

## CHAPTER

# 3

# Identifying Target Audiences

Precise targeting of audiences of all kinds has always been a hallmark of data-driven marketing. That is especially true of digital marketing. SMM has

added not only huge quantities of behavioral data but also types of targeting not imagined in other marketing channels.



## The Importance of Targeting in SMM

Marketers have long recognized the importance of identifying the target market for their product or service. Digital marketing in general and SMM in particular has added measurably to their toolkit for targeting.

### WHAT IS TARGETING IN SMM?

If your answer to that question is “getting the right message to the right person” you are partially correct. However, that is a traditional media answer, not a digital one. The Content Marketing Institute identifies the challenge for digital marketers as being:

The right **person** to get

The right **content**

At the right **place**

At the right **time**

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this chapter students will be able to:

- Explain the importance of audience targeting in SMM
- Describe the SMM targeting process
- Define *big data* and explain its role in SMM targeting
- Discuss what a persona is and how a marketer goes about creating one
- Describe the contents of an SMM media plan
- Explain what optimization means in SMM

(Continued)

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- Discuss uses of keywords, hashtags, and emojis in targeting branded posts
- Identify best practices for targeting branded posts

In the right **format**  
In the right **language**  
On the right **device**<sup>1</sup>

That is a formidable challenge! Data and tools associated with social media are available to help marketers meet it.

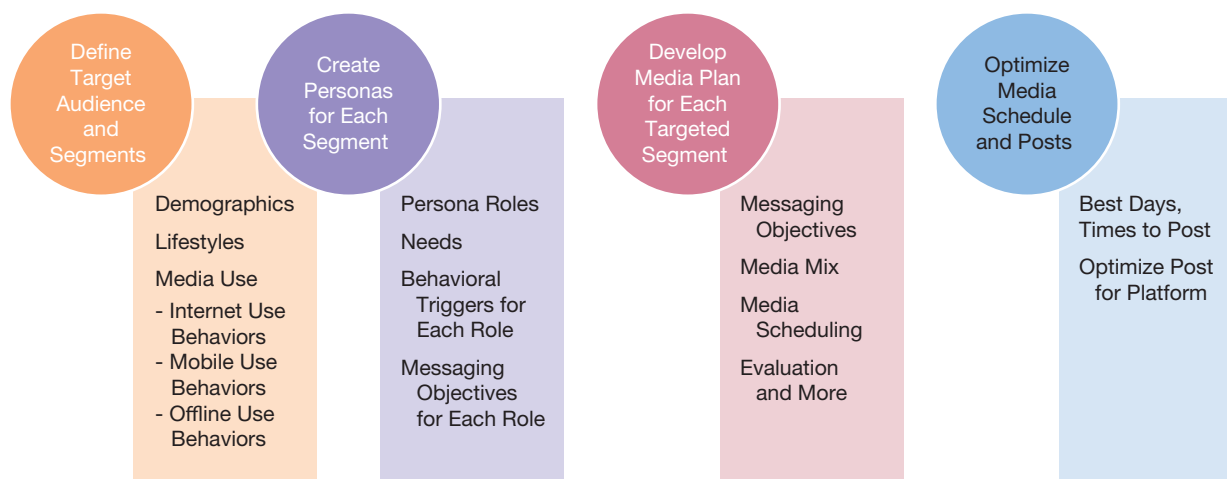
## The Targeting Process in SMM

The most common characteristics marketers use to identify and profile target markets are demographics, geographics, and lifestyles or psychographics. Behavioral data, what people are doing (or what they tell marketing researchers they are doing), has always been part of the process but has become more valuable as a result of the actual (not reported) behaviors provided by digital marketing. Digital marketing has added a wealth of data from the online clickstream to the basic “what did they buy, which promotion did they buy it from” data of the offline direct marketer. Social media has added some interesting additional features. We will, for instance, discuss targeting by emoji later in this chapter.

Identifying and segmenting the target market is a key marketing activity. However, it is not the last step before a promotional campaign is launched. Rarely does the marketer want to reach the entire target market—all the market segments—with one campaign or one message. Usually the campaign is designed for a single market segment. In digital marketing, it is possible to fine-tune targeting beyond the entire market segment to a small target audience, often behaviorally defined, that will be especially receptive to a particular promotional message. For example, in Chapter 2, we discussed the 2015 Super Bowl as an example of the growing importance of mobile engagement while attending or watching sporting events (Figure 2.2). To somewhat over simplify, one audience is attending the game and using their mobile device during the game while another audience is watching from home on traditional TV. Actually sports fans who are not attending may watch on traditional TV, with or without using a mobile device while they are watching, or they can watch on desktop computers or mobile devices. And those are only the major audience groupings. Think of what all goes on before, during, and after a Super Bowl game, and you will quickly realize that a huge audience (not all of whom are actually sports fans) is watching the event in various contexts that can affect their attention to marketing messages and their inclination to act on them. That complexity is the essence of targeting in SMM. Figure 3.1 shows identifying the target audience and audience segments as the first step in SMM audience targeting.

Once the target audience for a campaign has been identified all the teams working on the campaign—and there are often several—must be fully briefed on the nature of the target audience. There are many ways to do this, but using personas has become a popular option among digital marketers of all kinds. Personas bring life to the bare bones of audience statistics and they are useful for everyone from web designers to copywriters to graphic artists. Marketers have increasingly recognized that personas are worth the time and effort it takes to develop them.

With the characteristics of the target audience firmly in mind, the rest of the campaign can be developed and executed. Figure 3.1 shows essential activities in developing a media plan to reach the selected target audience(s). The first step is messaging objectives. Is the marketer introducing a new social media channel, say adding Instagram to its social media platforms? Is the pizza marketer introducing a new pie, or perhaps a new way to order as in the Domino’s ad in Chapter 1?



**Figure 3.1** Steps in Targeting SMM Campaigns

The media mix includes the social platforms that will be used in the campaign. It also includes other online media like email or online advertising as well as traditional offline media. Other digital media and offline media may play important roles in SMM campaigns, but in this chapter we will concentrate on the planning of the social media component. Each medium must have a specific schedule, and campaign effectiveness must be monitored and evaluated.

Returning to the specifics of social media, the final step in the media plan is to optimize the postings on each social channel so they will be best attended to by the target audience. Each channel has its own best days and times of day to post. Posts themselves need to be configured to meet the criteria of the specific platform in order to achieve prominence on it. In some cases, there is also a need to optimize posts for search engine visibility.

Good SMM requires that platforms be carefully chosen to reach the right target audiences. Once that is done each major platform will offer assistance in targeting specific platform audiences. Each platform has its own programs to encourage marketers to use it, and we will provide examples from several of the largest platforms. First, however, let's look at how digital data is improving marketers' ability to target specific audiences.

## "BIG DATA" EXPANDS OPTIONS FOR IDENTIFYING AND TARGETING AUDIENCES

You have probably heard the term big data. How do you interpret it? If you said the massive amount of data that is available from the digital clickstream, you would be correct. Today the definition has broadened to include data from audio and video files. How the data is collected and stored is beyond the scope of this book and is not a major concern of most marketers. However, marketers do need to understand the basic ways of analyzing big data and the new options it makes available in disciplines from supply chain management to audience targeting. They also need to understand that the volume of data will explode once again when the Internet of Things becomes widespread and even your scotch bottle is able to send and receive messages.<sup>2</sup>

The amount of data that comes from all this activity defies traditional marketing analytics—regression-based predictive models, for example. Big data provides too many data points for a regression model. Consequently, other technologies like pattern recognition, data visualization, community recognition and link prediction within social networks, social influence analysis, and machine-learning techniques like neural networking are needed. In addition, much of the data processing takes place

“in the cloud,” on large remote servers operated by IT services companies.<sup>3,4</sup> Analytics services firms exist to support the model-building and analysis marketers require to make use of these sophisticated techniques.

There are many ways marketers can use this wealth of data and the insights it provides to target specific audiences. Some of them are:

- **Behavioral targeting** based on purchase behavior or behaviors that convey intent like search behaviors
- **Connection targeting** based on the type of connection to your brand page, a Facebook fan, for example
- **Interest targeting** based on self-reported interests and page-related behaviors like search
- **Look-alike targeting** that identifies people like the ones who have been successful targets in the past
- **Custom targeting** that allows the marketer to upload his own data, an email list, for example
- **Location targeting** based on the location provided in the user’s profile or by geo-targeting data, which determines the user’s current location. This type of targeting will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 12, Mobile Marketing on Social Networks. Uses include:
  - o Send offers to customers while they are in the vicinity of a retail store
  - o Send personalized coupons to customers while they are in stores
  - o Help customers find the location of items in the store<sup>5,6</sup>

When looking at these types of targeting, there are two important warnings, however. First is that not all platforms offer all the types of targeting listed and some offer their own special targeting options in addition to the ones listed. It depends on the type of data they obtain from their users. Second is that advertisers usually receive new targeting options first, with brand pages receiving them at a later date. The social media marketer must carefully examine the targeting options for each platform.

Marketers, however, need to take the possibilities into account when planning their campaigns and targeting audiences for them. Target audience descriptions then become much richer than the ones for traditional media. Some hypothetical examples include:

- Facebook users over 55 years of age who use Facebook at least once a week and belong to one or more travel interest groups (fall and winter tour packages)
- LinkedIn users in the states of Illinois, Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Wisconsin, and Minnesota who list SMM among their skills (SMM conference in Chicago)
- Instagram users who post from Los Angeles beaches over the Labor Day weekend (a local restaurant)
- Brand page fans who visit one of the brand’s retail stores (special limited time in-store coupon offer)
- and others too numerous to list

These are simple examples limited to a single platform. Long-term, multi-platform targeting is possible and adds to the plethora of opportunities available to marketer. The marketing opportunities are limited only by the creativity of the marketers themselves.

## THE PERSONA DEVELOPMENT CYCLE AS PART OF THE TARGETING PROCESS

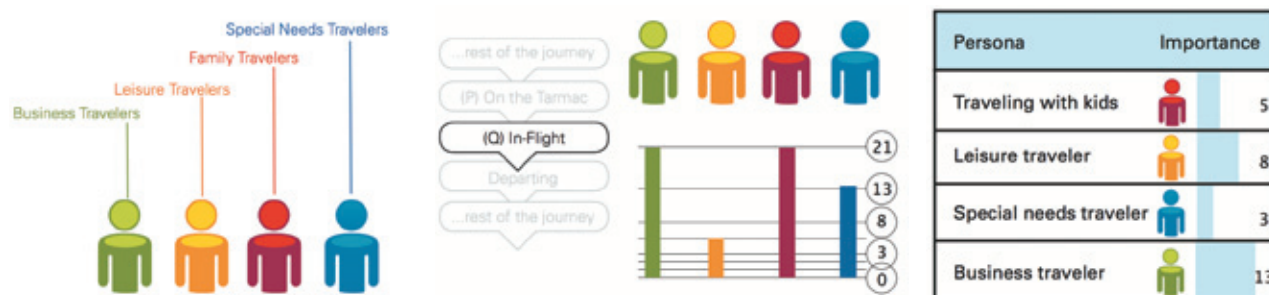
Many experienced marketers use personas, but the dilemma for a person new in the field is how to develop personas from scratch. There are many possible ways to create user personas, including intuition, trial and error, and costly market research, but only a few that have been modeled and studied academically. One such approach is the Three-Step Persona Development Cycle, which was created by Michelle Golden and which contains the following steps:

- **Identify Persona Roles**, listing all relevant personas by role.
- **List Needs and Situational Triggers** from personas' perspectives, defining concerns, symptoms, and problems.
- **Create Messaging Objectives** suited to each persona's needs that you have the expertise to address (and note those that you don't).<sup>7</sup>

These steps can be broken down in more detail. First, think of a few well-known companies or consumer groups that are relevant to a specific industry or business. Then, consider the roles those people within these organizations take in their interactions with others. In particular, focus on buyer roles or buyer personas: those who make decisions about which products or services to spend money on. For a firm this could be the chief financial officer or general counsel, while in a household it would be the person who spends the majority of that household's income. Also, consider external stakeholders who are indirectly influenced by the buyer's decision; these may be taxpayers, donors, employees, or regulatory agencies. During this stage it is important to be specific and think of as many potential buyer roles as possible, although you may not ultimately develop a persona for some of the roles deemed less important or low-value market segments.

In Chapter 1 we discussed the success JetBlue has experienced with SMM. The basic persona they use to guide their SMM efforts is the low budget traveler who wants comfort at an affordable price. One tweet to this target audience urged them to "Fly like a BOSS, pay like an intern" and gave a special link to a page with \$49 one-way fare offers. The persona describes their customer as younger than the typical airline traveler, reachable by social media and with high expectations for quick response on social media.<sup>8</sup>

Second, consider the needs and situational triggers for the personas identified earlier. Figure 3.2 shows a typical segmentation of airline travelers with 4 segments—business, leisure, family, and special needs travelers. It also shows 5 stages in the flight, concentrating on the in-flight issues. The research identified 26 in-flight issues—things like food service, entertainment, and Internet access. Business travelers identified 13 of the issues as important, the special needs only 3, while the Family and Leisure segments identified 5 and 6 important issues respectively. Are the most important issues the same for each segment—say business travelers and families traveling with children?



**Figure 3.2** Generic Air Traveler Personas



Almost assuredly they are not. Knowing which issues are important to each segment represented by a persona not only tells the marketer how to market to the segment but also gives other operations groups like flight services information that helps to keep customers satisfied.

The third and final step is to create messaging objectives, which are “purpose-oriented goals for your communications” with each of the personas defined earlier.<sup>9</sup> In order to be effective, a social media marketer must tailor her or his message toward each group being addressed. Which of the identified issues will be most effective in persuading business travelers to fly JetBlue? What do families who are considering a flight on JetBlue need to know? JetBlue has a “Families in Flight” page on its website that describes special services for families, gives travel tips, gives tips for getting through security, and provides a page with downloads that include a video and various activities and games to print out and bring along on the flight. Some of this content is easily converted to other platforms. For instance, if a family traveling with children provides a mobile number in the reservations process, a link to the children’s activity page can be Tweeted.

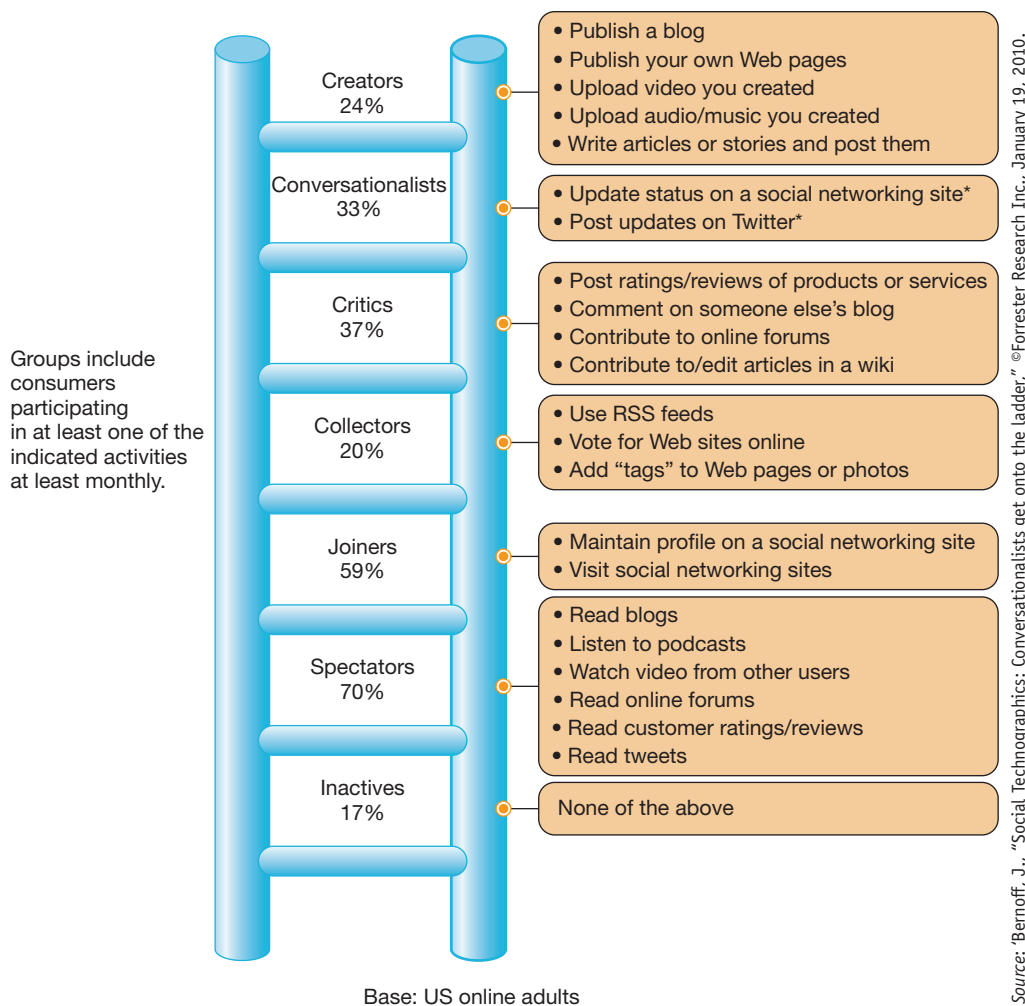
In other words, once a social media marketer knows what information a buyer will need before making a purchase, it is possible to design a social media strategy that provides a buyer with the relevant information, making the individual more likely to buy the product. Later, as feedback arrives, it will be possible to adjust these messaging objectives based on new information about the personas. Thus, like the social media planning cycle, persona development is also a fluid process that should be constantly evolving.

## THE FORRESTER SOCIAL TECHNOGRAPHICS LADDER

Some social media researchers have done pioneering work in developing personas, which can be of use to social media marketers who are developing their own brand personas. The most influential of these is the Social Technographics Profile, pioneered at Forrester Research in 2012 and updated with new research data each year since. The Social Technographics Profile uses demographics such as age, location, and gender to group social media users into personas based on their social media activities. Technographics is the methodology by which Forrester surveys consumers, similar to demographics and psychographics but restricted to technology behaviors. These personas are represented by rungs on the Social Technographics ladder shown in Figure 3.3.

The Social Technographics Profile consists of the following personas:

- **Creators** develop blogs, articles, videos, music, images, and art, and then upload them to social media platforms and are at the top of ladder.
- **Conversationalists** participate in group discussions, engage in conversations on Twitter, and update their statuses on Facebook and LinkedIn.
- **Critics** evaluate and comment on content produced by creators and conversationalists, post product ratings or reviews, comment on blogs, and participate in community’s discussion forums, as well as correct wiki articles.
- **Collectors** upload and save favorites on bookmarking sites such as Delicious, vote on content on sites such as Digg, tag photos on sites such as Flickr, subscribe to RSS feeds to automatically receive new blog posts, and perform the valuable function of helping to organize and categorize content on the social web.
- **Joiners** interact on social networks such as Facebook, LinkedIn, and Eon.
- **Spectators** consume the content that others produce, such as blogs, videos, podcasts, forums, reviews, and so on.
- **Inactives** are Internet consumers who are not involved in social media.



**Figure 3.3 Social Technographics Ladder**

The Social Technographics ladder not only reveals *what* people are doing on the social web but, perhaps just as important, *where* they are doing it (i.e., which social media platforms they are using). To reach their optimal target market, social media marketers must know where to aim and the Social Technographics ladder provides a helpful set of persona profiles to assist in understanding the target audience. Forrester offers a free Social Technographics Profile Tool to help brands understand where their target audience falls on the Technographics ladder.

### COMPLETING THE MEDIA PLAN FOR EACH AUDIENCE SEGMENT

Once the personas and associated messaging objectives are complete, the social media marketer is ready to complete the other elements of the media plan. Next comes the media mix. JetBlue, for example, not only uses Twitter, but it also has an active Facebook page and an Instagram page. Facebook provides another platform for customers to surface issues and JetBlue to reply. Instagram seems to primarily feature pictures of JetBlue destinations and associated events, but it includes a link for customer to submit issues. JetBlue has a planned approach to both Twitter and Facebook, but much of what happens on any given day depends on what customers post on one platform or the other. It is also important to remind ourselves that social media is only one part of JetBlue's integrated media plan.<sup>10</sup>

Part of the SMM media plan is to schedule each post on each platform. Some of the messages are “repurposed” for the various platforms—appropriate versions of the \$49 one-way ticket promotion on both Twitter and Facebook, for example, with a shot of the ad on Instagram that includes a link to the promotion page on the website. Twitter and Facebook will both be active in promoting the offer while it is active. If that sounds like a lot of work, it is, but there are tools to keep it organized and effective that we will discuss in Chapter 14. The social media schedule is most often communicated in an Excel spreadsheet with rows for days and perhaps times of day and columns for individual platforms, which include content information for each post.

The schedule must, of course, be executed. That can be done as simply as an individual making a post on his or her own Facebook page. It can also be automated, using one or more of the tools we will discuss in Chapter 14. Either way, someone (or a tool) must follow the reaction to the posts, listening and perhaps replying to at least some of them. Formal evaluation must be done and reported to marketing executives. Processes and platforms for monitoring and evaluating social media campaigns will be discussed in Chapter 13. SMM is increasingly being held accountable for the results it produces in everything from customer service to Return on Promotional Investment.

## OPTIMIZING POSTS AND POST TIMING

First, what do we mean by *optimizing*? You may be familiar with the use of the term in connection with search marketing. SearchEngineLand defines the acronym SEO as follows:

*SEO stands for “search engine optimization.” It is the process of getting traffic from the “free,” “organic,” “editorial” or “natural” search results on search engines. All major search engines such as Google, Bing and Yahoo have primary search results, where web pages and other content such as videos or local listings are shown and ranked based on what the search engine considers most relevant to users. Payment isn’t involved, as it is with paid search.*<sup>11</sup>

You often hear this referred to as “search engine visibility.” While the process is different in SMM, the goal is the same—to make everything from a user’s profiles to her blog posts to her Pinterest pins as visible as possible to everyone on the platform and sometimes also in search engine rankings.

Second, how do we optimize social content? Unfortunately, there is not a one-size-fits-all answer to that question. The bad news is that every platform is different when it comes to optimization. The good news is that there are many publishers on the web who provide information on the subject. However, since each platform is different, it is a large subject and we will give only a few examples.

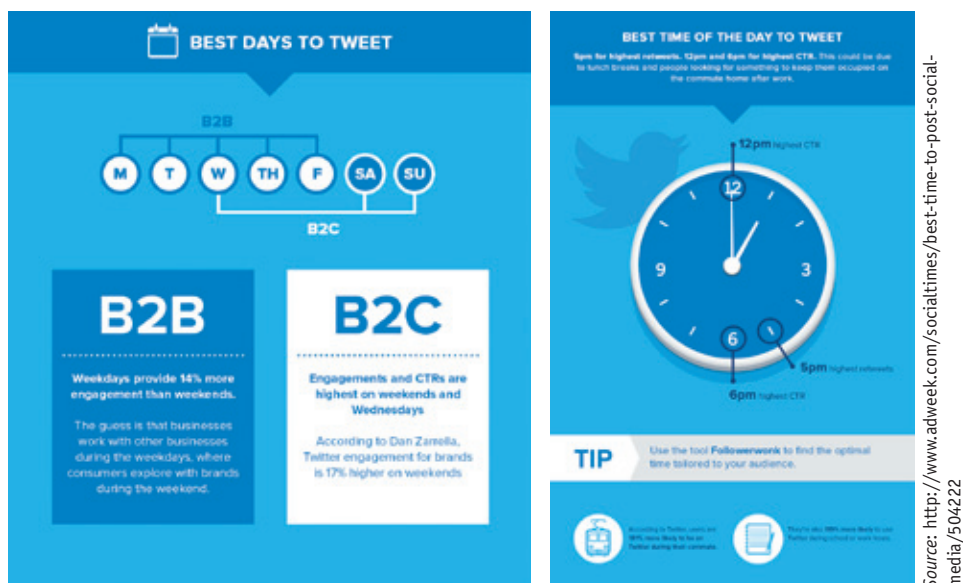
Facebook, as the largest platform, provides the first example with recommendations shown in Figure 3.4. It shows that most brand posts are made on weekdays with the best days being Thursday and Friday. “Best” is measured by Facebook engagement—the number of viewers who liked, shared, clicked, or commented.<sup>12</sup> The best time is between 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. (assume Eastern Standard Time in these recommendations and adjust if necessary for your audience). The infographic quotes Buddy Media as inferring that “the less people want to be at work, the more they are on Facebook!”<sup>13</sup>

Figure 3.5 paints a very different picture for Tweets, however. Weekends are best—Saturday and Sunday. The reason appears to be a difference between business audiences, who are most engaged during the week and consumer audiences who are most engaged with Tweets on weekends. The best time is between 5 and 6 p.m.<sup>14</sup> Is that because people are engaging with their Tweetstream while commuting home from work?





**Figure 3.4** Best Days and Times to Post on Facebook

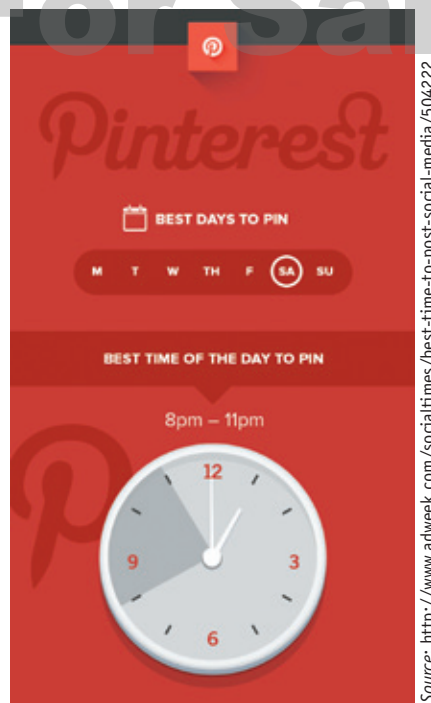


**Figure 3.5** Best Days and Times to Post on Twitter

One of the leading visual platforms, Pinterest, shows still another pattern. Figure 3.6 shows Saturday as the best day and the best time as evening between 8 and 11 p.m., with activity being the greatest at 9 p.m. However, if you are in the fashion industry, the optimal time to post is Friday at 3 p.m.<sup>15</sup> Does the overall optimal time being in the evening have to do with the entertainment value of the visual platform? Is it reasonable to surmise that fashion at 3 p.m. on Friday is correlated with weekend shopping plans?

According to the same infographic:

- The other leading visual platform, Instagram, does not exhibit a best day to post but does find that off-work hours produce a higher level of engagement with brand posts than do working hours.



**Figure 3.6** Best Days and Times to Pin

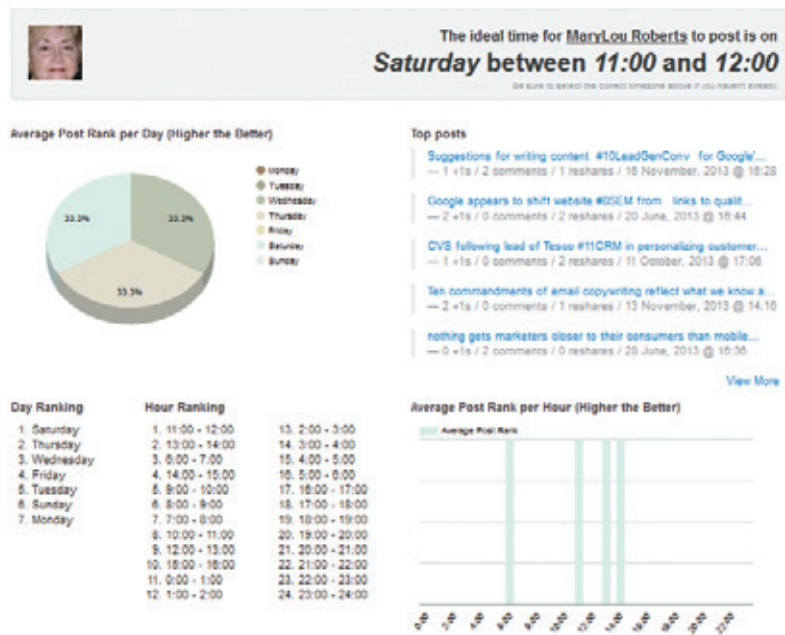
- LinkedIn, with a primarily professional audience, finds Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday the best days to post while posts made between 10 and 11 a.m. on Tuesdays garner the most clicks and shares.
- On Google+ the best days to post are Monday through Friday with the best time being between 9 and 11 a.m. on Wednesday.<sup>16</sup>

To add to the complexity of the optimization issue, optimal days and times may differ from industry to industry like the fashion industry on Pinterest. Unilever, owner of Ben & Jerry's, studied the effect of social media and found that people talked about ice cream on social media on Thursdays and Fridays and bought ice cream on Saturdays. "So why are we spending money on Mondays and Tuesdays?" Mr. [Shawn] O'Neal [VP-global people data and marketing analytics] asked.<sup>17</sup>

There are tools to analyze these differences with Fanpage Karma for Facebook and Followerwonk for Twitter as referenced in Figures 3.3 and 3.4. Both of these are paid tools. A free tool for Google+ produced the analysis of Prof. Roberts's Google+ account that is shown in Figure 3.7.

Her results resemble the overall for the platform, with posts made on Monday achieving highest ranking although the optimal time, presumably for engagement, is between 11 and 12 noon on Saturday. Are professors working on their classes for next week on Saturday morning? Of special interest is the top posts listing, which helps the owner know what content works best for her on this platform. This illustrates that the optimal data reported for the selected platforms, all obtained by sampling large number of users of the platform, are useful. However, brands need to investigate what is best for their industry and monitor results for their product to be assured of doing the best possible job of reaching their own target audience.

With that in mind we turn to an examination of the ways in which some of these same platforms assist users in reaching their selected audiences.



Source: <http://timing.minimal.se/109092906756723237471/>

**Figure 3.7** Best Days and Times to Post for a Google+ User

## Targeting Ads and Posts on Social Platforms

There is an important caveat as you read this section—in this chapter we are attempting to keep the focus on targeting brand posts, not targeting advertising. Why is this an important issue? First, there is the practical issue—brand posts are owned media with no advertising costs. Ads on social media platforms are paid media, usually pay-per-click (PPC) advertising or sponsored posts; either way there is a cost. Second there is the technology issue. Since advertisers are paying for their media space, they usually get the targeting options first, often long before they are available to brand pages. The result is that brand pages generally have a more limited set of targeting options than do ads. In general, personal pages on any platform have a limited set of targeting options like “everyone” or “your circles.” The targeting options for personal profiles are primarily based on the way people set up and manage their pages, not on the big data options that are available to brand pages and advertisers.

### Identifying Audiences for Personal Branding Efforts

As part of your personal branding effort you will become a participant in various communities. Those communities form the basis of the target audience for your brand. Social media platforms have a variety of ways to help you identify specific audiences for it. In Chapter 6, we will discuss how to use Twitter for developing a personal brand. Google+ allows you to create circles that categorize members of your community—for instance, your classmates who will be resources throughout your career or people who work for companies that you might like to include in

your job search. Facebook allows the creation of interest groups and lets users create lists that can be used to control the friends with whom the user shares. Many of the platforms allow direct messaging of personalized content. All you learn in this chapter can be put into practice as you build a community around your brand and categorize members into meaningful audiences.

LinkedIn, however, has become established as the indispensable platform for business professionals and we will concentrate most of this discussion on it. In Chapter 5, we will discuss creating a personal profile on LinkedIn. That is an essential step, but profile creation can be more effective if the user understands the audience he wishes to reach with the profile. Having created a vibrant profile, the user is advised to join LinkedIn groups and to participate actively in them. It is also important to connect with people on the platform. You are building your target audience so be sure the people you connect with are relevant to your career plans.

The rest sounds straightforward. Having identified your audience on LinkedIn, you simply share your profile and your career aspirations with them, right? Actually, that would be a huge mistake!

**Lesson #1.** LinkedIn groups expressly forbid self-promotion. The platform describes self-promotion as follows:

While the specific details of what's considered self-promotion depends on the group, topics such as webinars, books, blogs, motivational speaking events, software sales, and real estate can be considered self-promotion. Try to avoid words like *buy*, *sell*, or *attend*.<sup>1</sup>

However, what is considered potentially unacceptable behavior on the platform goes further: It includes these kinds of group behaviors:

- Sharing a link in multiple groups at the same time. The content may not be relevant to all groups.
- The content of a discussion that promotes the user's website or blog or other specific sites.
- A post using inappropriate words or content that was not professionally oriented.

If a group member violates any of these rules, the group manager has the option of requiring that posts be moderated before they are posted online. If the post is deemed inappropriate in any way, it will not be accepted.

LinkedIn offers assistance to the individual user by offering possible connections that make sense based on his profile and other contacts and by offering a Relationship tab that helps organize and manage those contacts.

**Lesson #2.** The LinkedIn Relationship tab provides information about how you are connected to another user, allows you to see the messages you have exchanged, and lets you make notes on the relationship and how you plan to further it. An especially useful feature is ability to set a one-time or recurring reminder to follow up with the connection. You find the Relationship tab near the top of the profile

<sup>1</sup>“Self Promotion in Groups,” LinkedIn. Retrieved September 14, 2015, from [https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a\\_id/49409/ft/eng](https://help.linkedin.com/app/answers/detail/a_id/49409/ft/eng)

of each of your connections. The Relationship tab is not available on the LinkedIn mobile app at this time.<sup>2</sup>

**Lesson #3.** Use the Tag feature on the Relationship tab to assign tags to connections. This allows you to assign your connections to categories provided by LinkedIn or to create your own tags. You can see a list of all the contacts you have grouped under a tag you create. There is, however, people from seeing your posts on LinkedIn.<sup>3</sup>

**Lesson #4.** You can categorize your contacts on LinkedIn but you cannot build a list that allows you to message all contacts in a category at the same time.

There are two main take-aways from the discussion of LinkedIn. First, you can make contacts, learn a great deal about them by studying their profiles and interacting with them in groups, and assign them to categories on LinkedIn. The platform, however, is very alert to spam and job seekers want to avoid being seen as spammers at all costs.

Second, you should use the direct messaging feature for LinkedIn contacts with great care. Contacts can easily block you if they object to the nature of your message.

If this sounds a bit discouraging, remember that LinkedIn works hard to create an environment where professionals can interact without opening themselves to spam. They have also created an environment where professionals feel comfortable posting jobs and looking for potential candidates for positions. Learn to use the Jobs tab on the platform, keep your profile complete and up-to-date, and make connections offline and online. And, very important, don't post content or try to take targeting shortcuts that will damage your branding efforts.<sup>4</sup>

**Lesson #4.** Consider using a tool to uncover profiles of relevant LinkedIn members. LinkedIn's toolbar includes Jobs Insider, which offers useful support for your job search.<sup>5</sup> Other tools have a cost associated after a trial period, but they may prove to be valuable. LinkedIn's own Social Selling service for individuals is one.<sup>6</sup> A widely-used tool called Diver is another.<sup>7</sup> There are other tools that include extracting source contact data as one of their services

**Lesson #5.** LinkedIn may be the repository of much of your personal branding content, but you can develop communities on a variety of platforms and reach them with targeted content that will enhance your brand.

Develop your audiences carefully and use them with respect. If you do, they will be a huge asset to your personal brand.

<sup>2</sup> Herman, Jenn (April 28, 2015), SocialMediaExaminer, "How to Use the LinkedIn Relationship Tab to Improve Your Networking." Retrieved September 14, 2015, from <http://www.socialmediaexaminer.com/use-the-linkedin-relationship-tab-to-improve-your-networking/>

<sup>3</sup> Clark, Karen (n.d.), "How to Sort, Tag or Categorize Your LinkedIn Contacts," MyBusinessPresence.com. Retrieved September 14, 2015, from <http://www.mybusinesspresence.com/how-to-sort-tag-or-categorize-your-linkedin-contacts/>

<sup>4</sup> McCorkle, Denny (April 20, 2014), Business2Community, "Do's & Don'ts When Using LinkedIn for Personal Branding & Job Search." Retrieved September 14, 2014, from <http://www.business2community.com/linkedin/dos-donts-using-linkedin-personal-branding-job-search-0857814>

<sup>5</sup> (n.d.). "How to Use the LinkedIn Jobs Insider." Retrieved September 20, 2015, from <http://www.dummies.com/how-to/content/how-to-use-the-linkedin-jobsinsider.html>

<sup>6</sup> (n.d.). LinkedIn, "The Social Selling Era Starts with LinkedIn Sales Navigator." Retrieved September 20, 2015, from <https://business.linkedin.com/sales-solutions?u=0>

<sup>7</sup> (n.d.). "Search Better," Broadlook Technologies. Retrieved September 20, 2015, from <http://www.broadlook.com/products/diver/>



# Not For Sale

## AD TARGETING ON SELECTED PLATFORMS

Because the targeting options for posts follow the targeting options for ads it is useful to understand a bit about ad targeting works on social media platforms.

Facebook is one of the few platforms that make ad targeting options visible on personal profile pages, and they are worth exploring. On your Home page, scroll down to the bottom of the right column and find several links including Privacy where you can make choices regarding your personal data, Ad Choices where there are options for preventing Facebook advertisers from collecting data about you, and Advertising, the page on which advertising campaigns are set up. It is possible to set up an ad and investigate targeting options without ever submitting a credit card and actually executing an advertising campaign. This is a useful exercise to help understand the targeting options for paid advertising, which form the basis for the more limited set of options available to the brand page.

As of late 2015 Facebook is the only major platform that offers data based targeting options to brand pages. Virtually all, however, offer targeting to advertisers. Twitter, for example, offers advertisers a number of targeting options, a few of which are:

- Follower targeting with a number of choices including followers of competitors and audiences whose characteristics are similar to the brand's own audience
- Behavior targeting that uses data from Twitter business partners about online and offline product-related behaviors
- Keywords that are used either in Twitter searches or in Tweets<sup>18</sup>
- Event targeting in which Twitter furnishes a global event calendar, provides audience data from last year's event, and enables targeting of the audience for the current year's event<sup>19</sup>

Pinterest is relatively new to advertising and only began to offer targeting in 2015. Pinterest advertising is primarily in the form of "promoted Pins." Targeting by product category, for instance makeup or home décor, is one option and by interest categories like travel or DIY is another.<sup>20</sup> Pinterest believes that much pinning activity infers future purchase intent and is working on ways to use that in targeting.<sup>21</sup>

## TARGETING AVAILABLE TO BRAND POSTS

Google+ has a built-in targeting mechanism with its circles. The platform also makes available targeting by age and location to brand pages. Until November 2015 the platform allowed hashtag searches of pages. Google+ has eliminated the search option for individual pages and has added Collections. The page owner can use Collections to organize his posts by subject matter. This may be useful to individuals but it was widely seen as unfriendly to brand pages.<sup>22</sup>

In spite of Google's actions, search by hashtag has become a key feature on other platforms. Hashtags themselves have become an important source of analytics data as well as ideas for everyone from journalists to content marketers. In 2015 it became possible to access the trends in real time.<sup>23</sup> It could be argued that hashtags are especially important in helping marketers to form communities of interest on visual platforms like Instagram<sup>24</sup> and video platforms like short-video site Vine.<sup>25</sup> Since Instagram is owned by Facebook and Vine by Twitter, it seems that hashtags have the potential to become another source of big data to be used for targeting purposes.

Perhaps the most intriguing discovery and potential targeting item to come along recently has been the emoji. Emojis surfaced in the late 1990s in Japan where the

DoCoMo mobile phone was the rage among Japanese teenagers and texting exploded. NPR sums up their appeal perfectly with a headline, “Why 140 Characters, When One Will Do?”<sup>26</sup> The phenomenon quickly became global, managed by the Unicode Consortium, which decides which emojis will be added to the lexicon and therefore to keyboards like iPhone’s and Gmail’s. On the visual platform Instagram, users have been adding emojis to their posts for quite some time. In April 2015 Instagram started allowing users to include emojis in hashtags. That makes it possible for a brand to search for hashtags on Instagram and use trending hashtags in brand posts. That makes them searchable and therefore able to reach targeted audiences.<sup>27</sup>

In addition, brands are developing their own emoji keyboards. The Baltimore Ravens announced that they had 53,000 downloads of their emoji keyboard, shown in Figure 3.8a, during the first weekend after it was introduced.<sup>28</sup> These icons offer an infinite variety of ways in which the football team can track, listen to, and engage with their fans. Brands of all kinds are using them. Twitter added its first branded emoji when it gave Coke its own crossed bottles symbol—and, of course, announced it on Twitter (Figure 3.8b).<sup>29</sup>

While new developments like emojis are trending in terms of targeting, it is also important to look at a final example of platform support for targeting brand posts. As it has done in so many social media developments, Facebook is leading the way—a way that is likely to be followed by other platforms in the months and years to come.

## AUDIENCE TARGETING ON FACEBOOK

Facebook has gone through a number of iterations in which brands first found it necessary to develop profiles, then fan pages, then were given the option of creating brand pages that had more features than personal pages. This was followed by several



**Figure 3.8a** Baltimore Ravens Emoji Keyboard



**Figure 3.8b** Twitter Announcement of Coke Emoji

upgrades of features, including targeting options, available to brands.<sup>30</sup> Initial targeting options for brand pages were demographics, specifically:

- Gender
- Relationship Status
- Educational Status
- Age
- Location
- Language<sup>31</sup>

Later Facebook introduced targeting by interests that are supplied by the brand as they develop the post. As a social media marketer types in the interests, the tool makes suggestions that guide the marketer toward interests that are common in the Facebook community. For all types of targeting only the targeted users see the targeted posts in their newsfeed, although the posts can be seen by all on the brand's timeline.<sup>32</sup>

Targeting options do differ somewhat from one platform to another, and the careful social media marketer understands best practices on the platforms she uses. However, there is a set of best practices that apply across platforms.

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## Best Practices for Targeting Branded Posts

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In order to obtain the most precision in targeting of social media audiences marketers should:

- **Understand what platforms are used by the target audience and how they are used.** Social media platforms, the way visitors make use of them, and user behaviors are constantly evolving. For instance, Facebook and Twitter have become major news sources for all demographics, with Twitter dominating the Breaking News category and Millennials looking at Facebook for news more than any other site.<sup>33</sup> Men are the fastest-growing demographic on Pinterest, which was originally 70 to 80 percent female.<sup>34</sup> Over 90 percent of teenage cell phone owners text on their phones, and over one-third are now using messaging apps. African American teens are most likely to use messaging apps, followed closely by Hispanic teens.<sup>35</sup> Brands must monitor changes like these and give careful consideration to what they mean for their brand and the brand's activity on social media.
- **Optimize content and posting schedule for each platform.** Different audiences tend to use different platforms. The same audience may use different platforms in different ways. A study from MarketingProfs found brands most likely to post on Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter on Friday (finishing up before the weekend?), but the most effective days were Monday for Instagram and Sunday for Facebook and Twitter.<sup>36</sup> The Facebook data differs from data from a different source presented in Figure 3.3, which is itself a warning to marketers to follow SMM data widely and carefully. However, the MarketingProfs data that shows brands posting on nonoptimal days in all five channels studied should be a huge warning to all SMM managers.
- **Use the targeting capabilities of each platform.** Whether it is directing posts by hashtag on Twitter or emoji hashtags on Instagram or using the Facebook options to target to specific demographics or specific locations or a specific

demographic in a specific location, the targeting possibilities offered by platforms are rich and getting richer. That alone is enough to warrant consistent and thoughtful use, but the targeting options for branded posts are free just like the platforms. Targeting options offered by big data marketing services firms may be even richer and more precise. They are, however, not free.

- **Monitor results on each platform and continue to improve content engagement and overall marketing effectiveness.** SMM is best seen as a process of continuous improvement. Each social media campaign produces data that can be used to improve the next campaign. The broad data about social media platforms and users presented in this chapter and throughout the book is informative and provides a useful starting point for strategy development. However, as illustrated in this chapter, platform data may differ from one industry to another. Data from one firm to another in the same industry can, and often does, differ. The brand's own data provides the best foundation for future campaigns, although it may need to be supplemented by outside data.

The emphasis in SMM often seems to be “more is better,” more followers, more likes, more posts, more platforms. While having a large pool of potential customers is desirable, messages are only useful if they reach the right people. This chapter has emphasized that successful SMM targeting is more than just the right content to the right person. The message must also be received at the right place, at the right time, in the appropriate format, in the correct language, and on the right device. Careful targeting, using all the techniques and tools at the marketer's disposal, is the key to meeting that challenge.

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