, add Cards to each list indicating a monthly theme, hashtags to use, or any other process for creating social media posts for that particular platform. The Card feature of Trello is valuable for creating any process and documenting it, so if your team member is ever sick or leaves, you're not at a loss for how to complete those tasks: Simply look at the process in your Trello List.

You'll notice dozens of project management platforms available. Do your research and choose a platform that works for you and your team or client.

**Exercise: Explore your editorial calendar options. Do the features and budget work for you?**

Platform	Features/Notes	Price (monthly/annual)
<p>Google Calendar</p> <p><i>(HubSpot has a very detailed tutorial about setting up Google Calendar for editorial purposes <a href="#">here</a>)</i></p>		Free
Trello		Free \$9.99/month \$21/month
AirTable		Free \$10/month \$20/month

### STEP THREE: CREATE YOUR BRANDING GUIDELINES

As they scroll through their Instagram feed, your ideal audience should instantly recognize your images. That's the power of good branding, and it all starts with creating your brand guidelines.

Consistency is powerful when it comes to your branding online. Not only should you post regularly to your chosen platforms but if you use multiple platforms, your color scheme and profile name should be consistent across them. You should never cause your followers to wonder if that Facebook photo from 3 years ago is really the same person in the Instagram photo posted yesterday.

As you go through these next steps, keep careful notes and create a Branding Guide about all the final choices you make so you can access the HTML color codes at a moment's notice; hire the same photographer next year; or know the file name where your watermark logo is located.

**1. Color Scheme.** No doubt you already have business colors and logo created; now it's time to update your profile pages to include those components. Hire a graphic designer to create customized profile headers for all your platforms. Take liberties with the designs but keep the colors and quality photos consistent. Choose colors that speak to you and which give the type of vibe you

want your followers to feel. Hire a photographer for a professional photoshoot so you know the quality of your photos is top notch.

Take notice of the AVA Facebook and Instagram account. You'll notice that the profile name is the same and the profile photos, although different, are up to date so you recognize our color and our branding. We use the same color in our Facebook header as we do with all of our graphics. We also use the same photo theme, and with good reason. Each of our image have people in them that you can relate to. Think about it: if you want people to hire you as their VA, you need to show people the real you. That doesn't mean posting photos of you that are blurry or where your face is partially blocked. Be approachable; let people see YOU and start building that relationship.

**2. Hashtags.** These simple keyword phrases are simply ways to identify social media posts which have a similar message. People can search a hashtag inside each platform to monitor certain conversations or a simple hashtag could bring you new followers. Providing hashtags in each of your posts is another way to show consistency across the platforms and gets your audience used to knowing which hashtags are yours.

Hashtags don't always have to be keyword phrases; you can customize a hashtag for your business, webinar, or podcast.

**3. Photos.** Social media is extremely visual and research shows that posts with photos attached attract more attention and engagement than posts using only text. So, expand your photo collection so you have multiple options to use on your platforms!

Don't ever be afraid to show your face online. YOU are literally the face of your business and people want to know YOU. Invest in a good camera or phone and practice with different settings until you get a clear photo you'd be proud to publish. Always choose a well-lit setting or consider using a ring light if you don't live in a photography studio. Natural lighting will always be your.

When taking photos or even choosing which ones of your collection to use, think of the purpose of your post first.

**4. Fonts.** Just as with your colors, fonts play an important part of creating a feel or atmosphere to your social media profiles. Using the same fonts (and colors) across all your platforms solidifies your brand and makes your photos easily recognizable. Consider adding a watermark on your photos, either with your website, logo, or hashtag. Not only will people recognize it as yours but it might convince shady individuals to not steal that photo and use it as their own. Ask your graphic designer to make some suggestions based on the image you want to portray to your followers. Go an extra step further and incorporate these fonts on your website, too.

Social branding on social media platforms is an important task that doesn't need to be done frequently. The end result is a professional online image that you can cross-promote on many platforms.

**Exercise: Create Branding Guidelines and share it with all your team members and service providers.**

## Colors + Fonts

List color combinations you love

List fonts you like

What do these colors + fonts say about your image?

Write down the HTML color codes

Use these colors + fonts consistently in your marketing

## Hashtags

Brainstorm creative hashtags that reflect your business

Use a hashtag generator for more ideas

Hire a copywriter for custom hashtag ideas

Use hashtags consistently in your posts

## Photos

**AT MINIMUM:**  
Hire a photographer to update your headshot

Or invest in yourself and hire a photographer for a photoshoot

Use high-resolution photos whenever possible

Purchase stock photos + understand the license

## STEP FOUR: PRIORITIZE THE BIG EVENTS

Creating an editorial calendar is paramount as your business grows and you become more busy, not just on social media but with attending live events, hosting your own events, and booking speaking engagements. Make sure you have room for those immovable events by getting them in your calendar first. You can shift other things around, but you can't easily move a product launch. Soon this social media calendar will become your general business calendar which your team must check and follow every day. As I like to tell people, "If it's not on the calendar, it doesn't exist!"

**1. Holidays and personal events.** Thankfully, most holidays are the same date every year so those are the easiest to take note of and definitely won't change. Still mark them on the calendar and consider marking off the immediate days surrounding those holidays, too. At some point you'll need to strategize if people really want to attend your event the week before Thanksgiving, especially if they're hosting 20 family members. And how many people in your ideal audience can you attract to your book launch in the days between Christmas and New Year's?

**2. Your live events.** No matter what type of event you're hosting – these events are meant to grow YOUR business and bring money into YOUR pocket, so make these dates a priority. Live events often require plenty of lead time between booking the venue to the actual event, so looking 12 months or further into the future should give you plenty of dates to choose from without conflict.

**3. Speaking gigs.** Depending on your experience as a speaker and on your message, speaking gigs are plentiful and available worldwide. You'll have to decide on whether you want to go to a neighboring city 30 minutes away or a country on the other side of the world. Think about:

- Ease of travel: Are you close to an airport or does it take a 4 hour drive just to get to the airport?
- The length of the event: Are you invited for the full event or just for your speech?
- Who's paying for travel: Are you a well-known name who will get comped or are you just starting out and have to pay your own way in exchange for the exposure? Can you afford this trip? Or do you see it as an investment in your business?

NOTE: when you're traveling for work, always build in one or two days at the end for recovery, especially if dealing with jet lag. At the very least, your family will enjoy having some uninterrupted time with you upon your return.

**4. Product launches.** No matter how large or how small your product launch, you should be completely available for any questions or problems that may arise. We've heard hundreds of stories of shopping carts and servers crashing during a launch and it's easiest if you are available to call those companies if problems arise. Due to security, these vendors most likely will not speak with anyone that is not listed on the account. If you're on a stage somewhere hundreds of miles away

## Social Media Posting and Planning

during a launch, you won't be able to troubleshoot, which could lead to massive customer service problems and loss of sales.

**5. Book releases.** How simple or how complicated your book release is depends on if you're self-publishing, publishing via Amazon Kindle, or if you have a book publisher printing hard copies. A book publisher will likely have more strict deadlines than if you self-publish and they may also have book tour dates scheduled for you. You have much more freedom if you self-publish or publish digitally via Amazon, although you are completely responsible for marketing the book yourself.

**6. Other marketing avenues.** Let's not forget other marketing avenues, such as interviews, community involvement, and podcasts. These are the easiest to reschedule and in some cases can be booked on the same day. For instance, consider booking multiple podcast interviews on the same day; just allow enough time in between to stretch and refresh yourself.

In the end, prioritizing is important so you don't overbook yourself or cause undue stress by having events scheduled back-to-back.

**Exercise: List your upcoming events for the next year and those dream events you hope to attend. Look at dates, fees, and locations; then prioritize.**

Month	Event Name(s)	Dates/Fees	Booked or Wishlist?
January			
February			
March			
Month	Event Name(s)	Dates/Fees	Booked/Wishlist?
April			

## Social Media Posting and Planning

May			
June			
July			
August			
September			
October			
November			
December			
<b>Other Notes</b>			

## STEP FIVE: INCLUDE IMPORTANT MARKETING AND VISIBILITY PIECES

Now that you've got the big stuff scheduled, remember all the smaller marketing pieces that you should promote regularly. Not everything you're sharing on social media has to be a major event, and marketing your business for even 30 minutes a day can still yield more followers and grow name recognition.

**1. Blog posts.** Keep your audience informed and educated with regular blog posts. Optimize each blog post with affiliate links, an email opt-in, or an offer for one of your products or services.

**2. Podcast episodes.** If you host your own podcast, include the link on your website and in your email signature. Publicize when a new episode publishes as well as your guest's website and/or product. If your guest has an affiliate program, join up and earn some affiliate cash.

If you're a guest on a podcast, still publicize those episodes! These interviews build your credibility and your host will appreciate the shout out in exchange for the interview.

**3. YouTube videos.** If you have YouTube tutorials or affiliate product reviews, publicize those. Again, videos will increase your credibility and build relationships while educating your audience.

**4. Small community events.** Did you join FemCity or a local business networking group? Talk about it on social media. Are you involved in a holiday toy drive or helping out at charitable event? Talk about it! Your social media feed doesn't have to be 100% business news; talk about why it's important to you to give back to the community. Let your audience see your human side.

**5. Older content and products.** Do you have a library of evergreen products? Publicize those individual products on social media. Make an update if necessary; otherwise, tell people about what you have to offer and why it will help them solve a problem. No time to update? No problem...hold a retirement party for one last-ditch effort to make some sales before these products go into your vault forever.

The same can be done for membership sites you don't want to manage any more. Announce a one-time, lifetime fee for new and current members with the agreement that "what you see is what you get" and no new content will be added.

**6. Friends and affiliate partners.** With affiliate partners, you'll receive a commission every time someone makes a purchase through your link but certainly promote your friends, even if there's no affiliate commission involved, especially if they have been supportive since you started your business. What goes around comes around.

**Exercise: Take inventory of your content + reuse for social media posts.**

Review Your Current Content	Next Steps
<p><b>Blog Posts</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most relevant topics</li> <li>• Add links (resources, affiliate product)</li> <li>• Add calls to action</li> <li>• Use a plugin on your blog so readers can send out tweets direct from your post</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Promote each new post with a link to your blog</li> <li>○ Pull out short sections of the post for social media, then direct readers to your site for full article</li> </ul>
<p><b>Podcast Episodes/Interviews</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use a plugin to embed the audio file into your blog post</li> <li>• Consider adding a transcript to your site for those who don't have time to listen</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Publicize new episodes or interviews on all platforms</li> <li>○ Take out small snippets of the interview and post on all platforms</li> <li>○ Tag your interviewer or podcast host/guest and thank them</li> </ul>
<p><b>Videos</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Turn blog posts into videos, or even a video series</li> <li>• Publicize your YouTube channel for new subscribers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Embed videos onto your website and on social media</li> <li>○ Utilize Facebook Live and Instagram video features to engage more</li> </ul>
<p><b>Email Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Take info from your autoresponder and create new videos, audios, blog posts, or opt-in freebies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Publicize your repurposed content across all platforms</li> <li>○ Hold Q&amp;A sessions for your followers</li> <li>○ Dedicate one day a week to posting FAQ for your followers</li> </ul>
<p><b>eBooks or Short Reports</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use quotes as social media conversation starters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pull out quotes and publicize them with link to purchase eBook</li> <li>○ Talk about your behind-the-scenes process for creating eBooks</li> </ul>

### STEP SIX: SOCIAL MEDIA IS VISUAL

Even Twitter uses graphics these days, so you can't afford to ignore the graphic part of social media. Think about all the posts you look at on Facebook. Why do you stop to read any one of them in particular? More often than not, there's a picture attached. We even see memes circulating on Facebook, about how very few people read all-text posts and won't you like this post as my true friend if you finish to the end. Social media is visual, which means you need visuals to attract your ideal audience.

Develop a plan for creating graphics you can share on all your preferred platforms. Remember, you can share the SAME graphics and the SAME messages across your platforms but you may have to edit the word count for Twitter and I would highly recommend rewriting your posts just a bit so it's not the exact same wording across your platforms. Pay attention to your posting times as we discussed so you're reaching your audience in real time instead of 10 hours after they went to work.

#### Photos in Your Blog Posts

Images within your blog post bring more excitement to your information. They also help break up the text, especially if it's a very long post. If readers see a great wall of text, with no photos, long paragraphs, and no subheadings, they will look for another source. As for sizing your photos, that will depend entirely on your blog design.

Another reason to use photos within your blog posts is because when you share the link on Facebook, a preview pops up WITH the chosen photo, thus saving you time having to search for one. Consider also using photos for announcements, your products, and challenges.

#### Photo Basics

Here are some rules for using photos in your marketing efforts:

- 1. Use LEGAL photos.** You may NOT copy/paste images you see on Google Images or other websites. Even if you pay to use stock photos, be sure to understand the licensing language. If a stock photo says, "For editorial use only," don't try to use it in a commercial product or an advertisement. Royalty-free doesn't mean it's totally free; it means you can use the image any way you like without paying hefty royalties but you need to pay an upfront fee for that privilege.
- 2. Use high resolution photos.** Blurry selfies are fun for kids to share but when it comes to promoting your business, opt for high resolution only. One exception is if you're at a live convention and are taking selfies with the speakers or other friends. You won't have any control over that lighting so don't fret about sharing a dim photo. Also remember that as you enlarge a photo, it will become more blurry. Always start with the bigger size and shrink it smaller to keep the clear resolution.

**3. Outsource graphics work to an expert.** Experienced graphic designers will know design rules and will create killer graphics in a fraction of the time it would take you to learn Canva. They will also know how to make the background fade to highlight any text you need to overlay, such as with an announcement or a challenge you’re running.

Having all this info on a social media/editorial calendar also makes outsourcing much easier. At the beginning of the month (or sooner) look at the calendar and order your graphics. Give your service provider as much time as possible in case there are delays or problems that arise. More lead time also give you more time to make changes if necessary.

***Exercise: Weigh the pros/cons of different photo outlets.***

Stock Photo Companies	DIY	Hire Photographer Or Graphic Designer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What are the fees?</li> <li>• Do you like their selection?</li> <li>• Do you understand their licensing agreement?</li> <li>• Do you understand the legalities of using stock images?</li> <li>• Do they have good customer service?</li> <li>• Some suggestions: <a href="http://DepositPhotos.com">DepositPhotos.com</a> <a href="http://BigStockPhotos.com">BigStockPhotos.com</a> <a href="http://Unsplash.com">Unsplash.com</a></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have time to take high-quality photos?</li> <li>• Are your current photos clear or blurry?</li> <li>• Do you know how to use editing software?</li> <li>• Do you know basic photography composition?</li> <li>• Do you know how to achieve special effects, such as placing text as an overlay for announcements?</li> <li>• Do your DIY results match your business image?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do you have the budget for outsourcing?</li> <li>• Do you know exactly what you want?</li> <li>• Can you explain the exact parameters of the project?</li> <li>• Have you interviewed prospects?</li> <li>• What is the turnaround time to receive the finished project?</li> </ul>

## STEP SEVEN: EMBRACE NEW WAYS TO BE SEEN

Maintaining a presence on social media is a full time job; just ask any social media manager! The big social media platforms are constantly trying to improve and are making changes nearly every day. So it's imperative that you stay up to date on the new features of your chosen platforms and that you embrace them enthusiastically.

**1. Video.** YouTube is the number two search engine behind Google; are you utilizing those stats to your advantage? So many people get intimidated by recording a video but it really couldn't be simpler with our cell phones. Post on YouTube, publicize your channel to get subscribers, but also get used to doing Facebook Lives. Sometimes you'll get people viewing live and other times it will be crickets but the replay will always pop up in friends' feeds. If you want to get your feet wet with video, try Instagram's new video feature. You can record live or upload a pre-recorded video. The beauty is you're limited to 60 seconds so that's a great introduction and way to edit your message.

**2. Facebook Groups.** Facebook is famous for changing up its algorithms and now the posts that get top priority are those posted by friends and those posted in groups. So, if you want to be forefront in the minds of your followers, invite them to join a group where they'll get all of your posts. Creating a group, however, means being active in your group so you'll need to strike a balance between posting and interacting in your group while doing the same on your public profile. Consider your group your warm leads: Those people who already like you and want to hear more about your programs. Those who are interacting on your public page are more cold leads: Those people who need more convincing before they jump into a group with you.

**3. Facebook Stories.** Have you logged in to Facebook recently? If you're on your phone, notice the very first thing you see is "Stories". If you're on a laptop, the Stories section is toward the right of the screen. You probably have noticed that interaction is severely down on Business Pages and Stories seem to be the replacement feature. Keep in mind that these Stories only last 24 hours so make it a point to plan your daily story update. It can be as simple as a behind the scenes photo or you can give daily advice.

**4. Instagram Stories.** Facebook owns Instagram so it makes sense that both would have this similar feature. On Instagram, your story will still last only 24 hours but you can now archive your stories for eternity. Simply click the feature in your settings. You can also create Story Highlights – with various different titles – which appear under your profile photo. When a follower clicks on your profile, they will see the story highlights before your photos and can learn more about your business at a single glance.

Technology can be fun, especially when new social media features are unveiled. Instead of shying away from new things, have fun experimenting with them!

Social Media Posting and Planning

**Exercise: Step out of your comfort zone + experiment with new social media features.**

Try Something New	Brainstorm Topic Ideas
YouTube	
Facebook Live	
Facebook Stories	
Instagram Stories	
Facebook Groups	
Facebook Watch Parties	
Other	

## STEP EIGHT: DON'T FORGET TO HAVE SOME FUN

Your social accounts will have a lot more traction if they're not all business, all the time. Yes, you want to grow your business but does that mean taking the human side out of all your posts? Certainly not.

Think again to what your clients want and need. Ultimately they want to improve their lives. Adding lifestyle posts to your social media feeds will encourage your ideal clients to work with you because YOU are living the lifestyle THEY desire.

What are lifestyle posts? Anything that shows a snippet of your private life. Show photos of your favorite camping spot. Talk about your favorite activity to do with your kids. Share your favorite game to play as a child. Post photos of your herb or flower garden.

### Other Ways to Share Your Fun

**Pet photos and videos** are beloved by many on social media so share stories of adopting your rescue dog or the time that beloved dog tore apart your favorite shoes. That one's not a fun story but you'll get dozens of people sympathizing and engaging with you by telling their own dog chewing stories.

**Inspirational quotes** always make the rounds on social media and for many followers, they will hit a nerve deep inside or inspire them to have a great day. However, don't just post these quotes because everybody else is doing it; think of the reasons WHY a certain quote stands out to you. People will be drawn to follow you and learn from you from your authenticity so choose quotes wisely and that have real meaning, not the ones that everybody shares because that's what you do on social media.

**Silly kid videos** and posts praising their accomplishments (at any age) bring about engagement. Everybody loves a good kid story and who doesn't love watching a 4-year-old belting out, "Let It Go," from the movie Frozen?

Even **behind-the-scenes videos or photos of your business** will help build your relationship with your audience. These can help show your human side and what you do all day to make your business run smoothly. You don't have to show your messy desk or admit to not having "it" all together but you can if you think that authenticity is a benefit.

No matter what kind of silly stories or lifestyle posts you make, keep your branding in mind, especially when it comes to sharing memes and quotes. Otherwise, mix up your social media posts to have a good mix of business and lifestyle to satisfy your current followers and to attract new eyes.

**Exercise: Take note of all the fun stuff in your life that you can share on social media.**

Hobbies	
Family	
Pets	
Travel	
Behind the Scenes	
Big Events	

## STEP NINE: AUTOMATE WHERE YOU CAN

No one has time for a constant connection to Facebook and Instagram, so once you have all your content planned out, take the time to add it to your favorite automation tool. Automation is a wonderful part of technology and with hundreds of platforms to choose from, every budget can afford some level of automation.

### Why Automate?

Today's world is busy and we're constantly being pulled in opposing directions, both in business and our personal lives. Making tasks easier through automation isn't a failure; it's an accomplishment to be proud of because now you can focus on other money-making tasks.

Marketing of any sort is a necessary task but you can't possibly be in two places at the same time. If you're marketing 24/7 then you're not working with your clients, enjoying family dinners, or even sleeping. Why not make your marketing efforts run 80% on autopilot?

### How to Automate

To automate your social media posting, select a social media management platform such as [Hootsuite](#) or [Buffer](#) or my favorite [Zoho\\_Social](#). All of these are popular, powerful tools that allow you to schedule multiple social media posts to multiple platforms all at once.

Meet Edgar goes one step further and will republish the evergreen content that you store in its library, on a schedule that you create. All or most of these programs have analytics so you can see at a glance how much engagement you're receiving from your posts. These analytics also help you determine the best time of day to post, when your audience is actually reacting and interacting to your posts.

Tailwind is a browser app specifically for use with Pinterest and Instagram. Now you can save time by using Tailwind's bulk image upload feature along with multi-board pinning. Tailwind also has a hashtag finder if you're really stuck on creating hashtags. You can also create instant content using the browser extension from any webpage. I also use Planoly for my clients IG account.

If automation sounds wonderful but still overwhelms you, you can delegate this task but keep in mind, that your posts are a direct reflection on your brand and your business so it's in your best interest to approve every post before it gets published. Using one of these tools allows you to view all your posts in one spot so you can approve or make changes as necessary.

## Social Media Posting and Planning

**Exercise: Compare social media management platforms.**

Management Platforms	Features	Pricing
<a href="#">Buffer</a>		Free or starting from \$15/month
<a href="#">Tailwind</a>		Starting at \$9.99/month
<a href="#">Meet Edgar</a>		\$49/month
<a href="#">HootSuite</a>		Starting at \$29/month
<a href="#">ZohoSocial</a>		Free or Starting from \$15/month
Other Notes		

## STEP TEN: GET MORE MILEAGE OUT OF EVERY POST

Always look for ways you can repurpose the work you're already doing and social media posts are no exception. Repurposing is all about saving time and it's a lifesaver, especially when planning your social media campaigns.

Here are some ideas for repurposing your content to spread it across the internet to reach your ideal audience:

- 1. Expand popular social posts into blog posts or emails.** Check your social media insights and take those posts with the most engagement and use that content or theme to write a longer blog post, email series, or a short report. When people respond to a post, it's a topic that's important to them so expand upon that theme.
- 2. Share reposted content at different times of the day.** If your original post published at 6pm Thursday night, try mixing it up by reposting at 12 noon on Monday. This practice maximizes your visibility with your best content without people complaining that they've seen that post already.
- 3. Re-use YouTube videos on multiple platforms.** Certainly promote your YouTube channel to gain more subscribers but also embed those videos on your website, in an email, or as an Instagram or Facebook story. Turn the audio into a podcast episode or set it up as a recurring evergreen webinar. Facebook doesn't always like when you post YouTube videos on your page so combat that by utilizing Facebook Live and your story feature.

If you want to publish your videos to all the social media platforms and also analyze performance stats from each platform, consider a [Vimeo](#) account. You can analyze all your data from the Vimeo dashboard and they make it easy to publish your videos elsewhere.

If you're recording videos to use in paid classes, consider Vimeo as your video host. They make organizing your videos very simple and your videos will only be made public if you change the settings.

- 4. Customize each post.** Each social platform has best practices for using it and when you share posts across platforms, each one should be customized for the appropriate platform. For instance, your blurry selfie doesn't belong on Instagram or Pinterest; those users want high-resolution photos and those posts get the most engagement. Instagram posts also use several hashtags while Twitter doesn't have the space for many hashtags. Twitter also requires a condensed version of your post while LinkedIn requires a more formal tone.
- 5. Use different quotes from the same blog post on different platforms.** Whether the quote is yours or from a social influencer, reworking the same social post will do wonders to attract new eyes and encourage engagement.
- 6. Repurpose photos for new posts.** Keep your photos categorized neatly on your computer so you can simply reuse past photos for new social media posts, Facebook ads, infographics (which can

then be distributed to all platforms), blog posts, or slideshows. This practice will also save you money in the long run because your collection will grow over the years so you won't need to purchase as many stock photos as when you first started out. Of course, be sure the older photos still maintain your branding standards but don't be afraid to reuse what you already have.

**Exercise: Organize your past social media posts along with past photos, videos + blog posts. Think of ways to mix/match to make new posts. And if your files are not organized, delegate to your VA to organize your files with clear titles for easy access.**

Old Photos	Old Videos	Old Blog Posts
Reuse with new blog post	Use Vimeo to host private or paid videos	Tweet quotes
Reuse in new video slideshow	Embed on blog or share as a FB or Instagram story	Update post with new photo
Create Facebook ads	Bundle like videos into a paid program	Bundle with other posts in an eBook or class
Add a quote as an overlay for social posts		Record a video on the same topic

Thank you! If you have any further questions about social media posting and planning, please don't hesitate to reach out to me in our AVA Slack Community!

Tammy Lorette, COE (Chief Officer of Engagement) – Association of Virtual Assistants

