



---

# MICHAELA CAUSEY

---

## Technical Writing Portfolio

### Contents

Society of Technical Communication (STC) Writing Contest Entry – 2nd Place.....	1
Writing Sample: Tutorial .....	2
Writing Sample: Best Practices Report.....	12



## Society of Technical Communication (STC) Writing Contest Entry – 2nd Place

To: Cookies Cleaner Programming Team  
Subject: Software Compilation Policy Change

Hi everyone,

My name is Michaela Causey, and I work at ComputerDefender as a new member of the Cookies Cleaner software team. I look forward to working with and getting to know everyone. If you are new to ComputerDefender, welcome to the company! I want to let you know about our process and inform everyone about some policy changes.

Recently, ComputerDefender changed its policy on compiling files for software versions: *Each person responsible for a software file will “check in” the most recent version to the software version control system before compilation dates.* Checking in the files on time is critically important to the company’s success.

The compilation date for routine updates and “bug fixes” is the 28<sup>th</sup> of each month at 1p.m. (CT). For those that live outside the central time zone, that is the 28th at:

- 11:00 a.m. (PT),
- 12:00 p.m. (MT),
- and 2:00 p.m. (ET).

There will be other compilation dates for new software releases; I will notify you of these dates via email.

When you check in your files, please specify that it is “Compile Ready.” I encourage you to check them in as early as possible to account for potential technology issues and give our supervisors plenty of time to review the files for errors. In the hours before files are compiled, you may need to be contacted. Please be immediately available by phone or email.

The process can be confusing. To put it simply:

- Be aware of compilation dates. Remember to factor in your time zone.
- Check in the most recent version of your file(s) early.
- Make a note that the file is “Compile Ready” when you virtually check them in.
- Respond promptly to emails or phone calls in the hours before compilation.

Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns. We can arrange to talk at a time that works best with your schedule.

Best,

Michaela Causey  
*Technical Communicator* / **ComputerDefender**  
T: 000-000-0000 | e: michaelacausey@cdefendermail.com

## Writing Sample: Tutorial

### Squarespace Tutorial: Creating a Professional Website

#### Introduction

As a college student preparing to graduate with your degree, you will soon find yourself on the job hunt. What better way to market yourself than a professional website? College graduates and jobseekers today are using websites to advertise themselves and show off their portfolio and resume. Squarespace is a customizable website service that can help you do just that! The following is a tutorial on how to create your own virtual space.

#### 1. Getting Started: Creating an Account

You'll have to create an account before you can start your website. Don't worry! No credit card information will be needed.

- 1) Open a browser window and go to [www.squarespace.com](http://www.squarespace.com).
- 2) Click the **Get Started** box found at the top right of the web page.
- 3) Enter your first name, last name, email, and password into the provided fields.
- 4) Make sure to agree to the **Terms and Conditions** by clicking the bubble, then press enter. You will be redirected to the templates page.

#### 2. Selecting a Template

Arguably the most enjoyable part, selecting your template is crucial to your website. To the right of the page is a list of categories. By clicking each category, you can navigate through the templates and discover hundreds of layouts. However, since this is your professional portfolio, we should stick to a professional theme.

- 1) Above the list of categories, there is a search bar. In the field provided, type "Hatch". Press Enter.
- 2) Hover your mouse over the Hatch template and select it. Dismiss the following pop up.

### 3. Answer Questions

Squarespace wants to know what your website is for and will ask you questions. Since this is your professional portfolio, answer the questions as follows:

1) Step 1 of 5: Site Content. What is the website about?

- i. Select **Personal/Bio** from the list by clicking the circle next to it and then click **Next** at the bottom.

2) Step 2 of 5: Site Goals. What are the goals for this website?

- i. Select **Showcase a portfolio of my work** and click **Next**.

Notice that you can also click **Back** if you select the wrong option.

3) Step 3 of 5: Site Content. Who is this website for?

- i. Select **Client** and click **Next**.

4) Step 4 of 5: Site Description.

- i. Write a short description of yourself, such as your name, major, and future dream job.

Click **Next** when finished.

It can always be changed later so don't sweat it!

5) Step 5 of 5: Site Title

- i. Title your website with your first and last name, and then click **Next**.

You will then be brought to your website.

#### 4. Customize Your Website: Familiarization and Editing the Intro

Now it's time to customize your site! First, we should get familiar with how to navigate. At the top of the page where it says "About Me" and "Exclusive Listings" is the Navigation bar. Hovering your mouse over this area will cause a dark grey pane to appear with the words Navigation and Edit.

- 1) Click **Edit** from the **Navigation** pane. (A sidebar titled "Main Navigation" will appear that lists all current sections and pages of your website. This will be important later.)

Just like with the **Navigation pane**, there are panes for **Intro**, **About** and **Experience**, and other sections of your website that will appear when the mouse is hovered over their specific areas (within your website).

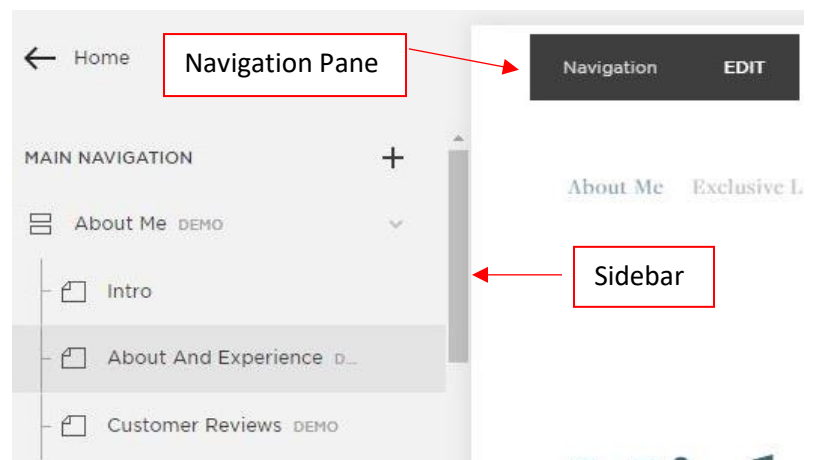


Figure 1 – Navigation pane and Main Navigation sidebar.

- 2) Click **Edit** from the **Intro** pane that is found at the very top of the page.

This step is a bit tricky as the Navigation pane might block you from selecting the Edit button from the correct pane. Make sure to select **Edit** from the **Intro** pane, not the Navigation pane. You can scroll down within your website until the Navigation pane no longer blocks the Intro pane). Clicking the **Edit** button will result with a "Modifying Demo Content" dialogue box:

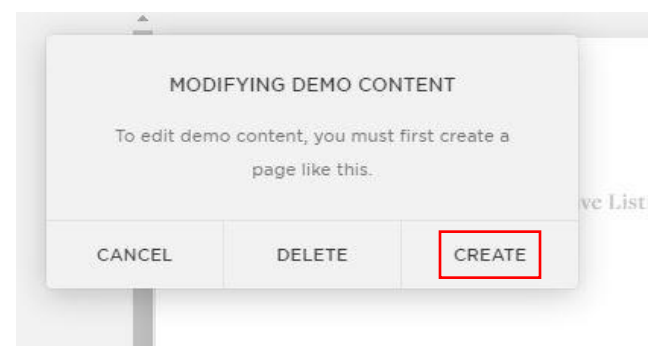


Figure 2 – Modifying Demo Content dialogue box that appears whenever you edit a new section. Create is highlighted.

- 3) Click **Create**.
- 4) Squarespace will pull up a short tutorial on how to add and position pictures. Watch it a few times to familiarize yourself, then click **Okay, Got It**.

- 5) Let's update the Intro, the large blue text, with your information. Clicking anywhere within the text box will place your cursor in the space.

Edit the text as follows:

- i. Delete "Elizabeth Hatch" and replace with your first and last name.
- ii. Delete "Licensed Associate" and replace with your major.
- iii. Delete "Real Estate Broker" and replace with your minor (if applicable).
- iv. Delete "Working in Olathe, Kansas" and replace with "Living in Denton, Texas" or your place of residency.

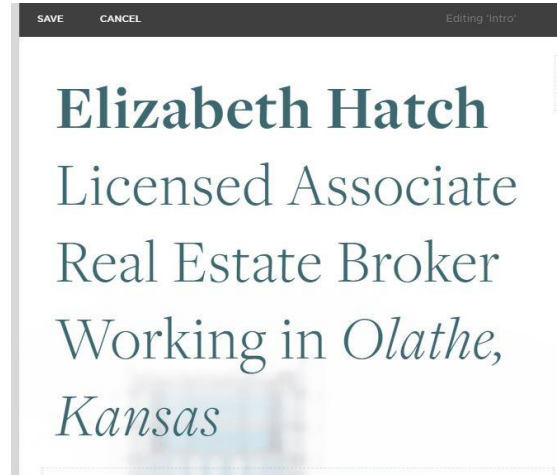


Figure 3 – Intro text box.

Note: Notice that the information you type may take up more or less space than the pre-existing text. You can adjust the formatting of your text however you like by using the editing pane at the top of the header, which functions like Microsoft Word.

- v. Click **Save** at the top left when finished.  
This will bring you out of editing mode.

## 5. Customize Your Website: About Me

- 1) Select **About And Experience** from the **Main Navigation** sidebar. Your page should automatically bring you to the About Me section of your website.
- 2) Click the **Edit** button from the **About and Experience** pane.

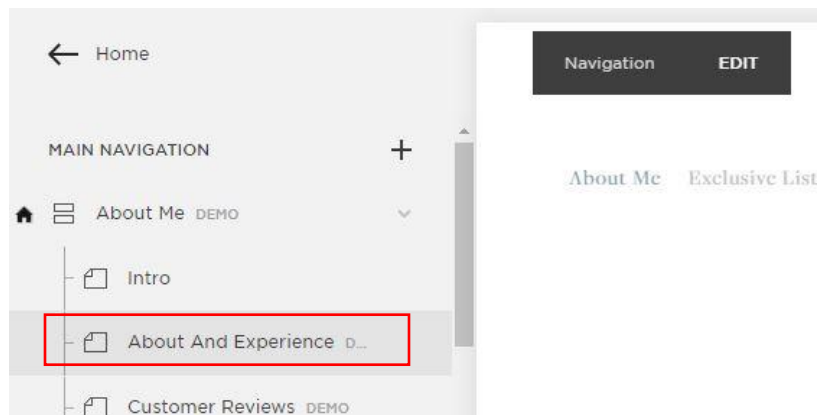


Figure 4 – Selecting About and Experience (highlighted) from the Main Navigation sidebar

- 3) Click **Create** from the “Modifying Demo Content” box.
- 4) Just as with editing the **Intro**, place your cursor within the large body of text and delete.
- 5) Write a summary about yourself! (Do not save yet.)  
Tips: Keep it professional, friendly, and brief. Possible topics to discuss can be your major and why you love it, and courses you have taken

## 6. Customize Your Website: Experience

- 1) Scroll down to the **Experience** part of your website.
- 2) Place the cursor within the text field and delete.
- 3) Write a brief description of your work experiences.  
Tips: If you don’t have work experience, it’s ok! You can talk about campus organizations you are involved in, volunteer work you do, or hobbies relevant to your career.
- 4) When you are finished, click **Save** at the top left.

## 7. Customize Your Website: Client Reviews to Contact Me

The template has a section for customer reviews. Chances are, you probably don’t have a personal business or client reviews to post on your website. Instead, let’s change that to your contact information so employers can reach you!

- 1) From the **Main Navigation** sidebar, click the **Customer Reviews tab**.
- 2) From the **Customer Reviews pane**, click **Edit** and then click **Create**.
- 3) Starting at the left where it says “Client Reviews,” place your cursor in the small text field and delete text only. Replace the text with “Contact Me”.  
Notice that the main body of text for the Client Reviews (now Contact Me) page is not a Text box but a Quote block.
- 4) Hover your mouse over the first **Quote block** and the box’s **pane** will appear. Delete the box by clicking the small red **trashcan**. Do this for all three quote blocks.

At the top right of the page, on the bar with the Save and Cancel options, there should be an **Add Block** button (or a **white plus sign**).

- 5) Click **Add Block**.

A menu will appear:

- 6) Under **Basic**, click the first option: **Text**.

A text box will now be placed under Contact Me.

- 7) In the new text box, type in your email and phone number.

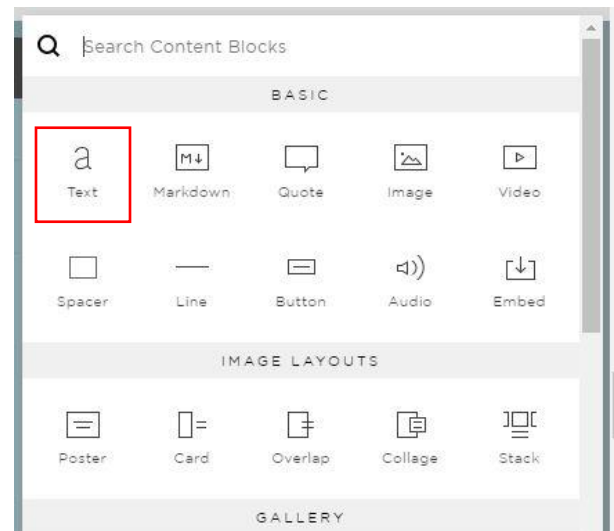


Figure 5 – The Add Block Menu with Text Box highlighted.

- 8) Use your mouse to highlight all new text. With the formatting bar at the top of the text box, change **Normal** to **Heading 2** (clicking the down arrow next to Normal will display all options) and **Center** the text by clicking the middle box of lines. It should now look like this:

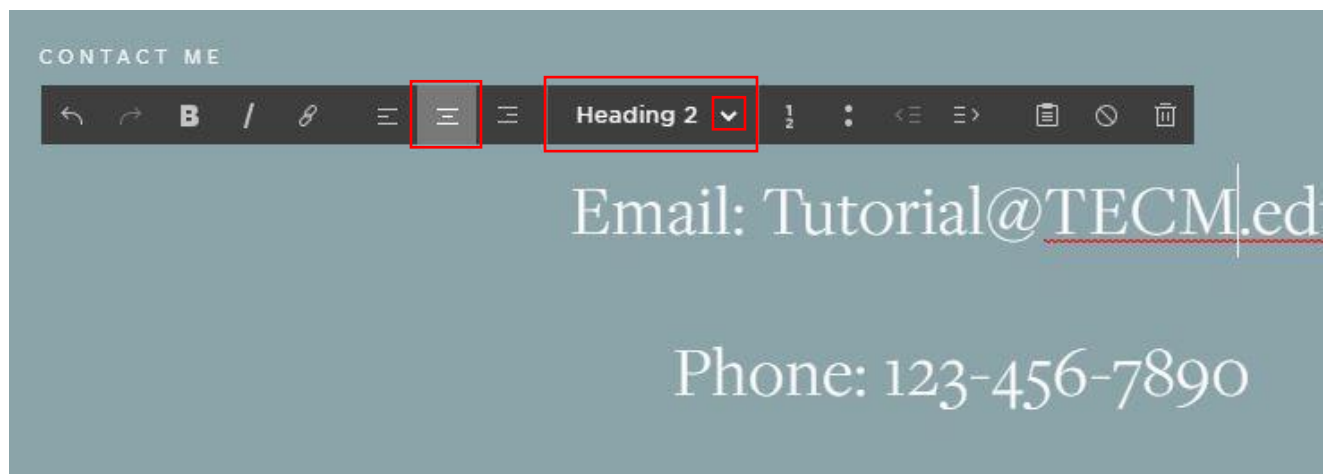


Figure 6 – The new text box's editing pane with the Center Text button, Heading, and arrow highlighted.

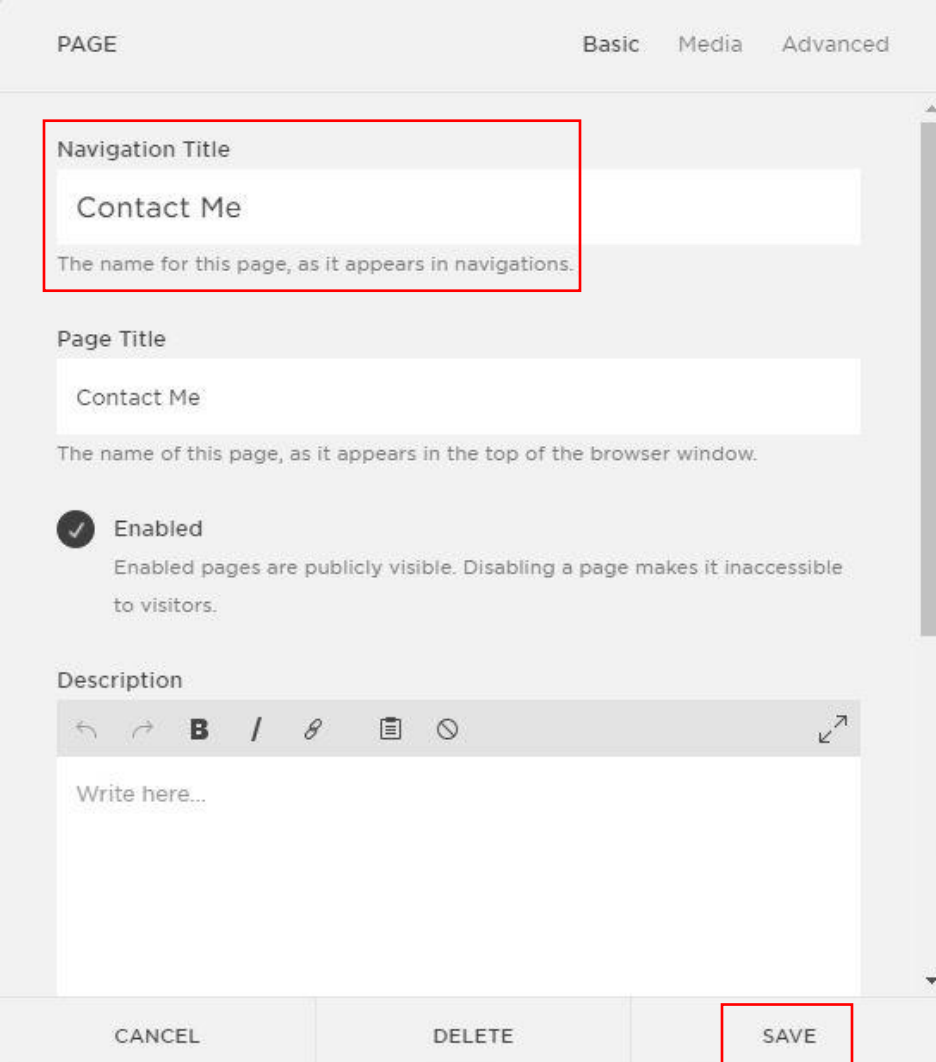
- 9) **Save** when you are finished.



## 8. Customize Your Website: Renaming or Deleting Pages

From the Main Navigation sidebar, you can see a list of all your web pages. Notice that the Contact Me page is still titled Customer Reviews. Also, the small word “DEMO” should only be next to “Exclusive Listings”. There are many webpages that are not needed for your purposes as this template was designed with a realtor in mind. Let’s rename a page first.

- 1) In the **Main Navigation** sidebar, hover your mouse over the **Customer Reviews tab** and right-click it. A dialogue box should be brought up:
- 2) In the field under **Navigation Title**, delete “Customer Reviews” and replace with “Contact Me”. (Page Title will change automatically.) Click **Save** at the bottom when finished.
- 3) Refer to the **Main Navigation** sidebar. Hovering the mouse over the **Exclusive Listings tab** will cause a **trashcan** to appear to the left. Click on the **trashcan** and **Confirm** delete.
- 4) Repeat step 3 for all the **Listings webpages** and their sub sections (you will have to scroll down within the **Main Navigation** sidebar to view them all).



The screenshot shows a 'PAGE' dialog box with three tabs: 'Basic', 'Media', and 'Advanced'. The 'Basic' tab is selected. It contains the following fields and controls:

- Navigation Title:** A text field containing 'Contact Me', highlighted with a red box. Below it is the text: 'The name for this page, as it appears in navigations.'
- Page Title:** A text field containing 'Contact Me'. Below it is the text: 'The name of this page, as it appears in the top of the browser window.'
- Enabled:** A checked radio button next to the word 'Enabled'. Below it is the text: 'Enabled pages are publicly visible. Disabling a page makes it inaccessible to visitors.'
- Description:** A rich text editor with a toolbar (undo, redo, bold, italic, link, unlink, list, link) and a text area containing 'Write here...'.
- Buttons:** At the bottom, there are three buttons: 'CANCEL', 'DELETE', and 'SAVE'. The 'SAVE' button is highlighted with a red box.

Figure 7 – Page box with Navigation Title and Save button highlighted.

The only webpages that should remain are **About Me, Intro, About and Experience, and Contact Me.**

Note: You can always add/create webpages to show off your work down the road. For now, we are focusing on the basics of your website.

## **9. Customize Your Website: Edit Footer Blocks**

At the very bottom of your website there are two different Footer Blocks: Top and Bottom. Top contains a newsletter and Bottom contains your contact info and links to social media. We will delete the newsletter, update the contact information, and link your SNS accounts.

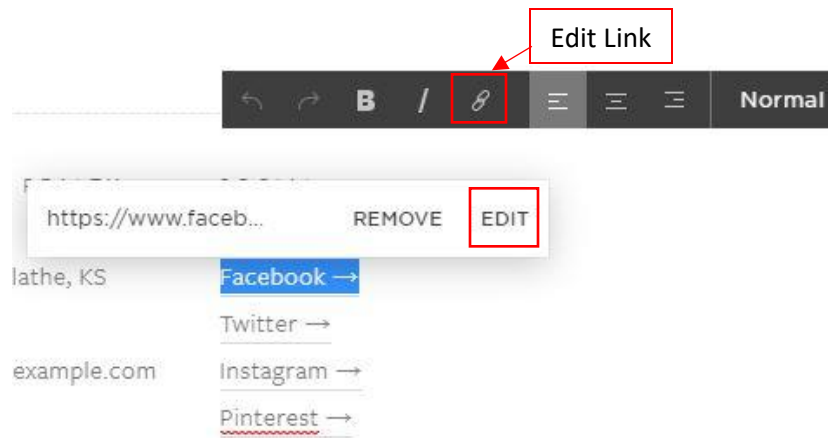
- 1) Click **Edit** in the **Footer Top Blocks pane**. There is only a **Newsletter block** within this section.
- 2) Delete the **Newsletter block** by clicking the **trashcan** icon in the **Newsletter pane**.
- 3) Click **Save** in the top left and return to the bottom of the website.
- 4) Click **Edit** from the **Footer Bottom Blocks pane**.

This section of your website contains your contact information also as well as links to your SNS (social media) accounts. This area of your website is important as employers or clients interested in contacting you may consult this area.

- 5) In the text box to the left, replace the template's text with your information: Name, address, email, and phone number.

- 6) In the “Social” text box, select “Facebook.”

It should highlight the entire word and a **white pane** should appear. (If it does not appear, it can be prompted by clicking the **Edit Link** button (found in **editing pane**, looks like two interlocked circles) or by pressing **Ctrl + K** simultaneously.)



- 7) Click **Edit** from the **white pane**. Another dialogue box will appear with a URL address field.

Figure 8 – Footer Bottom Blocks section with Facebook selected. Edit from the white pane and the Edit Link button is highlighted.

#### 8) **Linking Your SNS Accounts**

- i. To link your Facebook to your website, open a separate window in your internet browser and go to your Facebook profile page.

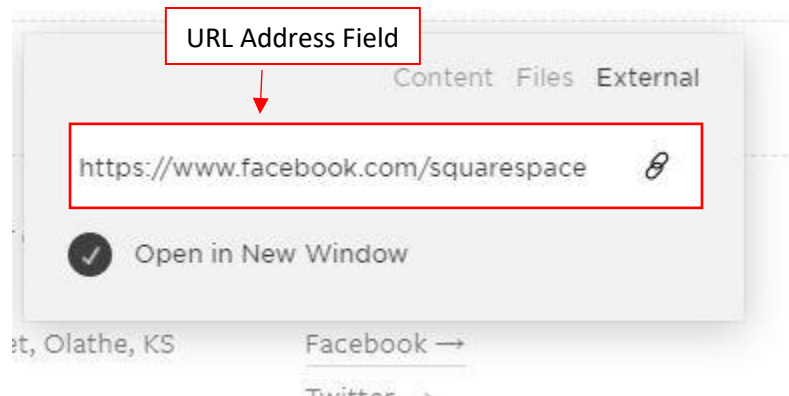


Figure 9 – URL Address Field is highlighted. Your profile page URL will be pasted here.

- ii. Copy the URL address of your profile page and return to your Squarespace website.
  - iii. Paste your URL into the provided **address field** and select the circle next to **Open in New Window**.
  - iv. Press **Enter** on your keyboard to save changes.
- 9) To set up the links for the other social media sites, repeat steps 6-8 for **Twitter**, **Instagram**, and/or **Pinterest** like you did for Facebook.
- 10) When you are finished, click **Save** at the top left.

## 10. Customize Your Website: Finishing Touches

Lastly, the backgrounds for different sections of your website can be changed to any picture or video you like!

1) Return to the top of the website by clicking the **Intro tab** from the **Main Navigation** sidebar.

2) From the **Intro pane**, select **Banner** this time (to the right of Edit).

An Index box for this section will appear.

3) Under the picture of the smiling woman, click **Remove**.

Clicking the new **Add an Image** option will allow you to surf through your computer's files for an image to fill the now-empty space.

4) Click **Save** when finished.

5) From the **Main Navigation** sidebar, click the **Contact Me tab**.

6) From the **Contact Me pane**, select **Banner**.

7) Next to **Images**, select **Video**.

You can search for YouTube videos to insert with the field provided; however, for simplicity's sake, just click **Save** at the bottom. This will use their demo video as a background.

Note: You can use images or videos as backgrounds for any section of your website using this process. However, limit moving media (videos) as these can be distracting.

You now know the basics of editing a Squarespace template and the appropriate content for a professional website. To enable your website and officially create a domain, you will have to upgrade your account by clicking the blue Upgrade Now button at the bottom of the screen, selecting a payment plan, and filling out your information. That's it!

## Writing Sample: Best Practices Report

### The Best Practices of Social Media Marketing For Small Businesses and Entrepreneurs

#### **Introduction**

One of the fastest growing trends in the world, social media is an ever-evolving network for stories, ideas, news, content, and so much more. Small business owners and entrepreneurs are utilizing social media to expose their business to a wider audience to increase sales and cultivate loyal customers. This report is targeted to those who want to use social media for their business but are unsure of what practices will yield the most success. It will discuss key aspects such as branding, goal setting, choosing the right social networking site (SNS), developing effective strategies, and striking the perfect balance. This report will give insight to what professionals in the field of social media marketing do to meet their goals.

#### **Problem Statement**

Utilizing social media to its fullest capabilities requires considering many factors. Managing social media accounts and producing original content requires creativity and a substantial amount of time to craft engaging posts. Many neglect to strike a balance between entertaining content and advertisement. Those new to marketing on social media also may not understand their audience. Now more than ever, an astronomical amount of businesses flood their content and ads to the newsfeeds of their followers. To prevent users of social media accounts from being bombarded with ads, many SNS restrict the number of people that see your posts. This restriction of reach is frustrating to many small business owners and entrepreneurs who become frustrated when their efforts yield no new customers or engagement. Many business owners, especially those who can't financially afford to "boost" or promote their posts, find this especially frustrating. The process is not finished once posts are published to social media accounts. Interacting with customers, whether it's acknowledging praise or responding to critique, is another important aspect of managing social media accounts.

#### **Findings**

After reviewing many articles, journals, and blogs, most stress the importance of the following:

- Setting Reachable Goals and Planning
- Creating and Maintaining your Brand Image
- Choosing the Optimal Social Networking Platform
- Having a Good Strategy
- Consistency and Frequency
- Remembering the Social Aspect

## **Recommendations**

### **Setting Goals and Planning**

Many experts agree that setting social media goals is important for success. After all, every trip has a destination. Whether it's getting more engagement on your posts or cultivating new customers, knowing what you would like to achieve with your efforts is a great starting place. Once you set your goals, you can begin to make plans to achieve them. In an online Forbes article, Jayson DeMers writes, "You... can't start just posting blindly to social media and expect prospective followers to like what you're posting. Before you get started, you should have a formally documented strategy that dictates your goals, your target audience, and how you plan to grow over time" (DeMers, 2017).

### **Branding**

Your image says a lot about who you are and what you do. But branding is not as it used to be. It's no surprise that entertainers (like musicians, comedians, or gamers) have more followers than businesses do. Some of the most successful YouTube channels may spend only a fraction of what businesses might spend, for less profit. Entertainment is typically the content that people want to see. In an interesting article about branding, Douglas Holt writes about a growing audience worth targeting, "The big platforms—the Facebooks and YouTubes and Instagrams—seem to call the shots... Companies need to shift their focus away from the platforms themselves and toward the real locus of digital power—crowdcultures" (Holt, 2016). Crowdculture, as he describes it, are (often large) populations of people that form around topics/interests/causes. These can range from niche subjects/subcultures (like sci-fi movies, anime, coffee, hiking, and so much more) to body image positivity or equality campaigns. Holt suggests a shift from solely researching trends to targeting "novel ideologies" that would make brands stand out (Holt, 2016).

A great example of a brand that tapped into a crowdculture and broke into the public eye was Dove. Dove's "Campaign for Real Beauty" tapped into the body positivity crowdculture. The campaign celebrates the normal, common qualities found in women in all their diversity. As Holt writes about the success of the campaign, stating that, "Women all over the world pitched in to produce, circulate, and cheer for images of bodies that didn't conform to the beauty myth. Throughout the past decade, Dove has continued to target cultural flashpoints—such as the use of heavily Photoshopped images in fashion magazines—to keep the brand at the center of this gender discourse." You should find the causes people care about and care about them as well. Understanding the ideologies that surround your audience is how you grow your follower/customer base.

### **Not all SNS are Created Equal**

Choosing the correct platform(s) for your business is vitally important. For example, a fashion blogger (whose goals are to drive up traffic to her website) is more successful using Pinterest, a platform solely for circulating and discovering content, than if she were to use Facebook. Artists use platforms like Instagram, a photo sharing powerhouse, because of its dedication to images. Though your goals also

influence what platforms can work for you, understanding how each social media platform is structured, as well as the interests of the users on that platform, is worth keeping in mind.

### **Facebook**

For small business owners and entrepreneurs, a Facebook page for your business is almost a requirement. As one of the largest social media platforms created, Facebook can display all kinds of information related to your business: contact info, background, and links to other SNS you manage. Facebook makes updating and displaying all aspects of your business very convenient.

A desirable aspect of Facebook is the amount of user data readily available and the ability to target ads (Patel, 2017). Your social media posts can be promoted to a very specific audience, down to their age, gender, jobs, location, and more. This precise level of targeting is why Facebook is a marketer's first choice.

When creating your Facebook page, know that, unlike most other platforms, all forms of media perform well (video, images, and text). However, there is evidence that suggests Facebook users are unlikely to follow links to external websites. Integrating your content into Facebook will allow for your posts to be engaged with more (Patel, 2017). Though the use of hashtags is popular in other SNS, they are best avoided on Facebook.

### **Instagram**

Acquired by Facebook in 2012, Instagram is a SNS almost entirely dedicated to photos/images with captions. In fact, Instagram has the highest engagement rate (Patel, 2017). Though 15-second videos can also be posted to Instagram, these typically receive less engagement than photos. This may be due to the ease of the liking/commenting feature and hashtags.

Hashtags are, as the name suggests, relevant tags coupled with photos. It allows for users to search and sift through images across the entire site using a specific tag. For example, if a user wants to look at images of food, they might search #food and find thousands of images related to food. On Instagram, entrepreneurs and businesses can use hashtags to circulate their photos to find audiences who care about specific topics. The more popular a hashtag is, the more people that discover your posts. If you choose to use Instagram, you should familiarize yourself with hashtags and which ones are the most popular in your business field. For example, a restaurant might post pictures of their lunch specials and use #food. A stylist might take a picture of her latest outfit and use #fashion and #beautiful.

The figure to the right is a chart of the top ten most used hashtags on Instagram (Top 100 HashTags on Instagram, 2016). You should use some of these when they relate to your posts. Other popular tags are #art, #style, #food, #beauty, #music, and #model.

Ranking	Hashtag
1	#love
2	#instagood
3	#photooftheday
4	#fashion
5	#beautiful
6	#happy
7	#cute
8	#tbt
9	#like4like
10	#followme

Since Instagram relies on visuals, long text posts don't perform well. That's not to say that all Instagram photos should be strictly visuals. Inspiring quotes and question text posts are great

ways to engage with your followers. Where Instagram falls short, when compared to Facebook, is the biography section of your profile. The amount of text that is allowed in this space is limiting, but it is also the chance to redirect your followers to your website with a link.

You should consider using Instagram if your business is concerned with fashion, modeling, luxury brands, food, art, and photography. These topics typically do very well.

### **Twitter**

Often referred to as a microblog, Twitter is another major social media site worth your consideration. As of the third quarter of 2017, Twitter had amassed 330 million monthly active users (Twitter: Number of Monthly Active Users 2010-2017, 2017). Twitter posts, called tweets, are limited to 140 characters, something unique to the platform. Twitter also makes use of hashtags, though not to the degree of Instagram, and GIFs (a sort of picture and video hybrid), but it's also great to use pictures and videos as well.

Other than short tweets, there are other aspects of Twitter that make it different from other SNS. Twitter makes sharing ("retweeting") easy. The nature of short tweets means it is OK to post several times in a day. In fact, in a single day, you can post more to Twitter than you could Instagram or Facebook without "spamming" your followers. People on Twitter are also more inclined to engage with humor as well.

If you plan to use Twitter, you should keep some things in mind. Optimize your twitter biography with a brief and well-branded statement about who you are and a link to your website. Interact with the major influencers in your business as these can have long term benefit. Consider also using pictures and videos (Schiff, 2013).

### **Pinterest**

Dedicated to an endless number of topics, Pinterest is a great way to circulate anything from fashion and beauty to art and DIY projects. Images, usually accompanied with links to external websites, are formatted as "pins." Users can then save these pins to their own personalized boards, separating and organizing them however they prefer. In its history, marketers have considered Pinterest the top choice for targeting women as 85% of Pinterest's 100 million users are female (Patel, 2017). The most pinned topics among men and women on Pinterest are food/drinks, fashion, crafts, home décor, and art/photography (Bennett, 2014). But, keep in mind that your audience is primarily women who pin these topics when you start creating/re-pinning posts.

When compared to Twitter and Facebook, Pinterest is not as "social" as other platforms. Focused almost entirely to creativity, updating customers/followers with information about your business is not as easy as other platforms make it. Interacting with Pinterest users is possible through a commenting feature for pins and a direct messaging system; however, it's best to use Pinterest as a bridge to your official website or another SNS, like Facebook, that contains all your contact information. Pinterest can be powerful in bringing traffic to your website but not for directly updating your followers about your business.



There are a few things to keep in mind if you decide to use Pinterest. Pins that feature topics like decorations, interior design, cooking, and/or clothing, are likely to do extremely well (Patel, 2017). If your business, or blog, revolves around any of these topics, Pinterest may be a great option for you. The pins you create should be visually appealing and images should be oriented more vertically (Patel, 2017). Any pin that you create should also be linked to your website, blog, or other SNS. Creating pin boards and pinning other users' pins is encouraged, but make sure they reflect your brand/image/message.

## **YouTube**

The amount of "YouTubers," those who actively post video content to YouTube, has increased significantly in recent years. In fact, YouTube garners about 1 billion monthly users (Patel, 2017). In its history, it has been known to launch careers and spawn businesses.

There are two ways to succeed on YouTube: entertain or teach. Many people build a nice business teaching things, sharing make-up tutorials, playing video games, reacting to other content, or performing music. For some, YouTube is a way to share their talents, ideas, and lives. It's used by gamers, makeup artists, musicians, educators, and, of course, businesses. YouTube is also a great method for sharing content with your followers, especially if they are not avid readers.

If you plan to create videos often, whether they be tutorials or lectures or entertainment, YouTube is another option. If you use YouTube, consider using your other social media channels to direct your follower to your YouTube channel. You can do this by posting previews, or snippets, of your video to other SNS you manage (Patel, 2017). In terms of video length, they can be as long as desired. However, you should be mindful of the length of your videos. If it's too long, people are likely to avoid watching it.

Evaluate what your business is about. Do you sell products (food, clothes, furniture, etc.)? Do you host events? Are you a blogger, writer, video content creator? These factors should be considered when choosing what SNS to operate.

## **Content and Knowing Your Audience**

Coming up with enough content will take a lot of planning, especially if the nature of your business doesn't produce content on its own. For example, tattoo artists and hair stylists produce artistic content almost daily. This means a steady stream of post material is (nearly) ready to go. On the other hand, writers will have to plan and draft out blog posts in advance. You will need to create a schedule to be consistent, something that will be discussed later in the report.

The next important factor of content is your learning what your audience is concerned about. However, creating content is more than just researching popular trends. When Holt discussed branding in his article, he said as much. "Today, in pursuit of relevance, most brands chase after trends. But this is a commodity approach to branding: Hundreds of companies are doing exactly the same thing with the same generic list of trends" (Holt, 2016). You should always monitor trends and create posts based on your findings. However, consider also creating posts that tap into causes that people care about,

especially if they align with your business's beliefs (body-positive movements, cancer awareness, and so on).

The biggest influencer of the content you create is your specific audience, so learning about them is necessary. Robbie Abed interviewed 25 social media marketing experts about their tips to the trade. He asked Sean Webster, a creative media specialist, what his tips were for learning about his audience:

“...Honestly, I just do a ton of research on Google. I answer questions like this:

- Who are the authority figures, thought leaders, or in brands in your market?
- What books, magazines, newspapers does your ideal customer read?
- Google: TOP \_\_\_\_\_ → (blogs, books, magazine, thought leaders, brands, website, etc.)
- What events do they attend? Google: TOP \_\_\_\_\_ events?
- What websites do they frequent? Where do they live? What tools do they use? What's SPECIFICALLY UNIQUE about this group?

By answering questions like the above, I can get a better idea of what my target audience is looking for and what they would engage with” (Abed, 2017).

Try to answer some of the questions for yourself. Also, write down FAQs that your followers/customers ask as these are good future post ideas.

## Strategy

Did you know that *when* you post is just as important as what you post? This is crucial for several reasons.

There are two types of social media communications: “‘organic’ and ‘paid’” (Fulgoni, 2015). Publishing to social media during times when users are most active means your post will reach more people. The initial reach your posts receive without any monetary promotion is called “organic reach.” Organic is sought after for one reason: it's virtually free. Other than the time required to create posts, money is not necessarily needed to reach some people. This is good news for small business owners and entrepreneurs who may not have a large advertisement budget. As the name suggests, paid social communication is the audience reached by using monetary promotion. To maximize your organic reach, posting when users are most engaged is beneficial. According to 20 studies, the following are optimal post times (Ellering, 2016):

<b>Platform:</b>	<b>Facebook</b>	<b>Instagram</b>	<b>Twitter</b>	<b>Pinterest</b>	<b>YouTube</b>
<i>Days</i>	Thursday Friday Saturday Sunday	Monday Thursday	Wednesday	Saturday Sunday	Weekdays
<i>Times</i>	9am, 1pm, 3pm	2am, 8-9am, 5pm	12pm, 3pm, 5- 6pm	2pm, 9pm, 2am	12pm-4pm

While these times are great starting points, pay attention to the analytics provided by your social media platforms to see when your followers are most active. You may need to adjust your post times.

## Consistency and Frequency

An aspect of social media managing that plays a huge role in your success is the daily/weekly frequency at which you post and your consistency. Not only should the quality of your posts be consistent, but your posting pattern should be dependable. DeMers writes that, “Profitable social media strategies are consistent. If you treat social media as a novelty, you might post with heavy volume one week, but post nothing the next week, and your activity could change drastically from day to day. Followers want to know what they can expect from you, so if you go through these rapid changes in volume, you’ll alienate the very people you’re trying to attract.” (DeMers, 2017). He also says, “Depending on the platform you’re using, you should be posting at least multiple times daily, and engaging with your followers on a nearly constant basis” (DeMers, 2017).

## Conclusion

Once you have set your goals, formed your brand, picked your platforms, and planned your content and strategy, remember that it’s called “social” media for a reason. Interacting with your followers is a must. Demers writes, “Social media is... a place for people to connect with other people. If you approach your social media strategy as a company, rather than an individual, you’re going to alienate people. If you’re posting on behalf of the company brand, you’ll obviously need to make some adjustments to the voice and tone you use—but you should still have plenty of personal touches in your campaign” (DeMers, 2017). Engage your followers with questions, conversations, and content daily. Stay attuned to your audience and flexible in your content plans. Though managing several social media accounts is a lot of work, remain disciplined and you will be rewarded.

## References

- Abed, R. (2017, August 31). *Social Media Marketing Best Practices From 25 Experts Who Have Been There and Done That*. Retrieved from Huffpost.
- Bennett, A. (2014, June 18). *Do You Want More Pinterest Followers? Create These Top 10 Pinterest Boards That Users Love To Follow*. Retrieved from Business 2 Community.
- DeMers, J. (2017, October 5). *The 10 Factors That Will Make Your Social Media Marketing Campaign Profitable*. Retrieved from Forbes.com:  
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/jaysondemers/2017/10/05/the-10-factors-that-will-make-your-social-media-marketing-campaign-profitable/#2f867f316697>
- Ellering, N. (2016, October 16). *What 20 Studies Say About The Best Times To Post On Social Media*. Retrieved from CoSchedule Blog: <https://coschedule.com/blog/best-times-to-post-on-social-media/>
- Foster, J. (2015, May 12). *How to Build a Social-Media Strategy That Works*. Retrieved from Entrepreneur.
- Fulgoni, G. M. (2015). How Brands Using Social Media Ignite Marketing and Drive Growth. *Jounral of Advertising Research*.

- Gholston, K., Kuofie, M., & Hakim, A. C. (2016). Social Media for Marketing by Small Businesses. *Jounral of Marketing and & Management*.
- Gunelius, S. (2016, February 16). *10 Laws of Social Media Marketing*. Retrieved from Entrepreneur.
- Holt, D. (2016, March). *Branding in the Age of Social Media*. Retrieved from Harvard Business Review.
- Patel, N. (2017). *Social Media Marketing Made Simple: A Step-by-Step Guide*. Retrieved from Neilpatel.
- Top 100 HashTags on Instagram*. (2016). Retrieved from Top-Hashtags.com: <https://top-hashtags.com/instagram/>