



## 6 Steps to Promoting Your Online Event Like a Social Media Maven

A step-by-step guide for establishing social media presence and using it to promote online events

Social media has fundamentally changed the way businesses interact with customers and partners. From global sports brands to small technology businesses, marketers everywhere are tapping into social media's power to connect businesses with people in a two-way dialogue, and nowhere is this method of promotion more applicable than in online events.

In this guide, we've outlined presentation expert Tom Bunzel's 6 essential steps for promoting your online presentations, webinars and trainings through social media.

Download Tom Bunzel's eGuide, "Strategies for Increasing Social Influence."



Watch Tom's webinar, "Presenting and Training in a World of Social Media."



## 1. Create your social identity.

To enjoy the benefits of social media promotion and connection, you must first establish at least one social channel. Creating a blog and Twitter account is a great way to start — blogs offer a publishing platform where you can provide longer original content, and a Twitter account opens you up to a world of social media-savvy topic experts who are seeking to talk to, connect with and even partner with other Tweeps (people on Twitter).

When establishing a social media channel, keep in mind that this medium is based on the mutual sharing of valuable content — so think of original content as the social media currency. Before you start reaching out to thought leaders and experts in your field, you need to create and disseminate beneficial content through your social channels. Then, when you start forging connections, people will see the value in connecting with you after reviewing your contributions.

For some, the idea of becoming an author — even in short form — sounds daunting, so get started by brainstorming a list of topics that you speak about on a regular basis with other professionals. You should be able to come up with at least a few topics to discuss via your new social media presence, which brings us to the next step: starting a conversation.

## 2. Start a conversation.

Use your new online presence to engage in conversation. Your targets for initiating this conversation should be prospects, customers and so-called "influencers." Influencers are people with established social channels and significant followings. If you're not sure how to gauge who is an influencer and who isn't, check out websites like Klout, LinkedIn and Empire Avenue, which measure the influence of social media accounts.

Keep in mind two things: First, you only need to connect with influencers that are directly or indirectly related to your topic area. Second, influencer status is relative to the industry. The biggest influencers in the online training world may only have

a sliver of the followers that the biggest influencers in the comedy world have; still, it's more valuable to connect with influencers who are related to your topic than it is to connect with random followers. It's the same logic that dictates that a qualified lead is more valuable than an unqualified one. Initiating conversation with the right influencers will help you garner the attention and followings of prospects and customers.

### **3. Start promoting your events socially.**

Now that you are actively participating in online connections, it's time to create a social outreach for your event promotions calendar. Start by creating a custom Twitter hashtag that speaks to your event topic. It's a good idea to do a search on Twitter to make sure your hashtag isn't being used by someone else for a different promotion or subject.

Once you have established your custom hashtag, add it to all of your promotions — emails, event pages, blog posts and social media posts. You should announce the event on your blog, promote the event on Twitter, and create an event on Facebook if you have a Facebook page for your business. Video-savvy people may even choose to post a promotional video on YouTube or Vimeo; videos that offer brief but personal introductions to the author or subject are great ways to further promote your event.

### **4. Use your social interactions to tailor your content.**

An important aspect of your pre-event promotion is asking your social media connections compelling and topical questions. As you introduce the event topic and speaker via your blog, Twitter account and other social media channels, take advantage of the two-way conversation platform. In your posts, ask your readers about their pain points, initiatives and best practices related to your topic. Remember to include the event's hashtag so people searching for your event will find these messages.

As you monitor the responses you receive, tailor your presentation to include discussion or answers to the questions your registrants posed. This is a best practice for online events, as it demonstrates that you are interested in helping your audience and ensures that your presentation will be fresh and dynamic. Online presenters that do this will connect better with their audience and are likely to attract more followers and registrants.

Additionally, if your speakers have established social channels, it's a great idea to engage in topical and public conversation with them online as a way to promote the event and engage your registrants.

#### 5. Monitor the backchannel.

During your event, you need to monitor the “backchannel,” the social media interactions discussing your event while it’s taking place. If you are the presenter, it might be hard to monitor the backchannel yourself, so you may appoint someone from your team to do it for you.

In the same way that you sought customization suggestions from your social connections and registrants before the event, participating in the backchannel and incorporating the discussion going on into your live presentation further communicates your dedication to your audience’s needs and suggestions. Refer to questions or commentary that comes up in the backchannel during your live event — your audience will appreciate your dedication and likely be more lively and engaged.

#### 6. Keep the presentation alive.

A successful online presentation takes a lot of planning and effort, so get the most out of it. To extend the shelf life of your presentation, record and post it so new people and those who registered but missed the event can still engage with your content and business. Post the recording to your website, blog or video channel, and then use the link or embed code to continue the conversation with attendees, registrants and new connections. When you do this, your event becomes a valuable piece of content that you can use to further establish yourself in the social media sphere.

## Conclusion

Joining the social media world is about building content, forging connections and incorporating social elements into all of your promotions. By engaging your customers, partners and thought leaders through social media, your online presentations, events and trainings will become more valuable and more engaging, helping you establish a reputation of excellence.

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## About Tom Bunzel

Tom Bunzel is an author, speaker and consultant for all things presentation-focused. He has appeared on Tech TV's Call for Help and spoken at InfoComm and PowerPoint LIVE. Tom was a technology coach for Iomega, MTA Films, Nurses in Partnership and the Neuroscience Education Institute, and he currently teaches at Learning Tree International and West LA College Extension.

Tom's latest books, *Do Your Own Ning Thing: A Step-By-Step Guide to Launching an Effective Social Network* and *Tools of Engagement: Presenting and Training in a World of Social Media*, are available for download at [www.professorppt.com](http://www.professorppt.com).

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