
Connective's Social Media Basics for Brokers

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Hey brokers: Let's Get Social!

Whether you're an established broker with years of contacts in your database, or a newbie broker ready to take on the market, developing your brand identity in the social media space is critical to your success. Cost-effective and targeted, social media platforms can be used to engage your community, build your brand and establish yourself as an authority in the industry. Social media offers mortgage brokers incredible reach and market influence, allowing you to interact with prospective clients and referral partners on a national scale.

To maximise the advantages of social media marketing, brokers need the know-how to master online tasks like prospecting, staying in touch with past clients, increasing loyalty and creating referral opportunities. Our Social Media Basics for Brokers will help you to learn these essential skills and apply them effectively to grow your business. With just a little time and effort, social media will provide you with a great foundation upon which to establish your online presence and to flex your digital networking muscle. So, what are you waiting for? Time to get social!

The Rules of Engagement.

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The Rules of Engagement

Social media is just that: social.

It's about making connections, being of service to your network by sharing your expertise, and publishing content that informs and entertains. Some mortgage brokers leave the 'social' out of their social media - and go on to bore their potential prospects in the online space and suffer because of it. Social media cannot be solely about selling your broking services, as audiences will disengage from relentless advertising.

Social media builds your credibility.

Customers frequently use social media sites like Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter to establish your credos – so make sure your brand has a profile on at least one of these platforms. Having no social media profile on these three essential sites could put you at a disadvantage. Clients will use them to make a judgement about you and your business based on the professionalism and frequency of your social media contributions, so it pays to ensure you are promoting the right image with these particular social media profiles.

Content counts.

'Content' is a general term that describes what you publish on your social media pages. Your content needs to be much more than just a description of what you do. You need to cut through your competition with content that connects – information that is valuable to the reader and showcases your expertise. Think about who your audience is – whether it's FHBs, investors or Aussie mums and dads paying down their mortgage and produce content that talks just to them.

Start off on the right foot.

Get your social media profiles set up the right way by using a professional logo and photography that present you as more than 'just another broker'. Do not discount the importance of these assets to your success. Investing in the quality of these foundation pieces makes all the difference to your social media project. Is it time for you to revisit your branding?

1. Don't be shy about asking your clients to follow you on social media. Do this when you're chatting on the phone, via your newsletters or when you're sending thank you gifts.
2. Ask your clients to post reviews on your Facebook and LinkedIn pages. Potential clients look closely at your ratings to establish your credentials and dependability.
3. Make sure you use social media 'buttons' to drive your audience to your Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn pages. They need to be prominent on your website, in your blog and newsletters, in your email footer and in any print collateral you produce.



The 30 second home loan...
Jason Back on LinkedIn

Jason Back is the Managing Director of the Australian Lending & Investment Centre (ALIC), one of Australia's most successful and highly awarded brokerages. They know their audience, creating content to interest, entertain and benefit them. What would your audience want to learn about?

Understand your audience.

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Understand your audience.

When choosing which social media platforms to use for your business, you should consider the different audience segments in your database and which social media platforms they may prefer. For example, the Gen Y audience loves Instagram, so if you're focusing on marketing your services to young First Home Buyers, then it may be a great platform for you.

Some would argue that potential home buyers use all manner of social media platforms, so it makes sense for your broking business to establish a presence on all of them. Not so. It is better to have no social media presence than have one that you don't have time to maintain effectively.

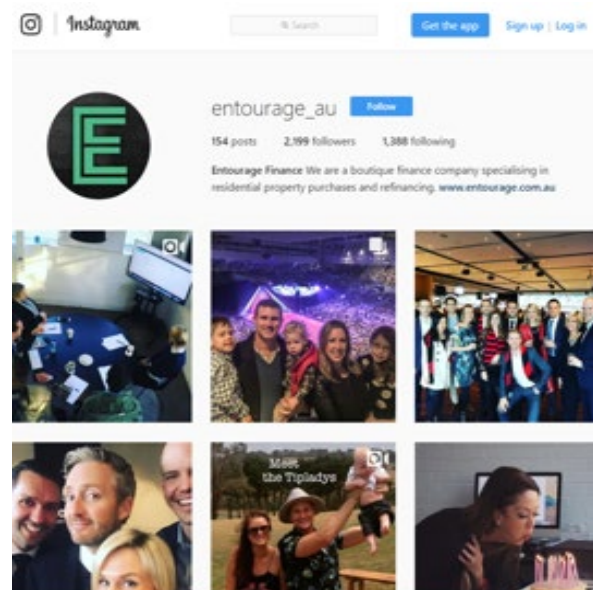
We recommend Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter because they have been tried and tested by some of Connective's most successful brokerages. It's the sensible place to start for most businesses, but you really need to be sure they are strategically effective with your particular target audience groups. The best way to find out what social media platforms your customers use is to ask them.

If you have a broad audience or you're just starting your social media project, we recommend you begin with a:

- Facebook Business Page
- LinkedIn Company Page
- Twitter account.

Make each of your social media platforms look like your brand – use your logo, brand colors and header artwork to look professional.

1. Observe what finance industry leaders are doing across their social media platforms. What can you learn from their social media strategy?
2. Ask your customers what social media platforms they use. Do they use different social media platforms for different purposes?
3. Only add other social media platforms if you are sure they will reach your desired audience effectively, and you have the time to maintain them properly.



Award-winning Victorian brokerage Entourage have had great success engaging their Gen Y audience on Instagram. The team have perfected the art of capturing the business' personality and brand through photography and Instagram is a fantastic way to showcase the results! However, they also make sure they maintain profiles on Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter.

Timing is everything

To build momentum and interaction, you will need to post across your social media platforms 3-4 times per week. This may sound like a massive task, but it doesn't have to be. We suggest posting **two new photographic or artwork-based pieces** promoting your brand each week, and two interest-based pieces (one might be about finance, one could be about your community or a seasonal event).

01

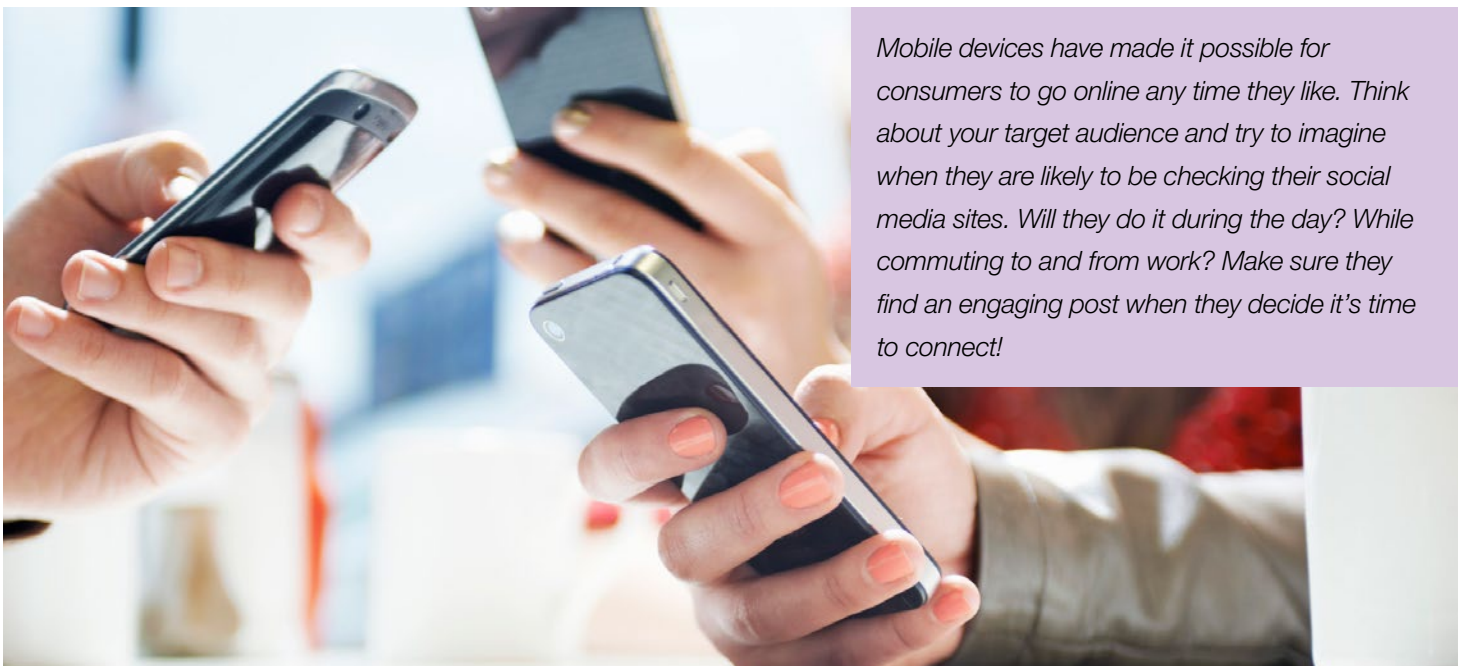
Use scheduling tools to plan and post content. These can help to save you time. HootSuite is a popular option, but there are dozens available online so jump on and take a look.

02

For Facebook and LinkedIn posts, timing is probably not as important as quality. With Twitter, it's important to consider what time your audience is most active.

03

Make sure to 'tag' any other brands you mention in your social media posts and let them know you're sharing their brand with your audience.



Mobile devices have made it possible for consumers to go online any time they like. Think about your target audience and try to imagine when they are likely to be checking their social media sites. Will they do it during the day? While commuting to and from work? Make sure they find an engaging post when they decide it's time to connect!

What to post?

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What to post?

Your social media identity should be interesting, useful and friendly. Think of it as the virtual reality version of your own personal identity, going to an electronic networking event. You don't want to be that dull, boring person no one notices, but you don't want to be the loud obnoxious lout that everyone avoids either!

If you have a blog, share your new posts extensively across your social media platforms. Build rapport and answer common customer questions. Share past clients' problems and say how you solved them. Think of information that your customers may need, that presents you as the 'go-to broker'. If you are stuck for content, start by thinking about the 5 most common questions you get asked. Then what are the next 5 most common questions? Start to create a list of all the things you can help your audience better understand – then how best to share this knowledge with them (a photo, a link to a blog post, an infographic).

1. Don't go into the fine details about finance. Address your clients' likely concerns about mortgages and lenders in plain language.
2. Remember to share news relevant to your clients' interests outside of their finances, and support the community you serve.
3. Humor (when used sensitively) is terrific in the social space, and can assist with forging bonds between you and your network.
4. Copyright matters! Don't infringe it. If you have questions or need assistance with this, ask your local Compliance Support Manager at compliance@connective.com.au.



George Samios at MADD Home Loans in Queensland provides a great example of how to create a friendly and engaging online personality. George has invested in a quality logo and graphics, using them very effectively across all of his advertising, marketing, website and social media pages. Note the 'you' focus of the graphic message.



All of the MADD posts are 'on brand', sharing consistent graphic design messages paired with appropriate hashtags, and aspirational images. MADD also understand that an entertained audience is an engaged audience. This campaign featured popular Australian comedian Vince Sorrenti, utilising quality photography.

Interact and respond.

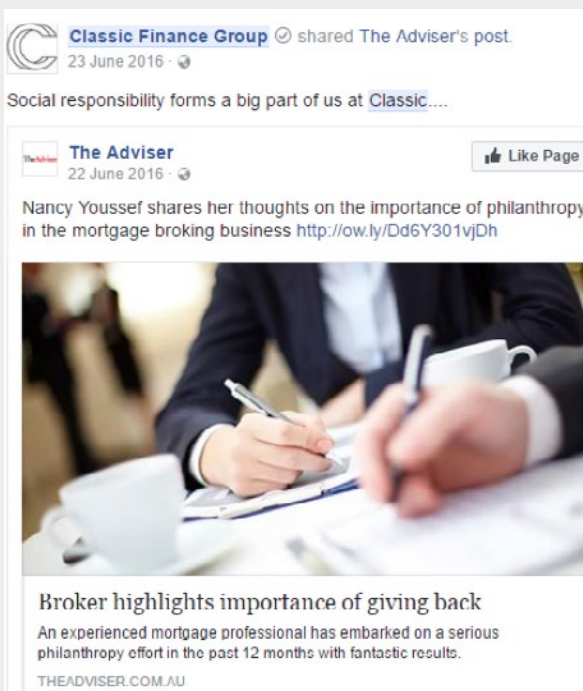
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Interact and respond

Engaging with your audience drives business in the social media space. When people respond to your posts, interact and show that you're paying attention. Respond to comments, likes and tweets as often as you can. Don't ignore negative comments when they arise – address them in public and find a way to turn them into a positive interaction.

Encourage your audience to engage by posing them questions. If someone responds to your posts with a suggestion, engage with them and take the conversation further. Consider asking your audience for their help with a community project, charity donation or a referral. People love sharing their knowledge given the chance.

1. Ensure you comment on other people's posts, and give an opinion on important news items and relevant mortgage and finance issues.
2. Post opinion articles on LinkedIn to encourage network interaction.
3. Ask people to engage with you. Get them to post photos and tag you.
4. Discover relevant conversations on Twitter using the search hashtag function.



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from 'Classic Finance Group' dated 23 June 2016, which has shared a post from 'The Adviser' dated 22 June 2016. The shared post is titled 'Social responsibility forms a big part of us at Classic....' and features a photo of a person in a suit writing in a notebook. Below the photo, the text reads: 'Broker highlights importance of giving back. An experienced mortgage professional has embarked on a serious philanthropy effort in the past 12 months with fantastic results.' The URL 'http://ow.ly/Dd6Y301vjDh' is also visible.

Classic Finance Group engage with their local community by supporting charities and raising funds, getting great mileage on social media. In this way, founder Nancy Youssef has built a profile as both a philanthropist and a highly respected mortgage professional in the local community.

Hashtags and hacks.

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Hashtags and Hacks

#WhatsAHashtag?

A Hashtag is a word or phrase preceded by a # symbol. They serve several purposes on social media:

- They provide a memorable byline for your business. MADD Home Loans' hashtag is #nowthatsmadd, which is both amusing and brand building.
- Hashtags allow you to connect with potential clients via shared interests that are searchable i.e. #Finance #Mortgage #FirstHomeBuyer #Retirement
- Hashtags also make it easy for existing clients and referral partners to find you on social media platforms, or to tag you in their posts. Why not hop on Twitter now and see if your business has been tagged?



Great photos capture attention on social media. Use hashtags to identify people and help to expand reach. Here George Samios (second from the left) hams it up with the team from Connective at the 2016 Connective Conference. The #nowthatsmadd hashtag expanded the views and the post generated 81 likes on Facebook alone.

When should you use a hashtag?

On Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn you can use up to three hashtags in your posts. For example, #YourBusinessName, #YourByline and one last hashtag which relates to the content you've shared. #Finance #MortgageBroker or #Refinance are good examples.

Let's be friends.

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Let's be friends

Social media is all about goodwill and making connections. It's important you follow – both personally and as a broking business – relevant and influential individuals. **So, who should you follow?**

- **Your clients and referral partners.** As part of your onboarding process, ascertain their social media handles as an opt-in! Clients love being acknowledged by businesses they work with.
- **Your community.** Local schools, businesses, events, markets and similar.
- **Industry leaders.** Global or local, follow influencers you want to be associated with. You'll learn quite a lot along the way – about both business and social media best practice!
- **Media organisations** relevant to finance, property, retirement and similar.
- **Brands and individuals you like.** Your business is a reflection of your own interests, and your social media should reflect them too.

Sit down now and take the time to find all of your clients, friends and colleagues and follow them. This will be a great start. Who else can you think of to follow?

When people follow your mortgage broking business, have a look at their profiles. Do they seem like legitimate followers? Are they highly respected in their field? If so, follow them back!

Dynamic Melbourne-based finance business Entourage have built a thriving community of followers on social media by sharing regularly with their audience. From networking lunches to days at the MCG, they're transparent about their activities, interests and expertise.



A picture says a thousand words

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A picture says a thousand words

Your identity in the social media space should be founded on high-quality images and branded artwork. This process doesn't need to be expensive – but a professional approach should be at the heart of your marketing efforts. In the social space, users are attracted to posts with images and are much more likely to share them if they are great. According to Facebook, posts with photos have the highest user engagement, and posts with videos higher again!

Articles and blog posts with appropriate images are also more effective at engaging your audience, garnering 94% more views than articles with text alone. Word to the wise - be discerning with the images you use. You may want to consider having your own professional photography taken, and never share images you do not have copyright permission to use. Subscribe to photo libraries to supplement your image cache, and you're onto a good thing.

1. Use real images of your team, your business and your community.
2. Never use images you do not have copyright permission to share. Purchase images from a stock photography supplier rather than copying them.
3. Blogs should be illustrated with original artwork wherever possible, enhancing your professionalism and building your brand.



Entourage have also mastered the art of using great photos of real people combined with the simple application of their logo. What could be more engaging and aspirational than pictures of happy customers who have secured the home of their dreams? If a picture says a thousand words, the expression on the faces of this couple says it all!

Voice Control.

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Voice control

Your brand's voice matters, as it conveys so much about your intelligence and competence to customers and referrers. Brand voice is more than just written form – it encapsulates the use of consistent logos, brand colours, fonts and graphic design. Inappropriate abbreviations, typos, profanity and inconsistent visuals reveal a brand to be the opposite of professional – so take time to settle upon your voice and the values you'll convey in the social media space. When considering your business brand voice, create Social Media Guidelines to help you and your team present consistently to the audience. Review these annually and stay relevant as the market – and your business – changes.

Brand Voice Discussion Starters

01

What is our brand personality?

02

What do we stand for and who do we represent?

03

What is our value proposition and how are we different?

04

What visual branding elements will we use and how?

Don't
Do this.

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Don't do this!

Many brokers accidentally destroy their social media identities by sharing nothing but interest rates, promotional updates, special offers and business advertising. Whilst occasional offers of genuine value will engage your audience, it's sharing useful information and the personal, human side to your business that will elevate your standing in the social media space. Generate trust and drive engagement by investing necessary time in creating and sharing good content, having good conversations and being a good social media citizen.

Brand Voice Discussion Starters



1. Always look for ways to add value with entertaining and clever conversation, relevant information and community service.



2. Avoid posting home loan rate offers constantly. This isn't interesting or social, and there are compliance implications.

Do social media metrics matter?

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Do social media metrics matter?

Yes. And no! Whilst it is possible to track and measure the success of individual posts and campaigns across all the social media platforms your brokerage uses, measuring your 'return on investment' is hard.

Social media success is about consistent interaction over a long period of time with an engaged audience. There's no endgame to customer interaction and brand transparency in the new world of lending. Sorry, number-crunchers!

On the other hand, observing audience trends and preferences offers you beneficial insights. For example, you can see which posts work well and produce more like them. We recommend checking into your Facebook Business Page Insights to see how your posts have fared – and how you're tracking compared to similar businesses. There are a variety of more advanced tools available online to track your social media efforts, too.

1. Social media isn't free – it costs in both time and money. Don't be grumpy about this - it's like advertising in the paper (but better).
2. You may want to consider 'Boosting' and 'Promoting' your Facebook Business Page (this costs money). Doing so will mean more people see your content and hopefully, your followers should grow. Create a budget and use it to best advantage.
3. Identify social media influencers in your community, and interact with them as your brand. Consider featuring them on your blog, and get collaborative!

Let Connective support you!

Social media for your mortgage broking business is an adventure in connection! Get in touch with Connective to see how we can help with your social media and digital marketing efforts.

Your local Compliance Support Manager is also available to help you with remaining compliant with your social media and marketing activities. If you have any questions or need any support, simply click the help icon in Mercury to get in touch. We'll be happy to help.

Other resources for your online success:

[Social media basics for mortgage brokers](#)

[6 great tips for social media compliance](#)

[10 simple ways to get more followers on social media](#)

[How to leverage LinkedIn for your mortgage broking business](#)

