



Presents:

The book cover has a blue and white sunburst background. A hand is shown giving a thumbs-up. The title 'How To Use SOCIAL MEDIA to Engage Your Audience' is centered. Social media terms like 'SHARE', 'TWEET', 'FOLLOW', and 'PEOPLE' are written in blue on diagonal bands. A circular badge at the bottom left contains the 'Become A Blogger 2.0' logo and the text 'CHANGING THE WORLD...' and 'ONE BLOG AT A TIME'. At the bottom right, it says 'Learning with Leslie Podcast Episode 125 www.becomeablogger.com'.

By: Leslie Samuel



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Introductions

[Intro by Guy Kawasaki, Gideon Shalwick, and Farnoosh Brock]

Hello, hello, hello and welcome to another episode of Learning with Leslie, the podcast where you learn, I learn, we all learn about how to build an online business with a blog. No, I'm not talking about one of those blogs that will fall by the wayside when Google puts you in a headlock. I'm talking about one that will thrive no matter what gets thrown at it.

I'm your host, Leslie Samuel from BecomeaBlogger.com where we're changing the world one blog at a time. As usual, another exciting episode for you today.

In today's episode, I'm going to be covering a hot topic. I'm going to be talking about *How to use Social Media to Engage Your Audience*. Social Media is no longer the wave of the future. It's what's happening today and if you aren't using it, you're most likely missing out on a significant amount of potential exposure. Chances are, your target is on Social Media and you want to make sure that you are fishing where the fish are, duh!

Well, today's episode, it's a first in a few episodes that I will do on the topic because I want to master Social Media and make sure that I'm doing it as efficiently as possibly and while I'm learning, I'm going to be sharing that with you.

That's what I'm going to be talking about today.

All right. I just came back from a trip to New York. I went with my family, my wife and my little boy, Noah and we went up to Upstate New York. We were in a number of different towns. It was just a blast. Noah traveled. He flew on a plane and he was a joy. No bunch of crying. No bunch of noise. He was actually kind of like entertainment for the people that were around us. So, it was actually quite funny. He stayed on an airplane for five hours and didn't complain. That to me is pretty awesome. So, we're going to be traveling the world from now on. It's just kind of great.

Anyway, I'm not going to do a bunch of preliminaries in this episode. I'm just going to go straight to the content. No listener questions, no announcements or anything of that sort. So, we're going to dive right in to it.

If you do have a question that you would like me to deal with on the podcast, you know what to do and if you don't know what to do, here's what you do. You call the hotline and that number is 888-835-2414.

You can call there, leave your comments, your questions, your suggestions. I will deal with it on the show.

So, let's get into this content for today dealing specifically with Social Media.

It's great to have a blog that gets a ton of traffic from Google, from the Search Engine. Someone goes to Google, they do a search for whatever your topic is and you are ranking very high and you are getting a lot of traffic from that.

Right now, Google is my number one source of traffic for my Biology blog and I love that. I love having people searching and finding. That's great. However, that's something that can take a while to build up, to build up the authority of your blog, to build up your blog to where Google thinks that, okay this is one that's going to be around for a while. It offers high value content and we need to serve this up high in the search results.

When you create something awesome that people start to engage with then starts indexing and all of that stuff then, over time, you build up your authority. It's a good stuff. It's good stuff, it's a good system, I think.

However, because that can take a significant amount of time to build up, using social media can really help to give you that extra boost. If you can create something awesome that people want to share because it's engaging, it's informative, it's unique and all that kind of stuff, social media can give it almost instant success. Now, I'm not someone that likes to talk about instant success because I don't full believe in instant success.

But, it can really help to give that boost. I'll give you one perfect example.

There's a girl by the name of Karen Chang. I don't know if you've ever heard of her but, she made a YouTube video showing how she learned to dance in one year. It's a time lapse video so, she's showing you from on day one, the way she was dancing and then, she practiced every single day, 365 days, one entire year and she made videos all along that process and then, created a short time lapse video showing that. It's pretty amazing to see the progression.

When I saw it, I thought to myself, "Oh, this is cool. I want to share this." And, I shared it and a lot of people shared it. The first day that she posted the video, she got 80,000 views. The second day, she was at 800,000 views and by the third day, she was at 1.8 million views.

She created something awesome. People really engaged with it. They wanted to share it and that gave her almost that instant exposure. When I say, "instant" it's not really instant because she did work for one entire year.

But, once she was ready to start and launch her online presence, that part happened almost instantly because of the work that she had done and also because Social Media was there to help to get it out there. Sharing is what makes Social Media so powerful.

Most people though, they get social media wrong. They hear that social media is great for getting the word out there. They hear that it can help them to promote their business. They see that maybe their competitors are on Social Media so, they think, "Okay, I need to get on this Social Media stuff," so, they jump on and they just start promoting their stuff. That is an absolute fail.

If this is what you're doing, if you're listening to this podcast right now, this podcast episode and you know that you are doing this, please, please stop, stop it right now, like if you are about to send out that tweet, you're about to post something on Facebook right now, just stop. Listen to this episode from beginning to end and then, re-evaluate the strategy that you are using and then, use something that's more effective.

What is Social Media?

So, first I want to talk about what Social Media is. Now, anytime I want to talk about what something is, for some reason, I just go to Wikipedia. So, I went to Wikipedia, I did a Google—Not a Google search, a search for Social Media. This is what it says, "Social Media refers to the means of interactions among people in which they create, share and exchange information and ideas in virtual communities and networks."



That's the definition according to Wikipedia. Now, people are going on Social Media sites to connect with friends, to connect with family, to meet new friends, to meet new people, to interact with brands even that they are interested in.

However, I want you to fully understand what Social Media does not involve as much. People do not go to Social Media because they care about your business. I want you to understand that. People don't care about your business when they are going to Social Media. That is not why they are there.

They are there to connect. They are there to engage. They are there to share.

Now, imagine this, you're out with some friends, you're hanging out, having a nice conversation, let's say, you're out at Cheesecake Factory. We went there yesterday and oh man, the food was awesome. I had the avocado egg rolls, the fried macaroni and cheese, the sweet corn tamales, and then, I had the Evelyn pasta and all... Oh man, my mouth is watering right now just thinking about it.

And then, we got some cheesecakes to bring home because we're so stuffed and we're going to eat that today.

Anyhow, that's beside the point but, imagine you're out of the Cheesecake Factory like I was yesterday and someone comes up to you and tries to sell you a vacuum cleaner. How are you going to respond? Are you going to be excited? Are you going to be like, "Oh wow! This is a nice vacuum cleaner. I want to buy that."

Even if you're looking for a vacuum cleaner at the moment, do you really want someone to just come up and randomly do that to you? What's your response going to be?

Now, think about that and then, answer this question, "Why would you think it would be any different online?"

If people are online and they are on there to engage with friends, connect with people and then, you start to push on them this vacuum cleaner, is that going to be very effective? No, it's not. It's relatively similar to what's happening offline.

People want to connect. People want to engage and they don't want you just pushing advertisements down their face.

Okay, so the take-home message is, "If you are using Social Media to build your blog, to build your brand, to bring exposure to your cause, or whatever the case might be, you want to be in the position of the trusted expert friend."

Now, imagine this situation, you're out with a friend. Let's say, you're still out at Cheesecake Factory, why not? Since we're going to use there, since the food is that awesome, you know

that this friend knows a lot about vacuum cleaners. In fact, this friend maybe sells vacuum cleaners but, this friend is a friend.

Yours is broken at home. Do you ask them about vacuum cleaners? Of course, because you know that they are someone that is well-informed about that. If they sell vacuums that you know are awesome, are you going to buy it from them or are you going to buy it from someone else? You're most likely going to buy it from them because you have a connection with them. You trust them. You know that they know their stuff and that's exactly what you want to be, that trusted expert friend.

Not that person that comes into a random conversation. You don't know the people and you're just trying to stuff a vacuum down their throat. Oh, that sounds kind of painful.

Anyhow, now, I am a certified recording engineer. Maybe you didn't know that about me but, I went through a course and got certification for being a recording engineer and I actually have all the equipment necessary for a recording studio.

I used to have a recording studio at home. My wife and I used to do some recording and I used to record some friends and some students and all that stuff.

Now, a few years back, I called a company and the company was **Sweet Water**. It's at sweetwater.com to ask about some recording equipment that I wanted to purchase.

When I called in, I got a guy and his name is Ryan Murphy. We spoke for a little while about the equipment that I wanted to buy. He spoke to me. He started to ask me about what I was doing, why I needed the equipment and trying to get me as much help as possible.

When it was all said and done, get this, he told me that I could do what I wanted to do with what I already had and that I didn't need to purchase that piece of equipment.

I was absolutely blown away. I was so impressed with the conversation that the next time I needed to get something, you know where I went? I went to my phone, and I called, not Sweet Water, I called Ryan.

Since then, I felt connected to Sweet Water because I am connected to Ryan. You know what? If I were to buy something some recording equipment anywhere else, I feel personally as if I am cheating on Ryan. That sounds kind of weird. But, that's exactly how I feel. I always go to



SweetWater.com and I always call Ryan directly. When I can call him, he say, "Hey Leslie! How are you doing?"

I say, "I am doing pretty good. I'm looking at getting such and such and I want to get your opinion or I want to order this," or whatever the case might be. And, we have a nice little conversation and then, I purchase it. He sends it to me. It's seamless because of the relationship that I feel that we have.

Now, of course, that's an orchestrated relationship. He did it very strategically but, that really worked for me. That's how you want to be when it comes to Social Media.

So, I want to dive into some tips. That's just kind of some of the background information. I want you to understand what Social Media is about and how you can use it effectively. And now, I'm going to give you some tips to be able to use it effectively to engage your audience.

Tips on How to Engage Your Audience Using Social Media

#1: Choose your platform wisely.

Now, if you're like me, maybe you're starting your online business, you have a full time job, you have a family, you don't have ton of time to be on Social Media all day tweeting and sharing and liking and all that kind of stuff, so you want to choose the Social Network, the Social Media site that you're going to be working on, spending the most time on. You want to choose that wisely. And, you want to choose it depending on what niche you're in.



For example, if you're in a niche where you're going to be broadcasting a bunch of news, you want to be on Tweeter.

If you're a DIY blogger, or you're blogging about recipes or something else that lends very to pictures, of you're thinking pictures, you want to think something like Pinterest. If you're not sure where to start, I would go with something like Facebook because that's where everyone is right now or maybe Google+ because I honestly believe that Google+ is the future.

There are a lot happening that I really see potential when it comes to Google+. I know there's not as many people as Facebook but, I think they are heading in the right direction.

If you're all about video, you want to be using something like YouTube. YouTube is what I use exclusively in the beginning to build my Biology blog and it was extremely effective.

So, depending on what you're focusing on, what you're niche is, you want to choose the correct Social Media site or the one that's going to work for you.

Guy Kawasaki calls this the 5 Ps. Facebook is about **people**—people you know, people you want to connect with and all that stuff. Everyone is there.

Twitter is all about **perceptions** – what do you think about this? What do you think about that and sharing your thoughts and sharing content that inform your perceptions or your perceptions are informing.

Google+-- that's all about **passion**. That's where you go to meet people that are passionate about a specific topic. Pinterest is all about **pictures**. LinkedIn is all about "**pimping**," he says, yourself. So, if you want to get a new job and that kind of stuff, all that stuff is very good when it comes to LinkedIn.

So, those are the 5 Ps that Guy Kawasaki calls. So, depending on what you're focus is, you want to choose your Social Network accordingly.

Now, I don't believe, especially in the beginning, in the "be everywhere" type of a philosophy.

I know my good friend, Pat Flynn pushes that concept but, I also know that he does not mean "be everywhere" and just like spread yourself thin. In how he describes it, it's more of building up to where eventually, you're everywhere and you're using these multiple Social Media sites effectively and kind of growing from there and getting exposure in multiple different avenues.

So, when you're beginning, especially when you're beginning and you're trying to navigate this whole Social Media stuff, or like Michael Stelzner from Social Media Examiner puts it, navigating the Social Media jungle, you want to take it slow and build one at a time.

So, that's tip number one, choose your platform wisely.

#2: Register for an account in all the other Social Media sites

...because you never know when they're going to come in handy and you want to make sure to reserve your name.

When I started my Biology site, I focused on YouTube but, I also got a Facebook page. I got a Twitter account and I did that because I knew that eventually, I wanted to spread out. So first, I started with YouTube alone. Then, I went to Facebook and I started building that out.

I still haven't fully gone to Twitter but, when I do, I already have the name that's reserved and I can start to work on that.

In doing that, one of the things that you can do is you can possibly automate some of the ones that you aren't working on as strongly so that, they are still there, they are still present. There's a service that I just started testing out because I am so falling in love with Google+, it's called [Friends Plus Me](http://friendsplus.me), it's at friendsplus.me and what it does is you can post to Google+ and have it syndicated out to other sites, to Twitter to Facebook and it does it automatically and I think that works very well.

But, the key thing is, you register for other accounts and once you've mastered one, you can move on to the next and master that one. Once you've mastered those two and you have systems in place to make sure those are done effectively, then you can consider moving on to the next.

#3: Remember the 80-20 Rule for Content and Promotion

I want to call this the 80-20 rule for content and promotion. The key thing is, give more than you expect to receive. I'm talking about much more. Spend 80% of your time giving and only 20% of the time promoting your products, your services, your content but, promote it in a way that it fits in into this concept of sharing valuable information.

Think about these questions, what does your audience want? What do they want to learn? Is it that they want to learn Biology like my target audience from my Biology site? That's the first question you want to ask.

The second question is what works well on the platform of choice, in the social media platform that you're choosing? Is it all about conversation? Is it all about pictures or maybe pictures with text?

For example, on Facebook, you see a lot of these pictures that have text on them that might have a snappy quote or some interesting fact.

Now, what I do for me personally, is I use that combination—the pictures with interesting Biology fact, or interesting Biology questions and I share that on Facebook or I have my VA share that on Facebook and the people engage very much with that.



So, I'm offering mostly value, offering things that people engage with, that people like, resources that they find helpful, linking to other sites that are relevant to my niche, that are going to help my audience and then, every once in a while, I promote what I have.

That 80-20 rule, I think that works very well for Social Media when it comes to content and promotion.

So, provide more content and the promotion kind of comes afterwards.

80-20 is not a hard set rule but, it's the concept that I want you to understand.

#4: Remember the 80-20 rule for on-topic vs. off-topic content.

Here's the thing, people want to know that you're a real person. They don't want to know that, they don't want to necessarily know that you're just all about business. No. They want to know that you're a real person.

So, for example, when I started this episode, I spoke about the trip that my family and I just came back from. That's not on-topic but, it kind of paints a bigger picture of who I am and I want you to get to know who I am and to interact with me in a way that you get to know me as a person.

That is very significant when it comes to Social Media also.

So, on-topic, off-topic, mostly on-topic so, maybe 80% of your posts are going to be on-topic but, 20% are going to be not on-topic. It's just going to be interesting things about you and sharing your life with your audience or sharing off-topics stuff with your audience.

#5: Be a source of great content from others.

You want to be sharing other people's stuff and the way you can do this, the way I do it is I subscribe to a number of blogs, a handful of selected blogs and I subscribe to them via RSS, I use the service Feedly, at Feedly.com and that allows me to go to one place and see what all of these blogs have posted for the day.

Once I see what they've posted, if there's something that I think is going to be of value to my audience. I can then share that content with my audience.

You can also use sites like popURLs.com or Alltop.com. What those sites do is they allow you to see what's popular across the Internet for specific topics especially AllTop, you can select a specific topic and then, it will show you what is popular online.

Now, if you can be one of the first people to get to as popular and share it with your audience, the first people that your audience gets that information from, you become more of an authority. They look at you as someone they can trust to go to to get great information. So, using these types of sites is very, very helpful.



#6: Invite dialogue.

This is not a one-way conversation, well, I guess, that's not a conversation. It's not a one-way lecture. It's a two-way street and hopefully, eventually, it's a multi-way street, if you want to call it that. It's not all about what you have to say.

So, you can ask your audience questions, engage them in that way, get their input, what do they have to say about a specific topic. Doing that will get them involved and by getting them involved, you'll get them more engaged with your blog, with your brand and with you.

#7: You want to be consistent.

I gave the example of SweetWater.com in the beginning. Two days ago, I got a call from Ryan just to see how I was doing, check to see if there were any questions that I had about any topic or any equipment that I might want to purchase in the future or equipment that I have that I am not sure how to use, he follows up with me regularly.

Now, when it comes to Social Media, you want to be posting regularly. That's going to vary from Social Media site to Social Media site. For example, on Facebook, I try to post once daily, at least every weekday. On Twitter, you want to be posting multiple times per day.

So, depending on the Social Network, you want to decide what the frequency of posts are going to be and I'm actually going to dive a little deeper into this and also all of these other things in future posts or future episodes when I do go more in-depth with one specific Social Media site.

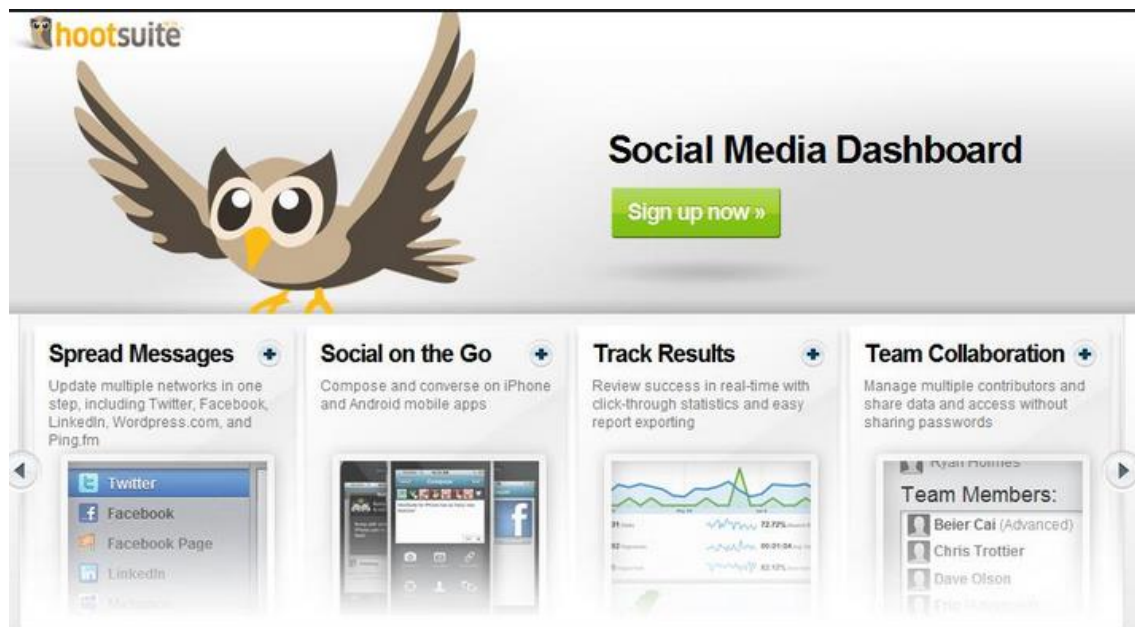
When you stop posting, engagement goes down. It's almost a direct correlation. If I post everyday for a week, more people are going to be engaged with my content. If I stop posting for a few days, you will see that number go down and you can actually track that and I have tracked that or at least, paid attention to that and I have seen that happen.

When you are more consistent, people get more engaged. That's tip number seven.

#8: Use Social Media tools to help you manage your Social Media sites.

Some of the tools that I use, I use [TweetDeck](#) for managing Twitter. I use [Hootsuite](#) kind of as a dashboard for managing all my Social Media sites and I'm kind of going between Tweetdeck and Hootsuite and trying to full evaluate. I like Hootsuite in that you can manage everything in one place. There are some features about it that I don't like as much but, I'm kind of getting used to it.





It's nice to have one place that you can come to and do all of your Social Media posting and engagement and all that stuff.

Also I use [Buffer App](#) I use that for scheduling my post because in the morning, when I wake up, especially these days, I go and I browse the Internet to find, I check Feedly and so on to find interesting content and then, I buffer them up and then, what that does is it schedules them at predetermined times throughout the day so that, it's not, you know, I post all the content at one time. Buffer App is really good for that.



#9: Make sure you're focusing your Social Media efforts.

Don't be on Social Media all day chatting up a storm. Get on there, do the things that you set out to do and then, bounce. It's so easy to waste time on Facebook, on YouTube, on Twitter. You go and you see an interesting video, you click on that video, you watch that video and at the end, there are suggested videos for you to check out and you're like, "Oh, this is kind of interesting," so you click on 'Play' and next thing you know, five hours later, you're like, "Oh man, I was on Social Media for five hours. I accomplished absolutely nothing."

Be specific about your goals, why are you on Social Media and spend a pre-determined amount of time doing those specific things. It's so easy to waste time. Don't get caught as I have gotten caught so many times in the past and I still even get caught from time to time in the future.

Make sure you're focusing your Social Media efforts.

#10: Integrate your Social Media with your blog.

You want to have a "like" box on there. Facebook is something that you're focusing on so that, people can easily like your page. Follow buttons, plus one buttons, Pinterest buttons anything to get people to engage with you on Social Media. The [Digg Digg plugin](#) is one that I am using right now to get people to share my content on Social Media so that, they can also now go out there and evangelize and spread the word about what's happening at Become a Blogger or what's happening at Interactive Biology.

Then, there's the [LiveFyre](#) and [Disqus](#) plugins. You can use either of those but, that allows people to leave comments using their Social Media profiles. The great thing about his is when they do leave those comments, they get the option of automatically sharing those comments on their timeline or on their page. When they do that, that brings more exposure, hopefully more engagement back to your blog. That's exactly what you want to do



Right now, I'm currently using the Disqus commenting plugin. I used to use LiveFyre. I prefer LiveFyre in terms of the features however, I like the fact that I can manage Disqus from in my Wordpress admin area.

I don't have to go to the Disqus website. LiveFyre, you need to go to their website to manage your comments. And, I don't like having to be in multiple places. So, either of them works, it just depends on what you are trying to accomplish.

So, that's tip number ten and of course, I have a bonus tip. This bonus tip is, in my opinion, the most important tip.

Bonus Tip: Be a real person.

Because you know what? People connect with people. People do not connect with companies. A company is boring. A person that's engaging, a person that you can have a conversation with, a person that feels like a friend, that is someone that you can connect with.

If you can connect with that person, or if you can be that person then, you're going to increase that engagement.

So, to recap, tip number one, choose your platform wisely. Tip number two, register on other accounts, maybe automate some of the others in the meantime while you build up the first, the other Social Media sites. Tip number three, the 80-20 rule for content and promotion, offer valuable content for 80% of the time or most of the time and promotion only 20% or even less, depending on how you feel.

Tip number four, the 80-20 rule for on-topic versus off-topic content. Make sure your on-topic for the most part but, also bring some life in there with some other stuff that's not necessarily on-topic but, interesting.

Tip number five, be a source for great content from others. Share other people's stuff. Tip number six, invite a dialogue. It's not a one-way street. It's a two-way conversation and hopefully, also a multi-way conversation.

Tip number seven, be consistent. Tip number eight, use Social Media tools to help you manage your Social Media accounts. Tip number nine, focus your Social Media efforts. Don't waste a bunch of time on Social Media all day. Tip number ten, integrate Social Media with your blog and then, of course, there's the bonus tip.

And the bonus tip is be a real person because you know what? People connect with people. People do not connect with companies and you want to be that trusted expert friend that people are going to connect with.

I hope you find this valuable. We're going to be diving more into Social Media over the coming weeks, coming months or whatever the case might be. I'm going to probably do some interviews with some people that know more than I do when it comes to this specific social network so that, we can all learn.

I hope you're enjoying this podcast. Of course, if you are, please head on over to iTunes, becomeablogger.com/itunes and leave me a review so, people can know if this podcast is a bunch of junk or if this podcast is valuable stuff. It helps to get additional exposure and of course, I appreciate that. It helps me on my goal of changing the world one blog at a time.

Hey, if you want to change the world with a blog, and you have not gotten started or you want some guidance, head on over to freebloggingvideos.com. You don't even have to opt in. You don't even have to do anything. Just press 'Play,' and I'm going to show you, I'm going to walk you through the process of getting your blog up there, running and getting it out there so that, people can engage with you on Social Media, on your blog, on everything.

So, freebloggingvideos.com. That's pretty much it for this episode. Until next time, this is Leslie Samuel, take care and God bless.