

Always Have Something to Share on Social Media by Building An Online Library By Edie Melson

I teach writers how to build an online platform by investing thirty- minutes a day in social media. I do this by utilizing a scheduling program (my favorite is Hootsuite). But, I also caution them not to spend much time talking about themselves, reminding them about Edie's 5 to 1 rule.

Remember, social media is not advertising. It's a way of connecting with others online. These connections will come into play and be your cheerleaders when you are promoting a book or sharing something you care about. But we don't start with what's in it for us, we start with what's in it for them.

The key to only spending a short time each day scheduling social media updates, is having a ready library of things to share. This concept will allow you to have the resources you need—always on hand—for valuable social media updates.

The Basics

Before you can build a library of resources, you need a focus for your social media updates. Your social media personality needs to have a focus. Just like an unfocused blog, a social media personality that posts about everything under the sun isn't going to garner many followers. It doesn't have to be just one things, but it should be well-defined.

My focus for social media updates covers four areas (yours will probably be something different, but that's okay. The process is the same). These are the four primary topics I share about on social media:

- Social media how-to for writers, business owners, non-profits, and ministries.
- Writing instruction and inspiration.
- Creativity & Photography.
- Inspirational Thoughts

I go to three places to find things to share on these topics.

- Blogs and sites I read regularly (I make sure I get email notification when something new is shared on one of these sites).
- Social media updates that others share.
- Hashtags and people I follow on social media—especially on Twitter.

I refer to these resources as my library. But they are only helpful if I already have them close at hand. If I have to spend time searching through websites or scanning social media every time I want to schedule updates, thirty- minutes isn't nearly long enough.

Building the Library

I recommend you take several days and up to a week to build your basic library. I also suggest that you're always adding to it as you find a valuable site and/or person. I do this in three ways.

1. Subscribe to Relevant Blogs

I take time to research topics I'm interested in and sign up for blog/website updates to come into

my inbox every time there's a new article and/or post. That way, I have a ready-to-hand list of things constantly coming into my inbox daily. I do the research by searching on google.

2. Find Valuable Social Media Accounts

Here's how I research social media:

- **Search General Topics**

I'd type "Social Media Tips for Writers" in the search engine box. I'd begin to read through the articles and posts that come up. I would continue to do this with slightly different searches, like, "Blogging for writers," "Authors and Social Media," etc. I would look for sites that come up again and again because they're probably the most valuable.

- **Research Updates**

I would spend several sessions—over several different days—scrolling through social media updates (particularly Facebook). I'm looking for other sites people I respect share regularly, and I'm looking for specific accounts that share their own updates regularly.

- **Cross Reference Accounts**

Next, I look at all the places/accounts/people I've found that I can share information from and I cross reference them—looking for them in different places. For example, @SocialMediaExaminer is also on Facebook, so I Liked their page, and they have a blog, so I signed up for email updates when they put up a new blog post.

- **Hashtags**

I would search for specific hashtags and accounts on Twitter that pertain to the subject I want to share on social media. To find the best hashtags to search for, I'd again start on Google (yes, Google). I type the following into the Google search box, "Best hashtags for Writers" or "Best hashtags for Christian Writers."

Once I have the most valuable hashtags, I make a stream on Hootsuite of just that particular hashtag.

As I'm researching hashtags, I'm going to come across some Twitter accounts that have lots of things about social media (one I follow on Twitter and FB is the @SocialMediaExaminer). I would also make a stream for these type of accounts.

3. Compile a List of Other Online Resources

Finally, I make a go-to list either in a spreadsheet or word document. This is a list of all the websites/blogs I can go to if I can't find anything in my inbox or on social media.

Now you can see why I say a few days up to a week to assemble all this information.

But once you have this information close at hand, you can easily spend no more than thirty-minutes a day scheduling valuable social media updates.