Social Media 101

Why is Social Media so Important?
Everyone uses social media these days, from individuals to businesses. In many areas, social media is how people hear about new products, news, and events.

Best Practices:
- **You need to post on social media 5-10 times per week** in order for your posts to show up in people’s feeds. (Otherwise, the algorithms just won’t have your posts show up).
- **Identify what social media channels you will use**
  - The big three: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter
- **Develop your over-arching theme and strategy**
- **Think about how your theme and strategy fits into each channel**
  - Customize content for each platform
- **Develop your posting schedule**
  - 4-7 times per week is a good standard
  - Post at prime times of day. Use Facebook and Instagram insights to identify times
- **Structure winning posts; engagement**
  - Take the time to write meaningful captions. Consider trying a call-to-action like;
    - What do you think? Who likes organic strawberries better?
  - Get your audience engaged.
  - Use top-notch photos and videos
  - @tag other brands and people if they feature in your posts
  - Tag your location in posts.
- **TELL YOUR STORY. Avoid being “salesy” and be authentic.**

Overview of the Three Major Social Media Platforms

**Facebook:**
- 2 billion monthly users
- Vermont has a very high user rate
- A great place for posting longer videos
- If you choose to do a Facebook Live video, make sure you announce that you’re going “live” before hand in a series of posts leading up to the event.
- Use Facebook Events to promote events and ticket sales
- Has robust paid advertising with Ad Manager and Facebook Ads; consider consulting an expert before spending money.
- Utilize Facebook groups for outreach and networking

**Instagram:**
- 800 million monthly users
- Post to Instagram Story, ideally a couple times per day
- Follow industry-specific hashtags to build following and engage with potential customers
- Think about how your Instagram profile looks as a whole. The first thing people see when they go to your account is 9 photo blocks and your company’s name. Think about how all your posts work together to create one cohesive “look” to draw customers in.

**Twitter:**
- 330 million users
- Supports news and real-time quick updates
- Use polls to engage your following
- Use hashtags to reach more people
- Retweet things that you think your audience will like
The Marketing Landscape
Your social media presence is important, and so is your marketing approach overall. Be thinking about all of your marketing channels including:

Website
Keep content up-to-date: copy and images for events, services, hours, especially the blog.
Include social icons, to click through.
Have a dialog box for enews sign-up if relevant
Create Google My Business profile if open to the public
Consider live social feeds

Social Media
Set up editorial calendar, with some flexibility built in, to stay on track
Integrate posts with other digital platforms, e.g. website and enews
Only reference and maintain channels on which you are active
Stay consistent with brand and messaging
Consider hashtags, grammar, etc.

Email Marketing
Use branded template for distribution and email lists such as Mailchimp (free!)
Keep copy short
Send regularly
Link articles back to website
Share re-purposed content on social media

Networking, Partnerships
People with similar goals, in different places
Consider non-profits and trade organizations for networking, education, advocacy and marketing (e.g. CAE, Vermont Farm to Plate, Fresh Network)
Integrate partnership projects into the marketing for your business

Events, In-Person Consumer Outreach
Choose events where your audience is likely to appear
Create a Facebook event listing and share to your page
Free samples, interactive booth etc. – always a draw
Create a postcard, rack card, brochure, flyer, pamphlet to accompany your outreach for your product/experience
Place website and social icons on printed collateral

Advertising and Paid Promotion
Notice where your competitors appear
Consider social media advertising as most affordable
Prepare your assets to receive customers prior to advertising
Create tracking mechanisms within advertising – coupons, etc.

Earned Media
Free PR for events, new line of product, new staff, etc.
Develop a local and statewide press list (don’t discount community newspapers, bloggers)
Communicate with reporters who have your beat, and media who publishes in your area, if possible
Twitter is a good platform to tag and talk to media
Send post-event press release, blurb, and/or photos with caption
Don’t over-contact – timing
Make your own news!