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Scott Cytron • Apr. 08, 2014

Professionals who participate in social media, and certainly most accountants I know, want to measure what they're doing, in order to know if they should increase or decrease the time they spend on non-billable activities. Seldom do I find anyone who tweets or networks with colleagues on LinkedIn just because it takes up valuable time the accountant could be spending building business in other ways.

Yet, social media is seemingly difficult to measure. For example, it's great that you're tweeting about how a taxpayer can reduce his or her tax liability, but unless a client or even a prospect actually *told* you he or she became more aware of your firm because of your tweet, you won't be able to determine the effectiveness of your social media efforts.

So, if it's difficult to measure your impact, you can do the next best thing; implement several tactics that reinforce your social media marketing. Once you begin using some of the following tactics, you may even feel better about your efforts.

#1: Ask Clients for Feedback

There's nothing better than going to your A-List clients, the ones who are the most engaged with you and your business. Coming up with your list shouldn't be difficult; if it is, then you need to examine the ways you service your clients, but that topic is best left to another story in the future.

This measurement is simple:

- Make a list of the clients you're connected to on LinkedIn, friends with on

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You'll also want to measure the impact you have on prospects, so if you have a defined pipeline of prospects who you've connected to several times over social media, ask them the same question. You probably won't get an overwhelming response, but you may pick up a nugget or two that could help.

#2: Use Google Analytics

Google has a large number of very helpful business and productivity tools, but perhaps the most popular is [Google Analytics](#), which measures traffic to your websites. If your site generates fewer than 10 million hits per month, Google Analytics is free; if you have a larger reach, the Premium version offers more help. Most accountants who are reading this most likely can opt for the free version.

Easy to set up, Google Analytics shows your traffic patterns and trends, and measures, for example, if you are using a page for a marketing initiative to your audience. Google offers a very helpful [webpage](#) that explains all of this in much more detail.

Certainly, Google Analytics is scientific because it tracks the number of visits, but I caution you not to depend too much on the numbers because of what the program doesn't show: engagement. You won't know, for example, if someone reading an article on your website is truly "engaged." Will that reader call the firm and try to reach you? Will that reader be influenced a certain way because your article was persuasive?

You will never know the answers unless that person actually tells you he or she found your article and acted upon it in a certain way. Still, though, Google Analytics is helpful for a specific gauge of how popular your website may be.

#3: Consider Using Klout

[Klout](#), a unique web-based and mobile program, measures your “Klout” score

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score.

I haven't spent very much time using Klout, but I am aware of my score and use it as a barometer to understand if the information I'm pushing out to my followers is of any significance. Klout can be useful for firms who are attempting to quantify their participation in social media; after all, accountants love numbers, right? What might be more interesting is to track your Klout score on a spreadsheet to see if it's increasing or decreasing based on how often you post or share.

#4: Push Out Information

Quite a few accountants may be hesitant to use social media to push out information to their friends and followers because they think it might be too invasive and even a bit boastful, but I recommend experimenting and seeing how it works.

Pushing out a status update and/or tweet for a white paper, for example, should give you several bits of information. First, it tells you whether your followers are reading what you're posting. Second, it indicates engagement, something hard to attain through tools such as Klout.

Here's an example of your tweet for a white paper (in 140 characters or less): “Direct message me back for a copy of a white paper on smart uses of mobile technologies in your business.”

If you haven't written any white papers, come up with something else: a short set of tax tips, update information about Obamacare or just about anything else that informs and educates.

#5: Make the Most Use of Your Email Signature

Many professionals in just about every industry often forget the value associated

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and [Twitter](#) (links to my handle).

- Use social media symbols and hyperlink each one. While this is a good way to visually show the social media you're participating in, the linking of the name can be just as effective.

Test, Test and Test Again

I am a huge advocate of testing and retesting your efforts. If you are tweeting and not coming up with any kind of results, measureable or otherwise, switch to something else. However, give it some time. Nothing should be tried and shut off in just a few weeks or even a few months. Give it up to six months and even a year's worth of time. People are slower to react than we want them to be, but you still have to give your efforts some time.

What kinds of measurement are you using with social media? What's been effective for you? Comment below and share your thoughts with other readers.

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