

A vertical sidebar on the left side of the page. It features a background of a hand giving a thumbs-up gesture. Overlaid on this are several white circular icons containing a person silhouette, and a large white thumbs-up icon. The background transitions from dark grey at the top to light brown at the bottom.

The 7 Step Social Media Strategy for Small Businesses

by Bobbi Baehne | ThinkBigGoLocal.com

01

Define Your Brand

This sounds simple enough, but if you've never gone through the exercise of identifying it, you will likely find it difficult to create content that constantly builds your brand while offering value to your audience.

Defining your brand is so much more complex than just having a logo.

It's not just about the visual appearance of your company. It's about your values, your personality, your depth of knowledge in your field, the culture within your organization, your reputation, the emotion you evoke from your clients and more.

It's about what makes you unique. Maybe you spend a lot of time giving back to your community through volunteering. Or maybe you're really funny, high energy or just a little bit sarcastic. It could be you have purple hair and it's one of the things that make you memorable. Whatever it is, identify it, evaluate it and own it!

To make sure the content you create and share is always in line with your goals, you need to make sure you are 100% in tune with your brand at all times. The next page provides a quick little exercise to get you started.

Define Your Brand

What makes you stand out from your competition?

What emotional feeling attracts people to you?

What makes you get out of bed in the morning?

What are your deepest set, core values?

What activities do you engage in that define your personality and your brand?

Define Your Brand

What visual elements (besides your logo) effectively represent your brand?

What colors make up your brand's color palette?

What fonts fit your brand?

02

Identify Your Audience

You can't be everything to everyone, so don't waste time and resources trying.

Before you start creating content you need to know exactly who you are creating it for. Makes sense, right? Determine exactly who your ideal client is. Then figure out where they are spending their time online and exactly how to reach them with content they find relevant.

The easiest way to go about this is to create a Client Avatar.

Your "avatar" is going to be your perfect client. You know the one...the client you wish all of your clients could be exactly like. The one that makes you smile instead of feeling frustrated. The one that finds value in everything you do. That's the client we're going to break down and learn more about. By going through this next exercise, you'll



create a better understanding of exactly who you are trying to reach, what messages mean the most to them, what images capture their attention and what they need from you in order to keep them engaged.

Name your avatar

This is so much more fun if you make it personal. So give your avatar a name (by the way, you can have more than one depending on your business.) Keep this close (as in it should never leave your desk) as a reminder to create your content specifically for this rock star client!

My Avatar's name is:

Avatar #2 (optional):

Ok, this may sound a little over the top so it's optional, but you can use the space below to paste a photo of what you picture your avatar might look like.

| Your Client Avatar

Answer these questions about your perfect client and then use the answers to develop the profile of your Client Avatar.

How old are they?

Male or female?

Do they have children?

Where do they live?

Where do they work?

What are their strongest personality traits?

What do they do really well?

What do they struggle with?

What do they read?

Your Client Avatar

What do they watch on television?

Where do they go on vacation?

Where do they hang out on weekends?

What is their attitude on health?

What is their attitude about money?

Your Client Avatar

What products do they use?

What is their level of education?

What social issues do they care about?

Where do they spend their time online?

Congrats!! You are going to find so many ways to use this information.

Your avatar will become part of your company culture. It will be the example you share with others when you tell them what you do and

who you do it for. You will think about how your avatar will react when you make decisions related to your business.

It's a big deal and I'm so glad you took the time to do it!

03

Choose a Social Media Platform

You don't have to have a profile in every social media platform.

Keep your audience in mind when you decide where you need to establish a digital presence. Make sure you are being reasonable about how many platforms you can effectively manage, especially if you are doing this work on your own. It is perfectly acceptable to start with just 1 and focus on doing it right.

Which social media platform(s) is your avatar using most?

- Facebook
- Twitter
- Pinterest
- Instagram
- Snapchat
- LinkedIn

04

Create Your Profiles

It's time to set up your profile!

Now that you've defined your brand, identified your audience and figured out which social media platforms they are using the most, it's time to set-up your profile.

If you have already created your profile, I recommend following along to make sure you've set everything up properly and take the time to improve your profile where you can (in the biz, we call this optimizing). To get started, you'll need to gather the following information and files:

- Desired account name
- Profile photo
- Cover photo
- Bio that connects precisely with your avatar and uses keywords directly related to your products, services and values
- Contact Info: Email, phone, address, website link
- Hours of operation
- Mission statement
- The year your business was started

As you create your profile, pay close attention to the following:

- Completely fill out your profiles, don't leave anything blank. Every piece of information you provide helps your profile to show up in search results.
- Make sure you are setting up a "business" profile (not personal)
- Verify your Facebook page in the settings
- Set up call-to-action buttons (for calls, emails, directions, etc.)

05

Create a Content Schedule

This will help you to stay on track by delivering content that provides constant value and engages your audience.

This doesn't have to be overly complicated and you can set this up in whatever space is most comfortable to you (Word, Excel, your favorite notebook.)

We keep a sheet similar to the example on the right to work from during each month, adjusting as necessary. This allows us to create a topic for each day that is relevant to our audience and that is in line with our brand. It also helps us to make sure we are providing value to our audience 90% of the time, allowing us to strategically promote our content (blogs, vlogs, training programs, etc.) 10% of the time.



Monday -
Post 1: Monday marketing tip
Post 2: Training class promo
Tuesday
Post 1: Promote blog
Post 2: Share bonus tips relevant to blog post
Wednesday
Post 1: Promote lead magnet
Post 2: Share social media news/platform update
Thursday
Post 1: Website dev / SEO tip
Post 2: Social media tip
Friday
Post 1: Question or Poll
Post 2: Social media tip/authority building
Saturday
Post 1: Funny / Entertaining

| Your Content Topic Schedule

Monday

Post 1: _____

Post 2: _____

Tuesday

Post 1: _____

Post 2: _____

Wednesday

Post 1: _____

Post 2: _____

Thursday

Post 1: _____

Post 2: _____

Friday

Post 1: _____

Post 2: _____

Saturday

Post 1: _____

Post 2: _____

06

Properly Post Content

Design your content specifically for the platform you are posting in:

The length and tone of your post and the images being shared need to be designed to fit appropriately in the post.

When you should post:

Eventually you can utilize the analytics or insights built in to each platform to see what time of the day is best to schedule posts. To get started, I recommend the following times (Ninja tip - write down the time you plan to post and then add it to your content calendar to stay on track):

Network	Best Times to Post	When You Plan to Post
Facebook	8 am, 12 pm or 8 pm	
Instagram	8 am, 4 pm or 9 pm	
Twitter	Between 7 am – 7 pm	
LinkedIn	Between 9 am – 4 pm	
Pinterest	7-10 pm	

Create notifications to others:

Take advantage of increasing your visibility and attracting the attention of others by tagging people and brands in your post when appropriate and by checking in at local businesses and at events. These actions create notifications to the accounts you are interacting with, encouraging them to engage.

07

Engage

They call it “social” media for a reason...you have to be social!

That means that your job is only halfway done once you've posted your content. You must return and engage with the people that have taken the time to read your content, watch your live stream, check-in at your business, tag you in a post, send you a direct message, leave a review or leave a comment.

Thank them, engage with them, make it personal and you are on your way to building a legitimate relationship!

Not doing this is like begging someone to come to your party and then ignoring them the entire night once they get there.

Just not cool. So, make sure you have notifications set on your phone, your tablet, your computer, everywhere! The quicker you respond, the better. Make sure that follower feels special and they are on their way to becoming one of your most loyal fans.

A few best practices...

- ✔ Set notifications so you are quickly informed when comments, tags, reviews, check-ins and direct messages are sent
- ✔ Check your platforms throughout the day to be sure you don't miss anything
- ✔ Respond to all comments in a positive and personal way – addressing people by their name deepens your relationship with that follower
- ✔ Don't delete negative comments (unless they contain vulgarities) instead, respond in a non-defensive and positive manner
- ✔ Thank people or comment when you are tagged in a post or photo
- ✔ Use direct messaging to really get personal with people that are avid engagers

You're off to a great start!! You're so much closer to getting the results you want, because you now have a plan!



Bobbi Baehne

President, Think Big Go Local, Inc.

My mission at Think Big Go Local is to create a "buzz" around our clients' businesses online and in social media platforms so their message reaches their desired audience. We know that relationships are built and maintained online each and every day and work to make sure our clients are building credibility, authority and attracting new followers and clients.

ThinkBigGoLocal.com