5 SOCIAL SINS

> You're working your tail off to promote your business on social media. You post, schedule and share. And — nothing. Your audience is not growing. Customers are not engaged with your content. Your sales show no sign of being influenced by anything you post. What gives?

You may be sabotaging yourself without even knowing it.

Each week, I get dozens of questions from retailers, and I see trends across the stores that aren't seeing results. Typically, while these stores are focused on growing their reach and engagement, they are skipping over critical steps to growth. Those missed steps matter.

Stop sabotaging yourself on social media! Here are the top ways you may be getting in your own way.

You're Not Giving Enough Info

Every photo you upload to social media should have a caption, and every caption should provide the information customers need to make their purchasing decision.

This includes, but isn't limited to, brand, price, size, color, availability, prints, creative uses and more. Too often retailers will post a product photo with a caption that reads, "New blooms in stock! Perfect for Mom. Come in today and put together a bouquet!"

Does that caption answer any common questions your customers may have? Not even close. A better caption: "The wait is over! Our newest shipment of exotic lilies is in-store and waiting to



INFOMANIAC Beautiful flowers are a given on social media, but detailed captions with price info can help you make a sale.

be picked by you. Mix beautiful blues with sweet peaches. Create a custom bouquet for \$29.99."

The second caption answers most common questions, gives product options and still gives a call to action to come in and purchase.

This tip also applies to your social media profiles. Each platform should have a completed "About" section including industry keywords (e.g., local florist, wedding, corporate, sympathy) as well as plenty of contact information, including phone number, email, address and other social media URLs.

You're Not Advertising on Facebook

If you're not advertising on Facebook, your posts aren't being seen. On Facebook, you can advertise individual posts by clicking the blue "Boost" button or build campaigns through the site's Ads Manager.

I recommend regularly running a Page Post Engagement Ad, or, as I call it, the "Most Recent" ad. The goal here is to get people who already like your page to see more of your posts and to engage by liking, commenting, clicking or sharing.

Many other ad options exist out there with the ability to meet your needs — such more traffic, conversions, awareness and more. Check out some of the great results retailers can get, even with small budgets, at safnow.org/moreonline (look for "Ad Case Studies").

You're Not Using Video

Video is the best way to build organic (free) reach on social media. If you aren't using video —either because you're scared to be on camera or you're not sure where to start or for any other reason — you're missing a big opportunity.

Video, whether live or prerecorded, gets more engagement than photo or text posts on Facebook. I typically recommend going live once a week, whether you have a weekly segment on how to care for different types of flowers and plants or you want to give store updates and invite customers to an upcoming event. Sprinkle pre-recorded videos into your marketing schedule.



LIVE FROM YOUR SHOP Post a live video at least once a week to improve engagement. Bloomtastic's quick video showing the Columbus, Ohio, shop's Mother's Day offerings got more than 1,500 views.

You're Overselling (or Underselling)

Have you heard of the 80/20 rule? It says that you should be selling on social media 20 percent of the time, while the other 80 percent of your time should be about educating, informing and entertaining. How does your feed stack up?

It's common for retailers to oversell without realizing it. Let's use a fictional florist as an example. They have beautiful arrangements and a small collection of fun gift items in their store. They even have access to a professional photographer to take their product photos. Their social media photos are beautiful, and they love sharing photos of their products and arrangements.

The problem? They don't post much else. Each day, they share an arrangement on their feed and give details about it: variety, occasion, price. Sometimes they share the same kind of details about their gift items. They are selling, but they aren't informing, engaging or entertaining. They are using high-quality photos and posting regularly, but the content mix is off.

To fix the problem, they can share tips for caring for plants at home, graphics featuring quotations about flowers, community news or humorous gardening videos.

Fewer retailers undersell, but I have seen that happen, too. (Think about the lackluster captions above and those missed selling opportunities.) The goal of your social feed is to sell products. Remember to let people know about all of the great things your store has to offer.

You're Not Responsive

Social media doesn't have to take up too much of your time, but it does have to be a consistent effort. In addition to posting regularly, you also need to be answering messages, responding to comments and reviews, and engaging with other users.



AD ON If you aren't paying for ads or boosts on Facebook, your posts likely aren't being seen.

Many retailers post to multiple social networks at once but forget to check all of these platforms for messages and comments. This is especially true on Instagram, where users may get short comments: "Love it!" or "So cute." These are opportunities to upsell these users. Instead of ignoring short comments, reply back with, "Do you want us to hold it for you?" or "We also have it in blue. and we ship!"

But it's not always short comments that get ignored. Many retailers will post on Facebook and then fail to follow up when a customer asks for a price or for the store's location. Never leave a question or comment unanswered, no matter how simple or small it may seem. One thing to keep in mind: Facebook now shows users how responsive a business owner is, so even if a person doesn't comment or send a question, they immediately see that a business owner is slow to respond.

Comments also get ignored on platforms retailers don't log on to often. Many retailers send their Facebook and Instagram posts to Twitter, but they don't actually log on to Twitter much. They may go months without checking replies and retweets, and that could result in a missed sale or angry lead.

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