Learning Objectives - After completing this session the attendee will be able to:

Create and implement a custom social media strategy to increase the credibility and visibility of their property management business, generate qualified leads and improve customer experience.

**You have a website, a Facebook page, a Twitter account and maybe even a blog for your business! That’s great but do you know if they are working in sync and helping you build your property management business? There is no “one size fits all” when it comes to social media strategy. Every property manager is unique. Each has a specific expertise, personality, methods of doing business and a wide range of clients.**

**Creating a social media strategy that works for your business is not difficult, and when implemented correctly, it can act as your sales force and consistently bring highly qualified leads to your business even while you are on vacation or asleep.**

Before creating a strategy, it’s important to highlight these key points:

* Social media for business is not an island
* It’s an integral and vibrant part of your online marketing ecosystem
* Your website is at the center of this ecosystem
* Social media platforms like Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are multiple customer touch-points
* When all these individual components work synergistically they act like Miracle-Grow for your business by increasing your online credibility, enhancing the visibility of your business and by generating qualified leads
* If they are not in sync, they become their own disconnected islands, time wasters and provide poor ROIs

**Eight Steps to develop an effective social media strategy?**

1. Start with your personality. Are you good at writing? If yes, may be blogging should be at the top of your list. How do you feel about being in videos that would be watched my thousands of people around the world? If you are OK with that, then creating YouTube videos for your business ought to be on that list. Do you love photography? If yes, then Flickr or Pinterest are for you.
2. If you are not yet fully engaged in social media for your business, start with one or two based on the above exercise of delving into your personality.
3. Determine your short and long-term business objectives and see if the social media tools you have chosen would help achieve them
4. Once you decide your top two choices, study them thoroughly by watching “how to” videos on YouTube, observing your competitors, and figuring out the general methods and etiquettes.
5. Determine your areas of focus – your ideal clients, expertise, niche or unique selling proposition
6. Decide how much time you are willing to set aside every day to invest in implementing your social media strategy
7. Figure out the time of the day, night or weekends that you would devote to building your social media presence
8. Commit – this is hands down the most difficult part

Once your strategy is in place, it’s time to act. Implementing your strategy into action depends on the type of social media tool you’ve chosen. Let’s look at a few…

**FACEBOOK**

Facebook is the Big Daddy of social media. Property managers must have a meaningful presence on it.

Do’s and Don’ts

* Your personal network should be in your profile and not part of your FB company page
* Choose your FB company Page name and URL prudently. You cannot change it after you have 200 likes
* Custom design your FB business page to match your website’s look and feel
* Use keywords that are important to your business in the Overview section and include your city/area
* Create custom tabs to showcase your properties and information about your services and expertise
* Create content that adds value to your target audience and addresses their needs, but don’t hard sell
* Foster interaction by using polls, contests, games and surveys
* Tag your fan page while sharing content
* Post regularly

Benefits

* Advertise available properties and featured properties
* Demonstrate your strengths, service areas and subject matter expertise
* Tenants and owners can communicate with you privately
* Embed property listings through an iFrame
* Communicate in real time with your prospects, landlords and tenants using live chat on your fan page
* Accept maintenance requests and rent payments
* Share tips, How To’s, community events and info
* Increases website traffic and tenant retention
* Generates leads and referrals
* Enhances your competitive advantage
* Improves personal credibility and your business reputation
* How to successfully advertise on Facebook
* Facebook Tools and Apps for property managers

**TWITTER**

Micro blogging – share your thoughts, messages, pictures, URLs and videos in micro posts of 140 characters

Do’s and Don’ts

* Have a separate account for your business with your company name as the username or something close that’s short
* Replace the generic twitter egg icon with your company’s logo. Use your initials or an acronym if you don’t have a logo
* Design your twitter page to match your company’s website to increase brand recognition
* Include your website or blog URL in your twitter profile
* Use hash tags in front of keywords (example: #NARPM, #PropertyManagement)
* Include your twitter handle in Email signatures, property listings, letterheads, on business cards, website, blogs
* No personal tweet to friends and family from your professional account
* Follow tenants, owners, prospects, maintenance firms, local businesses, professional associations (NARPM), and of course competitors

Benefits: how to use it for your property management business

* Tweet your current vacancies – include links to property descriptions, photos and details
* Send scheduled maintenance alerts and property maintenance reminders
* Keep tenants posted about local events, coupons, deals and offers
* Request tenants to tweet their repair requests
* Tweet seasonal maintenance tips
* Tweet about your expertise, specialty and areas that you serve by answering questions posted by others
* Use twitter to increase tenant and owner response times – you can quickly respond to a tenant’s maintenance request by tweeting the link to your maintenance request form
* Encourage twitter as another option for your tenants and owners to communicate with you. It’s
* Tweet regularly – at least once a day. You can use your smartphone

Tools

* Twitter Power 2.0 – a book by Joel Comm
* FollowerWonk: twitter analytics, who are your followers?, where are they located?, etc.
* Listorious: find anyone on twitter by topic, region or profession
* Bitly: URL shortening service
* TweetBeep: What are others twittering about you, your service, your company
* Twitpic: Share your photos and videos as they happen
* Twellow: a directory of people by area of expertise and profession
* Twibes: create groups and organize tweets by topics

**YOUTUBE**

If a picture is worth a thousand words, a video is worth a thousand pictures!

* YouTube is the second biggest search engine after Google
* If you don’t yet have a YouTube channel for your business, create it today
* Make your business’s name as your channel’s username if it’s still available (Example: youtube.com/planetsynergy)
* You can be the spokesperson of your channel, you don’t need to hire anyone
* Creating videos is easy and inexpensive
* All you need is a digital camcorder (Example: Kodak PlayTouch is under $100) and a tripod for a buck at the dollar store or under $20 online

Benefits

* Create videos with highly customized content for owners, investors and tenants
* Provides vivid details of before move-in and after move-out to owners via private video links
* Before and after repair videos give owners peace of mind
* Minimizes tenant disputes about security deposits – a video evidence is compelling
* Make DIY, tutorials and How To videos to add value to your target audience
* Rent your properties quickly with marketing videos. It makes it easy for out of town renters to decide
* Upload your client testimonial videos for increasing your personal credibility
* Videos can be used for blogging. You can embed links on your website, blog and social media accounts
* Helps in increasing the organic ranking of your website in searches

Tips

* Create good quality videos with adequate lighting
* Most inexpensive camcorders have poor audio recording quality. Buy a wireless microphone system (<$100)
* Don’t make videos to overly promote your business
* Avoid
* Properly edit videos to avoid showing gaffes and bloopers. Use YouTube’s free editor or other free ones
* Always use a monopod or tripod to prevent jerky motions while panning
* Be sure to clearly label and describe your videos with keywords that are relevant to your business
* Add tags to make your videos easy to find during searches
* Use subtitles and captions to highlight names of customers in testimonial videos
* Submit videos to search engines

**GOOGLE PLUS**

Google+ is Google’s answer to Facebook. Although the concept is similar, it has some unique features.

* Google+ (or G+) is represented by the icon “+1.”
* The +1 symbol according to Google is shorthand for “this is pretty cool.”
* When a user clicks the +1 icon on your website, it’s just like they would click the “Like” button on your Facebook page to give your business a thumbs up.
* Google+ now has over 175 million users
* Customize your page’s public profile for promoting your brand to owners and investors

Key Features and their benefits to property managers:

***Circles***

* Allows you to categorize people in your network and control which circle of people gets to see what information
* Unlike a Facebook page, Google+ allows you to follow your page’s fans and add them to your Circles
* It’s like the Friends on Facebook, but with the added ability to organize them in categories based on types of relationships such as landlords, investors, sellers, lenders, etc.

***Hangouts***

* Enable you to have instant face-to-face video chats with groups of up to ten people across the world
* A great tool to hold video meetings with out-of-country investors, out-of-state owners and sellers
* Ability to upload documents and share your computer screen during these video chats
* You can even join a hangout from your iPhone or Android phones.

***Instant Upload***

* It’s a photo app for smart phones and tablets
* Can be used for instantly sharing pre- and post-maintenance/repair photos with homeowners and investors…or you could walk into a new listing, take a photo or video on your smart phone and instantly upload it to your Google+ page

***Sparks***

* Suggests articles and videos specific to your interests and selected keywords
* Property managers can use it to keep abreast of developments in their industry or market. For instance, you could choose keywords such as “Atlanta Rental Market” or “Midtown Condo Sales” as alerts to get pertinent up-to-date information about the chosen topics.

***Messenger***

* A feature available to Android, iPhone, and SMS devices for communicating through instant messaging within Circles
* It allows photo sharing between Circles.
* Google plans to launch many Google+ apps specifically for real estate professionals in the near future. Google+ is here to stay and everyone in the real estate industry ought to take it seriously.

**PINTEREST**

What is it?

* It’s an online pin board-style social photo sharing platform
* It’s not just for pictures. You can pin videos too
* It’s like an online scrapbook to organize and share pictures of your projects or things you like
* You can create and manage theme-based image collections such as events, interests and hobbies
* Users can browse other pin boards for inspiration, re-pin images to their own collections or ‘like’ photos
* With over 10 million active users and growing, Pinterest is now considered part of elite list of top ten social networks
* You no longer need invites. You can join immediately on their website

How can property managers take advantage of this rapidly growing social media?

* You can create multiple pin boards for marketing (example: one for each subdivision that you manage properties in, before/after pictures)
* Upload images of the pool, club house, and other differentiating amenities.
* If you manage apartments you could have a separate pin board for each floor plan to show images of various rooms in each plan
* You can have pin boards for model homes and show detailed pictures of decorated rooms, cabinets, closets, bedrooms, bathrooms, living rooms, patios, basements, etc.
* Embed your YouTube videos of home walkthroughs, before and after inspections on your Pinterest account
* Repin (just like Retweeting) images and videos of DIY tasks such as fixing a leaky faucet, pressure washing and painting from other users
* It’s a fast way to propagate images and videos of your rentals to many people on the web with just one click. Many viewers could be potential tenants or investors from all over the world
* It’s a great search engine optimization tool for boosting the organic ranking of your website because images and videos on Pinterest are linked back to the original location

Important Tips

* Use good quality pictures and videos that can be appealing to your target audience. Nothing fancy, just professional
* Link your Pinterest account with your Facebook and Twitter accounts to maximize visibility of your pins
* Name and describe your pins appropriately. Use keywords that are relevant to your business, region or area of expertise and be sure to include a link back to your website or blog to attract more traffic
* Make sure your pictures and videos are Pinteresting.

**Mini Group Discussions** (Time permitting)

**REPUTATION MANAGEMENT**

How to establish, maintain, repair and augment online reputation?

How to effectively deal with negative reviews on Yelp?

**QR CODES**

How are property managers using them?

**Smartphone Apps**

What are property managers using to increase productivity and customer satisfaction?

BIOGRAPHY

Raj is the cofounder and CEO of Planet Synergy, Inc. Planet Synergy has been providing website solutions and virtual assistance services to property managers over the past 9 years. Raj has presented workshops and participated in panel discussions on online marketing, social media, web technologies, mobile applications and productivity tools for property managers and real estate professionals at many organizations including but not limited to the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce, Northeast Atlanta Metropolitan Association of Realtors, The International Real Estate Council of Georgia (now a part of CIPSMLS), etc.

Planet Synergy is an affiliate member of NARPM (national and Atlanta Chapter).

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