CHAPTER 9

Writing for Social Media

Chapter Outline

"Writing should not be a daunting task—it's natural! Being a strong writer has helped me advance in my schooling because I don't allow myself to get stressed out over writing assignments like many of my classmates. To plug into my best creative and energy levels I like to think about my project for a couple of days. This allows my ideas to marinate and makes the writing process much more natural."

—Catie Beatty, Texas Christian University

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Describe the work done by social media coordinators and social media specialists.

2. List the elements of a social media campaign.

3. Discuss key style elements for social media copy.

4. Explain the difference between short-form, middle-form, and long-form social media copy.

FRONTLINE MEDIA WRITING PROFILE

Jason Carlton, Social Media Manager

Intermountain Medical Center, *Murray, Utah*

Regardless of the medium or message, Jason Carlton is a multimedia writer and producer all day long. As social media manager with Intermountain Medical Center in Murray, Utah, Carlton writes tweets, Facebook and Google+ updates, blogs, video scripts, newsletter articles, news releases, and media statements for the patients, staff, and community members the hospital serves.

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Intermountain Medical Center is a Level I trauma center. Whether Carlton is creating a blog post about superbugs and antibiotics, drafting a newsletter piece to promote employee wellness, or scripting a video on newborn health, his writing affects the lives and health of countless people who rely on the hospital every day.

"Intermountain Healthcare's whole mission is helping people to live the healthiest lives possible, and I get to play a role in that," says Carlton, thirty-five. "I have worked with people at death's door who are now living healthy lives again. I have been in the operating room to see pulmonary valve replacements, liver transplants, and other revolutionary procedures. It is a real thrill to tell those stories of the lives changed through medical technology."

Carlton has achieved career success through networking, honing his writing skills, and persevering through setbacks. Earning his bachelor's degree in communication at Weber State University in 2004, he job-hunted for a year and completed a second internship to find his first job with Vanguard Media Group in Salt Lake City. In 2009, Carlton landed a position with Primary Children's Medical Center, and in 2012,

started with Intermountain Medical Center.

"My position with Intermountain Healthcare is pretty unique," Carlton notes. "My primary responsibility is social media, but I also work closely with journalists and serve as a spokesperson for five of the hospitals in the system, which gives me the opportunity to blend these two positions through my writing."

In 2009, Carlton earned his master's degree in communication from the University of Utah, and his Accreditation in Public Relations (APR) from the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) in 2010.

Like all media professionals, Carlton utilizes professional strategy. He carefully assesses his situation and audience before writing his message. For a recent news release on antibiotics and superbugs, Carlton began by running Google searches on the subject and discovering what news organizations were writing. He checked Intermountain's social media logs to see whether any related blog posts had been written.

"I had to write this piece on Friday for a Monday deadline," Carlton recalls.

> "I was familiar with antibiotic misuse and how it creates superbugs, but the challenge was to determine my audience and what they needed to know about the issue. Was it parents, news media, or doctors? Why should they care? What information did they need?"

> Carlton advises aspiring media professionals to practice their craft diligently. "Find opportunities to do your own writing through our own news releases, your own blog posts, or volunteer opportunities," he concludes. "You'll be surprised at how quickly you improve."

It's Both Personal and Professional

Do you consider yourself to be a skilled social media writer? Perhaps you write daily on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, or Google+. Social media now account for the highest usage of any type of Internet site.[1] Over 2 billion Internet users accessed social networks by April 2016, and by all indications, these figures are much higher today as the use of mobile devices for social media access continues to grow.[2]

What do we mean by social media? We can broadly define **social media** as a set of digital tools that allow for the creation and sharing of messages in a way that builds collaboration and/or relationships. People use social media because it provides them with a sense of community and brings them attention among their friends and family. A *channel* refers to the delivery system for a communication medium. There are many different **social media channels**, such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram, Pinterest, Yelp, and Foursquare, to name just a few. Each uses unique features to deliver messages.

The Media Industry and Social Media

Social media has become an integral part of daily work in the media industry. Journalists use it as a reporting and promotional tool, and news organizations front their operations with social media accounts. Public relations practitioners specialize in creating social media campaigns using a variety of social media channels to deliver their messages. Advertising professionals create and place ads in social media to effectively reach target audiences. All of these industries are hiring *social media coordinators* (sometimes called social media managers)

and *social media specialists* whose job is to design campaigns and specific messages tailored to particular social media channels. Today, social media campaigns are important parts of overall media strategies in journalism, public relations, and advertising.

What does a social media coordinator do? He or she leads a team of media writers and producers who together develop social media campaigns for public relations or advertising clients. A **social media campaign** is a media strategy that uses more than one social media channel, such as Facebook, Twitter, and Pinterest, to promote and build audience attention for an organization's brand.

Planning Social Media Campaigns

Professionals organize and execute their social media writing within well-planned social media campaigns. These campaigns are proposed and planned by the social media coordinator with a team of social media specialists. Thus, the first important job for social media writers is to construct a social media campaign plan and then to sell it to clients or the decision-makers in their organization. Once their plan has been accepted, the social media writers and producers begin their work writing and constructing the messages they will place on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and the other selected social media channels. We begin our coverage of social media writing by showing you how to write an effective **social media campaign plan**.

Social media campaign plans include everything you do with social media channels to achieve specified objectives for your client. Effective social media plans are based upon the Professional Strategy Triangle, first discussed in Chapter 2. The plan must include complete explanations of the situation, including the client's objectives and the social media channels that will be used for the campaign. It must also address audience, including an analysis of the audience demographics, psychographics, and lifestyle segments. Finally, the campaign must specify the types of social media messages to be used, along with their placement and frequency. Social media coordinators have developed various outlines for these plans. Here is a six-part structure for effective campaign plans developed by Evan LePage at Hootsuite:[3]

1. Construct social media objectives for the client.

2. Conduct an audience analysis.

3. Perform a social media audit and adjust client's social media accounts.

4. Analyze social media content in the client's industry, and detail effective message designs.

5. Create a social media content plan that includes a *content calendar*. A content calendar specifies when content will appear in social media channels used in the plan.

6. Test social media messages, evaluate audience reaction, and adjust the plan if necessary.

Steps 1 through 4 above identify any problems or issues with your client's or organization's current social media use. Steps 5 and 6 describe solutions with a plan that shows the client exactly what to do with social media to strategically distribute effective content to its target audience.

SOCIAL MEDIA OBJECTIVES

The first step in constructing a draft of your plan is to write social media objectives for your client. **Social media objectives** are short statements that explain exactly what you want to achieve with specific messages placed in particular social media channels. These statements reflect the needs of your client, part of an overall public relations or advertising media strategy developed for your client. Businesses can use the "SMART" system to create effective objectives. The acronym stands for

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Time-bound

Specific means that each objective refers directly to tangible things, with no ambiguity. It names a particular social media channel, describes the exact message content, and details how frequently the messages will be posted.

To illustrate a social media plan in this chapter, we will use a hypothetical client named Classic Glass Photography. Let's use the following as a description of the business:

Since 1985, Classic Glass has helped commerce, industry, and government organizations document various Pennsylvania landscapes with digital and classic photography techniques. Located in a restored hotel building in Lucinda, Pennsylvania, the company also sends photographers to serve clients in eastern Ohio, southern New York, and northern West Virginia. Expert at aerial photography, Classic Glass also reaches a niche audience with releases of photographic prints featuring well-known landmarks and beautiful scenery. Its clients include realtors, town and city tourist bureaus, state park offices, conservancy and environmental groups, and natural resource companies.

Here is an example of one objective for this client:

Classic Glass Photography will post <u>daily Facebook updates</u>, including <u>locations of shoots and sample photos</u>. It will gain ten likes and five comments a week, with one client interest inquiry received each week, by December 15, 2018.

We have underlined the details of this objective that makes it *specific*—the particular channel (Facebook), the frequency of the posts (daily), and the content for the message (locations of shoots and sample messages). Because of the need to be specific, always write a separate objective for each social media channel in your campaign plan.

A *measurable* objective is one whose results you can count or quantify. Notice that the sample objective uses *likes* and *comments* as audience feedback measures in the underlined sentence below:

Classic Glass Photography will post daily Facebook updates, including locations of shoots and sample photos. <u>We will gain ten likes and five comments a week, with one client interest inquiry received each week,</u> by December 15, 2018.

Media professionals refer to measurable audience feedback as **metrics**. Social media metrics include simple indicators such as the number of comments or likes a post receives, as well as the number of reposts made by audience members.

A goal that's *attainable* is feasible and takes into account the current situation for your client. Two important considerations apply to make objectives attainable. The first is the staff your client will work with in creating messages. Your objectives must consider the time it will take for your writing and production

staff to produce social media messages as you specify the frequency of social media posts. Second, you need to be realistic about audience reactions to your planned social media messages. A client in a niche business, such as landscape photography, simply won't generate high levels of audience interest as would a popular restaurant or nightclub. To gauge appropriate metrics goals, try examining other social media sites in the client's industry.

Goal Setting

Specific
Measurable
Attainable
Relevant
Time-bound

PHOTO 9.2: SMART is a best practice framework for setting goals. Set SMART goals to clarify your ideas, refocus your energy, and use your time and resources productively.

Objectives prove to be *relevant* when they specify results that fit the client's needs. Relevance is determined by the types of content you plan to post and the type of social media channel you choose for the post. Does your client need to use video to convey its message to an audience? If so, YouTube would serve as one social media channel relevant to your client's needs. Does your client need to post text-based content that seeks to persuade an audience of a particular point of view? In that case, a set of weekly blog posts may be appropriate.

You accomplish *time-bound* objectives when you insert a "done by this date" phrase into your objective, as noted in this example:

> Classic Glass Photography will create one Twitter post a day for each weekday, adding one new follower each week, <u>by December 15, 2018</u>.

Be sure to date your objectives, because it provides a measurable indicator of whether or not you have reached the objective.

Social media objectives form a key component of the social media plan. Not only do they specify exactly what you plan to do with social media messages, they give you a valuable means to measure your success. Here is an example of a list of objectives for the first part of a social media campaign plan for our simulated business, Classic Glass Photography:

Social Media Objectives

Discussions with the owners of Classic Glass Photography have led to the creation of seven objectives for our social media campaign:

- Classic Glass Photography will post daily Facebook updates, including locations of shoots and sample photos. We will gain ten likes and five comments a week, with one client interest inquiry received each week, by December 15, 2018.

- Classic Glass Photography will post daily Google+ updates, including locations of shoots and sample photos. We will gain seven likes and three comments a week, with one client interest inquiry received every two weeks, by December 15, 2018.

- Classic Glass Photography will tweet once a day on Twitter, adding three new followers a week by December 15, 2018.

- Classic Glass Photography will post at least three new short photo essays (4 to 6 photos) a week with Instagram. These photo essays will attract at least five comments a week.

- Classic Glass Photography will post three sets of photos on Pinterest each week, and will generate ten new pins a week by December 15, 2018.

- Classic Glass Photography will gain three new clients each month through Facebook inquiries by December 15, 2018.

- Classic Glass Photography will gain two new clients each quarter through Google+ inquiries by December 15, 2018.

SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN AUDIENCE ANALYSIS

Throughout this text, we have repeatedly referred to the importance of understanding your audience when writing for media. In the social media campaign audience analysis, the second step in the process, you must carefully specify the types of people in your desired audience. For our purposes in this chapter, a *target audience* refers to an audience made up of specific types of people who are most likely to buy your client's product or service (advertising), or the particular people with whom your client wants to initiate or maintain a beneficial relationship (public relations).

How do you specify a target audience? You can use three main categories to analyze it: demographics, psychographics, and lifestyle segments. **Demographics** refer to descriptive characteristics about the types of people you wish to target for your audience. They include characteristics such as age, income, the geographic area where people live, education level, and gender. **Psychographics** chart the attitudes, values, and beliefs held by the people in the target audience. *Attitudes* are opinions about current issues important to the people in the target audience. *Beliefs* focus on deeper faith or acceptance of philosophical or religious concepts. *Values* refer to ethical or moral principles that guide people in making decisions. **Lifestyle segments** are a subset of psychographics that focus on characteristics such as hobbies, outdoor/indoor activities, vacation preferences, sports participation, and aesthetic preferences (choices in art, popular music, movies, television, and other media).

PHOTO 9.3: Knowing your audience is key for crafting the most effective, meaningful, and memorable content for your readers.

The target audience analysis carefully explains each of the three characteristics. Start with a brief introduction explaining what an audience analysis accomplishes for the social media campaign. Next, a bulleted list that contains each element of the audience analysis works well for this section of your plan. Use the audience characteristics as bullet points, followed by the descriptions of the target audience for each bulleted characteristic. Here is an example for our simulated business, Classic Glass Photography:

Target Audience Analysis

Classic Glass Photography's social media presence currently focuses on photo enthusiasts. There is a need to specify the audience that includes decision-makers in the industry that purchase Classic Glass Photography photo documentary services. We have targeted that audience in the analysis below:

Demographics

- **Age:** People between the ages of eighteen and seventy will be attracted to our social media content. Most of our audience will

consist of people between the ages of twenty-five and sixty; people of these ages tend to be most interested in photography and landscapes.

- **Income:** People who earn $50,000 per year and above will have the most interest in our social media content. These are the people associated with organizations that would be interested in our services. This could include members of environmental organizations, private natural resources companies, and state natural resources agencies. In addition, these people would be willing to spend money purchasing our photographic prints.

- **Geographic area:** Our target audience resides in western Pennsylvania and eastern Ohio, where we serve clients. We will focus on the woods, farmland, Appalachian mountain scenery, rivers, lakes, streams, hills, flatlands, wetlands, cityscapes, towns, and classic architecture in this geographic region.

- **Education:** People with college degrees will form the bulk of those interested in our services, including those with advanced professional and academic degrees and those in managerial positions in the organizations that purchase our services.

- **Gender:** Our audience will contain roughly equal numbers of men and women because both exhibit equal appreciation of and interest in landscape and event photography, and hold managerial positions in companies that hire our services.

Psychographics

- **Beliefs:** Our audience will be made up of people who regard preservation of natural resources as an important priority in society. Many belong to organizations that work to preserve natural resources.

- **Attitudes:** Our audience will consist of successful professionals and business people who support the role of business in the preservation of the environment and use of natural resources. This includes environmentalists and logging, mining, and drilling professionals.

- **Values:** Our audience will demonstrate that they value our environment and the judicious use of natural resources.

Lifestyle Segments

- **Outdoor activity enthusiasts:** Many people in our audience will be hikers, campers, canoeists, anglers, trail bikers, and other outdoor sports enthusiasts. These people spend money on outdoor equipment and maintain healthy lifestyles that enable them to participate in rigorous outdoor activities. They would see the value of buying photographs and photographic albums of their favorite outdoor landscapes.

- **Photography enthusiasts:** People who take pictures and follow photography as a hobby will make up a significant portion of our audience. Our use of classic photography equipment creates an opportunity to attract photography enthusiasts who would be interested in our photographic processes and the way we use classic equipment to achieve high-quality landscape photos.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN AUDIT

As the third step, the **social media campaign audit** provides a review of the current social media activity of your client before you implement a campaign. It aims to identify the accounts currently used by your client and then to perform modifications to make the most effective use of social media channels. The task here is to create a single, unified social media presence for your client.

Start with a paragraph summarizing what you found when examining your client's current social media accounts. Then, set up a bulleted list of the social media channels used by your client with information about when they were set up and the way your client currently uses them, if applicable. The second part of the audit includes your recommended action steps to adjust the social media accounts to create a unified social media presence for your client. The recommendations in this section revolve around the need to eliminate duplications in accounts and use particular social media channels that will accomplish your campaign plan's objectives. Here is an example report section for a social media audit for our Classic Glass Photography client:

Social Media Audit

Our analysis of the current social media accounts used by Classic Glass Photography revealed some duplication in the use of Twitter. Two people at Classic Glass Photography were writing social media messages

without coordinating their efforts. The team was also failing to utilize a number of key social media channels that could be exploited to our advantage. Our recommendation is to eliminate duplication and bring all channels under the direction of our social media service team. We also recommend the creation of a Google+ account with a business page.

Current Social Media Usage

- **Facebook:** Classic Glass Photography Facebook page created on 10/08/16 by owner Scott Kuehn.

- **Twitter:**

  o @ClassicGlassPhotography Twitter account created on 10/12/16 by owner Scott Kuehn.

  o @Classic_Glass_Photo2 Twitter account created on 4/13/16 by company photographer Daniel Berg.

- **Instagram:** Classic Glass Photography Instagram account created on 5/13/16 by owner Scott Kuehn.

- **Pinterest:** Classic Glass Photography Pinterest account created on 7/1/16 by company photographer Daniel Berg.

- **WordPress Blog:** Classic Glass Photography WordPress account created on 6/12/16 by owner Scott Kuehn.

- **Flickr Image Gallery:** Classic Glass Photography Flickr account created on 2/14/17 by company photographer Daniel Berg.

Recommended Action Steps

- Remove Twitter account @Classic_Glass_Photo2.

- Transfer Pinterest account to client social media service team.

- Transfer Flickr account to client social media service team.

- Create a Google+ account to utilize Google+ Communities and Hangouts.

INDUSTRY SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

The fourth step in the social media campaign plan features an analysis of the social media activity of similar businesses in the client's industry. Start with a

brief introductory paragraph summarizing how your client compares to others in their industry who use social media. Bullet points work well to convey the information about how competitors and similar businesses use various social media channels. Your goal here is to survey social media use in your client's industry to discover *best practices*. Once you find examples, you can gain inspiration from successful use of social media by others in your client's industry. Adapt the successful models from others to use in your client's social media campaign plan.

The **industry social media analysis** section of your plan includes two sections. First, list a set of industry practitioners that have a social media presence and briefly outline the social media channels that they use. Second, highlight instances of effective social media use by these others in the client's industry. Here is an example of the industry social media analysis section of a campaign plan for Classic Glass Photography:

Industry Social Media Analysis

Classic Glass Photography is one of only a few landscape photography businesses that caters to private sector and government clients. Many other landscape photography businesses focus on landscape art and drive sales of their aesthetic products through online vendors and their own websites. Despite this difference, Classic Glass Photography can use effective social media practices to attract customers to its products. These practices also attract members of the private sector/government/environmental audience. Here is a brief analysis of effective social media use by three other landscape photography businesses.

Landscape Photography Social Media Examples

- *Charlie Waite Photography*
  - Charlie Waite uses Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, and a WordPress blog site as social media channels.
  - Based in England, this business posts pictures from current shoots and writes an informational blog centered on taking artistic landscape photos.
  - This business is focused on artistic landscape photography.
  - Mr. Waite is also a photography instructor and posts information for his students.

- *Mark Gray Fine Art Photography*
  - This business uses Facebook, Twitter, Google+, and an Instagram channel.
  - Mark Gray is based in Australia and posts pictures from current shoots.
  - This business is focused on artistic landscape photography. It sells Mr. Gray's photos to the public from a commercial website.

- *Elizabeth Carmel, Fine Art Photographer*
  - This business uses Facebook, Twitter, and a YouTube channel.
  - Ms. Carmel is based in Georgia and focuses attention on her two walk-in galleries.
  - This business is focused on artistic landscape photography. Social media channels direct traffic to Ms. Carmel's website, which also promotes her two photo galleries.

Effective Social Media Practices by Landscape Photographers

- **Original Content Posts**
  - Charlie Waite posts a weekly Facebook feature that discusses a recent picture he shot. This short Facebook piece (about 60 words) links to a companion blog on his WordPress site that expands upon the Facebook feature. Waite's weekly Facebook feature generates many likes and positive comments.
  - Mark Gray engages Instagram followers almost daily with new landscape pictures he takes on photo shoots. These pictures receive many positive comments.
  - Elizabeth Carmel engages her Facebook followers with "how-to" photography features that appear approximately every two weeks. These digital photography features run about 250 words long and include pictures of equipment and short discussions about how a current picture was created using a certain piece of equipment.
  - Mark Gray makes effective use of Google+ Hangouts for photography fans and photographers. He posts current pictures with commentary, along with digital editing tips to retouch digital photos.

- **Effective Reposted Content**
  - Charlie Waite Photography reposts photography contest information from around the world and encourages fans to participate.
  - Mark Gray Fine Art Photography reposts information about Nikon photography equipment. Mr. Gray will include short comments about the usefulness of the equipment.
  - All three photographers repost news about equipment, tips for photographers, and photos from other photographers that they find interesting.

THE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT PLAN

The fifth step in the social media campaign plan specifies the content you will post on your client's social media channels. Here, you also specify the frequency of the posts along with a content calendar that shows times during the week you will create each post. The content plan and calendar are essential elements of your social media campaign because they provide instructions for your social media writing and production team. These instructions need to be specific and focus on the content in your client's social media campaign objectives.

Begin this section with a careful review of the results you obtained in your analysis of effective social media practices in your client's industry. Don't be afraid to copy some ideas from others in the industry. Doing what works to attract audience attention is your prime goal, and you must make sure that your client maintains its brand voice in the mix of others in the industry.

The content plan includes three types of content (see Figure 9.1). The first type is **original content updates**. Written and produced by your team, these consist of short update messages. Such updates regularly appear on social media channels such as Facebook, Google+, Twitter, and Instagram. Writers usually construct original updates with a visual element and no more than two sentences (Facebook and Google+ updates can be slightly longer, perhaps a paragraph). The second type of social media content is **original feature content**. Its length will depend on the social media channel you use. Facebook

and Google+ features can include one or more pictures or video plus copy that runs 100 to 250 words. Blog features may run considerably longer in word count; they also include pictures or video. Feature content will likely provide the source of most of your social media promotions.

The third type of content is called **curated content**. Here, your team finds and distributes material from other sources, curating it like a collector. Curated content refers to reposts. It can be planned or unplanned. Planned reposts work effectively for content that is available on a scheduled basis, such as music releases or sports updates. Unplanned reposts occur when your social media team encounters an important issue in the news that should receive attention from your audience (for instance, a regulatory change that allows gas drilling in state forests).

Your social media content plan must also establish a **content ratio** for your social media channels. A content ratio specifies how much of the total numb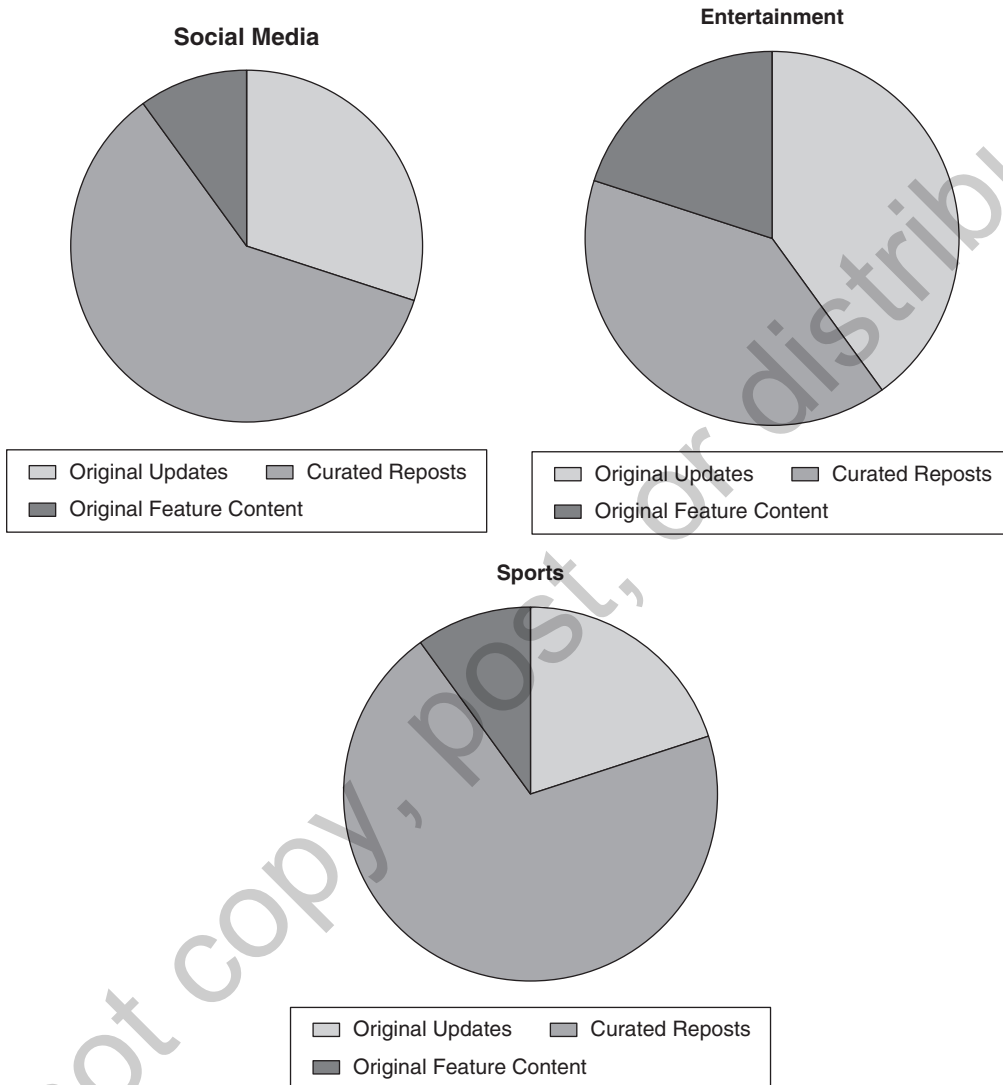er of posts each of the three different types of content will make up. What percentage of your content will be original update posts, what percentage will be reposts, and what percentage will be original feature posts? Social media professionals usually begin with a default ratio they call *the golden content ratio*.[4] This model specifies 30 percent original updates, 60 percent curated reposts, and 10 percent original feature promotional content. It is also referred to as the 30/60/10 ratio (Figure 9.2). Social media coordinators use many other

FIGURE 9.1 The Three Types of Social Media Content

- Original Content Updates
- Original Content Features
- Curated Content

types of ratios, depending on their business. Entertainment businesses, such as restaurants or night clubs often increase the amount of original content (both original updates and original features), and decrease the amount of curated content. In contrast to the golden content ratio, they might run 40 percent original updates, 40 percent curated content, and 20 percent original feature content for a 40/40/20 ratio. Sports-oriented businesses, such as teams, fantasy sports, leagues, or famous players often move in the opposite direction with a heavy reliance on sports news and updates, using a ratio such as 20/70/10.

FIGURE 9.2 The Golden Content Ratio

Social Media

☐ Original Updates ☐ Curated Reposts
☐ Original Feature Content

Entertainment

☐ Original Updates ☐ Curated Reposts
☐ Original Feature Content

Sports

☐ Original Updates ☐ Curated Reposts
☐ Original Feature Content

FORMATTING THE SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT PLAN

The **social media content plan** consists of five sections:

Section 1: Presents your chosen content ratio and your reasons for adopting the ratio you chose.

Section 2: Describes your original content updates. Here, you should include a discussion of the topics that your updates will cover as well as the social media channels you will use to deliver them.

Section 3: Provides a detailed explanation of the curated content you plan to repost on a weekly basis. Explain exactly what the curated content will be, as well as how frequently you choose to repost it. You also need to provide reasons why you choose to repost it.

Section 4: Focuses on feature content. Carefully explain the promotional content that you will plan as weekly features on your client's social media channels.

Section 5: Provides the content calendar, usually constructed on a spreadsheet. A number of content calendar spreadsheet templates can be downloaded for free online. We also provide one on this textbook website for you to use.

Begin Section 1 of the content plan with an introduction that explains the types of social media content to be included. If your client is not well versed in this area, he or she will need to learn what you mean by original, curated, and feature content. Once you have introduced the idea of a content ratio, discuss the ratio you suggest for your client's social media channels, and then explain your reasoning. Here is an example of the first section of a content plan for our simulated client, Classic Glass Photography:

SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT PLAN: CLASSIC GLASS PHOTOGRAPHY

To determine the weekly mix of content, we have established a content ratio for Classic Glass Photography.

A content ratio of 30/60/10 will begin our campaign. Of all the content we post each week (100 percent), 30 percent will consist of original updates we will produce, 60 percent will consist of reposts we curate from other sources, and 10 percent will consist of two weekly features we will post on Facebook and the Classic Glass Photography blog site. With 30 percent of our content consisting of short updates on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, we maintain consistent connections with our audience all through the week, emphasized by our reposts of curated content on these same channels. This curated content will keep our

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brand in the eye of our audience as we find interesting items to share about landscape photography and the environment. Our two features, *Classic Cameras on Landscapes* and *Beautiful Black-and-White Classic Landscapes* will make up the last 10 percent of our weekly posts. A shortened version of each feature will appear on Facebook: the first on Mondays, the second on Thursdays. Each Facebook post will include a link to the Classic Glass Photography blog site, where a longer version of the feature will appear.

Section 2 of the content plan provides an explanation of the original content updates your plan specifies for your client's campaign. Write this section with bullet points that focus on each of the social media channels. Under each channel, carefully explain the types of content you will provide. Here is an example:

Original Content Updates for Classic Glass Photography

- **Facebook**

  Two original content updates will be posted each week on Classic Glass Photography's Facebook page. These updates will be posted on Monday and Thursday. Current Classic Glass Photography photo shoots will be the topic of these updates, which will share sample photos and comments from our photographers in the field.

- **Twitter**

  Twitter updates will duplicate the Facebook updates, posted simultaneously on Classic Glass Photography's Twitter account on Monday and Thursday.

- **Instagram**

  Two original updates will be posted each week on Classic Glass Photography's Instagram account. These updates will appear on Tuesdays and Fridays. Instagram posts will use a select photo from the week's landscape shoots that highlight a particular photography characteristic of interest to photographers.

- **Google+**

  Copies of the Facebook updates will also be posted to the communities section of the Classic Glass Photography Google+ business page on the same days they appear on Facebook.

- **Pinterest**

  Photos used throughout the week on our other social media channels will be posted on Pinterest Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Section 3 of your content plan will look much like Section 2, except that here you specify curated content that you plan to repost throughout the week. As in Section 2, explain the sources of your planned reposts and the channels you will use for your reposts. Here is an example:

Curated Updates

- **Facebook**

  Five curated content updates will be posted each week on Classic Glass Photography's Facebook page. These reposts will appear once each day of the work week, Monday through Friday. Reposts will include content from other landscape photography businesses, including Charlie Waite Photography and Mark Gray Fine Art Photography. Also included will be updates from camera equipment manufacturers, photography contests, and conservation updates from groups such as the Izaak Walton League and the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy.

- **Google+**

  The same curated content posted on Facebook will also be posted on the company's Google+ business page.

- **Twitter**

  Twitter reposts will duplicate the Facebook reposts, posted simultaneously on Classic Glass Photography's Twitter account Monday through Thursday.

- **Unplanned reposts**

  We will look for important photography and conservation news events. As they occur, we will repost breaking news items on the Classic Glass Photography Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Section 4 of your content plan specifies feature content. This refers to original content that runs longer than simple updates. It can run up to 400 words or so on Facebook

and much longer on a blog. Features form your promotional content where your client engages the audience with copy and pictures that showcase their products, services, or promotions. Most features are written as short articles with plenty of visual content including video and photographs. Some are "how-to" articles promoting the client's products. Other features include testimonials from people who have purchased the client's products or services. We will focus on writing social media features later in this chapter. Here is an example of Section 4 of the content plan:

Original Features

- **Facebook**

  Our two features, *Classic Cameras on Landscapes* and *Beautiful Black-and-White Classic Landscapes* are short articles that will promote Classic Glass Photography pictures. *Classic Cameras on Landscapes* will appear on Mondays, showcasing a set of Classic Glass Photography photos and compelling stories behind the photo shoots. *Beautiful Black-and-White Classic Landscapes* will appear on Thursdays and will demonstrate the compelling aesthetic of black-and-white landscape photography using photos from the Classic Glass Photography archive. Each feature will run approximately 150 words, with five to seven photos. Video demonstrations can also be included.

- **Blog**

  Each of the two features, *Classic Cameras on Landscapes* and *Beautiful Black-and-White Classic Landscapes* will be posted on the Classic Glass Photography blog site. The blog versions of these features will run about four times the length of their Facebook versions, perhaps with more photos. The Facebook versions will provide a link to the longer blog versions.

Section 5, the **content calendar**, concludes your content plan. This is usually a spreadsheet file that lists each of the social media channels as columns and the days of the week as rows. Here, you fill out the grid with cells that indicate the posts and reposts you plan for each social media channel for each day of the week. When the calendar is complete, you can see at a glance exactly what you need to post or repost on a weekly basis. If you have a team producing the client's social media, you can assign each post to particular team members and indicate it on the calendar.

FIGURE 9.3 Social Media Content Calendar

Be sure to construct your calendar so that you distribute your social media posts evenly across the week. Do not allow holes in your calendar or days of the week where your social media activity slows. Evenly distributed content provides your closest followers with a sense of rhythm in the posts. They can come to expect and enjoy the content you post on a regular basis. Figure 9.3 shows an example of a social media content calendar.

THE WAR ROOM

Setting a Content Calendar

Imagine that you are a content specialist on the Classic Glass Photography social media team. Your job is to set up a content calendar that will

- represent a content ratio of 30/60/10;
- use the social media channels Facebook, Google+, Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest to their

full potential to reach the landscape photography audience; and

- evenly distribute the content flow across the entire week.

  1. As a class, divide into three- or four-member social media production teams and set up your content calendars.

2. Once your team has completed its calendar, present it to the class.

3. The class will then discuss different approaches presented by each team.

4. What is the optimal distribution of social media content by channel to reach Classic Glass Photography's audience?

TESTING, EVALUATING, AND ADJUSTING YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA CAMPAIGN PLAN

The final step of the social media campaign plan tests whether the elements of your plan effectively attracted the target audience. It establishes a trial period and examines social media metrics such as comments, likes, and reposts to evaluate how well you are reaching your intended audience and how positively your audience reacts to the content you post and repost. Once you analyze audience reaction, you can modify your plan to better attract them. You can access a complete example of the simulated Classic Glass Photography Social Media Campaign Plan on the textbook website.

Social Media Copywriting

Social media copywriting shares many similarities with electronic media writing, found in Chapter 6, and web copywriting, discussed in Chapter 10. Space for copy is minimal and audience attention span is short, which means you must economize word use. Use a conversational tone and active voice and limit the use of extraneous adjectives and adverbs. Most of these style conventions are addressed in Chapter 3. However, social media writing differs from other forms of media writing in one major way: since you address your audience members individually, your work is viewed as having its own personality. Social media writers must be aware of the personal style they convey in their copy and use it to strategic advantage in attracting their target audiences.

STYLE STRATEGY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA

We begin our discussion of social media writing with style strategies common to all types of social media, whether community channels such as Facebook or Google+, microblogs such as Twitter, or blog sites such as WordPress. Social media audiences expect to read messages that directly address them in a friendly, inviting way. At the same time, social media professionals recognize that some brands need to sound warm and friendly, for instance, while others might sound bold and edgy, or understated and sincere.
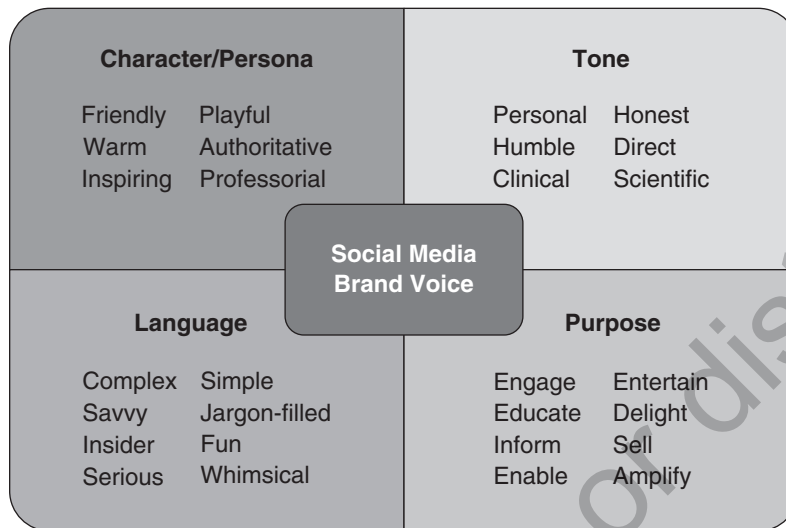
In 2010, Matthew Latkiewicz of mashable.com introduced the idea that companies needed to use writing style characteristics to create a social media *persona* (an identity or character) for their brand.[5] Once that persona is created, writers should use it for all copy to build consistency across social media channels. Companies began to specify the particular writing style characteristics they wanted their writers to emphasize to be true to the persona they selected. These sets of instructions became codified into various social media style guides that companies would create for the brands they represented on social media channels. Today, the style guide is one of the first things you will encounter when you become a social media specialist for an established brand. If you are working for a company that does not have a social media style guide, you will need to create one. We show you how to do that later in this chapter.

PERSONALITY IN SOCIAL MEDIA COPY

What personality factors should you consider for your social media copy persona? Social media expert Peg Fitzpatrick suggests you use your audience analysis to construct a composite "ideal customer" in order to visualize the type of person your client wants to cultivate in the social media audience.[6] As you begin to think about this person in your audience, you can also think about how he or she would like to engage with your copy. You can ask, "With what type of personality would this ideal customer like to engage on my social media channels?" and "What personal characteristics would this ideal customer expect in my copy?"

When you are clear about the persona you believe the audience will enjoy engaging with, you can begin to list the writing style elements that fit the persona. This becomes your social media voice to your audience. Social media expert Stephanie Schwab says that four copywriting elements represent your social media brand voice: character/persona, tone, language, and purpose (Figure 9.4).[7] Our job is to

FIGURE 9.4   Social Media Brand Voice Components

Character/Persona		Tone	
Friendly	Playful	Personal	Honest
Warm	Authoritative	Humble	Direct
Inspiring	Professorial	Clinical	Scientific

Social Media Brand Voice

Language		Purpose	
Complex	Simple	Engage	Entertain
Savvy	Jargon-filled	Educate	Delight
Insider	Fun	Inform	Sell
Serious	Whimsical	Enable	Amplify

SOURCE: Stephanie Schwab, 2011.

take characteristics from these four elements to construct the **social media voice** that our audience would most appreciate.

To illustrate how this might work, let's develop a social media voice for Classic Glass Photography. We can envision two different types of people who could be customers for this landscape photography business. First, private sector and governmental customers purchase photos and related services. Second, customers buy photos from Classic Glass Photography's website. Let's focus on the first type of customer for this illustration. What type of person pays attention to our social media and hires our client to take pictures of landscapes? Imagine a male government employee who is about forty-five years old, is well educated, concerned about environmental issues, enjoys hiking and canoeing, and earns a moderate salary. How would such a person like to be addressed on social media? We believe it would be a *friendly* character/persona that uses a *personal* tone, with language that is *savvy* but *simple*, with a purpose to *engage* and *inform*.

Once we have chosen characteristics for our social media voice, it's time to adopt writing style elements that represent each of these characteristics. Let's pick up our Classic Glass Photography illustration again and define the writing style

characteristics that go with *friendly*, *personal*, *savvy*, *simple*, *engage*, and *inform*. How do you express *friendliness* when you write? You might try,

"Hey there!"

"Hello!"

"How's it going?"

You can also indicate that you care about what the audience thinks in your messages:

"Hope you like this."

"What do you think of this?"

"Enjoy this."

A personal style seeks a direct connection with audience members. You can accomplish this by using the second-person voice to connect to audience members. You might write,

"You are always welcome here!"

"I know you'll find this interesting."

"I hope you return soon."

You can also adopt a personal style by using informal words and phrases in your copy:

"Wow, that's great!"

"All right! I see it clearly now."

"I hope you're good with that."

Savvy language demonstrates knowledge of an area of expertise; in our example, that means knowledge of photography. To demonstrate that you are photo-savvy, communicate in the way that photographers do to other photographers:

"Open the lens one stop."

"Set the shutter speed slower so you can get greater depth of field by closing the lens."

"Use a faster film to account for low light."

Simple language is short and direct. Use no flowery words here; stick to the everyday language people speak. To *engage* the audience means to speak directly to them in a straightforward manner:

> "Hey, have you seen the new Nikon camera yet?"

> "Going to the forest? Take your boots . . . it's wet!"

Finally, to *inform* our audience means to provide facts and critical opinion in our posts. For example,

> "The new Canon EOS 5DS has a 50.6 megapixel full-frame CMOS sensor, one of the best cameras you can buy. Priced at over $3,200, it is also probably out of our league!"

As you can see from the above illustrations, it is not hard to choose writing elements that represent characteristics we choose for our social media voice. Once we have selected those characteristics, we can bring them together in a **social media style guide**. Such a guide provides a handy collection of the writing characteristics we desire and standardizes the social media voice for anyone on the team who will write copy for our client. You can construct a style guide organized by the four copywriting elements of the social media voice with bulleted instructions and examples. Here is an illustration of a social media style guide for our simulated business, Classic Glass Photography:

Social Media Style Guide: Classic Glass Photography

Persona: Friendly

- Write with greetings:

  o Use words such as *hi*, *hello*, or *hey there*.
  o Don't use questions such as "What's up?" "What's happening?" or "How are you?"

- Show that you care:

  o Ask what they think: "Hope you . . ." or "How do you feel about . . ."
  o Don't get too informal. Examples to avoid are "Did you dig on that?" or "Does this ring your bell?"

Tone: Personal

- Use the second person *you* in your copy.
- Use informal, everyday language.
- Don't use expletives, curses, or cleaned-up swear words like *frickin thing* or *crap*.

Language: Savvy, Simple

- Use the language of photography carefully and accurately.
- Do not use non-photography jargon.
- Keep your word choice simple; use everyday words.
- Keep sentences short.

Purpose: Engage, Inform

- Write sentences or questions directly to the audience, such as "Did you see the beautiful snowfall in the forest this morning?"
- Ask audience members rhetorical questions like "How many times has this happened to you?"
- Report new information directly: "We saw a giant bald eagle in Cuyahoga National Park yesterday."
- Report relevant nature and photography facts in copy: "Many new wildflowers on the river banks this spring!"
- Use keywords in updates and feature copy. For example:
  - *vintage, classic, panorama, horizon, harmonious, peaceful, escape, solitude, pleasing, sunny, woods, streams, babbling brook, soar, captivate, impress*.

Craft Essential: Write a Social Media Style Guide for Your Campus Newspaper

Team up with one or two classmates to write a brief social media style guide for all social media content that would be developed for your campus newspaper. Include Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and other relevant channels.

1. Use the sample style guide on page 315 as a model for your style guide.

2. Discuss the nature of the audience for your newspaper and consider the social media voice you believe you should use for your campus newspaper.

3. Follow the process for selecting appropriate language for your social media personality as shown on pages 313–315.

4. Draft a brief style guide according to your instructor's guidance.

5. Reconvene as a class to present and compare your social media style guides.

6. As a class, discuss the creative strengths and limitations of each style guide. After hearing your classmates' feedback, what might you do differently next time?

Key Style Elements for Social Media Copy

Whether you are posting Twitter updates, comments with Instagram pictures, or Facebook articles, write your copy according to four simple rules:

1. Be brief and concise.

2. Use a conversational tone.

3. Use the active voice.

4. Use action verbs; limit adjectives and adverbs.

BREVITY

Brevity is a virtue in all social media copy. As we discussed in chapter 3, being brief means that your sentences are short and you choose the right words to express what you mean.

When you express a thought such as "Cassie caught the ball" in a simple sentence, do you notice how easily you can visualize it in your mind? That's precisely the goal for social media. By writing sentences simply, you encourage the audience to tune into your message because it is easy for them to visualize. The moment your sentences get crowded with too many facts and descriptions, the harder it is to visualize the meaning. For example, instead of using the above sentence, "Cassie caught the ball," consider this one:

> *Cassie Hardy, of 3457 West Fanning Avenue, put the Wilson A3000 ball glove on her left hand, then suddenly looked up, reached out, and closed the glove around the brand new Spalding baseball that had been hit by Terry Wincoop of 2345 East Main Street.*

While all this information might be interesting to baseball fans, it seems to take forever to find out what is happening in this sentence. Social media audiences will stop reading and move to the next item in front of them. Part of the problem for this sentence is that it just takes too long to visualize in your mind's eye.

To make brevity work in your social media writing, simply think what your audience wants to know. Give them just that and nothing more. Repeat this process step-by-step for each point you want to make. Ask yourself, "Does my audience really want to know all this?"

CONVERSATIONAL TONE

Let's dispel one notion right here: achieving a conversational tone does not mean writing as you would speak. Sentences written in a conversational tone borrow some characteristics from verbal speech, but they do not exactly mirror the spoken word.

Conversational tone works for social media copy when you adopt three "talk" characteristics and use them in your writing:

1. Use common words and avoid jargon.
2. Use contractions at times.
3. Address the reader directly.

Be especially careful to use proper grammar. Although many other people let grammar rules slide in their personal social media use, as a representative of an organization or brand, you need to always put proper grammar on display. For example, here is a paragraph in which the writer uses proper grammar and displays the three elements of a conversational tone:

> *"Don't worry—watch* Saturday Night Live *whenever you want! Just download our free app. It will find all your favorite comedy shows, old or new."*

Now compare that last sentence to these two, which use jargon and too many modifiers. They also lack conversational tone:

> *"Consumers who wish to find classic and current comedy programs can install an Android application that will employ the latest search algorithms with proven successful results. This application is open-source and it does not cost the user to obtain a software license."*

When writing copy, think of conversational tone as limiting your words to those your audience members would use in everyday conversations.

ACTIVE VOICE

As discussed in Chapter 3, you achieve the *active voice* when you use *sub-ject–verb–object* sentence order. You might be thinking, "What's wrong with the passive voice?" Plenty, as far as social media writing is concerned. First, the passive voice sounds boring. This occurs partly because the sentence is too wordy, and also because the subject is letting something happen to it instead of taking action itself. Second, the passive voice reverses the way people normally think about a situation. In an active sentence, we can easily visualize the agent (subject) taking action (verb) on the object. But passive sentences force us to think harder for a moment to figure out the subject and what is actually going on in the sentence. Therefore, they encourage readers to tune out and abandon your message in favor of others that are more straightforward.

ACTION VERBS

Adjectives modify the meaning of nouns. They offer more description, illustration, or definition to understand a noun. For example, let's look at a poorly chosen adjective: "The *aggressive* Cubs beat the Mets." Does *aggressive* tell us anything specific about how the Cubs won the game? Adverbs do the same job for verbs that adjectives do for nouns. "The Cubs *aggressively* beat the Mets." *Aggressively* also fails to give us much information about the Cubs. Did they steal a lot of bases? Hit a lot of home runs?

Adjectives and adverbs don't work well for social media copy. First, they add words when we are trying hard to write copy as brief as possible. Second, they take time to visualize, again making it slightly harder for the audience to

understand the sentence. Instead of using an adjective or adverb as a modifier, why not use a verb that better describes the action in the sentence? Sports verbs are often quite picturesque, and we could choose many to help the audience quickly visualize what happened in the game:

The Cubs *clobbered* the Mets.

The Cubs *terrorized* the Mets.

The Cubs *destroyed* the Mets.

Beat, *defeated*, and *lost* are verbs that can be applied generically. They seem to need modifiers to make them specific. But action verbs such as *clobbered*, *terrorized*, or *destroyed* need no modifiers. They almost tell the story themselves.

Social Media Copywriting: Length Matters

Length matters. In fact, social media copywriters distinguish between types of copy using length as a measure. The short updates that are common to Twitter, Facebook, Google+, and Instagram are called **short-form social media copy**. This copy fits within the 140-character limit imposed by Twitter for tweets. **Long-form social media copy** occupies the other end of the length scale, usually running 700 to 2,000 words. You will find long-form copy on blog pages (see Chapter 10) and in company articles often published on organizational websites. Long-form social media writing is gaining popularity with social media specialists, as recent social media statistics show that long-form content gains the most reposts and shares from users.[8] Current social media strategies employ web links in Twitter and Facebook updates to attract followers to long-form content on websites. These strategies can move followers to article-length blogs and promotional pieces that sell products and services.

Middle-form social media copy occupies a niche between the two extremes of short-form and long-form copy. Posted on community channels such as Facebook and Google+, middle-form copy runs 100 to 250 words long. It uses largely the same organizational pattern as short-form content, but it packs a bit more detail into the copy. Middle-form copy is becoming more popular because it can be easily read on portable devices and fits well with picture and video media. Like short-form content, middle-form content often packs links that move readers to long-form content for more details.

Recent studies show middle-form content is shared more than short-form content, almost as much as long-form content.[9] We concentrate on short-form and middle-form content in this chapter.

SHORT-FORM SOCIAL MEDIA COPYWRITING

Microblogs, with their limit of 140 characters, have created a new means of online expression. Here you must write succinctly. It is a challenge to pack all you want to say in a single tweet or Facebook update. Users respond to this limit by compacting sentences to the smallest possible size and still convey the intended meaning. At times, sentences become so abbreviated that articles (*the, a, an*) and pronouns (*you, he, her*) are left out. Adjectives are a luxury, and when they are used, they are often used in lists that modify the previous sentence.

Twitter's 140-character limit wasn't the only way the microblog has influenced social media copywriting. The pound sign, called a **hashtag** when used in Twitter copy, transforms a word into a topic. Click on a word with a hashtag, such as *#national-parks*, and it opens search results showing tweets and other social media that contain that hashtag word. This makes it easy to offer your tweet for reposts. Thus, when you write "#national-parks" in your tweet and other people also search for it, your tweet will show up in the results. Hashtags help make your posts come up in searches of "trending" topics when you use popular hashtags in your tweets. But use them sparingly. Between one and three per post is most effective. Apply hashtags to topics, places, and things in your posts, but never hashtag the name of your brand. People usually won't click your brand name to search it, and even if they do, someone may say something disparaging about your brand, and you certainly don't want that to pop up in a web search.

FIGURE 9.5 Twitter Post With a Picture

Scott Kuehn @ClassicGlassPho · 30m
Sunny winter day... Cook Forest... A Rolleicord Vb loaded with Kodak TMax 100. Pax hibernis...

3:50 PM - 19 Oct 2015 · Details

FIGURE 9.6   Twitter Post With a Picture

Scott Kuehn @ClassicGlassPho · 7m
Wish you were here? Cook Forest always pleases! Come and see...

4:05 PM - 19 Oct 2015 · Details

Often, pictures accompany microblog copy. Indeed, Guy Kawasaki and Peg Fitzpatrick write that you should always include pictures and links with your short-form copy.[10] Updates with pictures can be short, with comments directed at the visual (see Figures 9.5 and 9.6). These updates can be simultaneously posted on social networks such as Facebook and Google+, and this type of writing works the same way for short-form social network updates.
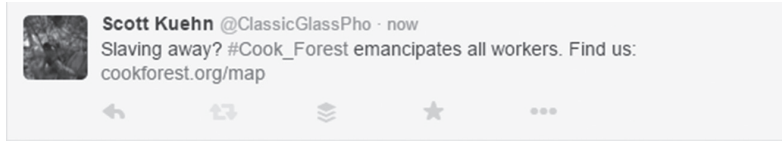
While you strive to be brief, always follow the rules of grammar. Use correct punctuation and remain vigilant with your spelling. Make your updates lively but keep the copy in good taste.
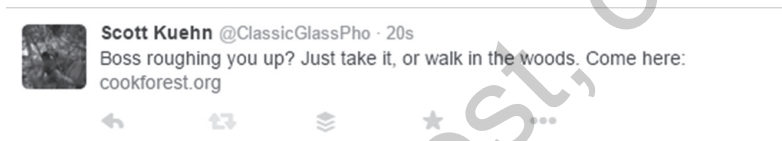
PROBLEM–SOLUTION FORMULAS

A problem–solution structure starts with a problem, and then offers readers a way to solve it. This structure works well for short-form tweets and Facebook

SECTION III • DIGITAL SETTINGS

and Google+ updates. Here are six of the most popular problem–solution copywriting formulas with examples:

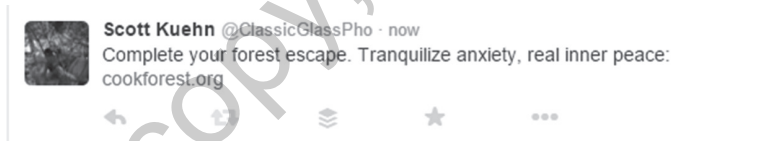**Before–After–Bridge:** Here you illustrate a problem, describe life without the problem, then give the reader a way to "go there."

Scott Kuehn @ClassicGlassPho · now
Slaving away? #Cook_Forest emancipates all workers. Find us: cookforest.org/map
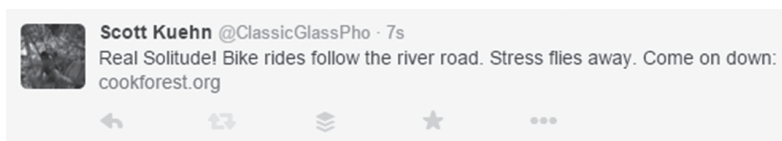
Problem–Agitate–Solve: One of the most popular formulas, and very much like before–after; but instead of describing life without the problem, you describe life if the problem persists, then present a solution:
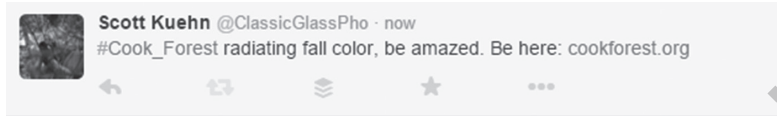

Scott Kuehn @ClassicGlassPho · 20s
Boss roughing you up? Just take it, or walk in the woods. Come here: cookforest.org

Features–Advantages–Benefits: A well-known strategy for selling, "FAB" works well for short-form social media writing:

Scott Kuehn @ClassicGlassPho · now
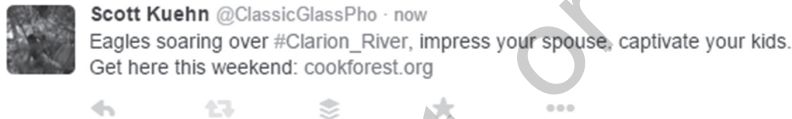Complete your forest escape. Tranquilize anxiety, real inner peace: cookforest.org

Attention–Interest–Desire–Action: A classic sales formula used for many years in advertising copy. Get audience attention, show them fresh, interesting information, demonstrate the benefits of your "solution," and ask for a response:

Scott Kuehn @ClassicGlassPho · 7s
Real Solitude! Bike rides follow the river road. Stress flies away. Come on down: cookforest.org

Star–Story–Solution: The "star" can be anything: your brand, your audience, a location. The story is a positive visualization for the audience; the solution is the positive outcome of the story.

> **Scott Kuehn** @ClassicGlassPho · now
> #Cook_Forest radiating fall color, be amazed. Be here: cookforest.org

Star–Chain–Hook: Your brand, product, or service, then a chain of facts, reasons, benefits, finished with action.

> **Scott Kuehn** @ClassicGlassPho · now
> Eagles soaring over #Clarion_River, impress your spouse, captivate your kids. Get here this weekend: cookforest.org

■ ■ ■ PRO STRATEGY CONNECTION

Write a Series of Tweets About a School Sports Event

Jason Carlton, social media manager for Intermountain Medical Center in Murray, Utah (see Frontline Media Writing Profile at the beginning of this chapter), writes short-form, middle-form, and long-form social media copy to accompany his press releases. Carlton often begins with a long-form article, which may appear as blog copy and in press releases. He then supports the long-form copy with short-form tweets. "We might develop ten or more tweets from that one main piece," he says.

Like Carlton, reporters spend much of their time sending tweets to accompany their articles. For this exercise, pick up the most recent copy of your campus newspaper and select a story from the sports section.

1. Team up with another classmate. Examine the facts about the sports event presented in the story.

2. Review the four social media style elements (brevity, conversational tone, active voice, action verbs, and limited adjectives and adverbs) from this chapter to make sure that your tweets conform to social media style conventions.

3. Working with your partner, write a series of tweets reporting each important fact about the sports event. Limit your tweets to a single fact each.

4. Submit your work to your instructor.

MIDDLE-FORM SOCIAL MEDIA WRITING

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, short-form copy and middle-form copy prevail on social networks. Often, writers post updates simultaneously on microblogs and social networks. Therefore, the style applications we covered for Twitter updates are relevant for this material if it is posted on Facebook and Google+.

Middle-form copy runs slightly longer than short-form copy. Here, writers create paragraph-length articles to provide more information than a simple update. Longer copy is appropriate for promotional feature content, which often describes products and services offered by a company. The writer also creates links to company websites and blogs, where people can find more information if they are considering a purchase. Facebook and Google+ features are usually designed with pictures, video, or graphic content. Writers produce this media in a smaller format to maximize their effectiveness when displayed on portable devices.

Note that the same copywriting formulas we saw with short-form content work perfectly well with middle-form content. However, when you are using middle-form copy, write a newspaper style summary lead (see Chapter 5) for your first sentence. Readers scan Facebook copy quickly, so you want to make sure the most important elements run up top. This is called *frontloading* the copy (Figure 9.7).

FIGURE 9.7 Middle-Form Facebook Article

Scott's Classic Glass Landscape Photography added 2 new photos.

6 mins · Edited ·

Destroy drudgery with a short trip 50 miles north of Pittsburgh. Beautiful Fall foliage waits for you now in Cook Forest. Experience the flaming reds of maples, brilliant golds from oaks, hickories shine bright yellows, and sycamores dazzle in orange. Can't think of anything better on a fall weekend!

Travel safe and easy to this little 600-acre heaven on the Clarion river. Grab route 28 north out of Pittsburgh, stay on it around Brookville. Continue north into the woods... hey this is a straight shot!

Nice weather this weekend... take a canoe ride, and maybe you'll see one of the bald eagles. Come, check it out: cookforest.org

Summary

1. **Describe the work done by social media coordinators and social media specialists.** Social media coordinators and specialists work in teams to develop plans for social media campaigns, and they present their plans for approval. Once campaign plans are approved, social media coordinators and specialists write and produce their client's social media content that they place on social media channels.

2. **List the elements of a social media campaign.** (1) Create social media objectives, (2) conduct a social media audit, (3) conduct an audience analysis, (4) analyze the social media messages of the client's industry leaders and competitors, (5) create a content plan and an editorial calendar, and (6) test, evaluate, and adjust the social media campaign.

3. **Discuss key style elements for social media copy.** Brevity means that social media copy is characterized by short, simple sentences. Conversational tone means that writers use words that the audience typically uses. Active voice refers to using the subject-verb-object sentence structure. Social media copy stresses action verbs and limits the use of adjectives and adverbs.

4. **Explain the difference between short-form, middle-form, and long-form social media copy.** Short-form social media copy consists of updates that do not exceed 140 characters, typically used with channels such as Facebook or Twitter. Middle-form copy can vary in length from 100 to 250 words and is typically posted on social network channels such as Facebook and Google+. Long-form copy typically runs 700 to 2,000 words and is used primarily for blog entries and websites.

Key Terms

social media 291

social media channels 291

social media campaign 292

social media campaign plan 292

social media objectives 293

metrics 294

Discussion Questions

1. Which of the social media channels do you find to be the most interactive? Which are the least interactive? Offer reasons to support your points of view.

2. Which social media channel or channels have you stopped using over the last couple of years? Explain why you no longer find them to be useful.

3. Why do social media professionals invest so much effort in planning social media campaigns? Why is it ineffective to simply write copy for clients without any planning?

4. What would be the optimal mix of social media channels to bring attention to your campus newspaper and the stories it publishes each week? Explain your reasoning.

5. What is your favorite type of social media *personality*? How do you recognize it when you read tweets and Facebook updates? What language usage makes this social media personality work effectively for you?

6. Which of the four key style elements for social media copy are the most important to social media, in your opinion? Explain why you believe this to be so. Which is the least important? Why?

7. Why is short-form copy most prevalent on social media channels? What are the possible disadvantages of using long-form copy?

8. Which of the short-form problem–solution formulas strikes you as the most effective for writing tweets? Why?

SECTION III • DIGITAL SETTINGS

Chapter Exercises

1. Pick your favorite social media channel and conduct some research on it. Write a 250-word essay summarizing how the channel got started and how popular it is with audiences today. Be sure to include the following information: startup date, originator or first CEO, current owner, and how many users it serves today.

2. Draft a 200-word audience analysis of the social media audience for one of your favorite brands. Be sure to include all the demographics, psychographics, and lifestyle segments that are relevant for the audience you have chosen.

3. Pick a campus group to which you currently belong. Prepare a brief content plan containing three original updates and three original features for social media channels that are used by your group.

4. Prepare a content calendar for the social media content you specified in Exercise 3 above.

5. Review the six different types of short-form problem–solution copywriting formulas found on pages 323–324. Imagine that you are writing to recruit members for a community volunteer group or church to which you belong. Write six tweets following each of the six formulas that might convince potential members to attend an informational meeting for the group.

Additional Resources

Social Media Association: http://socialmediaassoc.com/join-sma/