

## BETTER WAYS OF CONNECTING VIA FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM AND THE REST

# SOCIAL MEDIA 2017: ADVICE, UPDATES AND QUICK TIPS

By Jeff Penson

Social media, for any small-business operator, is like a vegetable garden. Fussing with it constantly is unnecessary and unproductive, but you can't turn your back on it, either. For a Proponent member wishing to harness social media's potential, a fairly deep dive will be needed every now and then, mixed with an ongoing effort of perhaps twice-weekly posting or messaging.

If it's been a while since you devoted a chunk of time and attention to social-media success, you may want to print this article and keep it somewhere handy. As the season quiets down and time opens up, the ideas below will still be current and they'll offer a big assist to any coach seeking a better return on his or her endeavors.

The information below includes many a question—how you answer them will reveal whether you're using digital social tools advantageously or if you've let the weeds grow (and your harvest over-ripen) in that garden we mentioned. The ideas are organized platform-by-platform, and each block ends with a "Bonus Question" that contains guidance only the most progressive social-media users are currently using.

You may want to read the article once through, then come back to the top and think about some next-steps to execute. You'll find the various online platforms discussed one by one, each block containing ideas and data points that have been highly valuable in our everyday work with Golf Channel Academy coaches.

### Facebook

Three quarters of American adults use Facebook and it is one of the best social media channels for promoting any brand, due to its vast user base. According to the marketing services vendor Hubspot, 42 percent of marketers say Facebook is important if not critical to their business.



#### Do you have a "business page" for your Academy?

To maximize Facebook's business potential, you need to create a business page, not a personal profile, to represent

your brand. This allows you to promote junior camps and photos of your facility instead of distracting people with photos of your kids on vacation.

#### Have you claimed your page's vanity URL?

Once you've created your business page, make it more shareable and easier to find by creating a recognizable vanity URL (e.g. [www.facebook.com/GolfChannelAcademy](http://www.facebook.com/GolfChannelAcademy))



#### Do you have a creative cover photo and profile picture?

Facebook's new page design enables you to feature an 851 x 315 pixel 'cover photo' at the top of your business page. Get creative with it to capture the attention of new visitors.

#### What type of content are you sharing?

Many coaches get caught up in just sharing promotional content around their upcoming events or their array of products and programs. Certainly there's a time and place for that material, but you should be varying your content—bring in a mix of videos, photography, quotes, article links and so forth.

**BONUS QUESTION:** Do you double your efficiency and effectiveness by auto-publishing blog content on Facebook?

Get ahead of the curve and start populating your Facebook page's Timeline with content! If you maintain a business blog, you can connect your blog so that links to the latest blog content you publish will auto-post to your Facebook page. Blogging platforms like WordPress automatically offer this feature within its software—you just need to turn it on and sync it with your page.

## Instagram

Now with over 300 million users, Instagram is an amazing tool for reaching younger audiences and a highly valuable option for academies that have the ability to share great photos and videos. The average Instagram user spends 21 minutes per day using the app. Lastly, Instagram trumps Twitter for engagement and interactions.

### Do you even have an Instagram account?

There's no way you can take advantage of the 300 millions Instagram users out there if you do not have an account. It is easy to set up an Instagram account and even easier to start using it.

### Are you getting tons of engagement (likes and comments)?

If not, you could be skipping the vital step of adding hashtags or tagging your location in posts. The way people find you and your account on social media is through hashtags (#). This is a way of tagging or classifying your posts so that people can search for specific topics and find posts that they are interested in. Many of you post great Instagram photos but don't use any hashtags so not many people can find you!

Some of the more popular and applicable hashtags you should be using are: #golf #pga #golflife #golfinstruction #summer #instagolf #golfsrag #Taylormade #golfchannel #livingthegreen #(your course name) #(your academy name).

### Do you use a good mix of photos and videos?

You work on a golf course for Pete's sake! You have one of the most beautiful office views around. Why not take photos and video at every chance you can to showcase and show off your facility?

### Have you mastered the "stories" function?

Instagram's Snapchat-like feature lets you create photo sequences that expire after 24 hours. They are absolutely ideal for multi-step swing tips and sharing content that you



Facebook keeps taking steps to professionalize the look and activity of what users post. That includes a new layout option that enables you to feature an 851-by-315 pixel "cover photo" at the top of your business page. Get creative with it to capture the attention of new visitors. The navy blue section of this diagram is where a "horizontal" or "panoramic" image—most likely a beauty shot of the place you teach—would be inserted.



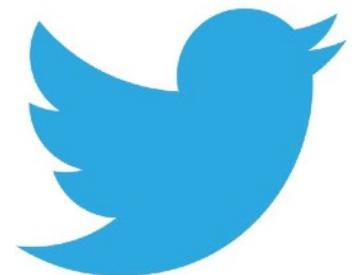
would rather not junk up your profile or feed with.

### BONUS QUESTION: Do you ever stream live?

Live streaming on Instagram is next-level for coaches. Similar to what "Facebook Live" provides, this Instagram gadget lets you answer questions via video based on comments from viewers. This is a great tool for coaches with good followings who want to answer golf instruction tips live for people or who want to showcase a live event.

## Twitter

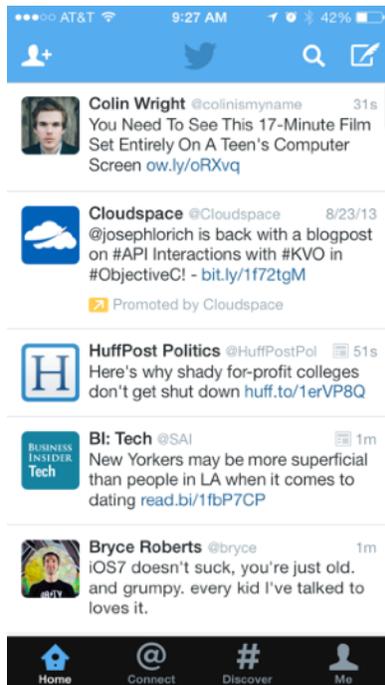
Have some cool instructional videos or interesting golf knowledge that you can convey in less than 140 characters? Then Twitter is for you. Also, if you are looking to push out your blog posts or also share FB and Instagram posts



this is a great platform.

### Do you post on a consistent basis?

One of the biggest problems people have when growing their following on Twitter is their sporadic posting and lack of consistency. You do not have to post every hour or even every 3 days to be successful, BUT if you do not provide value and interesting posts on a fairly regular basis why would anyone want to follow you?



### Are you using visuals?

Yes, you can post videos and photos on Twitter! You can even post polls for your followers to vote on. It has been shown that photos and videos receive a much higher engagement rate than conventional messages.

### Do you look for your peers and engage with them?

Who are you connected with? In many cases, one of the easiest ways to gain a following and build Twitter exposure is to follow and tweet similar peers or people in the golf industry, to gain exposure to their following.

### What does your profile look like?

One of the quickest and easiest ways to stand out in the golf industry is to have high-quality photography and graphic design on your social media platforms and website. If you have a sloppy pixelated photo and log on your profiles, you will lose a lot of credibility. Sophistication in your digital presence matters.

### BONUS QUESTION: Do you have goals and a strategy?

What's it all for? Why post? Why care? Each year or each quarter think about the goals for each marketing initiatives including each social media platform. From there you can build a strategy on how to achieve these goals and track progress. Otherwise, you are just going through the motions without the ability to truly track results.



LinkedIn

Although this is predominately more successful for B2B marketing, having a presence on LinkedIn is a must—especially if you run corporate programs, hold various networking events, want to expand your customer base or notice that a lot of your students are business executives or involved in the corporate world.

### Do you have a LinkedIn page?

As the saying goes, “you miss 100 percent of the shots you don’t take.” Get started, it is easy to set up and it is free!

### Do you have a custom URL?

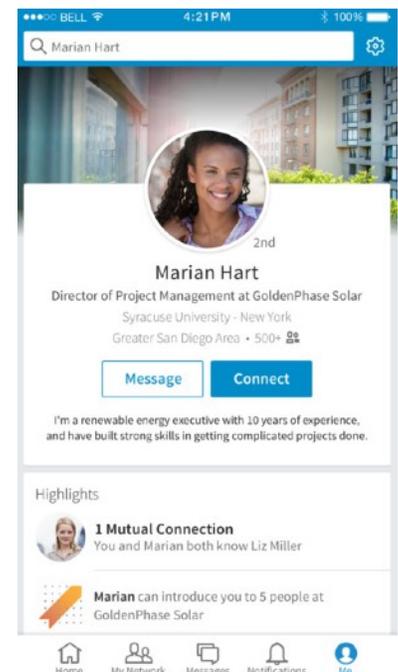
Just as on Facebook, you can customize your academy page on LinkedIn.

### Are you connecting with the right people?

Sure, you can connect with an old friend from junior high, but you should really be proactively targeting business leaders and influencers in your community as well as anyone who you think would be interested in networking or corporate events.

### Did you start your own group, or at least join one?

There are hundreds of thousands of groups on LinkedIn. You should join as many as make sense to your academy. Look around for a local golf group—joining that is a no-brainer. You could also tap into your local Rotary Club network by joining that LinkedIn group. Don't be afraid to start your own group and invite some influential people to join—just make sure it has a common purpose and isn't all about you pushing for your next sale.



### BONUS QUESTION: Do you advertise on LinkedIn?

If corporate and networking events are a big initiative for you and your academy, it may make sense to advertise on LinkedIn. First, you must have a solid LinkedIn page, but once you are set with that you can start to advertise and reach a highly-targeted market.

## YouTube

One of the most dominant digital platforms, YouTube has become the second largest search engine out there—it's bigger than Bing, Yahoo, Ask and AOL combined. Visual content has never been more popular or effective, and YouTube continues to dominate among visual-centric social networks. With 85 percent of online adults considering themselves regular YouTube users, the opportunities for businesses to get their videos in front of a large audience are huge.



### Are your videos optimized for searches and clicks?

Proper tagging of topics, clear descriptions and a clear title for each video (50 characters or less) are imperative if you want the right people to find your videos.

### How are you filming?

Smartphones have given us the ability to create high-quality videos without expensive cameras and costly editing software. With that being said, if you are going to go the inexpensive route, make sure you are competent enough to edit the videos and make sure to invest in a tripod and attachable microphone.

### What types of videos are you creating?

If your channel only shows video tips then you are missing the point. The content you can cover is endless! Some examples would be: Student testimonials, facility intro and program breakdown, clubfitting demo, behind-the-scenes stories and product launches/reviews.

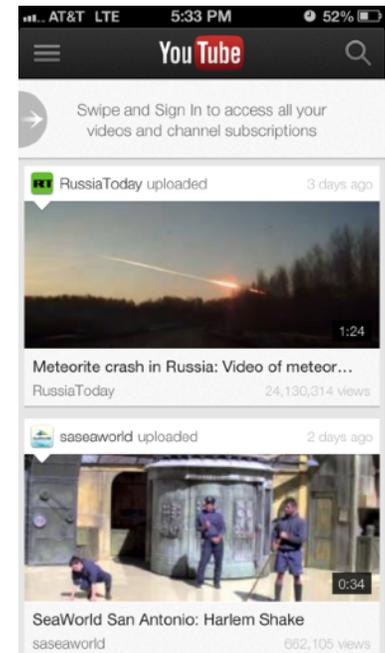
### Do you have a customized YouTube academy page?

If your videos are stored on a personal account that is impossible to search for and find, we have a problem. Check out successful YouTube channels in the golf space and replicate (in your own way) their customized channels.

### BONUS QUESTION: Do you actively promote your YouTube videos?

There's a reliable set of steps you can take to generate more views for your videos. These include using strategies to bolster each video's basic ranking in Google and YouTube keyword-search results, steadily increasing your channel's subscriber base, and promoting your videos via social media, email and your website.

At the conclusion of our social-media questions and recommendations, a point worth restating is the point about steady, habitual attention to these tools—not much different than what a committed gardener brings to that little plot of land in the back yard, where good things grow. **PG**



## State of the Art (Social Media-Wise) within Proponent Group

Over recent years we've provided some relevant summaries of how social media gets used by successful teachers. From this year's Operations Survey of Multi-Teacher Facilities, interesting highlights include the stat showing **85 percent** of academies do have their own Facebook page (meanwhile **64 percent** have their own Twitter account). In that survey we asked about number of "likes" and found that a small sliver of respondents, **4 percent**, had amassed over **2,500** of them. On the YouTube question, 41 percent of academies led by a Proponent member have their own YouTube channel.

When asked about "additional social media platforms," multi-teacher sites came back with a heavy

endorsement of Instagram—**70 percent** called it their go-to choice after Facebook, YouTube and Twitter. The time-spent question is oft-discussed, and an average of about two hours weekly is what members who took this survey seem to devote to all the posting, tweeting and other forms of content-sharing.

However, if you switch over to the recent full-membership Compensation Survey for 2017, some heavy immersion into this form of business-building shows up. Among independent contractors, a full **25 percent** spend over five hours weekly doing social media. One out of five academy owners can beat that—they report spending 10-plus hours in an average week on the various social platforms. — *David Gould*