

## **25 Social Media Ideas to Personally Connect with Your Audience**

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There are two kinds of people when it comes to those who struggle with social media branding:

...those who think, "Who cares what I had for breakfast?"

...and those who want to retain a sense of privacy and not share the small details of their lives.

Both are common, but if your goal is to leverage the power of the Internet to help you build your fan base, increase exposure and build your financial worth – then you have to learn how to make this work for you in spite of your feelings.

Notice I never said to get over it. Your concerns are valid – but the world today is deeply rooted in the connections people make online, so if you ignore the vast potential of social networking, you'll be doing yourself a disservice.

First things first – I'm never going to ask you to morph into the kind of person who relies on mirrored booty shots to attract your audience. It's not necessary - and unless your goal is to launch a sex tape, it has no place in real online branding.

What I am going to do is teach you how to put yourself out there as an everyday man or woman – and if you already have a certain amount of celebrity, then you might actually end up feeling a sense of relief that your posts are no more glamorous or exclusive than Joe Blow walking down the street.

Why do I feel qualified to guide people in their online branding and fan building efforts – whether you're a nobody with no fans (yet) or a celebrity failing at social media?

Because in social media, the playing field has been leveled. There are normal people who have huge followings and become celebrities based on their Internet activities.

Likewise, there are celebrities who get online and don't have a clue how to garner a following because to date, all of their press has gone through a media company – and unfortunately, this isn't something someone else can do for you.

It's the height of personalization – and that comes from one person – you. Every time I see a personality or brand interacting online, my instinct kicks in and I spot what they're doing wrong and how they could easily rectify it. Or I see something I love and nod in approval.

This book is born out of a recent encounter of sorts that one marketer had with a mega rock star. This person (who I won't name) has sold out tours, a rabid fan base – and a mere 192,000 fans on his Facebook page (a low number for a celebrity).

His posts on Facebook get a couple of hundred Likes, but nothing compared to his band mate's 1.3 million followers and tens of thousands of Likes per post.

It's a shame because he's the lead singer – he should have no problem drumming up comparable numbers, but sadly, he hasn't grasped what social networking is all about.

His posts are infrequent, impersonal for the most part, and sometimes even pathetic when he begs for people to Like and share his page. Nobody of that caliber of interest should be asking for a fan base.

When the marketer reached out to him via LinkedIn, he was curious about her advice, so he asked his social media expert about it. She emailed her and said she was glad she told him what she did – that he didn't listen to her, no matter how often she told him to be relatable and relevant.

When you start throwing niche terms around like that, people who are new to a concept will have their eyes glass over – and they never will get it.

The marketer advised her to be literal and specific with him, holding his hand with examples, and she gave her some specific clues about how to help him “see” the possibilities for his social posts. He removed the post that made him look bad.

What I’m seeing are a lot of companies and experts who know how to get someone started with social media, like setting up their Fan Page on Facebook, creating an Instagram account and Twitter profile, and maybe a YouTube channel – but then abandoning the person and leaving them to flounder.

Setup is great. It’s a technical detail that you might enjoy outsourcing. But unless they also teach you specifics about what to post, other than generalities like “be personal and relatable,” you’re going to feel nothing but frustration with your efforts.

That’s where I come in.

I’m known to my subscribers for holding their hand through things that initially feel uncomfortable, and giving step-by-step guidance with concepts they’re not used to. In other words, I kick their butt and get them out of their comfort zone.

So, my goal here is to provide you with 25 very specific social media post ideas to help people relate to you on a casual level. I’ll do it with specific examples from my own sharing – along with commentary and ideas for you.

Important: This doesn’t mean you can’t ever promote something. Do that, too! Promote your brand – but make sure you have a healthy balance of personalization and promotion or you risk losing your fans before they can build trust with you.

### **3 Things to Remember Before You Post**

First, this strategy won’t work if you only post once every three weeks. People need to hear from you frequently so that you begin to put them in the habit of checking in with your pages and accounts online.

Second, this isn’t something someone else can do for you. You have a unique voice and style and if your fans know what that is and suddenly there’s someone else trying to connect to them, they’ll smell a rat.

Third, don't tell people what you're trying to accomplish with this effort. There's no need to say, "My social media manager thinks you guys might like to see my breakfast. Here it is, if you want to see it."

You'll be defeating the purpose if you make what should be a casual online conversation, awkward. Whenever possible, include a picture. But text posts are better than nothing.

Ready to get started? It's okay if you said, "No." You're going to do it anyway. Do it afraid – courage will come later.

## 1. The TBT Post

TBT stands for Throw Back Thursday. These posts on social media are done weekly and are a chance for you to showcase yourself at a different point in time.

From birth to last week, a throwback Thursday post is a fun way to let people see who you used to be. It can reflect youth, family, friendships, old interests – and more.

I start with this one because it's a specific schedule (Thursdays), it's easy – pick a picture from your past, and tell something about it.

Respond to or *Like* every comment people make on your post. Now as your page or fan numbers grow, that might not be possible. But while it's growing, go for it. Comment when you want to and *Like* people's contributions.

By the way, Throw Back Thursdays don't HAVE to be you at all. It can be anything from another time – something you are longing for (like a speech from a politician in a bygone era), some family members you miss (like your grandmother and grandfather), or anything old fashioned that you happen to be missing that Thursday.

## 2. Kids

Whether you're a parent or not, you can share pictures of your kids or others – including cute baby pics that are viral online with cute captions. Now I'm

personally not someone who likes putting their underage children's photos online – at all. But many people do. It's a personal choice.

You can post something you're proud of – their graduation, etc. I have a friend who routinely shares silly things her kids are doing. She gets dozens of comments and Likes because it's like a zoo over at her house – insanity 24/7. But people eat it up.

### 3. Pets

Do you have any fur babies? Pets – from dogs and cats to birds and other animals - make great social sharing posts. Barb Ling always posts pics of her dogs (Moose as she calls them) – and I love the pictures of her little birds, too – Hacker and Tech Support.

With pets, they make great pictures. They have "looks" and habits you can post about. Even if they're not your pet, you can post or share other peoples' animals if you have a friend or relative whose pet you can snap a quick picture of.

It's just a brief split second that helps you connect with someone or make them smile.

### 4. Hobbies

Hobbies can be anything from cooking to gardening, playing music or building cars. I go through different hobbies at different times. You just have to snap a pic of it, or post about it – a question, a comment, a frustration – whatever you want – share it with your audience.

### 5. Food

This is a biggie. People post food shots of what they're cooking, what recipes they want to make, and meals whenever they eat out. And don't think it has to be something fancy, either.

There are plenty of "burger and fries" pics making their way around the Internet! Everyone can relate to food. We all have to eat. What happens when you post a

food pic or post is people will comment about it and ask for the recipe, share a recipe, and more!

People start sharing a lot when you post about food. Doesn't matter what niche you're in. And you don't have to have images. But it works well when you can post a pic.

## 6. Drinks

Now drinks convey a different kind of camaraderie. You have your coffee connoisseurs, your umbrella drink posters, and everything in between. Coffee is a BIG shareable post. There's a whole culture of "must have coffee" every morning, and some people routinely post pics of their coffee – nothing fancy – and share the mug they're drinking out of.

A shot of your drink out at a restaurant is nice – they usually look better than we make them at home. Here's one of my drink shares – in a special mug my audience can relate to:

## 7. House and Décor

Anything in or around your house (or someone else's) that you can post about can bring good socialization. One celebrity recently had a neat post showcasing a table – a small corner table – where he spoke of what was on top of it.

He had a handmade box his father-in-law made for him to keep his vinyl records in, a little decorative box another rock star gave him, and a lamp. It's not that anything in it was overly awe inspiring, but it made you feel like you were there listening to a friend share something special to him.

You can share things like your Christmas tree, the view outside, one piece of furniture or art, etc. Here's one someone shared of their new office chair:

## 8. Activities

What are you out doing? It could be seeing a movie, taking a hike, visiting a landmark – anything. Activities make good, shareable content because others might have similar interests – or simply might like to cheer you on in yours.

Some things I don't share right away, like if I'm on vacation away from home because that invites thieves into your house. But I'll post after I'm back.

It doesn't have to be going out anywhere, either. I saw a neat post the other day on Facebook (by Brad Gosse) who took a picture of his New Year's Eve activity – know what it was? A picture of his legs extending out of his chair, while watching TV.

Know what happened? His audience started posting their own pictures of them doing the very same thing. A string of leg selfies in front of the TV. Just a little bonding moment for the people who chose not to go out that night.

It was cool! People not only shared their leg selfies in front of the TV, but they also started commentary about what he was watching and what they were watching.

Don't be afraid to be silly and ridiculous! Sometimes I'll make and share a video instead of a picture. I saw one of some local Botanical Gardens or some Japanese Gardens. It was beautiful and serene – a great video to get comments on!

These pics don't have to have you in them. You can share the picture of the activity – a rollercoaster at an amusement park, for instance.

## 9. Dates and Friends

People post pics of themselves with their significant others, their old high school friends at reunions, fellow marketers, famous people and more.

Make a joke out of your pics that you add by Photoshopping something funny in. You might add your pic photobombing a celebrity or something fun.

## 10. Solo Selfies

Solo Selfies are something I'm capable of, because I don't have to ask anyone else's permission. And yes, it's sometimes hard if you're having a self conscious day where even your fingernails feel fat and ugly. But do it anyway.

You can do selfies at home, with a pet, while you're out and about. I love Brian G Johnson's selfies – he does them with quotes and puts them on his Facebook to inspire us and remind ourselves to have fun in life while striving for success.

Trivial things – small shares of everyday stuff – help your audience bond with you.

## 11. Inspiring or Thought-Provoking Quotes

This is a GREAT one – especially for anyone who's nervous about this whole social sharing ordeal. This is a quote, so you can add a pic of yourself – or not! Either way, it allows your audience to see what kinds of things resonate with you so they can either bond with you or weed themselves out.

By the way, if you want to see who shared your post or what they said, you just click on the share link and it will show you. If you're short on time, post a simple quote with your blog URL.

It may not get as much engagement – 25 Likes and a comment – but it's branding and bonding, all the same. When you post longer, more thoughtful items, people take time to respond in kind.

## 12. Health

Health posts are personal. Not everyone wants to share this kind of stuff. But for those who can and want to, go for it. Not only does it help people relate to you, but they can be very helpful.

One share of Tiffany Lambert's resulted in a subscriber informing her that it sounded like her Vitamin D levels were low. Sure enough, a visit to the doctor and she found out she was almost empty on Vitamin D. Started taking it and her energy levels and life felt transformed!

I've had friends battling cancer who post and allow us to support them during this time. Some things are serious, and some not so serious. You might have a headache that won't go away - and someone can provide a tip that helps.

Your post doesn't have to be of you. It can be of Nyquil or the thermometer. Sometimes I post a pic of my Fitbit stats – or the treadmill dashboard.

You don't have to drag out every detail of your health woes or successes. You can be broad and general. I've seen lots of people post about sugar lately, how they're giving it up. That's a health decision.

### 13. Collections

The other day I was looking at the Instagram account of a musician (male) who started posting pictures of his Converse shoe collection. I'm not into shoes or Converse, but it was neat seeing the variety of styles and reasons why he loved them. Each one told a story.

Collections are obviously, things you collect – and that might mean 3 items or 3,000. Your collection could be books, clothes, weapons, or anything you enjoy. Here's an example of a collection post:

Your post could get shared by other marketers who ask their audience the same question. Something like, "What do you collect?" and then the engagement carries on further.

### 14. Clothing

I'm not a big clothes person, but once in a while I grab something I want to share. People love clothes and accessories. If you've ever browsed Pinterest, you've seen how popular they are.

You might post pics of a funny t-shirt, a tie, a hat, something worn but much loved, something new, and so on. The picture of clothing you post doesn't even have to be something you own. You might be out shopping and see something funny or cute. Snap a picture and post about it!

### 15. Music, Books, Movies and TV

This is a great share on social networking sites. People are fans of similar things and love commenting about it. You might share a celebrity picture or meme, make a

comment about an episode you just watched – but always remember not to aggravate your audience by posting spoilers.

If you are commenting about a character that just got killed off, for instance, put SPOILER at the beginning of the post so people know to avoid it if they haven't seen it yet.

Sometimes you just mention something you see in connection to a movie, book or TV show. You can also post a quote from a show or book. Quotes from characters don't always have to be motivational. You can ignite a discussion from any starting point.

## 16. Unwind and Relaxation

Self-care shots always go over big. Again, this doesn't have to have YOU in it. It can be a pic of the spa itself, the water, the nail polish you're about to use – anything soothing.

Some people tie this in to their alcohol, like a nightcap or glass of wine by the fire. We see a lot of leg selfies posted by swimming pools.

Don't be afraid to post you. Whether or not that means you offend a couple of people with your preferences.

Your goal with social media isn't to falsely keep everyone subscribed to you. You want to attract people who either agree with you, or can handle your differences. There are some people who post some things that are in a 180 from what I believe.

But I still follow them – because there's a reason I started following them – and I focus on those things and ignore the stuff I dislike.

## 17. Planes, Trains and Automobiles (or Boats!)

Many people post selfies or pics of them on planes or in taxis, on trains, boats or more. If you buy a new car, post about it! I love seeing the new cars my friends buy – and hearing about it.

Joel Comm bought a new Mustang that shines an image of the horse onto the ground when you unlock the doors. After he posted about it, one of his readers mailed him a 1966 keychain for it.

Barb Ling cracked me up when she posted about buying a new car, only to post the next day that she accidentally bought the wrong car and had to go back for a second round of negotiations to trade it for the right one.

You don't have to buy something new. You might post a picture of your dashboard showing what song is playing. People love discussing music! Or post a pic of the temperature listed on your dashboard and talk about how cold (or hot, or perfect) it is.

#### 18. Sports Fans

Many people are rabid over sports, players and games. So if you're into watching sports OR playing them, post about them periodically. You might take a pic of you wearing a jersey, or even lay the jersey on your bed and snap a pic of it before you put it on if you're shy.

Look around at your friends' social profiles and see what kinds of sports posts they're doing, and what gets interaction. Here's a pumpkin carved for Halloween that has a sports theme:

#### 19. Holidays

The holidays are lots of fun to post on social networking sites about. Doesn't matter what religion you are or how you celebrate, people love sharing holiday stuff!

Think of all holidays where you might post something with a picture, like flowers on Mother's Day, the Christmas tree, Easter Egg hunting, and more. Sometimes I'll attempt a Pinterest creation and post a picture of the original image compared to mine.

They're called Pinterest Fails.

#### 20. Weather

Weather related posts get interaction. Whether your current weather is sweltering, icy, or perfection, you can post about it and see engagement soar. Many times this will mean getting a landscape shot of some sort, like the mountains or even a beautiful sunset.

You could share pictures of the aftermath of a tornado you had on your street or the floods from the rain. Share a beautiful sunset, or a rainy video if there's a nice thunderstorm.

You might get out in your car and drive to a beautiful spot one day to snap a picture. Water pics are always gorgeous.

It can be a close-up pic of a droplet of rain on a leaf after a light shower. A rainbow in the sky. A beam of light hitting the floor that your cat has curled up in – anything to reflect warmth, cold...Mother Nature.

## 21. Art

Art is something you can find everywhere. Maybe a sculpture in your local city, a painting in a restaurant. Anything you find beauty or amazement in is worth sharing.

Even better if you can selfie with it. But even if you don't, think of some other artistic posts you can make.

## 22. Random Acts of Kindness

Now this is something I just thought about based on something Taylor Swift did. I like to do random acts of kindness, like paying for the car behind me at Starbucks, or paying for a military family's meal at a restaurant.

You could go into a grocery store and buy flowers and a gift card and then wait in your car until you see someone go into the store who you think could use a pick-me-up.

Then leave it on their car windshield and maybe watch from afar as they find it. That's something you could document in pictures. Someone on Facebook posted a video about Taylor Swift's Swiftmas.

This mega star actually scouted out her fans on social media and spied on their profiles to learn more about them. Then she personally shopped for them, personally wrapped the gifts and personally mailed them – even showing up to deliver one woman's gifts in person!

### 23. Local Spots

No matter where you live, there's a place or a story behind a place worth sharing. Hop in your car or go for a walk and start looking for things to share.

Anywhere tourists go, snap a picture and say something about it. It's almost like sending a postcard to a friend when you grab a piece of local flavor and share it with others.

### 24. Technology

New TVs, computers, iPhones – anything technology has in store for us makes a good social networking share. It could be health technology, like an electrotherapy machine, some Tiger Balm, or anything like that.

Whenever you buy something new, ask yourself if it would fall under any of these categories and how could you position it to share with someone else. Don't worry about anything thinking it's not important. That doesn't matter.

### 25. Funny Things, Memes and Cartoons

This is the category where everything that makes you giggle is placed. It can be anything – things you find online, things you laugh about offline – whatever puts a smile on people's faces is good social sharing and personalization.

Think of humor this way – it's one of the top responses (if not THE top response) people give when they ask what they're looking for in a relationship. "Someone who can make me laugh."

You're not dating in this case, but it's still what attracts people to you – a good sense of humor.

Listen, social sharing isn't difficult. The most difficult thing won't be finding things to share or the technical aspect of putting it online.

It will simply be – your mind.

Don't let it engage you in a battle of self-consciousness. Just put it on ignore and post stuff anyway!

You can post 100% pure niche facts all day and night, and not one person is going to feel a bond with you where they instinctively trust your advice.

They have to see you be humanized, and in order to do that, you have to open up a bit.

As you've seen in these examples, there are many, many ways to share without putting your face in the image. And there are dozens of ways to share impersonal stuff in a personal way.

What I mean by that is, you're sharing things about a local beautiful spot, but it's not about you – it's about the spot. With your opinion. So you're still opening up to your audience because through your opinions, they get to see what kind of person you are and what your likes and dislikes are.

This is one of those exercises where, in order to brand in this day and age, you must force yourself to get comfortable with it.

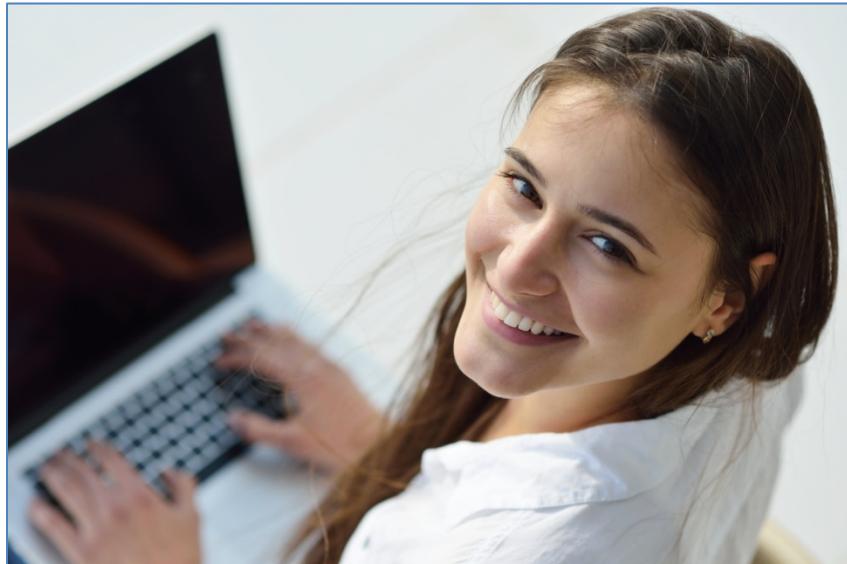
That requires doing it, more and more often.

As you do it and the novelty wears off, it's no longer a big deal – AND – you're able to instantly have an "eye" for anything shareable without having to literally sit and think and struggle about it.

This is a new way of advertising. A new way of branding yourself that wasn't a factor in decades' past.

If possible, utilize multi-media formats like text, audio, video and images. Don't think this has to be a major movie production. Whip out your iPhone, record, upload and share.

I hope this has given you some ideas on socialization with personalization online! Put them to the test and ramp up the efforts that go over well.



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