

# Verizon

*Using Scheduling Tools to Build Your Social Media Content Calendar*

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The statements and opinions by Mari Smith do not reflect the views or opinions of Verizon and its affiliates.

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## **PRESENTATION**

### **Andy Choi**

Hi, I'm Andy Choi with Verizon, I want to welcome all of you to our Small Business Webinar Series. Thank you so much for joining us today. With all of these webinars, we aim to bring you the latest insights on finding success for your small business, we host industry experts with innovative and inspiring ideas. Returning again to our series today is Mari Smith. Now, you might remember, she is so well recognized as a premier Facebook marketing expert, Facebook actually hired her to help teach businesses throughout the US. She is the author of *“The New Relationship Marketing”*, and her work has earned her quite the nickname, the Queen of Facebook. Today, is our second webinar of a series of three with Mari and she will be sharing how your small business can use new tools to schedule and manage social media. So, if you're looking to run your social media like a pro, which nowadays who isn't, you've come to the right place, so let's get started here.

Now, is Mari Smith.

### **Mari Smith**

Thank you so much. It's a delight and a pleasure and an honor to be here for webinar number two in a series with the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series.

Now then, today's topic is all about building that social media content calendar and one of Mari's favorite scheduling tools, I'm going to give you a few of them, a few choices, you might already be using scheduling tools and content calendaring tools, but I want to show you a real systematic way to approach this, so that you can save time, which ultimately means you will save money and make more money and helping to boost your small business using the right tools with a systematic approach.

So, real quick, I would like to put my bio on the screen and emojis, they do call me the Queen of Facebook. I didn't give myself that name, but I kind of like it, it's fun. Social medial thought leader for many, many years. I first got on Facebook in 2007, so over 13 years now. I speak all over the world when it's OK to travel. I'm doing almost all virtual right now. I love being a brand ambassador. And if you notice, I have a bit of an accent. If this is the first time you're hearing me speak, I'm Scandifornian, born in Canada to Scottish parents, I'm now living in California. So, lovely to be here with you.

Now then, let's start out with the definition of content marketing, because a big part of what we're talking about today is the content calendaring and planning and mapping out, and once you've got your content, tools to make it nice and easy to schedule. So, my good friend, Joe Pulizzi, he is the Founder of the Content Marketing Institute. It's a wonderful – CMI known has – a wonderful organization, it's been around for a long time, and their definition, as you see on the screen there, of content marketing is “a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer actions”.

The part I bolded is what we are focusing on today, that distribution of the valuable, relevant, and consistent content. So, there's really great shortcuts and effective ways that you can get the results you're looking for with a little bit of planning ahead.

Now, some of you might relate to this graphic on the screen. Is this you tearing your hair out, you've got all of these social channels, you're trying to figure out, oh my gosh, I need to have an optimized presence on everywhere, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, Pinterest, you name it, and then maybe you've got your blog or your podcast. It can be really overwhelming to just know what to post where and when and how often, and what tools there are to just make life easier for you.

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There really is such a thing as social media overwhelm. Many, many small business owners realize there's just too many social channels, how can you possibly keep up with it all. There's too much content. You probably get too many notifications to check and you're maybe using a lot of different systems, too many DM boxes, what I call, they're jerry-rigged systems where some people, they just don't know what they don't know and they might be using a combination of some apps, maybe some older systems, different tools and documents and they're not all seamless. You might have these multiple disparate tools, it's time consuming, your workflows aren't quite clear, and the list goes on, especially if you need approvals. Let's say you have someone in your company that's creating content, but maybe the CMO or the social media manager needs to sign off on the content, so that's what's called an approval flow. Somebody has to approve the content.

So, there are ways forward, though. If you could go from this left side of your screen (a woman tearing her hair out), to the right side of your screen (a woman doing the om) OK, much better, let's take a breath and there's ways forward that you will be just like... literally, a breath of fresh air and breathe a sigh of relief going, oh my gosh, Mari, I never even knew some of these things were available. So, now I can create this content, schedule it out so much more smoothly.

The benefits of utilizing a content calendar include improving your efficiency, no question, staying organized, and avoiding any last-minute scrambles. There's nothing worse than going, oh my gosh, we've got this marketing campaign come up. Do we have our social ready or maybe it's a national holiday and you're like, ah, we forgot, and it's too late. So, getting all organized and planning for each social platform, customizing posts ahead of time, tracking your performance, and doing more of what's working. That's really, really important as well because when you can go into these different social tools – I'm going to show you in a little bit – and you can see that your metrics will show you how many shares, how much engagement, how many retweets, how much engagement did this particular post get on Instagram or Twitter or Facebook, and then you go, wow, we thought this type of post was working really well. Now, we're studying our metrics and we can see that that type is doing better.

Then, finally, on slide seven there is integrate holidays and observance days. You get to decide as a brand, as a small business owner which are the holidays that make most sense to put a post out there about, observance days. And then also another aspect is being able to be nimble, to just not get locked in, don't plan your content calendar out too far ahead. Many of us here, we're now in month seven or something of the – seven is it, six anyway – of the COVID crisis, and I know that for many of us in the beginning of the year, you might have all kinds of content plans and you've had to really pivot and adjust and tweak, and to know what to say, and to really be there for your customers. Now, you can still be planning, weeks, months, probably a quarter ahead. That's what I'm going to map out in these five steps here in this next slide.

A simple five-step process. It's going to start with, speaking of which, your goals, your quarterly. I recommend going in quarters, depending on what's the nature of your business, your vertical, your industry. Maybe it makes more sense to go six months at a time for some of you. Maybe it makes more sense to go monthly or even weekly. In terms of goals, that's going to pertain to your traffic, leads, and sales. Driving traffic to a particular initiative or offer or campaign, generating qualified leads for your business and then converting those to sales, that would be your quarterly goals.

Then next, now you're going to map out and I put “draft” in parenthesis there because the content calendar is not always necessarily always locked in stone, you want to leave a little wiggle room. Using a content library for your assets. I've got some great tools for you there, wonderful systems. Establishing a workflow is number four. It's so important. If it's just yourself and you're running your business and you're doing your social, then you have your own workflow, but the vast majority of you tuning in here, you are going to have a number of people in your team, whether they're outsourced or internal staff, and that you have this flow of they know, OK, step one, we write this blog post. step two a proofreader goes through it. Step three, a grammar or a factchecker looks at it.

By the way, I would love to take your questions, we're going to have plenty of time to take questions at the end. Go ahead and pop them there in the question mark box, I believe it is, and include your first name. I love to know people's first names. If you turned into my last webinar with Verizon last month, then you will know it's just wonderful. It's the sweetest sounding word in a person's entire

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vocabulary, so I would love to know your name. Pop your first name in there. Let me know your question, your comment and I will be happy to take as many questions as I can toward the end there.

Then step five is to pick your scheduling tools. I've got several choices of my own personal favorites for you.

Step one is your goals. So, what are your quarterly goals? I alluded to them a little minute ago. You want to make them specific, measurable, you know the smart goals, achievable, realistic and time bound. So, we want to generate 100 new leads by the end of this month or by whatever the date might be. We want to increase sales by, it could be X amount of dollars or X percent, or you're launching a specific product. So, there's specific measurable goals and you want to be able to connect your content with your bigger picture. This is one of the downfalls or mistakes I see some small business owners making is they just keep throwing content out there on their social channels, and they're actually not doing enough marketing and promoting of their upcoming campaigns or launches or sales, or making sure that your social media content is converting into actual leads and sales, ultimately. So, that's why we start out with the goals. You can look to see what are your different campaigns coming up. Depending on the size of your business, there's maybe a separate sales department, separate marketing department, and looking to see that everybody is working together to know what is the company, overall, doing. What's coming up ahead in the next month, quarter, and year even?

Now, once we've got that, we begin to map out the calendar. I've got a few tools for you. This is simply for mapping it out. This part here is not necessarily for scheduling, although some of it can be. So, I've put there some choices for you. A very, very basic way of mapping out your calendar is simply using a spreadsheet. That is using Google Sheets. I actually have on that Bitly link there for you, I will show you that. One second, I will put it up on the screen to show you if my computer behaves. So, it's [bit.ly/SM\\_calendar](https://bit.ly/SM_calendar), and what that is – I'm going to share my screen here to show you – this is for you. This is something I created years ago and if this helps you, fantastic. You're going to just simply... it's like a rough draft, you're going to put the dates in here. This will automatically get updates, and then you will just click into here, you put the right date in, and it automatically updates to all I've got. The second tab there is "Instructions", so you're going to make a copy first. "File", "Make a Copy", and that's yours, because this one is not editable. And then you will just go ahead and fill this out and you can get different topics or... it's just a simple calendar and you want to share that with your team. So, that's just super simple to use there.

Or try some different tools. Many of you here might have heard of Trello. That's typically known as task management. I'm going to show how Trello can also be used in other ways in a moment. I've got a screenshot coming up. Or Asana, we use Clickup in my company. Airtable is another one. You're just going to use one of these. You're either going to use that real basic Google Sheets, or you're going to use one of these where you can drag and drop. But, guess what, Facebook Creator Studio is ideal for uploading content, planning it, drafting it. You get drafts and then you've got the ability to schedule for both Facebook and Instagram, and it's free. Or you can use any of the integrated social media tools, I will show you in step five coming up. What do I mean by that is that you can also, you can plan and schedule. That's an integrated social media tool.

There's the Trello board, so those of you that maybe use Trello, and I've got a link right there in the slides. You can download these slides, they're available to you right here in this webinar. And you can go and use this sample content calendar, a similar idea to the simple spreadsheet or Google Sheet or you can use Trello and that would be free to use as well. Nice and easy to pick things up and drag and drop them, put them in a color code. That's just a way to map out a content calendar.

Some content types that you should know about, I put it into three sections here, Categories, Topics and Formats.

Categories is all your own content, content that belongs to you, your company, your brand. UGC you might be familiar with is user generated. That would be testimonials, contest entries, using content with permission from your audience. And then what I call OPC, it is other people's content, and when you can be a master curator or relevant content, in addition to your own, and your own includes not only educational and informative, it includes promotional when you're actually doing your offers and your lead generation campaigns, or there's sales campaigns, as we see down here under Topics.

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So, for example, if you were to look at my Twitter feed, you will see that a lot of content – and my Facebook page as well – a lot of content I put out is curated from other sources, interspersed with my own.

Topics. Inform, educate, inspire, empower, people love quotes. Entertain perhaps, I will say if you can make people laugh, cry, or go, aaah, then you will get more engagement, but that's not with every post. It's that category of post. Then promotional, lead magnets and offers.

Then the format, I put video first. I'm such a big fan of doing video, especially on Facebook. Facebook is really favoring video. You can short form in the ad format, which is going to be maybe 15 seconds, up to 60 seconds, sometimes you can go as long as two minutes in video ads, or with a Facebook Live like 20 minutes. Facebook Live is really good for reach on Facebook. You've got images of course, graphics, infographics, you name it. Lots of different formats of content. You want to include those in your overall plan.

Some best practices, you really want to make sure that you include sufficient promotional content for your upcoming marketing campaigns. Remember, I said earlier, it's one of the biggest mistakes that I see, small business owners and marketers make is... gee, Mari, all this effort, I'm spending so much time on my social media and it's not really generating revenue. I will go to their bio or their social posts, I'm like, you know, I don't even know what you sell, make it more obvious, give people really clear information and instructions on how they can buy from you and what you sell.

I recommend a ratio of three non-promotional for every one promotional. That's kind of a general rule of thumb. You could apply that to practically every social site. Especially on Twitter, because Twitter tends to move fast and so it's totally OK to repeat if you've got some kind of a campaign coming up or a blog post or a lead magnet, it's totally fine to put that [audio]. Twitter doesn't like you doing it more than once a day, but you can certainly put the same or similar post out, maybe change up the wording and put that out once a day if you wanted to.

Decide in advance which holidays and observance days, so you've got your content planned out, maybe a little video or a graphic, and then leave room always in your plans for breaking news if that's part of your brand. If you're not the kind of brand or business that shares relevant industry – I don't mean mainstream everyday news, unless you're a news company – but breaking news pertaining to your industry. For example, I'm a Facebook expert and typically I'm always watching the social media industry, specifically any breaking news around Facebook. People come to me for that kind of news. Always have an SOP (standard operating procedure) in place if you need to pivot.

This last bullet on the slide is critical, because we have had so many challenges and emergencies this year (2020) and many of you can relate, it's like whoa, oh my gosh, this thing is blowing up on the trends, what do we do now? How do we post? Do we post? Do we address it? Do we not address it? Do we say this? Do we not say that? Those kinds of things, ideally, are already anticipated and mapped out, this is what we do if there's an emergency, we pause everything and then we regroup, you know what I mean, so that's where you want to have that addressed.

OK, so now we're still in the content planning stage. If you use Canva, which I highly recommend you use, it's like 12.95 a month is the beginning part of their paid plan, it's so worth it. It's predominantly known as a graphic creation platform, but they also can do little videos and now, new, I wanted to make sure I included this in this webinar, they have a content planner, so you can actually create your designs and use this simple little content planner system inside of Canva, super cool.

Now, then step three is your assets. Remember I said about using a content library, because there's nothing worse than spending ages and ages, gosh, where did I put that? Is it on your own phone? No, it's on my phone. Oh, it's in here. It's in the cloud. It's on the desktop. It's on this drive. Have a solid system where everybody on your team knows everything goes into a Google Drive or a Dropbox or Facebook Creator Studio actually has a whole section in there where you can add and upload your media. In fact, Facebook Creator Studio allows you to upload up to 50 videos at one time, which is amazing, or any integrated social media tool, coming up. As I say, you can actually use that as your asset library.

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Step four is your workflow. What do I mean by that? So, who is involved? who is creating the content? Who needs to sign off? Who needs to proof it, factcheck it, schedule it, final say, so click the button and off it goes, or at least schedule it? Maybe there's some collaboration. Maybe there's an approval process. There's one tool I'm going to show you, in a minute, that has the best approval workflow, approval process. And then you get the simplicity of an all-in-one system where you've got the planning and the calendaring and the scheduling all in one. It just depends on your needs and how active you are and how many social channels you're on, how often you post.

So, heres your tools. You're going to pick your scheduling tools. I've listed them on this slide in the grouped by which social channels you can use the tool for. OK, so multiple social channels, there's Agorapulse, Hootsuite, Buffer, ContentCal.io is a great app, they're out of the UK, I've done some work with them, it's a great tool. SproutSocial, MeetEdgar, Sprinklr is a little more on the enterprise end, SocialBakers is a little more on the enterprise end. Agorapulse, I use that one every day myself for Twitter and LinkedIn.

For Facebook and Instagram, honestly, I would stick with Facebook Creator Studio. It is so simple and easy to use. If we get time during the Q&A, I can do a quick demo, but I will tell you that Facebook has made that so easy, and they have a companion mobile app now. Or you could take a look at Iconosquare, some of you might be familiar with that.

If you want just Instagram and Pinterest, Tailwind is phenomenal, and that has some great features for doing groups of hashtags, you can schedule stories onto Instagram.

Facebook Creator Studio, by the way, back up a second, they just recently added the ability to create very, very simple stories for Facebook and the ability to schedule is not right there just yet, but I'm sure it will be coming.

And then Instagram only, if you're really heavy on Instagram, you're not really that active on the others, or you just want to go all-in on Instagram, you've got Later, Planoly, PlannThat. Or, as I say, there's Tailwind or Creator Studio. Lots of choices.

Don't get too carried away and set them all up, but if you're in the market right now for a shift to choose a different tool that will really help you to streamline and, most importantly, to plan and to schedule, then you might get some free trials. All of these have free trials. Facebook Creator Studio is free. But just get a sense that sometimes, depending on how your brain works, you will just prefer one over the other.

This is a screenshot right here of Facebook Creator Studio. When you first open it, it can be overwhelming. I actually recently did a Facebook Live on my page demonstrating how to use Creator Studio, as my audience kept saying to me, Mari, have you ever done a video on how to use Creator Studio? I'm thinking, oh my gosh, I've been thinking it's quite obvious, but when you first go there, there are so many things to look at. But all I want you to focus on is that blue button, it's kind of greyed out in my screenshot, because once you click on it, the sidebar opens up for where you will create your post. But all you pay attention to is that little button at the top, "Create Post". So, definitely use Creator Studio on Facebook.

Agorapulse, this is a screenshot of my own tweets, and then you will see I've got also LinkedIn, is just underneath Twitter. So, we scheduled to LinkedIn and Twitter here every single day, super easy to use, a great all-in-one platform, really great and tremendous customer service. Very, very reasonable, they have some good plans as well, and all of them have free trials.

ContentCal is the one I mentioned. It has the best workflows, the best approval workflows. They've kind of designed it, they were agency owners, they're out the UK, a wonderful drag and drop, beautiful visual calendar tool, some really fancy features, but at a very, very affordable rate. The approval process is just super, super awesome. They do all the social networks.

Then Tailwind is the one that they do Pinterest and Instagram, that's all they do, Pinterest and Instagram. And if you want to schedule your stories, really great. We use this one for some Instagram. I use it for my bio. It's got Smart Bio, a little thing that says Smart Bio in my bio link and that means I can put links to the different posts that are on my Instagram profile, so that I can say "Link in Bio" and that way I can have lots of links clicked through to the Smart Bio.

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Now then, how often to post? These are general guidelines based on some research, as well as my own experience. It is really going to depend, and you do need to test for yourself, so your Facebook page, I put five to seven times per week, meaning not necessarily once a day, but probably once a day. For some of you, it might be two or three times a day. You're going to know, and the litmus test is are people engaging with you. If they don't really engage a lot, try to reduce the posts. Twitter, two to seven a day. Instagram Feed, four to seven per week, maybe it's more like twice a day, three times a day for you, it just depends on how your audience is responding. Stories, as I covered in my last webinar – if you haven't seen that webinar yet for the Verizon Small Business Webinar Series, definitely go and check out the Stories webinar – I'm going to say minimum one to three times a day if you can, because they disappear after 24 hours. And then you've got Pinterest, LinkedIn, YouTube, it's up to you. Those are some general guidelines.

With that, my friends, we have come to the end of the content portion and now I would love to take your questions.

So, thank you. Oh my gosh, thank you so much for your patience. Many of you will be catching the replay of this and I really, really appreciate all of you who made it this far. We love you, we appreciate you. Gosh, we've just got a couple of minutes to go here and then we will wrap up. One super quick question someone had asked, a heating and air conditioning, an HVAC company who is asking, how can we attract more of a presence online to obtain new customers.

It's really about humanizing and not necessarily showcasing your products, the heating and the AC physical products, it's what they can do. It's keeping people warm or cool. It's showcasing customer stories, it's humanizing your business and having little clips of real people. It's the story of how you got started, of how you serve your customers, and just really adding value. And also educating, educating, and just sharing little bits of content.

OK, friends, so we are at the top of our time. Again, I so, so, so appreciate you being with us today. We've just got a final parting message to leave you with. Thank you, I appreciate your kind words, we will see you again on the next presentation. OK, friends, stay tuned, I know there's a lot of great, great webinars here on BrightTALK, and we will see you next month. We're going to talk all about video.

Heres a closing message for you.

### **Andy Choi**

That's it for today's webinar. Thank you so much to Mari for sharing all of those insights about new tools to help businesses plan their social media content. Remember, we have another great session coming up with Mari very soon. She will be back with even more super savvy ideas about social media.

Now, you can catch up on all of our past webinars on demand, that is on the Verizon BrightTALK channel page, or at [www.verizon.com/webinars](http://www.verizon.com/webinars) and don't miss out on our next webinar, that's with Emmy and Grammy winning entrepreneur, Jeff Hoffman, and that's happening Tuesday, 29 September, we look forward to seeing you again for all of our events in our Small Business Webinar Series.

Have a good one. Thanks so much for joining us. We will see you soon.