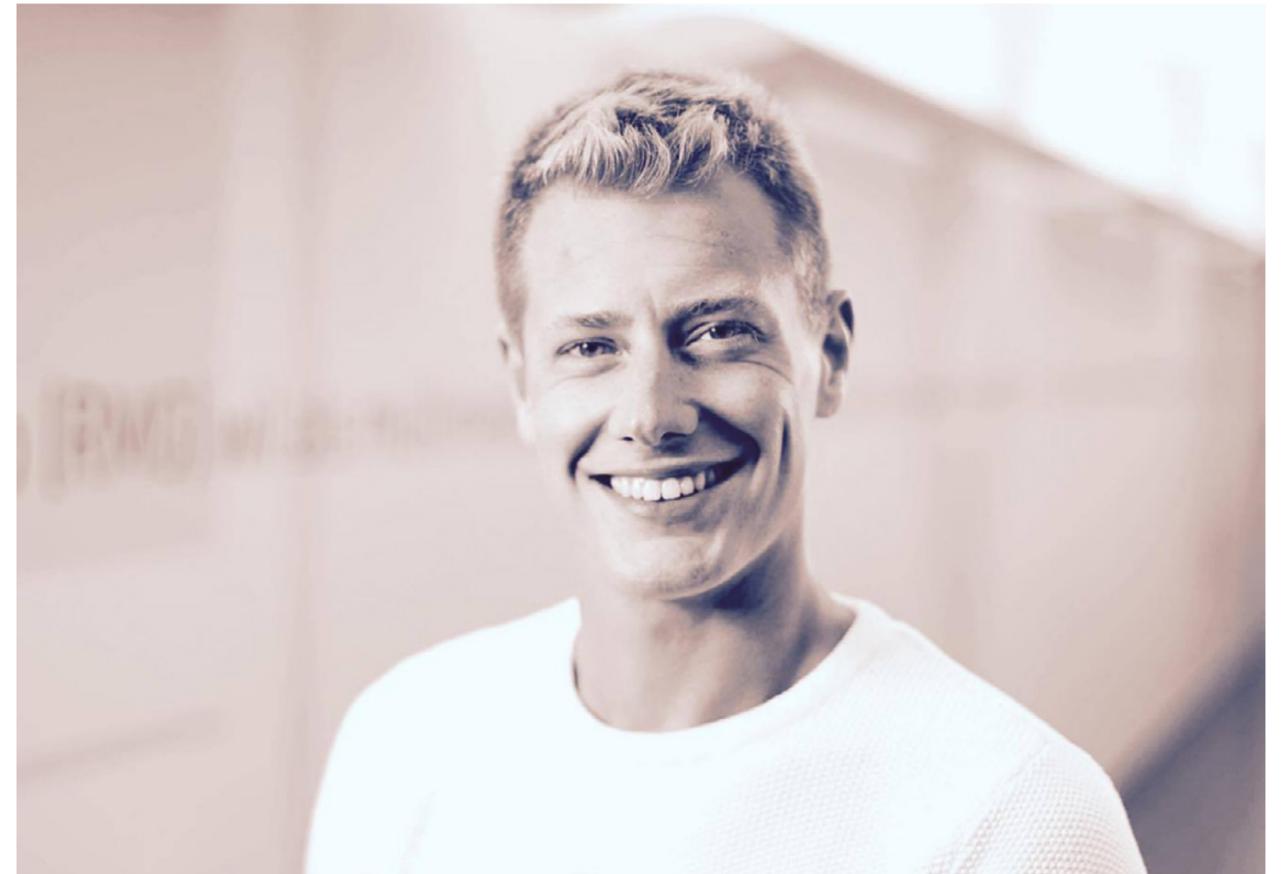


Seven reasons why social media is NOT working for your company

A guest article by Nick Vinckier

You're on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and what not, but you feel it's not really doing anything for your company? Well, it might be completely your own fault. We've asked Nick Vinkier – consultant for Duval Union – about the seven most common mistakes made by professionals on social media. Read it all and learn.

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We are a conservative industry", "Our clients are not ready for social media.", "I have the feeling that digital marketing was just a hype.", "It all costs so much time", "The ROI is just not high enough to keep investing in social channels." Sadly enough, I hear these - and lots of other -statements quite a lot.

As a consultant, I'm privileged to work with a lot of companies on a daily basis and over the last three years I realized that there are seven big patterns: 7 reasons why social media is not giving you or your company the bang for its buck. I'm providing you with these because I highly believe that social media (digital marketing as such) is still super underestimated because people don't know the true power it has and/or are doing things wrongly.

I hope that, by walking you through the 7 most common mistakes, you can recalibrate your efforts and run social/digital more effectively and efficiently - resulting in an exponential ROI-bump.

1. There is no (digital) strategy

Strategy is to business people what sex is to teenagers: everybody talks about it yet nobody has a clue how to do it properly. Only few companies have a real,

concise strategy for their business, let alone for their digital marketing actions. It's the reason why you're doing things ad hoc, why taking decisions is so damn hard and/or why your company is not doing anything (successfully) (yet) on social media. Look at the goals of the company, the key stakeholders to reach these goals and design an approach to contribute to the company's objectives by using digital channels. Make sure you write down 3 to 10 strategic pillars and live by them. Every decision has to be made with these in mind!

Don't say: "We're going to post 3 times on Facebook & LinkedIn". But say: "We will create continuous top of mind awareness amongst our key target audience in the most cost-effective way."

Stop confusing tactics with strategy. Like, really. And truly commit yourself by using real, ambitious KPI's linked to the company's growth. If you're still measuring the success of your social media activity based on the engagement your tweets receive, I got some bad news for you.

2. There is no company-wide belief

There are two types of people: those who complain about something and those who try to fix the reason

why others are complaining. Be the last one. Social media, growth hacking, digital marketing, ... These all are new things. And typically, human beings don't like new things. We all know digital channels are the way to go but your management and/or your coworkers don't. Explain them what it is in their own language, why it's important for the company and the individual himself/herself to get to know it and how you want to (gradually) progress from here.

Having a tight war plan (strategy) is great start. Organizing introduction sessions and trainings is an other way to unfreeze people. Try to help people as much as possible and convert coworkers into internal influencers to get the job done.

It's not only 'digital media', you should become a 'digital company'! Make sure there is both top-down and bottom-up belief. Pull from both sides. Don't complain about the lack of company-wide knowledge around digital/social, but install it yourself.

3. There are no resources

Digital is not free. Digital marketing (SEO, SEA, social media, growth hacking, ...) is more cost-effective, measurable, scalable and converting than traditional channels but it is not free. Managers providing resources and those asking for them, should acknowledge this fact and need to become more serious about this, because you'll need people and money to thrive in a digital age.

Big companies should at least reallocate 20% of their marketing budget towards digital, smaller companies 80%. When it comes to people, take into account that one-armed bandits are okay for the short-term but no good to be(come) future-proof.

Look out for at least two types of people: on the one hand, you need a strategy-minded, analytical person who can manage the machine and on the other hand a creative, empathic, community-drive persona in your team. Add partners & tools where necessary (Look at these and thank me later: Fiverr.com, Upwork.com, MTurk.com)

You decide whether or not they can work full time on digital marketing, but I highly recommend you to give your digital team the full mandate to execute on the proposed strategy with a serious budget without a manager having to double check everything back and forth. Seriously, do you trust your people?

4. You lack digital skills

Stop hiring 'digital natives'. You need dedicated people, who love your organisation and want to help the company grow. Look for real digital-business-minded people and/or invest in the education of non-natives. The last thing you need is a 21-year old intern who has a Snapchat account.

Ask your social media team what a 'shadowban' or a 'pod' is on Instagram. Ask them to make a vlog for four consecutive weeks. Let them produce a podcast or set up a landing page with Wordpress. If they can't answer your questions or complete any of these tasks, you have a 'Dirts' problem. Your team doesn't have their boots in the mud: they lack real digital skills.

Managers: Find real talent. Pay them appropriately (some want money or a car, others recognition or a network). Invest in good freelance partners to surround your team with.

Digital natives: Work. Stop head line reading. Don't overestimate yourself (there are thousands like you). Work harder.

Both: Invest in your education. What works today, will not work next week. Keep moving fast. Keep breaking things - responsibly ;-)

5. Your content sucks

Have you ever watched a pre-roll YouTube ad so good, you didn't check the original movie you were looking for anymore? Nobody has because 99% of the pre-roll ads are not disproportionately relevant.

When I see online content, I always have the same feeling: 'mèh'. It's not enticing, not appealing, even boring, interrupting my experience and always communicating a message 'from the company to me'. There are only a few companies who put out content that speaks to the target audience. Content that brings what the audience was originally looking for: educational and/or entertaining content - value.

Look at what you're creating today and ask yourself: Are we educating our target audience with this? Are we entertaining our audience? Are we providing value? Are we disproportionately relevant? 90% will have to answer no, 90% is going in directly for the kill. Be the 10% who is not and you'll win.

You could force people to watch crappy creative back in the 70s, but it's a different ball game in 2015-2020. The biggest problem nowadays is that organizations really don't have a clue who their target



stakeholders are, what they do, what they fear, what they dream of, what they eat, sleep, buy and where, how, when and why they do so.

Get to know your customers, potential employees, shareholders, ... Tell them what they want to hear. Win.

6. You're married to tactics

This one hurts me so badly, it makes me cry and laugh at the same time. There is no silver bullet when it comes to digital marketing or social media. If you've found a tactic that works great right now, triple down on it - yet know that it'll soon run out of effect.

We're holding onto channels (not only digital ones) and 'times to post' because "everybody else says/does so", while we are switching up our core messages à la go. Trust me on this one: Marry your strategy, date and dump your tactics before they dump you.

7. You're not slicing the elephant

And I totally get why marrying tactics is super valid at big corporates. Changing up your tactics every now and then asks for a team with a change-embracing mindset and disciplined flexibility. Elements that aren't really integrated in traditional marketing departments.

The times are gone where you could make an excel sheet with four big marketing campaigns and hit the 'GO-button' every year: spraying and praying that the ROI's going to be defensible at the end of the year (or at least have a plan B to confuse others when it isn't).

Speed is the variable in this digital age and we've received all the tools to monitor the performance of all

our actions. Yet only a few companies are really getting up to light speed while they are constantly optimizing their efforts. When it comes to social/digital: Perfect is best. Done is better than perfect. Fast is better than slow. Slow is better than not.

Slice the elephant, integrate the growth hacking mentality and entirely transform your marketing approach to meet the expectations of your internal and external stakeholders.

Do you know how much it costs to acquire a customer through SEA? And are you 100% sure that visitors that come from Facebook convert better than those who come from Pinterest? If not, how do you even know if your CAC is lower than your CLV?

Marketing in 2017 should be equally considered as a science and an art, but always needs to contribute to the growth of the company. Whether you're a giant corporate or a tiny startup. End of discussion.

Nick is a digital consultant and helps companies grow by combining his experiences in social media, growth hacking and digital marketing with his entrepreneurial mindset. As a consultant and keynote speaker, he tries to transform marketing departments across the globe: shifting organizations from social media to a social business, installing growth hacking within corporates and learning companies to forget about digital marketing but think about marketing to digitals.

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