

Developing a social media strategy

For resort managers without the luxury of a dedicated staff – or even a few extra minutes throughout the day – entering the social media space is a daunting task. However, as more and more timeshare owners continue to tweet, post and upload their vacation experiences, it becomes crucial to make sure your resort staff understands how to use those channels to promote the property, address concerns and generate more positive attention, or if a social media strategy is right for your resort.



Jumping into social media isn't as simple as starting a Facebook page. You're entering a space where everything you post has the potential to go "viral," and there's no way to get it back! It's important to have a strategy on how you will speak, how you will respond, and how you will feature your product in the best possible way. You need to:

- **BE AUTHENTIC**
Transparency is key in social media – posts need to feel like they came from another person, not a mass advertiser.
- **HAVE A POSITIVE MESSAGE**
It's not enough to post about your property; have a positive message about renovations, awards, upcoming events or activities – something that will engage people in a positive conversation.
- **BE READY TO LISTEN**
Social media provides a great mechanism to get feedback, and while not all of it is constructive, be prepared to have a thick skin and respond in a way that converts detractors into promoters.
- **RESPOND THROUGH THE RIGHT CHANNEL**
Sometimes responding to social media messages on social media isn't the best approach. It's important to know when to make your message public and when to take it offline and reach out directly.
- **USE THE RIGHT VISUALS**
Lean more on high-quality images or videos, and keep your text brief and to the point. Make it about your community.

WHY DOES IT MATTER?

Every company has a social reputation, whether it tries to create one or not. Blogs, social networks and message forums all play a role in how your owners and prospective guests view you – and that can have a big impact on their engagement and commitment to the resort. Social media gives you a chance to listen and respond in a way that can turn negatives into positives either with timely, helpful and personal responses or by using feedback to make positive changes. You can also maximize the messaging of advocates by engaging with them – amplifying the positives.

So if you're not listening, you're missing out!

RCI TIMESHARE ONLINE LISTENING CENTER®

RCI believes in the social media space so much, it established the Timeshare Online Listening Center (TOLC), and has seen the program continue to grow as more resorts see the value in social listening. TOLC is a unique service providing a turn-key solution for online reputation management to the timeshare industry. Every day, TOLC services help resorts understand, manage, and influence what is being said about them in the online channel.

TOLC clients score

17%
higher
in positive sentiment
than the timeshare
industry average.




TOLC SERVICES INCLUDE:

- **Monitoring** of online and social media channels to uncover what consumers are saying about your brand
- Delivery of **customized, ongoing reporting and analysis** of how your brand is being discussed online – who, how often and through what channels as well as what they're saying and other relevant metrics
- Identifying potential customer issues and recommending a **response strategy**
- Identification of loyal brand supporters and **strategies to promote positive messages**
- **Search Engine Optimization** best practices to enhance your resort's online reputation

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Current social media landscape

WHAT IS IT?	HOW CAN IT HELP?	POTENTIAL PITFALLS
 <p>FACEBOOK</p> <p>The largest social network, with more than a billion users worldwide. Users share 1 million links every 20 minutes.</p>	<p>Communicate with your owners in a non-obtrusive way, using text, photos, videos and links. Promotes sharing and conversation with owners and resort guests.</p>	<p>Easy for messages to get lost in number of posts. “Pay to play” promotes paid advertising above other messaging.</p>
 <p>TWITTER</p> <p>Online social network that enables users to send and read short 140-character text messages, called “tweets.” 241 million active users, mostly in the U.S.</p>	<p>Great for customer service and establishing direct communication.</p>	<p>Lots of noise, easy for message to get lost. Any message can go viral in minutes.</p>
 <p>YOUTUBE</p> <p>Video-sharing website, allows users to upload, view and share video content. Second-largest online search engine (next to Google).</p>	<p>Ideal for leveraging promotional videos and advertisements. Gives you the ability to set up a resort channel and encourage members to post videos.</p>	<p>Need to focus on video quality when posting - amateurish video can hurt your brand.</p>

EMERGING CHANNELS:



- Users curate their own visual pinboards of image content, which is shareable
- 83% of users are female
- Content is mostly inspirational



- Social sharing site for single photos and short videos, with 200 million active users
- Many brands participate in the conversation via use of #hashtags
- Mobile-based, trends toward younger demographics

Source: Leverage New Age Media infographic, <https://leverageagemedia.com/blog/social-media-infographic/>

HOW CAN I KEEP TRACK OF IT ALL?

For resorts with staff and resources, hiring a full-time social media manager to handle responses and monitor traffic may be a solution, but there are still ways you can be active without those types of resources.

• BASICS

Setting up **Google searches** including resort name, resort personnel names or resort location (however broad you want the search to be) gets you notifications of mentions on the web – but it’s a broad net, and you’re likely to miss a lot of the conversations taking place. **Search functions within Twitter or other social media sites** can also locate comments related to your resort. Sites like socialmention.com allow you to search blogs by keywords for mentions of your property or location, while some social media platforms like HootSuite provide free basic services allowing you to consolidate messaging across multiple social media channels.

• ADVANCED

If you have resources, some fee-based services provide more precise monitoring along with reporting and even strategy and response assistance. It’s crucial to do your research and pick the service that fits your needs and your budget.