



# SOCIAL MEDIA PLAN

AUGUST 2018

# Executive Summary

*"Social media replaces nothing, but compliments everything."*

-Neal Schaffer

**This social media plan intends to help MEDCO identify new ways to delight and engage its social media followers, prospects, and community.**

MEDCO's current social media efforts are on track for the company's audience but need a bit of refinement and more engagement from constituencies. This plan provides information about innovative social media marketing tactics to help MEDCO's staff understand new methods for using social media effectively and efficiently. We cover social media listening, defining a value for fans, options for engagement, identifying opportunities, techniques for building relationships, and the case for social media advertising.

To aid MEDCO in developing an active social media program, DHQM created the following:

## **CONTENT CALENDAR**

The sample calendar is organized around themes targeted at specific audiences and/or MEDCO services. With accompanying hashtags, the themed content is scheduled so that MEDCO can pre-create items while also keeping space open for breaking news. A list of business-related "days of" throughout the year is included to keep content fresh and to allow for coordination with MEDCO events.

## **EVENT PLAN**

DHQM developed an easily-produced event for Business of the Year. The plan encourages participation through voting and allows MEDCO to highlight its services in the bios of the various nominated businesses.

## **EVERGREEN CONTENT**

DHQM has created evergreen content, so there is a continuous flow of information on the various social media platforms. This content, while targeted at the Marion business community, is not necessarily specific to MEDCO. Instead, it highlights the organization's core values and can be posted when MEDCO finds that there isn't enough planned or breaking news content.

## **ADVERTISING**

Facebook and Twitter can provide MEDCO with affordable advertising opportunities. DHQM has provided sample ads to help increase engagement for specific MEDCO causes.

MEDCO has a great core group of followers on social media, but it has a fantastic opportunity to learn more and refine its programs to serve Marion businesses better. To be effective, MEDCO must listen more closely to its constituents, encourage more discussion, and define what is valuable for its community.

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# Platforms, Analytics, & Audiences

*"I use social media as an idea generator, trend mapper and strategic compass for all of our online business ventures."*

- Paul Barron

MEDCO is providing the community of Marion with invaluable economic development that supports businesses, increases job opportunities, and creates a link between business, the City of Marion, educators, and other small business development organizations. MEDCO competes for grant monies and support from the city, county, state, and federal government, but exists more in partnership than competition with other economic development entities. All the partners are working to improve Marion, which makes social media cross-pollination a part of MEDCO social media marketing. Some partners include:

- Marion Chamber of Commerce
- Small Business Development Center
- Economic Development Center / Innovation Expo
- 1 Million Cups
- EntreFEST
- Cedar Rapids Metro Economic Alliance
- SCORE Eastern Iowa
- Iowa Startup Accelerator
- Startup Weekend
- SBDC in Cedar Rapids.

The company's focus on the newly fashionable idea of co-working spaces (The Loft) and co-incubators (Loft Startup Exchange) is highly promotable on social media. MEDCO's Community Promise program is an amazing way to highlight how MEDCO creates jobs while supporting business and educational partnerships. MEDCO also provides resources for property searches and development, local and state organizational assistance, utility contacts, and educational connections for small companies and startups.

## MEDCO'S PLATFORMS

Following is a summary of the platform options for MEDCO. With only three people available to manage social media, it's best to be selective about how active the company will be on each platform. DHQM has ranked the discussion by importance. Pinterest and Instagram are not listed in this discussion due to a lack of proper MEDCO audience in those platforms.

### **FACEBOOK – PRIMARY PLATFORM #1**

Facebook (2.2 billion users) is specifically designed for engagement – to listen and build a relationship with the customer. This platform is far more flexible for posts lengths, content types and text-heavy or poll/voting. Allowing MEDCO to incorporate important contact information and a call to action into its business pages, makes Facebook an ideal medium MEDCO and a primary focus of engagement. The analytics for Facebook is another major plus for MEDCO as the company can measure engagements specific to posts or initiatives. Advertising is affordable on Facebook and allows for very strict segmentation which lowers cost. Currently, MEDCO uses Facebook as an announcement board rather

than an engagement source. As such, DHQM will create content that will ask the questions and drive the narrative, to which Facebook users are accustomed. [1][2][3]

### **TWITTER – PRIMARY PLATFORM #2**

Twitter (336 million users) is a common discussion spot for small businesses. It's valuable to MEDCO because it's a place where users are expecting to share news and opinions. Twitter has several good segmentation options for advertising which allows advertisers to limit cost for reaching exactly the right audience. MEDCO's current press-release style posts on Twitter is an effective use of the platform and appropriate to the audiences; however, Twitter requires a more regular schedule of engagement – not all the time, just more frequent than current posts. DHQM will build upon MEDCO current efforts and provide ideas for content that speaks to how MEDCO helps businesses thrive while finding out what local fans need to be successful. [1][2][3]

### **LINKEDIN – PRIMARY PLATFORM #3**

LinkedIn (294 million users) users are on the platform to advance their careers and businesses. As such, it is an ideal place to create buzz through posts. DHQM won't recommend advertising on LinkedIn due to the high cost. However, the platform provides excellent access to MEDCO's ideal audiences. LinkedIn social posts by MEDCO has been active and appropriate to highlighting how MEDCO helps local businesses. There is a great opportunity here for MEDCO because LinkedIn caters to business professionals. [1][2][3]

### **YOUTUBE – SECONDARY PLATFORM #1**

YouTube (1.9 billion users) is the largest video-sharing site in the world. MEDCO can use this platform as a linkable source for posting a video. However, DHQM won't recommend that posts are an active focus due to limited staff resources. MEDCO hasn't posted recently, and the existing posts are quite lengthy. As such, DHQM recommends adjusting the timing and use of clips from presentations to synthesize the content and respect the user's time while providing the necessary key messages. [1][2][3]

### **GOOGLE+ – SECONDARY PLATFORM #2**

With Google+ (111 million users) associated with the largest search engine in the world, postings are important for MEDCO's search engine optimization. While MEDCO has a page on Google+, the link from the website shows no active postings. DHQM recommends using Google+ as a storage for the same videos posted on YouTube so that Google promotes MEDCO's postings higher in search results. [1][2][3]

## **CURRENT SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS**

Although MEDCO has been actively posting to social media platforms, it appears that engagement responses beyond the retweets of partner organizations are relatively low. MEDCO is active on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn, but less so on YouTube. MEDCO does not have a presence on Google+. The following bullets provide important observations about MEDCO's current social media and simple fixes for the issues. The following pages in this plan will detail ways to increase responses to posts by asking questions, responding to audience questions, and actively listening to MEDCO's constituencies.

- **Issue:** Most of MEDCO's Facebook engagement – likes and retweets – is coming from a partner business, not customers or prospects.  
**Fix:** pose questions to audiences and engage in discussions.
- **Issue:** MEDCO has no presence on Google+ which can negatively impact Google searches.  
**Fix:** Easily be remedied with reposts from other platforms.

- Issue:** MEDCO comes up in a search for its business name on all platforms, but it does not show up on Facebook or Twitter using the keyword set: “business development Marion Iowa.”

**Fix:** Add relevant keywords and phrases to the information section of all platforms profiles and also add friends and follow pages – organizations similar to MEDCO.
- Issue:** Facebook fans rarely move beyond MEDCO’s profile page.

**Fix:** Build content that pushes the reader to click the “link” button by writing a great teaser that leaves readers wanting more information.

## CURRENT SOCIAL MEDIA AUDIENCES

Using Facebook’s analytic data as a guide for who follows MEDCO in overall social media, it is women. Women follow MEDCO as a rate of 60 percent. A summary of the segments follows:

	Women	Men
<b>13-17</b>	0	0
<b>18-24</b>	1%	.921%
<b>25-34</b>	15%	8%
<b>35-44</b>	20%	12%
<b>45-54</b>	13%	9%
<b>55-64</b>	7%	7%
<b>65+</b>	4%	3%

Although women represent most of MEDCO’s followers, DHQM believes that it’s unnecessary for a business development company to separate audiences by gender when the content is relevant to all users. Due to the range of services for a range of businesses – co-working to location searches for manufacturing sites - the critical audience segment for MEDCO will be business professionals aged 25 to 54. The following pages will provide future details about keywords and content specific to audiences and services.

## MEDCO SOCIAL MEDIA GOALS

MEDCO has a considerable range of services for entrepreneurs and established businesses alike. In supporting the company’s goal to create an exceptional business environment for Marion’s companies to compete and thrive, DHQM’s social media will:

- Build community awareness and customer engagement by 10 percent by redefining social media content based on customer interactions, MEDCO successes, and MEDCO services.
- Increase awareness of MEDCO’s Loft Co-Working and Incubator opportunities by creating both photo and video stories for all social media and posting monthly in a rotating fashion in each platform.
- Create both advertising and posts that are used monthly to highlight MEDCO’s areas of expertise and provide daily weekday content.

# Listen, Think, & Define Value

*“The more you engage with customers, the clearer things become and the easier it is to determine what you should be doing.”*

–John Russell

## LISTENING

As a business development organization, MEDCO works with a wide variety of business owners, partnership organizations, and entrepreneurs. To truly be useful in its social media presence, MEDCO must learn to understand its target audience and partners through active listening.

Social media is providing unprecedented access to customer and competitive data. Google Alerts, Social Mention, Twitter Search, YouTube Search, and TweetBeep are some free search sights MEDCO can use to see what customers and prospects are saying online, both about MEDCO and about competitors and partners. [1]

Listening carefully to customers is the single most crucial part of social media marketing. Through listening, you'll be able to capture the attention of entrepreneurs and business owners that don't even know MEDCO exists. It's a compelling opportunity to build your offerings and create successful businesses. [1]

In a search for the terms 'economic development' and 'small business' across all MEDCO's platforms, there is little being said other than what MEDCO is saying about itself. On Google+, however, the search did reveal news stories about MEDCO's customers. The following are some phrases that potential MEDCO customers might use in a search that would be useful for future posts:

- Small business owner looking for a new space in Marion, IA
- Entrepreneur looking for collaborators in business
- Expanding small business in Marion, IA
- Shared workspaces in Marion, IA
- New startup business in Marion, IA
- What People are Saying about MEDCO

Listening to fans and prospects can be both good and bad. Sometimes it's difficult to hear negative feedback from customers and others online. If it is something MEDCO can address, it should be dealt with immediately. Otherwise, negative comments must be viewed as another tool to understand how to serve the customer and help them be successful. A framework for responding to negative comments will be needed to be sure that all comments support the overall social media goals of the business. [1]

## THINKING

Today's social media platforms provide a fantastic ability to segment MEDCO's audiences. Gone are the days of saying the audience was female, 25 to 54, and a small business owner. As compared with niche publications and television, social media can provide MEDCO with unprecedented ways to reach its audiences.

For example, the following businesses that are like customers of MEDCO could be reached by "hyper-targeting" social platforms with search criteria so narrow that only the real customers of a given service will be reached: [1]

- 10-year-old, manufacturing company with 30 employees, looking to expand production in Marion or Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Digital designer, aged 35 to 44, wishing to connect with other digital experts to collaborate in Marion or Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Sole proprietor, aged 35 to 44, needing a shared workspace in Marion or Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Once MEDCO finds its target audience, it can begin to listen to them, find out what they are looking for, and provide the services they need to be successful businesses in Marion.

Facebook's searches are free. The search can be cursory (gender, age, city) or in-depth (job, preferences, hobbies, affiliations) but should be worded as if looking for one specific person as opposed to a vast group which will help to narrow the focus. With Facebook searches, MEDCO can reach as many or as little of its preferred audience as it wishes. [1]

LinkedIn's search allows for determining not only gender, age, and location, but who MEDCO's audience should be based on job title, school, skills, affiliations, industry, and company size. With LinkedIn, it's important to target only professionals with professional content as it is more of a business than a social site. [1]

Twitter searches will not involve any specific demographic data; instead, it is rich with details that individuals like or need. In the case of MEDCO, a search at 'search.twitter.com' for shared workspace in Marion, Iowa, only gave one result for a co-working space in Cedar Rapids. [1]

The critical component of "hyper-targeting" MEDCO's customers is in respecting their time enough to give them the information they find valuable in building their business. With only three staffers, effective use of targeted social media advertising will save staff time and make better use of advertising dollars. [1]

The key point for MEDCO is that the "hyper-targeted" advertising will start a valuable conversation about what customers need and when MEDCO can help them grow their business. MEDCO's perfect prospects would have the following characteristics:

- Male or female
- Small business owner
- Aged 25-44
- Marion or Cedar Rapids, Iowa
- Creates, organizes, and manages an enterprise
- Titles include: owner, principal, COO, CEO, CFO, entrepreneur, and president
- Employs one to 30 people
- Focused on growing the business
- Entrepreneur or former corporate executive

## DEFINE EXPECTATIONS

Disruptions have become the norm for traditional advertising. Television, radio, billboards, and more have become nothing more than needless distractions; and the more bombarded, the more people learn to filter out the clutter. To have active social media, MEDCO must stop thinking like a marketer and start thinking like the consumer. MEDCO's customers – like all of us – welcome advertising and information that is specifically catered to our needs. [1]

So, what do MEDCO's customers and prospects want? They want MEDCO to be useful to them. For every social media post (and for that matter every type of promotion), one must ask: [1]

- Will MEDCO's customers honestly find this valuable or just an irritation?
- Would I want to receive this message as a customer of MEDCO?
- In the case of Facebook, how MEDCO's content is seen in a customer's news feed is based on three factors:
  - How recently the content occurred or was created
  - The strength of the customer's relationship with MEDCO
  - How many 'likes' the content received

The last item is essential because it affects whether MEDCO content is seen in the customer's news feeds. The more people who are interested in the content, the more likely it will show up in a customer's feed. Facebook optimizes the content based on relevancy, time, focus, quality, and variety. When posting, MEDCO must ask the following: [1]

- When and how often should we post content?
- Do our customers or prospects interact with our posts often?
- How active are the engagements with our content?
- Has MEDCO boosted the post?

Ultimately, Facebook's algorithm is designed to have irritating or poor content disappear. It's a powerful tool if MEDCO listens and truly understands what its customers want. If posts engage customers with questions and input requests, excite them with the prospect of business growth, and are linked to their business goals, that will create engagement, and the posts will remain in the news feeds. Examples of social media power posts will follow in the Building Relationships section.

# Engage & Respond

*“Community is much more than belonging to something; it’s about doing something together that makes belonging matter.”*

– Brian Solis, renowned speaker, and digital analyst and principal at Altimeter Group

## CREATING DIALOGUE

MEDCO has a good start at a fan base of customers, prospects, and partners. All the social media accounts are in place, but now the real work begins. MEDCO must engage its fans so that they advocate with other MEDCO fans, prospects, and partners. It’s time to use social media to create meaningful dialogue with MEDCO’s constituencies. [1]

Social media dialogue carries responsibility and accountability. By engaging directly with fans, prospects, and partners, MEDCO will find that the best listeners will win the audience. It will need to show concern for all kinds of feedback - not just the positive - to know where to take the organization. MEDCO needs to believe that actively growing its social media network will lead to more engaged constituencies and a better understanding of what is needed now and in the future. [1]

Good listeners are generally known as trustworthy because they demonstrate that they care about what people are saying. To be an excellent social media listener, MEDCO will need to revisit its core values and use those as a base to show that it is authentic and wants to create long-lasting connections through social media. How well MEDCO listens will determine its fans level of trust and how much they want to contribute to the organization’s social success. [1]

Contributors will feel comfortable in an environment where ideas are welcomed. MEDCO will learn how to develop and improve its program offerings by creating a forum for open, safe information sharing. How well MEDCO establishes an environment for discussions and learning will determine its social media growth and its ability to develop programs needed by the business community in Marion.

Five ways MEDCO can improve posts, “likes,” and engage communities are:

- Posting a clear value proposition that’s written into a short, easy-to-understand call to action.
- Using posts to ask for tips on business-related issues that foster discussion amongst fans.
- Shortening video posts to no longer than three minutes and three key messages.
- Reminding constituencies that MEDCO is there to help and ask them “how.”
- Creating a forum for business owners to discuss and solve issues – not always by responding, sometimes just by listening.

- Becoming further engaged means taking small steps to foster better dialogue between MEDCO's brand and constituencies and amongst the audiences themselves.

## NEGATIVE POSTS

MEDCO's fans have a right to their opinion, and occasionally that opinion may be less than favorable. The reality in today's social media environment is that there is no way to stop negative posts. One can think of these posts as the modern-day comment card that's no longer private and anonymous. Recognizing that these comments could be posted wide and far, it's critical that MEDCO set up some boundaries for responding. [1]

MEDCO will need to prepare to respond to negative posts and adopt a do-no-delete (DND) rule. The DND rule says that unless the content is obscene, profane, bigoted, or contains personal and private information, it should never be deleted. Anyone feeling wronged by mishandled posts can potentially turn to an even broader audience with their complaints and do even more significant damage to MEDCO's reputation. In the sphere of social media, a lack of response and/or a post deletion are not options that have ever proven to be a good solution. [1]

So, what's a company to do? Respond quickly to the negative post and then take the conversation private. The first step is to post a response that: (1) includes the person's name; (2) says that MEDCO is sorry they had a problem; and (3) says (publicly) that MEDCO will contact them in a private message to discuss the issue. The public post should immediately be followed by a private message that begins to resolve the issue. MEDCO has a small staff, but there should be someone always responsible for keeping an eye on social media and responding within 24 hours.

When responding, MEDCO shouldn't worry about admitting guilt. There are ways to express regret for the situation that include: [1]

- "I'm sorry you had that experience."
- "We're sorry you feel that way."
- "We're sorry you had a problem."
- "That sounds frustrating. I'm sorry you feel like that."

Although complaints must be addressed, it is essential to remember that some followers have more capacity to damage MEDCO's reputation than others, just based on their number of fans. As such, it is acceptable to respond to posts based on a commenter's online influence which can be checked at BuzzSumo, a service that ranks online presence.

When responding to negative posts, MEDCO has an opportunity to turn complainers into supporters. Remember that people want to be heard and have their issue addressed. If the person that made the post received an immediate response and had the problem resolved, they might be willing to report a happy outcome. What if they received more than they expected, some extra item to compensate them for the effort of complaining? They could be more than satisfied and be a dedicated fan.

Although MEDCO isn't providing a retail product or service, there is still the opportunity for its community to make negative posts about its services. Some sample posts and responses for handling these situations follow:

**POST:** The Loft overcharged me again for my shared workspace. When will MEDCO get it together?

**RESPONSE:** Janie, I'm so sorry to hear there was a problem with your invoice. I've sent you a private message, so we can get it resolved right away.

**POST:** Why is MEDCO spending so much time on manufacturing businesses? What about the little guy?

**RESPONSE:** John, I'm sorry it seems that way. MEDCO does our best to reach all businesses, big and small. We have an incubator program through The Loft to help the "little guys." I've sent you information via direct message and would love to sit down with you to discuss your business. (Link to Loft Start-Up Exchange: <http://www.medcoiowa.org/grow-your-business/loft-startup-exchange/>).

**POST:** Why does the city spend so much time trying to grow? I want Marion to stay the way it is.

**RESPONSE:** Darren, I'm sorry you feel that way. MEDCO works closely with the City of Marion to address ways to keep the small town feel while maintaining jobs, so people don't feel they have to leave Marion to find work. You are right that Marion is changing, but we're hoping it is for the better. We would love to have you involved in our planning processes. I've sent you a private message to see if there's a city committee you might want to join to help us better address your concerns.

**POST:** Why won't you help me with marketing assistance?

**RESPONSE:** Mary, I'm sorry for the confusion. The Kirkland SBDC can provide counseling services. I've sent you a private message so that you can connect with Debbie Vasa, their small business marketing consultant.

**POST:** How do I get my kid into the Community Promise program? It seems like your selection process is slanted toward certain families.

**RESPONSE:** Sherri, I'm sorry for any confusion about getting into the program. MEDCO works with Marion Independent and Linn-Mar school districts to find kids to participate in five disciplines (link: <http://www.medcoiowa.org/communitypromise/students-test/community-promise-job-profiles1/>). I've sent you a private message to find out where your child goes to school and the program of interest. After that, I can connect you with the right contact. Please note, because your child is a minor, let's be sure to keep the details private.

Remember that mistakes happen, but now those errors can be broadcast to all of your fans. Respond quickly, take the opportunity to reinforce MEDCO's values, and provide an authentic apology to avoid any damage to the company's reputation.

## POSITIVE POSTS

MEDCO has many fans and partners that provide unlimited support in social media, and they deserve some love too. Positive endorsements and conversations are powerful promotional tools that are potentially more important than how MEDCO handles negative comments. Saying "thank you, we're listening" is invaluable in showing MEDCO's appreciation for the support. [1]

When saying "thanks," MEDCO needs to determine its responding personality – painting a picture of a business-savvy, knowledgeable counselor that is always friendly. "Thanks for listening and contributing" or "Thanks for your comment, and keep sharing the good word," are ways MEDCO can tell fans it's listening. The social media voice that represents MEDCO's brand must convey the company's values and represent its public persona so that fans and prospects feel they know and trust the organization, just by conversing on social media. [1]

The tone of your brand's voice is incredibly important and must recognize the language of MEDCO. In other words, business-focused and supportive. The audience sets the tone on the post, for example: "Thanks for your support and feedback," versus "Thanks, dude," show the difference in audiences – adult versus teen. The nature of MEDCO's adult, business leaders, dictates that all conversations will be positive, but businesslike because that is the way the audience expects MEDCO to respond. [1]

What does MEDCO's voice sound like and how does MEDCO say "thank you" in its authentic, business voice? Again, saying "thanks" represents an opportunity to ingratiate ambassadors but also to remind prospects of MEDCO's values. Some examples follow: [1]

**Sean:** thanks so much for your feedback. MEDCO exists to help businesses in our community thrive. If you have any comments on how to promote our upcoming ribbon-cutting, let us know.

**Connie:** We're so glad you enjoyed the program at The Loft. We're dedicated to incubating Marion's small businesses for success. If you have other comments on how to improve our services, let us know.

MEDCO has an opportunity to build on good comments and conversations. By simply saying, "Thanks, please let others know.," MEDCO can amplify the positive. There's also an option to surprise MEDCO's brand ambassadors and expand their support with special event information, incentives, exclusive classes, or project updates. Remember that, by law, any pay-to-post scheme must be reported as part of the post. Cultivating ambassador support has the added benefit that they may come to the rescue (respond) when negative comments are posted about MEDCO.

# Content Calendar

*"Collaboration is a key part of the success of any organization, executed through a clearly defined vision and mission and based on transparency and constant communication."*

- Dinesh Paliwal

One of the critical components of social media success is organization. MEDCO's social media calendar can be broken into a variety of evergreen content – content that's prepared ahead of time – and breaking news. DHQM established content categories (and the associated hashtags). Recognizing that MEDCO has a small staff to manage social media, most of the content will be posted to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn with videos and reposts into YouTube and Google+.

## CONTENT CATEGORIES

The categories help to spread messages by audience and topic so that postings don't get redundant. The colors are represented on the actual calendar.

THEME	Business Inspiration	Technical Assistance	Partners / Influencers	Marion Milestones
CONCEPT	Scheduled content with day/month theme or inspiration. Provide content and/or request quotes that speak to growing small businesses.	Scheduled content that shares a hint or a problem about managing social media, accounting, staffing, technology, etc. Request ideas to solve or address.	Scheduled content for networking opportunities, partner services, or success of a valued influencer. Ask about others' experiences.	Unplanned stories about a local business, anniversary, opening, ribbon cutting, etc. Ask people to share their events for future posts.
MEDIA	Photo or GIF of quote. Finish with prompt.	Video - three key messages, less than three minutes.	Story or news release with a photo. Finish with prompt.	Video - three key messages, less than three minutes.
HASH	#INSPIREDBUSINESS	#SKILLS4BUSINESS	#MARIONPARTNERS	#MARIONMILESTONES

THEME	Future Focused	Sharing Success	Breaking News
CONCEPT	Scheduled content with links to news stories about cities and businesses of the future. Ask: Where will their business or organization be in 20 years?	Scheduled stories about MEDCO clients or development stores with a specific focus on the Loft initiatives. Ask what fans need for services.	Unplanned content to respond to area stories or issues learned from constituencies. Be sure to engage rather than announce whenever possible.
MEDIA	Prompt for discussion. Prepare to like and respond	Story or news release with a photo. Finish with prompt.	Story or news release with a photo.
HASH	#FUTUREOFBUSINESS	#MARIONSUCCESSSES	#MARIONBUSINESS

## PLATFORM DETAILS

While it's recommended, due to limited staffing, that content is shared across platforms; there should be slight changes in copy to match the platform goals as referenced in the platform summaries. Platform responsibilities, insights, and frequency follow.

	Facebook	Twitter	LinkedIn	Google+	YouTube
RESP	Emily	Michelle	Nick	Emily	Emily
FREQ	Daily	2-3x per week	2-3x per week	4x per month	4x per month
INSIGHTS	Engage, "likes," info source, community and discussions	News, ideas, customer service direct messages	Collaboration, Slideshare, and business development	Video, linked to Google search	Video demonstrations, corporate culture

## LINKABLE CALENDAR DAYS

Using annual celebrations and days of recognition help keep the content calendar interesting as a way to create buzz around events or issues. Calendar days relevant to MEDCO follow. [4]

<p><i>JANUARY</i>  <b><u>Clean Up Your Computer Month</u></b>                      Every January  <b><u>Show &amp; Tell At Work Day</u></b>                      Every January 8th  <b><u>Poetry at Work Day</u></b>                      9th January (Second Tuesday in January)  <b><u>International Fun at Work Day</u></b>                      26th January (Last Friday in January)</p> <p><i>FEBRUARY</i>  <b><u>Work Your Proper Hours Day</u></b>                      23rd February</p> <p><i>MARCH</i>  <b><u>Dribble to Work Day</u></b>                      Every March 14th  <b><u>Client's Day</u></b>                      Every March 19th  <b><u>International Ideas Month</u></b>                      Every March</p> <p><i>APRIL</i>  <b><u>Walk to Work Day</u></b>                      6th April (First Friday of April)  <b><u>Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day</u></b>                      Every April 16<sup>th</sup></p> <p><i>MAY</i>  <b><u>Accounting Day</u></b>                      14th May  <b><u>Bike to Work Day</u></b>                      18th May (Third Friday of May)</p>	<p><i>JUNE</i>  <b><u>Take Your Dog to Work Day</u></b>                      22nd June (First Friday after June 19th)  <b><u>Positive Media Day</u></b>                      Every June 22nd  <b><u>Social Media Day</u></b>                      Every June 30<sup>th</sup></p> <p><i>JULY</i>  <b><u>World Emoji Day</u></b>                      Every July 17th</p> <p><i>AUGUST</i>  <b><u>Work Like a Dog Day</u></b>                      Every August 5th</p> <p><i>SEPTEMBER</i>  <b><u>Bring Your Manners to Work Day</u></b>                      7th September (First Friday of September)  <b><u>Swap Ideas Day</u></b>                      Every September 10th  <b><u>Business Women's Day</u></b>                      Every September 22nd</p> <p><i>OCTOBER</i>  <b><u>Fair Trade Month</u></b>                      Every October  <b><u>Computer Learning Month</u></b>                      Every October  <b><u>Techies Day</u></b>                      Every October 3rd</p>	<p><i>OCTOBER - continued</i>  <b><u>Bring Your Teddy Bear to Work &amp; School Day</u></b>                      10th October (Second Wednesday of October)  <b><u>International Artists Day</u></b>                      Every October 25th</p> <p><i>NOVEMBER</i>  <b><u>International Project Management Day</u></b>                      1st November (First Thursday in November)  <b><u>Entrepreneurs' Day</u></b>                      20th November (Third Tuesday of November)  <b><u>Social Enterprise Day</u></b>                      15th November (Third Thursday in November)  <b><u>Computer Security Day</u></b>                      Every November 30th  <b><u>Small Business Saturday (US)</u></b>                      24th November (Sat after Thanksgiving in the U.S.)</p> <p><i>DECEMBER</i>  <b><u>Write a Business Plan Month</u></b>                      Every December  <b><u>Food Service Safety Month</u></b>                      Every December</p>
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# CONTENT CALENDAR: AUGUST 2018

## MEDCO SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CALENDAR | AUGUST 2018

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
Facebook:			Breaking News Update (or The Loft Focus)	Internal Promo: Co-working from The Loft manager.	FUTURE FRIDAY: From Forbes "The Future of Business Belongs To The 'Small Giants.'" Thoughts?		Work like a Dog Day. What's the hardest project you've had? Do you have advice on tackling tough projects?
Twitter			Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
LinkedIn			Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
Google+							
YouTube							
	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Facebook:	Shared story from sproutsocial.com on 8 trends that will take over social media in 2018	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	Breaking News Update (or consulting focus)	PHOTO: M Baker is celebrating it's 10th anniversary. What's your favorite M Bakers treat?	FUTURE FRIDAY: The Hill says tech is critical to the future of small business. Your thoughts? ( link)		
Twitter:	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
LinkedIn	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
Google+		repost					
YouTube		VIDEO: Five tips for better accounting					
	13	14	15	16	17	18	19
Facebook:	Michael John Bobak says, "All progress takes place outside the comfort zone." Your thoughts?	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	Breaking News Update (or Community Promise)	Internal Promo: Incubation successes from the team.	FUTURE FRIDAY: What will be missing from the workplace of the future?		
Twitter:	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update		repost & respond		
LinkedIn:	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update		repost & respond		
Google+:		repost					
YouTube		VIDEO: City Managers' Project Update					
	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
Facebook:	Shared story from sproutsocial.com on 10 ways to attract college students on social media	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	Breaking News Update (or Project Update)	PHOTO: Tate Manufacturing celebrates 20 years in Marion.	FUTURE FRIDAY: By 2023, 50% of the workforce will be freelance. How does Marion prepare?		
Twitter:	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
LinkedIn:	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
Google+:		repost					
YouTube		VIDEO: Tips for engaging social media.					
	27	28	29	30	31		
Facebook:	Chris Grosser says "Opportunities don't happen. You create them." Agree or disagree?	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	Breaking News Update (or Service Spotlight)	Internal Promo: The Community Promise Program from the team			
Twitter:	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond			
LinkedIn:	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond			
Google+:		repost					
YouTube:		VIDEO: Interview with Kirkland SBDC marketing services					

# CONTENT CALENDAR: SEPTEMBER 2018

## MEDCO SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT CALENDAR | SEPTEMBER 2018

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
						1	2
Facebook							
Twitter							
LinkedIn							
Google+							
YouTube							
	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
Facebook	"Success is walking from failure to failure with no loss of enthusiasm." - Winston Churchill	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	Breaking News Update (or consulting focus)	5th anniversary of the development at XX. What's a favorite memory to the business?	THEME: Bring Your Manners to Work Day - 7th (First Friday)		
Twitter	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
LinkedIn	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
Google+		repost					
YouTube		VIDEO: Best way to recruit new talent.					
	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
Facebook	THEME: Swap Ideas Day. What idea can you share to help a peer?	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	PROMOTE 9/22 EVENT for Business Women's Day	Highlight women-owned businesses that use the SBDC services (9/22 event)	FUTURE FRIDAY: Upcoming city infrastructure improvements. Open for comment.		
Twitter	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
LinkedIn	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
Google+		repost					
YouTube		VIDEO: Engaging social media with consultant					
	17	18	19	20	21	22	23
Facebook	Inspirational quotes from female entrepreneurs (promote 9/22 event)	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	PROMOTE 9/22 EVENT for Business Women's Day	Spotlight focus on local female-owned businesses. (Promote 9/22 event)	FUTURE FRIDAY: Forbes article link on 23 trends to shake up business. Ask questions.	THEME & EVENT: Business Women's Day	
Twitter	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond	repost & respond	
LinkedIn	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond	repost & respond	
Google+		repost					
YouTube		VIDEO: Best way to recruit new talent					
	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
Facebook	Summary of inspirational quotes and photos from the 9/22 event	TECHNICAL TUESDAY: Video tips and/or a link YouTube Post.	Breaking News Update (or Service Spotlight)	Summary of abilities opportunities for local businesses with influencer. Encourage questions.	FUTURE FRIDAY: What is the biggest challenge facing Marion's economic development?		
Twitter	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
LinkedIn	repost & respond	repost	Breaking News Update	repost & respond	repost & respond		
Google+		repost					
YouTube		VIDEO: Interview with city manager about Tax Increment Financing for business.					

# Building Relationships

*"Authentic brands don't emerge from marketing cubicles or advertising agencies. They emanate from everything the company does..."*

- Howard Schultz

## AUTHENTICITY

MEDCO's constituencies want to know that they are talking to or following an organization whose people empathize with their business goals or woes. The larger, or busier, an organization becomes, the more difficult to cater to customer's various needs. It's crucial to recognize that scripts and slogans won't garner support, instead, MEDCO needs to develop a method to be flexible and responsive to questions and discussions and provide a personal touch. A perfectly polished post isn't nearly as important as one that seems authentic and coming from a supportive team. [1]

With all the talk that goes on in social media and the knowledge that the "talk" is in the cloud forever, organizations feel compelled to "regulate" content. Those in the organization that see their role as one to protect the brand may get a bit overzealous about regulating MEDCO's discussions. Written guidelines about what can (and can't) be said, when it's acceptable to delete a post, and the tone of MEDCO's brand voice, will go a long way in establishing responses that everyone will find acceptable. [1]

We are all human, and mistakes are made. As part of the writing guidelines, it's essential to include a summary of how to deal with posts. Most likely, MEDCO can deal with issues by merely admitting the problem and providing a solution. [1]

MEDCO's constituencies want to know the people with whom they are interacting. Once a month, to personalize team members, take some pictures and tell fans about what that member team is working on that month. Humanizing team members will go a long way toward making prospects and customers feel comfortable asking for help and in giving referrals to others in the community. The more authentic a picture of the team members, the more connected constituencies will feel. [1]

The way MEDCO responds to questions or comments will quickly establish if the company cares about its constituencies. Some possible posts could look like the following, MEDCO needs to be authentic if it wants to garner fans. [1]

Inauthentic Voice	Authentic Voice
We don't have marketing counselors to service your business.	Thanks for contacting us. Our partner company for business counseling is the Kirkland SBDC. I've asked Melissa to contact you directly via messenger to help you with marketing plans. She can also be reached at 555-555-5555. Please let me know you've connected with Melissa.

We'll consider your comment.	Thanks so much for your feedback. We're hoping to add more spaces to our co-working spaces soon. Please "like" our FB page, and you'll receive regular updates on our progress.
We partner with the City of Marion to ensure business development.	We're so excited to be a part of the city's efforts to revitalize Marion. Future business growth will go a long way in helping to keep our citizens employed and thriving.
We know about the traffic issues and are addressing them.	You're right! That intersection has been difficult for MEDCO and the city's traffic engineers to reconfigure. We are working closely with them, and there's a city planning meeting next week (7p city hall) to finalize the plans. Please feel free to attend, have your opinion heard, and learn about the new ideas.
The deadline for Loft applications has ended.	We're so glad you're interested in opportunities at The Loft. We've reached the application deadline for this round, but please complete an application in August.

## HONESTY AND TRANSPARENCY

Social media consumers have become good at identifying who is behind most posts. It's critical that MEDCO staff identify themselves, and their affiliation with the organization when participating in social media. Honesty and transparency help cultivate a relationship with fans and prospects; any deviation from these values erodes trust in the long term. [1]

The Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) offers the following advice on proper social media language and behavior. WOMMA says "It's all about the Honesty ROI. Ethical word-of-mouth marketers strive for transparency and honesty in all communications with consumers, with advocates, and with those people to advocates speak to on behalf of a product:" [1]

- Honesty of Relationship – say whom you're speaking for
- Honesty of Opinion – say what you truly believe
- Honesty of Identity – say who you are

Transparency in communications follows these same lines: practice the "Golden Rule." People don't want to be misled or manipulated by organizations they follow on social media. Four guidelines on transparency follow: [1]

1. Payment: If MEDCO is receiving in-kind or paid services, make a note of it in posts
2. Sponsored Share Requests: It's great to ask for support from followers, but if they are receiving any support from MEDCO, it's critical that they disclose it.
3. Don't Hide: If MEDCO has something it needs to fix – do it. Don't try to cover it up on social media.
4. Name Names: Be sure viewers know who is posting. Fans want to hear from people in organizations more than the organizations.
5. Transparency: When confused about what should be posted - share.

MEDCO doesn't have to be the only source of information for businesses in Marion. If the staff is unaware of how to answer a question on the spot, say, "I don't know, but I'll find out and back to you with an answer."

Just as telling a fan that the company doesn't have an answer at that moment, MEDCO must take time to share its values and business insights. MEDCO needs to find ways to encourage discussion about its programs and services. Two things will come of the conversation: (1) a greater understanding of what constituents need, which will therein strengthen offerings; and (2) building trust and supporters for MEDCO which can help reach bigger audiences. [1]

## ASK MORE QUESTIONS

Social media users prefer a question to a statement because questions engage the viewer and encourage a response. MEDCO can guide the conversation without appearing overbearing and use questions to build dialog and engagement. Outside of items related to a specific post, MEDCO can pop the following questions to its community at any time, allowing MEDCO to become customer-focused marketers and use followers like free focus groups:

1. What would you like to see more of from MEDCO?
2. What business inspires you most?
3. Where have you used MEDCO's information or services?
4. When did you first come to MEDCO for assistance?
5. Why do you follow MEDCO?
6. What can MEDCO do better?
7. What do you think of our recent "name" project?

According to research by Likeable Media, the interaction rate for posts that included a question was above the average engagement rate for all other posts. Think of questions as a way for MEDCO build an emotional connection with consumers, generate discussion while keeping them coming back for more conversation. When fans contribute, MEDCO will find solutions from the very people that know it best – customers. MEDCO will learn from the wisdom of its supporters while helping them become even more invested in its success. [1]

Some ideas for MEDCO to build its fan base and generate conversations follow.

- Did you know that MEDCO and the City of Marion have 53 sites ready for businesses? Do you have ideas about other locations or companies that would appreciate our help?
- Have you heard about Community Promise? It's MEDCO's program to connect kids with future careers in Marion. Have you ever heard of a VDC Coordinator or a CAD Technician? Let us know your thoughts on future jobs for Marion's kids. Sign up for our Community Promise newsletter at <http://www.medcoiowa.org/communitypromise/community-promise/>.
- Did you know MEDCO helps businesses with location scouting, facilitating site visits, and providing general assistance? Do you know of a company that needs our help?
- What do you think about co-working spaces? Did you know Marion has a co-working space at 700 11th Street? MEDCO has a tour coming up soon. DM us to sign up.

- Are you the owner of a start-up in Marion? Do you feel like you're operating your business on an island? Tell us how we can help and check out our Startup Exchange at <http://www.medcoiowa.org/grow-your-business/loft-startup-exchange/>.
- Keep the conversation going, stimulate discussion, and use your fans as a free focus group to keep MEDCO's offerings fresh.

# Event Plan

*We see our customers as invited guests to a party, and we are the hosts. It's our job every day to make every important aspect of the customer experience a little bit better.*

- Jeff Bezos

## BUSINESS OF THE YEAR EVENT PLAN

**When Local Businesses Win, We All Succeed. #VoteMarionWins**

### VISION

#### WHAT

- A voting campaign for "MEDCO's Business of the Year" in Marion
- Ask followers to vote for a MEDCO client (nominees will be selected by the MEDCO board and staff)
- Do a live feed of the winner's location on Entrepreneurs' Day, November 20.

#### WHY

- To highlight the successes of businesses in Marion
- Show, by telling the story of each nominated business, how MEDCO helps local businesses thrive
- To learn about more how the community views MEDCO services

#### WHERE

- Post voting ballot on Facebook. Stories and news can be posted to Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn.
- Do a Facebook Live event at the winner's location providing recognition of the event and free advertising to that business
- Videotape the award and post to YouTube and Google+

### GOALS

#### INCREASE FACEBOOK FOLLOWERS BY 20%

At 745 Facebook followers, many of whom are partners, and a population of over 38,000 people in Marion alone, MEDCO can grow its Facebook presence. Facebook is the best platform on which to promote the voting. The ballot can be promoted in other platforms, thereby in increasing Facebook followers

#### BUILDING ENGAGEMENT AND 20% MORE LIKES

MEDCO has 745 Facebook, 457 Twitter, and 419 LinkedIn followers. By placing the ballot on Facebook and referencing it back on other platforms, MEDCO has the opportunity to build followers in all forums. Additionally, posting individual stories of each nominated business will provide recognition of MEDCO's services and garner likes.

### **FOSTER AWARENESS THROUGH PAGE VIEWS AND 200+ VOTES**

Building buzz for the nominations, providing compelling stories, and asking people to vote for local businesses will expand MEDCO exposure to the business community outside of the existing constituency. MEDCO should remind its nominees to tell their friends and family to vote and like the event's posts.

## **EVENT SCHEDULE**

<b>Item</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Facebook (repost in Twitter &amp; LinkedIn)</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>Event Release</b>	11/1	Announce event, process, etc.	Logo
	11/5	Repost & promoted post	Logo
<b>Announce Nominees</b>	11/8	Announce nominees in total	Photo
	11/8	Repost & promoted post	Photo collage
<b>Nominee Story (1)</b>	11/12	One story about nominee; ballot link	Photo
<b>Nominee Story (2)</b>	11/13	One story about nominee; ballot link	Photo
<b>Nominee Story (3)</b>	11/14	One story about nominee; ballot link	Photo
<b>Recast Nominees</b>	11/15	Stories and nominees; link to the ballot	Photo collage
<b>Nominees in Total</b>	11/16	Repost and end of voting	Pic: end of the vote
<b>Finalize Winner</b>	11/17	Team Meeting, create content, finalize event	
<b>Promote Announcement</b>	11/19	Recast nominees, promo Facebook Live announcement	
<b>Facebook Life</b>	11/20	Live event announcement at nominee business. Get MEDCO staff and local, recognizable business dignitary (influencer) to present winner.	Video
<b>Formal Announcement</b>	11/20	Link to event video (also posted to YouTube and Google+)	Photo/Video Link
<b>Formal Announcement</b>	11/21 & 27	Repost & promoted post	Photo/Video Link
<b>Thank You</b>	11/28	Thank you to those that voted with a summary	Photo

## **SAMPLE POSTS**



Vote for your favorite Marion business. Cast your ballot for MEDCO's Business of the Year. On the 8th, we'll announce the MEDCO nominees for the business of the year. Link to the ballot and cast your vote. Tell your Marion friends and neighbors to vote to at [FB.com/medcoiowa/vote](https://www.facebook.com/medcoiowa/vote). Because when local businesses succeed, we all win. #VoteMarionWins.



We know who they are! Meyer Industrial, Glazier Creamery, and Johnson Manufacturing have been nominated for MEDCO Business of the Year. Cast your vote by 11/16 and learn who won at our Facebook Live even on 11/20. Tell your Marion friends and neighbors to vote to at [FB.com/medcoiowa/vote](https://www.facebook.com/medcoiowa/vote). Because when local businesses succeed, we all win. #VoteMarionWins.



Link to Facebook Live on 11/20 at [FB.com/medcoiowa](https://www.facebook.com/medcoiowa) and see the winner of MEDCO's Business of the Year awards. Because when local businesses succeed, we all win. #VoteMarionWins.

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# Creating Value & Interest

*“Online hierarchies are inherently dynamic. The moment someone stops adding value to the community, influence starts to wane.”*

- Gary Hamel

## PROVIDING VALUE

Traditionally, competitive value was in what an organization knew. In today’s connected society, an organization can’t be successful without sharing its expertise and adding value to anyone that happens to read the post, including the competition. [1]

Providing valuable information about what MEDCO knows allows local fans and prospects to understand MEDCO’s brand and capabilities. Creating value can come from sharing posts about:

- The things business owners find necessary
- White papers regarding business development
- A “Ten Things You Didn’t Know About Business Development” blog split up to be one weekly topic as part of a ten-week series.

Highlighting MEDCO’s expertise via sharing doesn’t mean that it will lose prospects or give away valuable intelligence. Instead, it will reinforce its skills and capabilities to fans and targets. [1]

What should MEDCO discuss? The answer is in what MEDCO’s customers need to know to help them be successful. In social sharing, MEDCO’s isn’t so much promoting its specific services as providing compelling customer-focused content that helps build the perception of the organization’s expertise, reputation, and credibility. [1]

## TELLING STORIES

Stories bring people and organizations to life – they cater to the reader’s imagination and find connections. Bring MEDCO to life by creating an emotional bond with fans, prospects, and the community. These stories are free – or nearly so – but consumers are in control of what they think is valuable and inspirational. Some questions to ask in developing MEDCO’s stories include: [1]

### PERSONALIZING MEDCO

- How did MEDCO get its start? The information is on the website, but how does MEDCO make it live on social media?

- In a more significant sense, how much has MEDCO contributed in economic value to Marion (i.e., jobs, taxes, etc.)?

### PERSONALIZING MEDCO CUSTOMERS

- What key businesses has MEDCO helped? How can social media highlight MEDCO services?
- What things happen when developing businesses? Was there a family of birds that had to be moved to clear a site? Did a business forget a part of a process and seek MEDCO's help?
- What key business leader's faces can you post? They will draw in other followers by "liking" the content MEDCO posts about them.

### PERSONALIZING MEDCO STAFF

- How has working for MEDCO changed the staff?
- Do the staff have stories about ways they helped businesses?
- How does MEDCO celebrate after helping businesses?

A picture is worth a thousand words. Great photos and/or video will be critical to MEDCO's social media stories. Take advantage of recognizable community faces and by tagging all the participants in a photo or video on the platforms. If they "like" the content, that opens MEDCO to their friends. Note that there's nothing wrong with checking how much influence a given fan has by checking their fan count at BuzzSumo.com. [1]

When creating photos and videos, use the guidelines about video creation from the book "Likeable Social Media," by Dave Kerpen: [1]

- Use an inexpensive camera. There's usually no reason to spend money on expensive equipment for social media.
- Keep videos short and sweet. People have short attention spans, particularly on mobile devices; 30 seconds to 2 minutes maximum.
- Share videos everywhere. MEDCO can utilize the videos on all platforms.
- Have fun with it. How much MEDCO enjoys the process will be reflected in the final product.

## PROVIDING INSPIRATION

So, MEDCO has begun to show fans how to share stories by sharing its own fantastic story. According to Dave Kerpen, "the only thing better than sharing your company's stories on social networks is inspiring your customers and fans to share theirs." MEDCO should ask: [1]

- What stories will create "buzz" and get MEDCO's social media community talking?
- Who is most inspired by MEDCO? Out of the chief fans, who are the most fervent influencers?
- How does MEDCO get its influencers to share stories that highlight MEDCO's services?
- What tools do influencers need to get talking about MEDCO in social media?

One option to get the community talking is to have a MEDCO #BOM! Highlighting a successful MEDCO “business of the month” (BOM) and their employees via a short video would help to broaden MEDCO’s fan base and build credibility. At the end of the video, ask followers to share their stories about business in Marion. The post doesn’t have to be specific to MEDCO, those included in the footage will reshare the video. The post gets the conversation going and continues to broaden MEDCO’s fan base through shares and “likes.” [1]

MEDCO’s social media must include opportunities to highlight expertise through valuable insights, telling stories and providing inspiration. Giveaways and promotions are less likely in the non-profit sector but some great examples of giving essential resources to the community, sometimes without explicitly focusing on MEDCO. The next section on evergreen content will help to highlight the following items visually. [1]

### **INFOGRAPHICS**

- 10 Steps to a Business Plan
- How to make Site Selection
- Marion’s Target Industries

### **STORY LINKS**

- Marketers Will Deliver on Brand Promise or Be Left Behind
- 4 Ways Leaders Can Protect Their Time and Empower Their Teams
- Small Towns as Business Incubators

### **INTERACTIVE**

- The Loft Coworking

### **VIDEO**

- What is Community Promise

# Evergreen Content

*"Sharing experiences rather than prescriptive advice is like giving someone the tools they need to problem solve on their own and become successful."*

- Brandon Webb, The Power of Thought: Core Principles to Overcome Adversity and Achieve Success

## EVERGREEN CONTENT

MEDCO's social media must include opportunities to highlight expertise through valuable insights, telling stories and providing inspiration. Some examples of providing essential resources to the community - sometimes without explicitly focusing on MEDCO services - include business-related storytelling with infographics, links to business stories, and informational videos. Sample content and links for the graphics and/or stories, follow.

### INFOGRAPHICS

#### 10 Steps to a Business Plan



LINK TO GRAPHIC:  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAC97EqYVWw/share?role=EDITOR&token=sq57vOUi\\_HaTXRGyv5T9g&utm\\_content=DAC97EqYVWw&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAC97EqYVWw/share?role=EDITOR&token=sq57vOUi_HaTXRGyv5T9g&utm_content=DAC97EqYVWw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton)

#### How to Complete Site Selection



LINK TO GRAPHIC:  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAC97eVP1CM/share?role=EDITOR&token=5398KpBU1OKgyvBwq32Vig&utm\\_content=DAC97eVP1CM&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAC97eVP1CM/share?role=EDITOR&token=5398KpBU1OKgyvBwq32Vig&utm_content=DAC97eVP1CM&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton)

### Marion's Target Industries



LINK TO GRAPHIC:  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAC-ARvkxxw/share?role=EDITOR&token=G5dvg8tjd1oOdYMn8wS4Xw&utm\\_content=DAC-ARvkxxw&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAC-ARvkxxw/share?role=EDITOR&token=G5dvg8tjd1oOdYMn8wS4Xw&utm_content=DAC-ARvkxxw&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton)

### BUSINESS STORY LINKS

#### Brand Promise



LINK TO GRAPHIC:  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAC9\\_UFD560/share?role=EDITOR&token=PDH4-3\\_LFwf1PXmmzeFuSg&utm\\_content=DAC9\\_UFD560&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAC9_UFD560/share?role=EDITOR&token=PDH4-3_LFwf1PXmmzeFuSg&utm_content=DAC9_UFD560&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton)

LINK TO STORY:  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forrester/2017/11/09/in-2018-marketers-will-deliver-on-brand-promise-or-be-left-behind/#77ff55064bb6>

#### Empowering Teams



LINK TO GRAPHIC:  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAC9\\_QH5Jzo/share?role=EDITOR&token=Im0GeK\\_US3139s4R2UsXBlw&utm\\_content=DAC9\\_QH5Jzo&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAC9_QH5Jzo/share?role=EDITOR&token=Im0GeK_US3139s4R2UsXBlw&utm_content=DAC9_QH5Jzo&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton)

LINK TO STORY:  
<https://hbr.org/2018/07/4-ways-leaders-can-protect-their-time-and-empower-their-teams>

### Small Town Business Incubators



LINK TO GRAPHIC:  
[https://www.canva.com/design/DAC9\\_YhR62U/share?role=EDITOR&token=b46\\_uYGM8KBsS59T2PWirA&utm\\_content=DAC9\\_YhR62U&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAC9_YhR62U/share?role=EDITOR&token=b46_uYGM8KBsS59T2PWirA&utm_content=DAC9_YhR62U&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=sharebutton)  
LINK TO STORY:  
<https://www.score.org/blog/small-towns-business-incubators>

## INTERACTIVE

### What is The Loft Coworking?



LINK TO GRAPHIC: <https://www.thinglink.com/scene/1076902105932890115>

## VIDEO

### What is Community Promise?



Link to Video: <https://spark.adobe.com/video/gRsEIBVMZkg3l>

# Understanding Advertising

*“Content builds relationships. Relationships are built on trust. Trust drives revenue.”*

– Andrew Davis

## ADVERTISING

In the world of social marketing, word-of-mouth marketing takes on new and vital implications. When people see a great restaurant that was liked by a few Facebook friends, they feel compelled to check it out see if it’s worth all the buzz. MEDCO has an opportunity to use social media advertising to create a buzz about its content and about how it can help local industries. [1]

MEDCO hopes to help businesses thrive in Marion for a very long time. The same should be considered when thinking about social media posts and advertising alike. It’s about starting and continuing a conversation; to build trust and develop relationships for the long-term. By gaining a “like” in any of the social media platforms, MEDCO has volumes of supporters that will help it create appropriate services, reach new business, and help Marion’s companies to be successful. For all MEDCO advertising, the company will need to establish clear guidelines about the purpose of the ad. Is it meant to drive traffic to the website or landing page? Is the ad supposed to get people to come to a Loft tour? There’s no point in paying to advertise if the goals are set before starting. Discussion of advertising by platform follows. [1]

## FACEBOOK

All of today’s social media platforms provide options for advertising, however, according to the book “Likeable Social Media,” by Dave Kerpen, “Facebook’s ad unit has the most potential for segmentation by audience.” Because many of MEDCO’s fans – those people that have “liked” MEDCO content – will have similar target audience characteristics for MEDCO, the company can use Facebook’s segmentation tools like a word-of-mouth database provided by its fans. [1]

MEDCO has three options for “Friends of Connections” ads on Facebook. According to Kerpen, “Facebook allows you to target your precise demographic with the exact call to action to fit the campaign needs.” For MEDCO, the focus of the ads can be: [1]

1. Driving traffic and leads to the MEDCO website or an event landing page
2. Post “likes” and engagement by boosting specific posts for increased reach

Beyond just reaching the friends of fans, MEDCO can use their data characteristics to create a demographic profile for Facebook and, where applicable, other platforms. Some search options could include:

### LOCATION:

- A 60-minute radius of Marion, Iowa and Cedar Rapids, Iowa

**DEMOGRAPHICS:**

- 25- to 55-years-old
- Working professional
- Homeowner
- College educated and/or MBA
- Household earnings: \$150,000 to \$250,000
- Titles: entrepreneur, business owner, principal, CFO, CEO, or COO

**INTERESTS:**

- Wine tasting
- Luxury cars
- Travel
- Continuing business education
- Gourmet cooking
- Dining out

**BEHAVIOR:**

- Recently attended a business conference
- Watches business news (CNBC Business, MSNBC, Business Nightly)
- Recent global travel
- High-level frequent flyer
- Connections:
- Current fans
- Friends of existing fans

Facebook will allow MEDCO to advertise to “look alike” audiences or make custom searches for advertising about a specific part of its offerings or certain types of customers. Custom keyword searches specific to areas of MEDCO are:

- **Community Promise:** Recruiting, teen job training, talent search, internships
- **The Loft:** Coworking, shared workspace, office rental, office lease, professional space
- **Incubator:** Business collaboration, think tanks, shared knowledge
- **Business Titles:** Owner, CFO, CEO, COO, Principal, Business Owner, Operations Manager

Kerpen notes that people are on social media to connect with others, not to purchase products. He also says that the visual is the most critical element of a Facebook ad and that one can try any number of ads (different visuals, headlines, copy) for the same price to determine what works best. MEDCO must give constituencies a reason to engage with MEDCO’s fan page. As such, MEDCO’s advertising needs to stay focused on providing a basis for the audience to link to MEDCO’s fan page and remain a fan or become a follower. [1]

Social media advertising is one of the most affordable forms of advertising. Kerpen notes that there are three options for purchasing ads, but that CPC or CPA (described below) is recommended so that MEDCO has a guarantee of how many actions it will receive for the money:

- **CPM:** Cost per Thousand Impressions – just views, no action
- **CPC:** Cost per Click – trackable as payment is only required when clicked
- **CPA:** Cost per Action – trackable as payment is only required upon the scripted action

## TWITTER

Like Facebook, Twitter allows nearly the same type of demographic selection, but another attractive option is to select the Twitter handles of followers, competitors, or partners of MEDCO; for example, the county's economic development corporation or the Kirkland SBDC. The keywords for MEDCO's offerings like business education, business development or entrepreneur as referenced in previous sections will help refine the audience reach but are broader than Facebook and therefore not as targeted. [1]

In Kerpen's book, his company suggests the following advertising guidelines as an acronym for Tweeting:

T: Trust building. Build a relationship.

W: Wisdom. Learn from industry leaders and your customers.

E: Ears open. Listen to the conversation.

E: Establish your brand. Create a strong presence.

T: Teach. Tell the world about what you do.

## LINKEDIN

Business is the business of MEDCO, so LinkedIn's platform for business professionals is an excellent place to post but perhaps not advertise. It has the CPC and CPM models, but on a Hubspot.com blog by Olivia Allen, she writes that the click-through-rate for LinkedIn is pretty low – 1 in 500 versus Facebook's 1 in 200 - and that it's normal to pay up to four or five dollars per click. While, according to Kerpen, the transparency of seeing who pasted the advertisement is "refreshing" and LinkedIn offers targeting criteria to reach professionals like those listed in the demographics section of Facebook above, LinkedIn may be a consideration for a later ad trial. [1][5]

# Advertising for Impact

*“People want to do business with you because you help them get what they want. They don’t do business with you to help you get what you want.”*

– Don Crowther

## SOCIAL MEDIA ADVERTISING

Based on the information provided in the previous section on advertising on the various social media platforms, DHQM is recommending that MEDCO place advertising on Facebook and Twitter. Catering to a slightly older, professional population, Facebook provides an opportunity to build recognition for MEDCO’s Community Promise program through a targeted ad specifically for business owners, human resource managers, and senior business managers. Twitter, with a slightly younger professional audience, is an ideal place to promote a Tweet about tours at The Loft co-working space.

	<b>FACEBOOK</b>	<b>TWITTER</b>
<b>PROMOTION</b>	The Promise of Community Promise	Tours at The Loft
<b>TYPE OF AD</b>	Targeted Ad	Promoted Tweet
<b>TIMELINE</b>	One month before registration	One month before registration
<b>AD TYPE</b>	CPC: Cost per Click (click here for more information)	CPA: Cost per Alick (click here to register)
<b>BUDGET</b>	\$100 max	\$50 max
<b>GOALS</b>	Increase business registration by 10% and create awareness of the program	Increase participation in tours by 50%
<b>SEGMENT</b>	A business owner with 50+ employees (see search criteria below)	Sole proprietor, consultant, creative or IT professional (see search criteria below)
<b>AD SETUP CRITERIA</b>	60 miles from Marion, Iowa Male or Female, aged 35-50 Title: business owner, human resources manager, operations manager, engineering manager, innovation manager Follows: Chamber of Commerce, City of Marion, business news, graduate education programs	60 miles from Marion, Iowa Male or Female, aged 25-35 IT, graphic design, consulting, communications, marketing, creative, social media consultant, innovator, Other businesses: Iowa SBDC @IowaSBDC; Entrepreneurial Center (@edcinc123); New Bohemian Entrepreneurial Collaborative

	Interests: Fine dining, luxury cars, travel, wine, gourmet cooking, continuing education	(@NewBoCo); Iowa's Entrepreneur Conference (@EntreFEST); UI Pappajohn Entrepreneurial Center (@IowaJPEC); 1MC CR (@1MillionCupsICR)
<b>EVALUATION</b>	Check metrics to determine reach and actual registration	Check parameters to assess the scope and actual registration

## SAMPLE FACEBOOK AD

(video: <https://spark.adobe.com/video/pYPs00Uqwls6C>)



**MEDCO Iowa**  
Aug 1



**Help your business find talent for the future. Join MEDCO's Community Promise and help students learn valuable career skills that will help keep Marion's economy strong. MEDCO does the work, you get the talent - contact us today.**

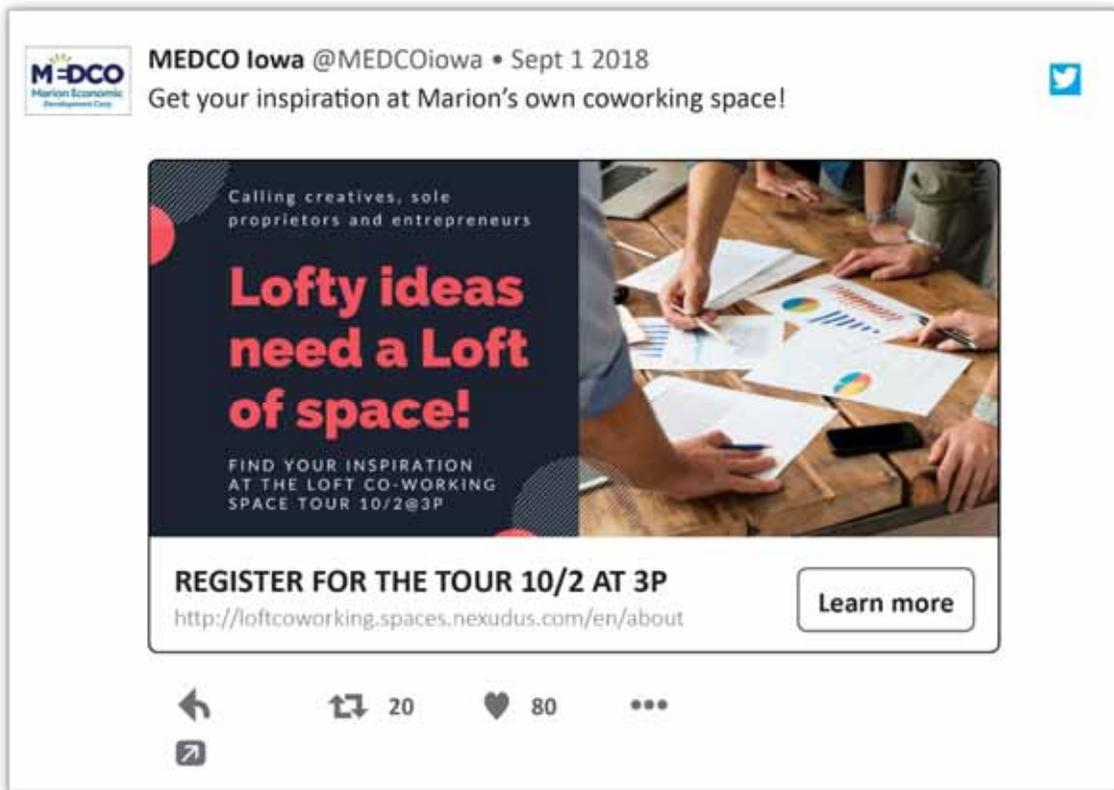


**Students + Business = Careers in Marion**  
**Check out this video for your business and contact MEDCO today.**

<http://www.medcoiowa.org/communitypromise/business/>

Sign Up

## SAMPLE TWITTER AD



**MEDCO Iowa** @MEDCOiowa • Sept 1 2018  
Get your inspiration at Marion's own coworking space!

Calling creatives, sole proprietors and entrepreneurs

**Lofty ideas need a Loft of space!**

FIND YOUR INSPIRATION AT THE LOFT CO-WORKING SPACE TOUR 10/2@3P

**REGISTER FOR THE TOUR 10/2 AT 3P**  
<http://loftcoworking.spaces.nexusdus.com/en/about>

Learn more

Retweets: 20 | Likes: 80

# Staying Relevant

*“Smart companies have realized that customer loyalty is the most powerful sales and marketing tool that they have.*

– Bill Price, Founder of Driva Solutions

## MISTAKES HAPPEN

Social media photos, content, and products or services can be misunderstood by constituencies. People understand that mistakes are made, the question of maintaining loyalty from fans is in how a company deals with errors.

In Dave Kerpen’s book, “Likeable Social Media,” he says that everyone makes mistakes, so it’s inevitable that companies will occasionally get customers upset. The critical thing to do in that circumstance is to have the highest-ranking person in the organization make an apology through video. The video - brief to respect people’s time - should be no more than three minutes, it should address the problem and how the issue will be remedied. A video is better than a note because it humanizes the company. [1]

## PLAN FOR THE WORST

Planning saves everyone from inappropriate or inconsistent responses to a crisis. Key leaders and board members of MEDCO need to approve emergency responses – before the crisis exists. As such, it’s in everyone’s best interest to agree on how MEDCO will create appropriate responses.

The best way to approach crisis communication is first to search to determine if there are other companies like MEDCO that have experienced a crisis. For example, was an organization the company helped, in default of its loans or responsibilities? Was there some fraud at a customer organization? Was there shooting or theft?

Next, determine what “sample” crisis the team and work with to create standard responses. Simple, direct language is the best choice. The more relaxed the expression, the more real it feels. Frame out how MEDCO will show that it genuinely cares, how it will apologize and how the problem will be solved. Once the team has a general idea of how to say the company is sorry and explain the resolution, then get approval from all interested parties and identify the team responsible for responding. In the best-case planning scenario, MEDCO has no crisis. In the worst case, the company can react quickly to issues and avoid any damage to its reputation. [1]

For the longer term, remember that saying sorry is the start of managing MEDCO’s reputation and/or crisis in social media. Integrating the kind of active listening discussed through this report, regardless of an issue will help MEDCO deal with an emergency if it comes.

## ALWAYS BRING HAPPINESS

MEDCO has an opportunity to stand out in the community as a resource and valuable partner in keeping Marion economically viable. Determine the little things that make customers happy and deliver.

Remember, on social media, MEDCO isn't just competing for the attention of its current fans but with all the brands and companies that are followed by friends of your fans. [1]

Some options for joining – and staying – in the conversation include:

- Respond to questions about Marion that aren't about MEDCO specifically.
- Provide unexpected value, like a Tweet about tax incentives or a Facebook post about a city seminar.
- Create questions or polls that bring people closer to MEDCO's services to strengthen the brand and an emotional connection (i.e., voting for Business of the Year).
- Cultivate relationships with people outside of MEDCO's normal reach. Perhaps host a Facebook live event where the city manager answers questions about zoning.

# Reflection

*“Social media is about the people! Not about your business. Provide for the people and the people will provide you.”*

– Matt Goulart

**DHQM has enjoyed learning about MEDCO services and providing guidance about how MEDCO can develop and refine its social media efforts. There are incredible opportunities for the company to increase its reach, toot its horn, and learn more about what services are required by the Marion business community - all of which can be harnessed through effective social media outreach.**

## **A 10 PERCENT INCREASE IN SOCIAL MEDIA ENGAGEMENT IS POSSIBLE**

Using the examples of customer interactions, successes, and services in the Building Relationships section of the plan, MEDCO can engage and learn about what its constituencies need, while the Evergreen Content provided will serve to fill out content for the social media calendar.

## **MEDCO CAN GET THE COMMUNITY EXCITED ABOUT CO-WORKING AND INCUBATORS**

In both the Evergreen Content and the two Advertising sections of the plan, DHQM provides ways for MEDCO to highlight its co-working and incubator programs monthly.

## **MEDCO CAN INCREASE DAILY WEEKDAY CONTENT WITHOUT OVERWORKING STAFF**

By using an active content calendar that organizes content thematically, reuses content, and organizes information, MEDCO can easily increase its weekday postings and create discussions. The Evergreen Content, Advertising and Event sections of the plan will build the foundation for other post concepts.

# Citations & Resources

**[1]** Likeable Social Media: How to Delight Your Customers, Create an Irresistible Brand, and Be Amazing on Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Pinterest, and More. Dave Kerpen - McGraw-Hill - 2015

**[2]** "How to Choose a Social Media Platform for Your Business." *How to Choose a Social Media Platform for Your Business*, ThriveHive.com, 20 Apr. 2018, <https://thrivehive.com/comparing-social-media-platforms-for-marketing/>.

**[3]** "Most Popular Social Networks Worldwide as of July 2018." *Most Popular Social Networks Worldwide as of July 2018*. Statista. July 2018, <https://www.statista.com/statistics/272014/global-social-networks-ranked-by-number-of-users/>

**[4]** "Days of the Year." *Days of the Year*. July 2018. <https://www.daysoftheyear.com/>

**[5]** "Which Social Network Should You Advertise On?" *Which Social Network Should You Advertise On?* Hubspot.com, July 28, 2017, <https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/social-network-advertising#sm.0001awztn7177afzulknzouiv4s>