IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOLS FOR SMART BUSINESSESS

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ABSTRACT

Most businesses are aware of the impact social media and often try to integrate these tools and networks into their marketing campaigns. The benefits of social networking are tremendous; however, with the growing number of social networks, the simple task of updating the content can become daunting. With so many different social media sites to post, share the articles related social media tools , and track engagement on, finding a reliable social media management tool to help streamline our social media tasks is pretty essential. Social media managing tools can help marketers save time; stay organized, and optimize their efficiency. This paper gives a brief overview of the social media management tools to help us to monitor and updates our accounts, pricier plans allow for more accounts and bonus features, providing with the analytics and capabilities to have a more successful social media presence.

Keyword :-*Social media, Social Networks, Dashboard, Tools*

1. INTRODUCTION

Now a days smart businesses know that social media is a power to be reckoned with: social media channels create a direct line of communication between our company and consumers and give anyone with an Internet connection instant access to the latest products or services. Not to mention, they can help to generate revenue, while building our brand presence. The term "social media" refers to the wide range of Internet-based and mobile services that allow the users to participate online exchanges, contribute user-created content, or join online communities. The different services commonly associated with social media include the following:

Blogs. Short for "web log," a blog is an online journal in which pages are usually displayed in reverse chronological order.

Wikis. A wiki is "a collective website where any participant is allowed to modify any page or create a new page using her Web browser." One well-known example is Wikipedia.

Social bookmarking. Social bookmarking sites allow users share links to websites.

Status-update services. Also known as micro-blogging services, status-update services such as Twitter allow people to share short updates about people or events and to see updates created by others.

Virtual world content. These sites offer game-like virtual environments in which users interact.

Media-sharing sites. These sites allow users to post videos or photographs. Popular examples

Sharing content with thousands of followers at once isn't the only benefit of social media for business. Small businesses all over the world have been discovering the ways social media can contribute to success and growth in all areas of their companies. However, there are still skeptics who still don't see or understand the management tools of social media for their business.

According to the latest research, the buyers of social media management tools are looking for eight core functionalities:

• Community management
• Publishing
• Campaigns & promotions
• Influencer & advocate management
• Lead generation
• Content marketing
• Analytics
•Paid media management.

2. SOCIAL MEDIA DASHBOARD

Simply put, a social media dashboard makes social media management super-easy. It syncs all your social media accounts in one convenient place.
In its truest sense, a dashboard also allow us to see all our social media analytics at one place, thus eliminating the need to manually go into each account and check what happened in the past week.

Benefits of using a social media dashboard
2.1 Productivity
Let's be honest. How many times have we logged in on Facebook to schedule posts on our business page only to find yourself lost in the sea of posts after 30 minutes? And suddenly, you realize we haven't retreated something you were meaning to. We rush to Twitter and the same story repeats. A dashboard will save our ton of time. Because on its own, each social media platform can be a time-suck. With a dashboard, you are keeping things in perspective.

2.2 Tracking
We want to keep a tab on what our competitors are upto. Who's talking about them? Who's following them? How's their engagement? All tracking-related questions that we can answer with simple search inside the tool.

2.3 Scheduling
Only a few social networks allow us to schedule our content. It's a headache to go inside each account and schedule every post manually. Granted, networks like Twitter operate in "real-time" but you can't be online all day long. Plus, no one likes being bombarded with string of posts within a given span of time, so scheduling is a smarter way to be present without really being there.

2.4Analytics
We probably wondered: What type of posts are a "hit" with my audience? Which ones get the most shares and engagement? How do we get more leads through social channels? Thankfully, with a dashboard, you can stop the guesswork. By seeing what our audience clicked on, we can fine-tune into what our followers enjoy. Dashboards make it easy to analyze everything at once.

2.5 Collaboration
Most dashboard tools will allow our team members to collaborate. We can also divide roles and duties and allocate social media tasks to each member accountable.

3. TOP 4 SOCIAL MANAGEMENT TOOLS

Let that marinate for a second. This potential for a triple treat is no task to walk into empty handed or unprepared. Unless we want to turn our social media endeavors into a triple threat, we should develop a strategy, based on as much knowledge as possible about our audience and their behavior.
The 4 tools below will help our social media manager take on the complexity of the job.

3.1 <u>Hootsuite</u>

Price: Free, $8.99/month for Pro Version
Nutshell: Manage all your social networks in one spot, in a multi-columned design that lets you see several feeds at once.

What You Get (with Pro) for $10/month:
- Unlimited Number of Social Profiles
- Access for You +1 Team Member
- Analytics Reporting
- Advanced Scheduling (Manual & Auto-Scheduling)
- Monitoring & Publishing Tools
- Unlimited Apps (To connect with other social networks like Instagram, YouTube, <u>Tumblr</u>, and Evernote) & RSS Feeds
- Mobile Apps

HootSuite is probably the most well-known social media management platform, letting users manage Facebook, LinkedIn, Google+, FourSquare, and many other social accounts.
What sets HootSuite apart from the ever-increasing number of social media management tools is its multi-columned design. In HootSuite, each social media account is designated its own tab, and within each tab, users have the option of setting up streams. Streams can be customized to monitor any number of social media segments.

PROS:
- **Multi-Columned Streams:** The multi-columned design makes it easy to monitor many social media components on one screen.
- **Apps to Connect with Other Social Media Networks:** HootSuite seems to be the only social media account management tool really giving you tons of app add-on options.

CONS:
- **Costly Analytic Reports:** Many of HootSuite's analytic reports cost money and can get quite pricey, with some hitting the $50 mark.
- **No Content-Grabbing Extension:** Some other social media management tools have browser extensions that make it easy to bookmark and queue articles across the web for sharing, but not HootSuite.
- **Ow.ly-Only URL Shorter:** As Ian Gray points out, HootSuite uses ow.ly for link shortening, which may not be an issue for some users, but ow.ly shortening means that those URLs can't really be tracked with anything outside of HootSuite.
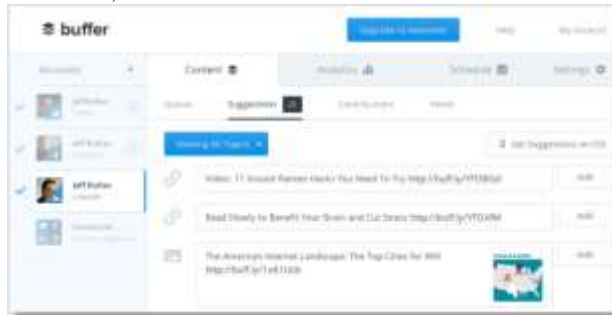
3.2 Buffer

Price: Free, $10/month for full version.
Nutshell: Queue & Schedule Content With Ease

What You Get with Full Version (aka the "Awesome Plan")
- 12 profiles (Twitter, FB, LinkedIn)
- Advanced Post Scheduling
- Schedule Retweets (NEW)
- 2 Team Members
- Simple Analytics
- Buffer Extension Button for Chrome and Firefox to easily share articles
- Link Shortening Capabilities
- No Limit on Buffer Posts

Buffer features a crisp, clean, and easy to manage interface for queuing up articles to share across Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

While Sprout Social and HootSuite are multi-purpose tools for publishing, listening, and measuring social media efforts, Buffer is designed for social media content management, primarily concerned with making it as easy as possible to share cool content you've found across your social media networks when and where we choose.

The Buffer button can easily be integrated into RSS readers, Twitter, Chrome, SocialBro, Wordpress, and other tools for discovering Content.

Buffer's scheduling options are fantastic – choose three, four, five or more specific times when you want to do a post, and Buffer will grab something from your assigned queue and post for you. As of a few days ago, Buffer

lets you schedule retweets too! These schedules can be changed and adjusted for each day of the week (so long

Schedule

So, when would you like your posts to be sent? Choose your timezone, schedule your times and we'll make sure your posts are sent out even when you're asleep!

Mon, Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun			New Posting Schedule	
Monday	**Tuesday**	Wednesday	**Thursday**	Friday

Post at these times **Mon, Tue, Thu, Sat, Sun**

- 09 : 50 : AM
- 10 : 14 : AM
- 12 : 00 : PM

Add Posting Time

as you have the Awesome plan).

Even Buffer's free option makes life significantly easier for content-sharing social media users.

Buffer's no-nonsense analytics are simple compared to other social media management tools, but still offer important information regarding the retweets, mentions, likes and comments on your various social media posts. Buffer has some handy little extras too, such as link shortening (bit.ly, buff.ly, or j.mp) and the option of adding team members that can access your Buffer account. You won't be assigning tasks and chatting inside the platform as you can with other social media management services, but it's still a nice additional feature.

If you're looking primarily for easy and powerful scheduling options with the core social media platforms, Buffer is your main man.

PROS:
- **Easy & Simple Interface:** Clean presentation and easy to use.
- **Great Segmented Scheduling**: Schedule times to repeat throughout the week or adjust according to different **days.**
- **Buffer Button Integrates Easily Across the Web:** Extensions make Buffering a breeze – you can use the Buffer button in your web browser, on Twitter, or on content pages.

CONS:
- **Simple Analytics**: Bare-bone analytics offer only the essentials.
- **Not an All-Encompassing Social Media Management Solution:** Again, I'm not sure this is a fair "con" since Buffer isn't trying to be a one-stop social media management spot. However, if you're looking to better manage your social media accounts, Buffer provides only one piece of the puzzle, albeit a valuable corner piece.

3.3 Sprout Social

SPROUT**SOCIAL**

Price: Starts at $40/month

Nutshell: Sprout Social is pricier than other social media management software, but advocates rave about its gorgeous design, advanced discovery and contact management options, and great customer support.

What You Get with the Standard $40/Month Plan
- All-In-One Social Inbox
- Real-time Brand Monitoring
- Advanced Publishing & Scheduling for Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn & Google Reader RSS
- Social CRM Tools
- Comprehensive Reporting Tools
- Complimentary Training & Support
- Manage Up to 10 Profiles

- •   Sprout Social Browser Extension for Easy Article Queuing
- •   Mobile Apps

Sprout's setup consists of a main Home dashboard, offering a quick snapshot of your social accounts, and several tabs that help users monitor, publish, schedule, and report on social media campaigns.

The Messages tab shows engagement, such as @ tweets involving you, while the Feeds tab is where you can access all your social media feeds in one spot. In this sense, the Sprout setup could be more compact – I'd prefer to see Messages and Feeds tabs combined, rather than having to go back and forth to see mentions and interactions in a separate section from my feeds.

PROS:
- •   **Gorgeous Interface**: Sprout is the most attractive social media management tool, with a crisp, clean, and clutter-free layout. While aesthetics may seem like a shallow and irrelevant factor, if you are spending every day working with a tool, you can bet you want it to look sexy.
- •   **Mega Customer and Tech Support**: Advocates rave about the helpfulness and friendliness of Sprout Social's customer and tech support.
- •   **Headache Free:** Sprout Social isn't as customizable as other social media management tools, but that also means it isn't as complicated. Sprout's interface is natural and intuitive – you won't have to spend hours figuring it out.

CONS:
- •   **Scheduler Not as Advanced as Buffer**: While Sprout Social has a nice queue system and scheduler, they don't allow for the same kind of deep, repeated scheduling as Buffer.
- •   **No Facebook Liking**: Sprout Social lets you reply and comment on Facebook, but the interface doesn't yet allow you to "Like" content – a strange hiccup that will hopefully be fixed soon.
- •   **No Google+:** Another significant issue is that Sprout Social doesn't have Google+ integration, although they're likely to change that in the near future.

3.4 Social Bro

Price: $6.95/month for Premium, with three higher options
Nutshell: A super-powered social media community management tool for Twitter
What you get with Premium Plan:
- •   10K social contacts
- •   5 Twitter accounts
- •   Assortment of tools for understanding & engaging with Twitter community
- •   Twitter monitoring through hashtags, URLs, or tweets
- •   Analyze Competitors feature
- •   Twitter Insights Reporting

"Do you even social, bro?" SocialBro allows for deep exploration of your Twitter community, letting users dig deep into information about their Twitter followers and friends.
SocialBro can feel overwhelming and even downright frightening when you log in for the first time, as you're bombarded with columns, graphs, and tools. Thankfully, SocialBro eases the learning curve with video tutorials and helpful mouse-over pop-ups that offer explanations for each metric and tool.

PROS:
•   **Built-in Learning:** SocialBro's tutorial videos and mouse-over instructions make the platform easy to learn.

CONS:
•   **Just Twitter:** Not compatible with other social media accounts outside of Twitter. Then again, it's not trying to be a complete social media management solution, so maybe this isn't a true con.

4. CONCLUSION

The best thing we can do when deciding on which social media management software to choose for our business is to jump in and try the tools ourself, taking into account your business's individual demands and needs. HootSuite and Buffer provide completely free social media management tools via their $0/month plans, while Social Bro and Sprout Social have free trials. We prefer Hoot Suite's multi-column design, which lets we take in more information at once on a single screen, but many others prefer the single-column layout, since with the multi-column we sometimes have to scroll across horizontally, which can be a pain. Ultimately, it's a matter of preference.

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