Social Media Tip - Using Hootsuite to save lots of time

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As part of Bob Stewart's latest challenge, I wanted to share my hootsuite system with all of you. It's an efficient way to schedule your tweets, shares, etc. all at once. **I post for 4 months across all 4 channels at the same time. I think I spend about 3 hours doing this and have all my updates done!**

My priority is my blog. I leverage social media to broadcast the message to other channels...so that way, the people I know can see it (i.e. those I'm connected with), as well as making it public so that others who don't know me may see it (not to mention that google and the other search engines are starting to value social shares/social cues). Most of my posts are "timeless" so time of year when it's posted doesn't matter.

I'm very busy, so I needed an efficient method to post. And, hootsuite.com provided the answer. (*Please note that this is a method for efficient posting. It does not substitute for interaction, but it definitely helps you be more efficient* - so that you can either spend more time interacting....or more time on other busines activities).

Background about hootsuite.com - It's free.

Go to hootsuite.com and sign up for a free account. You can then connect this to your social media accounts, including facebook, linkedIn, twitter, and now your google plus business page. (I think you need to be a paying member to add your personal google plus account).

There's a lot you can do with hootsuite, including tracking the effectiveness/engagement on your posts, and viewing various screens at once (e.g. to see updated from certain streams, see your messages, etc.). **But, I use it primarily for scheduling my posts. It saves me a ton of time and ton of hassle.**

My hootsuite system:

I used to do this myself. Now that I've gotten so busy, I have an assistant help w/ most of this.

1. I go through all of my blog posts and create a series of updates. I will go through my blog and copy and paste my favorite blog posts. I just go through the list one by one. I make sure I have at least 31 of them (one for each day of the month).

- I write the title of the post

- I copy the link...then, I make it a shortened link by copying it into the short link maker in hootsuite (upper left). That way, my link doesn't look so long/doesn't create much clutter and it gives you flexibility for places like twitter where you have limited # of characters.

- After the link, I will add in a few relevant hash tags (e.g. #hardwood #westchester). That will help in future searches. I try not to do too many hashtags as that can be annoying to readers.

Then, I have a whole update. Here's an example.

Which type of flooring is better for your bedroom - Carpet or hardwood? ow.ly/dKEvy #hardwood #carpet

2. I copy and save all my updates to a word document. That makes it easier for me, and easy to ahare with an assistant. And, importantly, I can reuse it (or portions of it) later in the year. It saves a lot of time. Im guessing the above process takes me 1-2 hrs.

Bonus: Sometimes I sprinkle in fun or funny posts. They have nothing to do with my business. Sometimes, I get them from Active Rain, and sometimes just across the web. I highlight those in my word document in yellow (you'll see why in the next section.).

3. Then, I go to hootsuite and schedule the updates.

- I copy and paste the first one into the update bar.

- Then I select the channels to post the update to. I generally choose: Twitter, Facebook Business Page, LinkedIn, Google Plus business page. **Yes, I am posting to 4 channels all at once!**

- If it is a yellow highlighted update, I will also post to my facebook personal page. I do not want to clutter my facebook personal page with business posts. So, I will post the fun ones there. (and maybe once a month or so...or once every 20-30 updates, I'll put in 1 post about my business).

- Hootsuite allows me to select a picture - it automatically picks up the pictures in the post and I just hit the arrows until I find one I like. If I can't find one, I just leave my head shot there. Something is better than nothing.

- Hootsuite allows me to choose a date (and even a time) to post. I will select January 1st. (I've given up stressing about the times...I keep reading different theories on this...I just post randomly between 8am and 8pm...whatever is easiest and takes least amount of effort.

- Then, I copy and paste, and do the same exact thing for Feb 1st. Then, the same thing for March 1st, then April 1st.

- Then, I move on to the next update, and post it for 1/2, 2/2, 3/2, 4/2, etc.

I keep doing this until I get to the 31st. And, then I'm finished for 4 months!
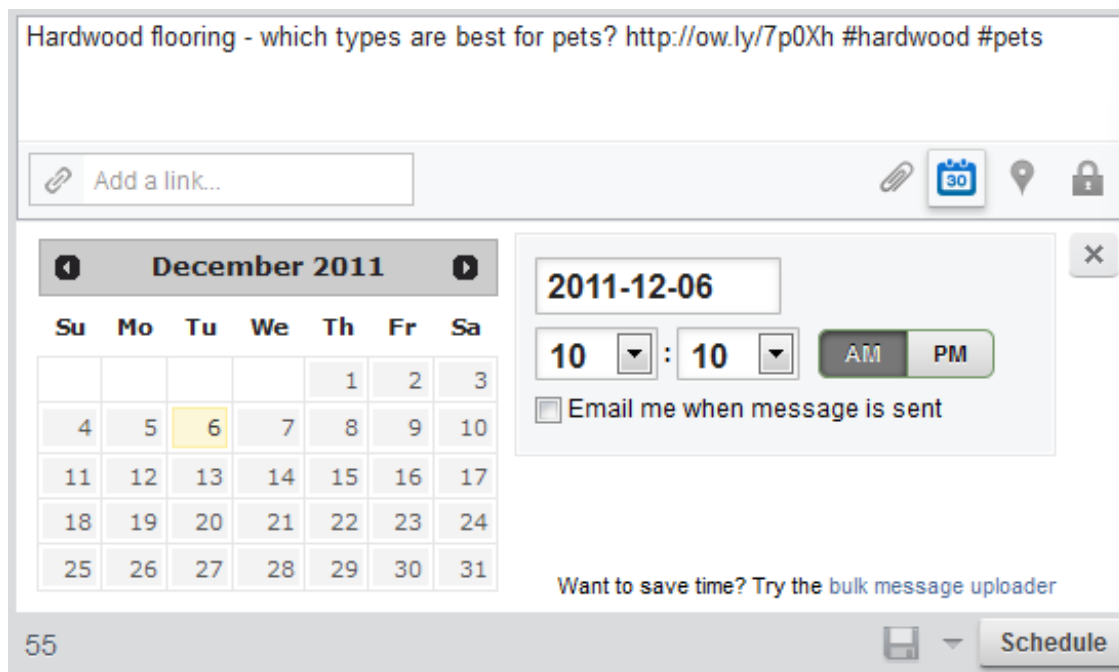
Then, 4 months later, I repeat. I may reuse a some important posts and will add some more. I had read somewhere that doing 4 posts about your blog post is ideal, but space it out so that it's not spammy or annoying. I think 1 month apart is enough time to space it out, and it makes it

an easy method to explain to an assistant.

By concentrating the time doing this, it makes it much more efficient! And, this way, I make sure I have at least one update per day. I don't have to spend time each logging in (or even remembering to log in) or trying to figure out what today's update should be.

As a side note, for my personal Google Plus page, I use a different program called "Do Share" (which only works in Chrome) and I'll use this same word document to copy and paste. It's saved me time here as well.

I hope this is helpful.

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