



January 25th, 2023

Maintaining Social Media Presence in the Off-Season



Objectives

1. Find clarity about your messaging & brand voice
2. Identify what you already have and what you need to develop in your portfolio
3. Identify what engagement with your audience means to you – and how to achieve it
4. Plan content around your season

The Basics

***Don't get ahead of yourself** with specific social media anxieties (How do I make a reel? Should I boost my Facebook ads? Etc.) – zoom out, **understand your voice & value proposition**, then go from there.*

- You'll need...
 - a. A foundational basecamp website (even if it's just one landing page)
 - b. A maintained Google My Business listing
 - c. Net positive reviews on sites like Yelp, Google, Facebook, TripAdvisor, etc.
 - d. Social media platform(s) that you can commit to updating regularly
- Developing a consistent brand will make this process much easier and more effective
 - a. What do you want your clients to know? What do you want your reputation to be? What would your customers say about your business to others? Is this in line with your goals?
 - b. Complete the branding activities beginning on page 9 of [Mieko's slide deck](#)
 - c. Share a brand statement with people you trust for feedback, then revise it

Up-to-Date and Mobile-Friendly Website

Why is it so crucial?

- Allows you to control your image
- Is perceived as reputable and trustworthy by customers
- Enables online sales
- Is more affordable than traditional advertising
- Is easy to keep up to date

Getting started...

- Consider what functionality you need and what purpose you want the site to serve
- Consider the aesthetics you'd like to associate with your business
- Consider the message you want to send on your site
- Secure a domain name (and preferably all suffixes – .com, .net, .farm, .org)
 - Mieko's Top Pick: [Hover.com](#)
- Build a website, either with an all-in-one platform or manually (hire a developer or code it yourself)
 - Mieko's Top Pick: [Squarespace](#)
 - Include photos, videos, articles, testimonials, and the option to subscribe to a newsletter (even a simple bimonthly e-newsletter will keep you on the minds of customers year-round)
 - Mieko's Top Pick: [MailChimp](#) for 2,000 subscribers or less, [FloDesk](#) for more than 2,000
 - Monitor your website's analytics to identify where to focus your energy when you have time to improve it. All-in-one platforms like Squarespace will offer this feature.



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Google My Business Listing

This is the panel that shows up on the right side of the screen of any Google searches of businesses, and it also can put you on Google Maps! When people search “farms near me,” it’ll increase your chances of showing up as a suggestion. The listing can contain:

- Photos (of your farm and/or products)
- Directions
- Reviews
- Hours
- Links to social media and website

[Claiming your listing](#) is FREE and ESSENTIAL. It should be pretty easy, but if you’re based in SE Mass, you can reach out to SEMAP for assistance at info@semaponline.org.

Review Platforms

- The most common platforms for customer reviews are Google, Yelp, and Facebook reviews
- TripAdvisor can be relevant, especially if you have agritourism activities on-farm
- You can’t get rid of negative reviews, so instead focus on encouraging large volume of positive reviews
- Find some time to respond to reviews, both negative and positive – it shows you are attentive and value the feedback you are receiving

Social Media Strategy

Which platforms should you use?

- [Mieko’s Top Picks](#): Instagram and Facebook
- Only create social media platforms that you can commit to updating regularly – ex. an out-of-date Twitter account is much worse than no Twitter account at all!
- TikTok is the top trending social media platform right now, but only create an account if you’re excited about its capabilities. It has a less direct connection to sales than Instagram or Facebook.

Which apps/platforms/resources can assist in your strategy?

- [Later.com](#) (schedule posts and view analytics)
- [Canva](#) (accessible graphic design)
- [Linktree](#) (landing page for all of your links, but not a substitute for a website)
- [Repost](#) (share when other businesses post about you)
- [InShot](#) (video editor, but social media apps have in-app video editors)
- [Scrl](#) (carousel images/continuous galleries)
- [Jenn’s Trends](#) (how new platform features can work for businesses)
- [Eventbrite](#) (event management and easy integration with socials)



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Maintenance Tips

- 1. Make a quarterly plan for your social media to be more manageable when you're in your busy season. The following is a suggested timeline for farms with summer & fall harvest seasons, but make your own!*
 - January-March: Reintroduce the business & share plans for coming season
 - April-June: Amplify what you are offering, and when & where it will be available
 - July-September: Share about harvests, make suggestions on what can be done with your products, and encourage people to sign up for your newsletter for more detailed or consistent information
 - October-December: Advertise holiday offerings and events (and conduct a donation appeal if you're a non-profit farm!)
- 2. Posting once or twice a week might be the sweet spot of post frequency, but it's more important to vary the types of content you provide. Examples of successful content include:*
 - Sharing your process and product (ex. field prep pictures, videos of value-add processing, growth stages of crops/livestock)
 - Telling your business's story (ex. people-oriented posts)
 - Collaborating with other businesses or organizations (ex. tagging farms you source from, working with a local value-added producer on a new product, partnering with SEMAP, etc.)
 - Holding contests & giveaways (ex. new followers who share this post to their story will be entered into a raffle for a CSA share)
- 3. Use platforms to engage with existing & potential customers, not just to post.*
 - Be attentive to places where people might send you private messages (ie. Facebook Messenger, Instagram DMs, a website contact form)
 - Reply to public comments as able, especially those that ask questions or ignite conversation
 - Share posts that give followers an action to take
 - If you receive recognition or accolades, share it on social media loudly and proudly!
- 4. If you're looking to gain followers, consider give-aways, take-overs, and other collaborations with more established accounts in a similar industry/geography.*
- 5. If you're going to pay to boost a post (debatable impact but may work for you), make it a post that is directly tied to an action or sale opportunity.*
- 6. Finding the right time to post is like throwing darts – analytics can help but it's a bit of trial and error.*

Key Takeaway: If it's going to give you a headache, find an alternative or let it go!