



# How Social Media Can Help Your Spa

By Rachel L. Johnson and Ada S. Polla

**D**uring the last two years, social media has exploded and brands and companies have embraced it, whether actively or reluctantly, in addition to—and not instead of—traditional media. What started with *MySpace* now includes *Facebook*, *LinkedIn*, *Twitter*, *YouTube*, *Foursquare* and more. Social media is not a trend; it is here to stay. Every type of brand is jumping on board from beverage companies such as Coca Cola to fashion stylists such as Rachel Zoe to wellness industry leaders such as *Skin Inc.* magazine and the International SPA Association. Whether your business is a large spa or a start-up, social media will prove to be a valuable marketing tool.

The key difference between social media and traditional media is that social media is a two-way

conversation. You cannot control the message with social media—your *Facebook* fans can post anything they want on your brand wall.

### Facebook fan page

Begin by creating your account and personal profile page. When creating your profile, make sure to include your business website URL, contact information and company description. A perfect area for entering your business information is the box titled "Write something about yourself."

Once you have developed your personal profile page, you can now develop your fan page. The fan page acts in the same way as the personal page, but represents a business rather than an individual. The *Facebook* fan page allows the user to invite friends

to join your fan page. In a sense, this page is similar to an online fan club through which members will receive updates on new retail offerings, services, events, sales and more.

Your first priority should be to build your fan base. Begin by posting your status updates that will spark interest and generate fans. Make sure to post effective and interesting statuses that are action-oriented. For example: "New service launched today! Visit our website for more information about how to receive \$5 when you book!" A site that offers great examples of how to best promote a business is City Shop Girl ([www.facebook.com/cityshopgirl](http://www.facebook.com/cityshopgirl)). City Shop Girl posts local events, contests, promotions and gift guides that are interesting and valuable to *Facebook* readers.

Ideally you want your fan base to consist of clients, consumers, industry experts, colleagues and loyal friends of the brand. You want people who will help promote your company and eventually spread the word to their *Facebook* friends.

## Twitter

The best way to understand *Twitter* is to just do it! Create an account and begin investigating how others are effectively promoting their brands. Remember, the number of followers does not necessarily mean a brand is employing a successful *Twitter* strategy.

You may have 2,000 followers, but only two people who actually view your tweets. The idea is to attain loyal and active followers, and not to just add each person that follows you. Two helpful applications called *Tweetdeck* ([www.tweetdeck.com](http://www.tweetdeck.com)) and *Hootsuite* ([www.hootsuite.com](http://www.hootsuite.com)) enable you to track followers, mentions and direct messages on one display panel.

The next step is to develop communication with your followers. Your tweets should have meaningful content. Be cognizant of ways to grab and entice your reader's attention. A great way to gain their attention is to post an image via *Twitpic*, follow up with a caption and include a relevant company or friend who is also on *Twitter*. For example, you could upload an image of a special event in your spa that involves a marketing partner, such as the fitness center down the road.

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The trending topics symbol is # next to the topic you would like to start a buzz about, and it could appear on the *Twitter* home page as a trending topic. Another way to build

communication as you are getting started is to "retweet" the tweets of some of your followers that you find particularly interesting and relevant. That will also build goodwill with the person whose content you are retweeting, and encourage them to do the same with your tweets.

One of the many fun *Twitter* traditions is the "#FF," which means "Follow Friday." Every Friday, choose friends, clients and helpful industry contacts to highlight to your followers. For example, you can do a Follow Friday to some of your favorite clients who are on *Twitter*. Your tweet could read: "#FF some of my favorite @YOURSIPA clients:" and then list their links. In general, *Twitter* communication is lighter, more frequent, and more personal than *Facebook* communication. A brand should tweet at least 8–10 times per day, including retweets.

## So what?

Although it is challenging to tie direct sales increases to social media, you can track the results of your social media outreach. Several websites, such as *Google Analytics* ([www.google.com/analytics](http://www.google.com/analytics)), provide graphs, charts, percentages and patterns for all your social media platforms, including the number of hits to your corporate website generated due to your *Facebook*

## RETAIL TIP

A great way to advertise any new retail lines your spa is carrying, or any sales or discounts you are promoting on your existing lines, is to mention your specials on your social media accounts. Whether you are on *Twitter* or *Facebook* or both, by making your fans and followers aware of your retail offerings in a friendly and informative way, you will see a boost in retail sales for your spa.

You can track the results of your social media outreach.

page. *Facebook* also sends out a weekly e-mail with your fan page statistics, called "Your Weekly *Facebook* Page Update," which details your likes, wall posts, comments and page views.

## Next steps

Embrace social media and keep in mind the following:

- Exploring is essential;
- Assemble a fan and follower base; and
- Initiate meaningful content and conversations.

Remember to put your *Facebook* URL (Example: [www.facebook.com/SkinInc](http://www.facebook.com/SkinInc)), and *Twitter* address (Example: [www.twitter.com/SkinIncMag](http://www.twitter.com/SkinIncMag)) on your website, your business card and your e-mail signature. And when you've mastered *Facebook* and *Twitter*, explore *YouTube*, *Foursquare* and all of the new social media outlets as they launch. Social media won't replace your other marketing efforts, but will support them and help your brand build priceless loyalty in the process. ✂



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In 2010, she transitioned her role into a consulting position handling regional press relations, celebrity and local outreach along with developing and maintaining the social media platform. Johnson holds a bachelor's degree in English from the University of Delaware and brings experience in public relations from *DC DailyCandy*, Dan Klores Communications and The Artists and Athletes Alliance Organization.



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