

MARKETER'S TOOLBOX: Choosing and Navigating Social Media Sites for your A/E/C Marketing Toolbox

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As marketers, most of us agree that social media should be in our toolboxes. But what about how to choose and navigate which sites are best for your role in the A/E/C community?

2 Things—Most Important:

1. **Know your goals and audience, and the best places to reach them.** Where are clients and prospects? Where and how do they want to talk to you? Research and test, and then do follow-up research and tests. Experimenting and risk-taking is OK and helpful!
2. **Give the people (your audience) what they want!** Develop your message and compelling content, and then encourage engagement to increase interactions helping your clients and prospects. Start with your website as content hub, and then share wherever else it will reach and help your audience.

And 2 Notes On Those 2 Things:

1. **A Valuable Conversation:**
Say something to help others – not just congratulate yourself. Of course, major announcements—such as a new website, partner or award—are worth sharing but also post about how you can concretely help your audience, and give them ways to interact with you in a two-way conversation. For example, consider asking questions and other calls to action.
2. **My Recent Test:**
Recently I checked several top developers, government

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agencies and architecture firms—and I found some on many social media sites, some on a few, and some not actively using social media. LinkedIn, Instagram, and sometimes Facebook had the most engaging two-way conversations. Is this true for your clients and prospects, too, or have you found otherwise?

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Now, on to a few other check-list items:

- o **Interactivity and Engagement Level:**
How much interaction do you want, and how fast and substantive? Facebook and LinkedIn enable longer, more substantial conversations—while Twitter and Instagram might have faster, but shorter interactions. Twitter chats are a phenomenon that I've heard a lot about recently. Most importantly, can you maintain an active presence with regular posts and responses to others? It only takes a few minutes a day (or even every few days, depending on your audience) to have an active presence – but make sure you have that time.
- o **Pictures:**
Do you have photos, renderings and other images frequently available? Will they showcase your services, and how much do you want to emphasize them? Also, how much descriptive text do you want to show with those pictures? Instagram, Pinterest, Architizer and Flickr are all popular for image sharing. So far, I've seen Instagram as the most popular, interactive site and easiest to learn, but all the sites have different personalities—so see what's most effective for your strategy and audience.
- o **Videos:**
When done well, videos (recordings and live streams) are popular and considered very effective. YouTube, Vimeo, Periscope and Facebook Live can help—if you have the content to post frequently and maintain an active presence.
- o **Searchability:**
Consider Twitter's "power of hashtags" that make searching especially easy—but of course, choosing compelling, differentiating key words is key for search engine optimization covering all your sites.
- o **Tools:**
Finally, I'd be remiss if I didn't mention management, measurement and scheduling tools available, such as Hootsuite and HubSpot—but engagement analytics can be viewed on the social media sites themselves, too.

I hope this helps your toolbox, and I can share more tips in future blog posts! I'm out of space for now, but feel free to reach out on LinkedIn, if you'd like more helpful resources.

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