



How to Be Social: A Social Media Manifesto

{Or, The Ten Worst Social Media Marketing Mistakes, and How to Avoid
Them}

By [Claire Diaz-Ortiz](#)



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Le Intro

Social Media is hard.

I know.

There are all kinds of things to do wrong.

You tell the world you don't use Q-tips and you get angry @ mentions for years to come. You send the [Baby Monkey video](#) to your mother and it becomes her ringtone, thereby ruining the lives of innocent passerby for years to come. You send inappropriate pictures to the world instead of to that special someone and lose your Congressional Gym Membership.

We've all been there.

The land of not #winning is a dark and dusty place, and I want to help you get out.

Here are the ten key mistakes that you're likely making today (and every day) when you try to market yourself, your brand, or your business on social media.

Read and study these mistakes.

Then, go and not make them.

1. You Think Social Media Is About the Number of Followers You Have



The fact that we measure the success of things in terms of numbers throws us all out of whack. The 98% I got on my algebra test is better than the 97% you got on your algebra test but fifteen years later there is no neuron in my brain that can connect my synapses to tell me what a polynomial is.

104 degrees Fahrenheit is worse than 82 degrees Fahrenheit but better than 114 degrees Fahrenheit, but you live in London and there is no Fahrenheit as far as the eye can see.

Numbers can be tricky little devils.

Luckily, social media, like your [favorite honey badger](#), doesn't give a crud.

Those of us in the know what's right: social media isn't about the numbers.

Never has been, never will be.

Instead, social media is a space where relationships rule, and the success of your social media strategy is only as powerful as the depth of those relationships.

Who wins on social media?

The relationship people.

Not the televangelist with the winking eye twitch, but the people who know how to really find friends, nurture relationships, and build community. The spammy one-trick wonders have no chance of success on social networking platforms.

In fact, as one wise, wise elder once said, "Social media is where spammy one-trick wonders go to die."

Don't die. Live.

(Through the relationships you foster.)

2. You Think a “Like” is a Friend



Lucky for us, social media is all about relationships.

But let's be clear.

If you run over someone's foot with your cart at CVS, you do not have a relationship. If you send someone a [LinkedIn](#) request because they work at Pizza Hut (and you – coincidence! -- eat at Pizza Hut), you do not have a relationship. Finally, if you like someone's Facebook page because you love the blog they write about urban composting, you have not just developed a relationship.

And not having a relationship is not the time to over-share, ask personal questions, or make requests (i.e. like my page, email my mother, [buy me Almond Joys](#)).

Yes, a computer screen makes it easier for you to pour out your weird obsessions in a LinkedIn message to someone you don't know. No, a computer screen does not make your ask any more palatable.

3. You Think Social Media isn't Honest



Guess what?

With social media, the world knows what you are doing.

No, really.

From [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) or other platforms I can see right now what you're doing and who you're doing it with. What cool folks you are meeting right now (like this pic of [me](#) with the King Twit and idol man [@DaveRamsey](#)), what husbands you're divorcing at the exact moment you do so (day #72, if you're counting), and what ways you are changing the world and tweeting about it (thanks, [@NickKristof](#)).

But what happens when the world can see what you're really up to? You better be telling it straight. Don't lie. And Don't Avoid.

After all, there is nothing more screamingly awkward (and ineffective) than hiding under the potted plant.

Need an example?

When social media darling Ashton Kutcher found himself in some hot water in the fall of 2011, the Tweeting got too much for him. In a prehistoric press release (yes, you read that right) he announced that his company would take over the tweeting reins of managing his unwieldy twits.

Smart public relations move or last-ditch effort to stop an incoming train?

Put on your big boy pants and talk to us straight, I say.

4. You Think Social Media Isn't Real-Time



Admit it.

Some of you schedule your tweets.

Luckily for you, I'm not here to cry foul.

Although I've been known to schedule some evergreen Tweets at times (and to [recommend the practice](#) – in moderation – to brands and individuals), the main rule of tweet scheduling as I advise it is also the main rule of social media: Don't say you're doing something you're not.

Scheduling a tweet to say “stuck in traffic on another dreary Monday”, when you’re actually hitting the slopes in Tahoe for President’s Day Weekend just looks dumb. And so do you when you do it.

Especially in snow.

People want to know what you’re actually doing. They do not want an automated Tweet that talks about your love of the [Game of Thrones Season 2 Premiere](#) when HBO has actually pushed back the release date (unbeknownst to your five-months-ago-tweet-scheduling self).

5. You Think Social Media Isn't Social



The best way to be bad at social media is to forget what time it is.

And what time is it, kids?

(Cue lights, banners, and sparkles.)

Iiiiiitttttt'sssss.....SOCIAL MEDIA TIME!

Huzzah!

If anyone asks (and I am asking), it is always social media time. Always time to tell the world what you're doing – providing it's interesting and not lame. (For questions about whether your proposed social media update is lame, [send me an urgent email.](#))

No, this doesn't necessarily mean tethering your iphone to your temple or tweeting in the bathroom, but it does mean making sure that you keep your social media followers up to date on major events, and in a timely manner.

6. You Think Social Media Means Telling People Everything



If there is one insight I can give to you today it is this: Not everything you do is interesting.

The blue status update box on Facebook can be alluring for many, and some are far too drawn to its power – regularly falling into the trap of updating when there is nothing to update on.

Getting home from the gym?

Fine.

Getting in the shower?

Minorly weird.

Soaping Up?

More than minorly weird.

Toweling off?

Dude, no need to Storify it.

Your social media fans and followers do not need a play-by-play of you flossing your hipster teeth, even if Instagram does make it look retro.

7. You Think Social Media is Press Release Media



My favorite kind of social media user is the one who waits for years to join. Then, when they finally do, they sit down at their big brown desk and begin flexing their long, knobby fingers. Getting ready to Tweet? Hardly.

They're getting ready to dip their quill in the inkwell to draft the announcement to inform the press release that will inform the bullet points that will inform the tweet. Don't hold your breath.

Social Media is not a new place for your press releases (or family Christmas cards) to shine.¹ If no one read it in 1993, they aren't going to read it now, even if all 450 words are broken up into 140 character segments. Think conversation, and start from there.

¹ Unless they are [wonderfully awkward](#), of course.

8. You Think Social Media Isn't a Conversation



Want to win on social media? I've got an idea! Tell a long boring monologue for weeks on end, never stopping to interact with the folks following you. Although that sounds extreme (and of course you'd never do such a thing!), I bet you already have.

Remember that time you didn't send an @reply for 20 days straight because you simply forgot to? Do you sometimes spend more time [rewriting your Tweets on scraps of paper](#) to Instagram them than you spend interacting with your followers? Do, you ever forget your fans entirely? Exactly.

Social media is a conversation, and you won't have anyone to talk to (read: they will all not reading your updates, click the "unlike", or stop following you), if you don't bring others into your world.

Try it. It's more fun not to Tweet on your island.

9. You Think Your Social Media Family is Your Real Family



I've got a social media family, and I bet you do too.

Here's the thing: I have great, close friends I have made on social media. And sometimes, when I send a tweet or a status update I am consciously trying to connect with those amazing folks with whom I have a personal connection.

But guess what?

Social networking platforms – and the messages I send on them – are not actually private (unless I make them so).

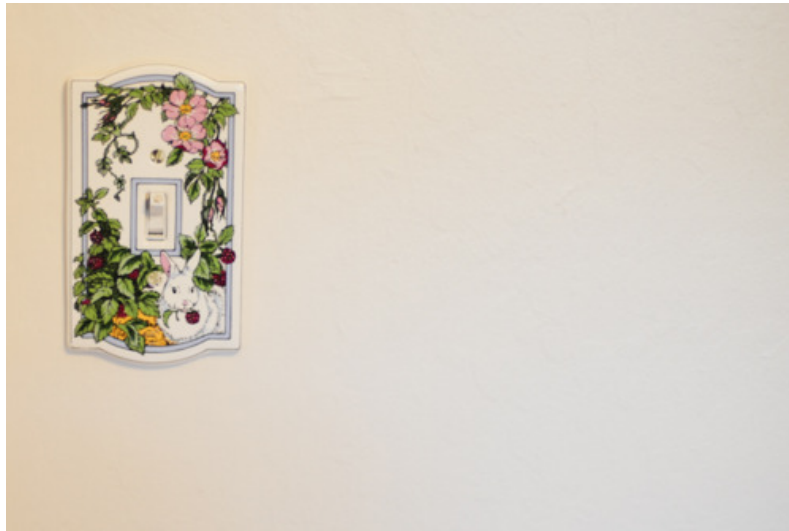
The fact that my tweets are public, and that my [Facebook updates](#) are visible to hundreds of friends, means that I am ultimately not just talking to those close friends I know consider family, even when I might feel like I am.

Do you want to share something really personal?

Don't tweet it. Seriously.

Ask [Weiner](#).

10. You Think Social Media Goes to Sleep



The social networks don't stop when you're in dreamland.

There were 30 people on my honeymoon in the Amazon jungle. (Yes, it's a long story. And yes, I invited them.) One night, I went to bed early. In the morning, I woke up to find a leather placemat slid underneath the hotel room door.

It said:

Claire!

Osama Bin Laden was killed.

Breaking news via Twitter (!)

We thought you should know.

But we didn't wake you.

We love you.

Just because I wasn't on Twitter that night didn't mean the Tweeting stopped.

Now, this doesn't mean you should stay up, waiting for the endless news cycle to quiet down (Breaking News: IT NEVER WILL!), or waiting for your friends to send you social media updates via a dark raven.

Instead, it simply means to be aware that social media is the eye and ear of today, and tomorrow. When you sleep, it doesn't. When I take [24 hours off of the interwebs](#) (as I try to do once a week), it doesn't.

Learn it, know it, and ignore it at will.

But don't mistake: it's always there.

In Conclusion.

Are you tired? I bet.



It's been a long two hundred thousand words (or so). At least for those of us writing them.

Time to kick up those feet, plug in the [George Foreman](#), and Instagram the crud out of your dinner. Or something like that.

Just remember the social media marketing rules, and don't make a dumb mistake.

And whatever you do, keep #winning.

About the Author



Claire Diaz-Ortiz leads social innovation at Twitter, where she has worked since 2009. She wrote [Twitter for Good: Change the World one Tweet at a Time](#) and is a frequent international speaker on social media. She is known for developing [the TWEET model](#) — a framework to help organizations and individuals best excel on Twitter.

Claire holds an MBA and other degrees from Stanford and Oxford, and is the co-founder of [Hope Runs](#), a non-profit organization operating in AIDS orphanages in Kenya.

She also owns [Interwebs Publishing](#) (which publishes stuff like this here item), the [The Unconference Series](#) (which hosts snazzy online “un”

conferences on a variety of topics) and [Saving Money Media](#) (a blog network that has been helping families live better on less since 2008).

Read more fresh from her mind at www.ClaireDiazOrtiz.com.

Need to get in touch with Claire?

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