

7 Tips to Help You Make Time For Social Media

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When I joined Twitter a few months ago, one of my pressing questions was how to manage the **ever-increasing influx of information**, considering that I also use email, read and write articles, newsletters and blogs, and am active on Facebook and LinkedIn.

Apparently, social networking increases our effectiveness, according to a pan-European survey*, in which 74% of European employees claimed there are benefits to using social networks and online communities in the workplace. **Increasing an individual's knowledge** and **giving access to solutions to problems** (both 38%) were the two main benefits highlighted.

I find that social networking offers a **fantastic way of communicating** with increasing numbers of people. With interactions being much quicker than via email, both communication and the exchange of information can be really efficient. However, one of the concerns I used to have before joining social networks was whether I would find the necessary time to manage all these new media!



Many things can sabotage your productivity, particularly the distractions that pull you away from your priorities. Indeed, 49% of employees in that same survey mentioned that distractions posed by social networks are a real challenge. I knew I needed to add social media to my online marketing activities, but also knew that without an effective strategy I wouldn't be able to find the time to use it consistently nor manage the additional distractions.

*[Social Networking Report commissioned by AT&T](#)

Here are some tips to help you integrate social networking time into your daily routine:

1. Schedule **designated time slots for social networking**. Mine are mainly at the beginning and the end of my work day.
2. Keep your **goal small to begin with** – perhaps just aim for 5 minutes of reading at the beginning, or just one post per day, or every other day, on just one site. Reading time is important as it helps you to learn more from and about the people you are connecting with. Naturally you can increase your goals once you feel more confident about networking online.
3. After updating your main social networking site, it may help to **scan** other online networks, blogs and articles relevant to your business. This needn't take more than 15 minutes and you'll **gain inspiration and ideas by learning** how other people use social networks and promote themselves.
4. Always **keep social networking separate from your other work tasks** to avoid any conflict with your other activities. When I read and post first thing in the morning for example, I do this before any other online or offline activities.
5. Once you've finished your online networking, it is best to **close all the browser windows** to concentrate on other work projects. Since getting side-tracked on the internet is so easy, **it is better to work on one project at a time**, rather than multitask! Jumping from one activity (or browser window) to the next and back, can affect concentration and cost you time.
6. **Do keep an eye on the clock** when you're online! Using a timer or setting a reminder on a mobile phone can both help you to avoid wasting time.
7. When starting to use Twitter, **it may help to plan and write a series of posts or tips a week ahead**, and then to post one of them each day. There will be less chance of getting side-tracked because of not knowing what to write. Once you are more familiar with Twitter, tools like Tweetdeck and Tweetlater can help you to be more efficient with your time, either by enabling you to post across several sites or to schedule posts to be delivered on specific days.

So, if you want to feel fully in control of your online time rather than it controlling you, why not start by setting a small and realistic goal for yourself?



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