

Tools to Develop and Monitor Your Personal Brand

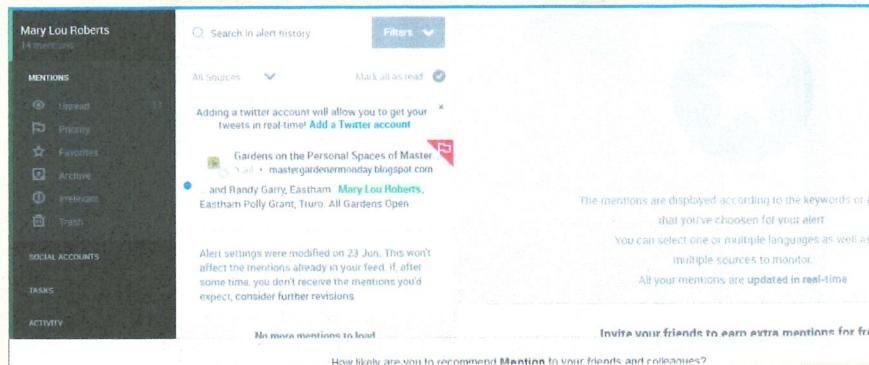
Throughout the book we have emphasized the importance of your personal brand and the role various SMM platforms and techniques can play in the personal branding process. We have encouraged you to establish your brand while still a student, to intensify that process as you begin the search for your first or next professional position, and to maintain your brand in a strategic way as you progress in your career.

Admittedly that is one more task to add to an already busy life. Are there tools that can make the task easier? Yes, there are tools specially designed for or especially appropriate for personal branding. We can discuss only a few of them; you are encouraged to continue to follow online resources that keep you updated on the subject.

Here are some examples, organized by the elements of Dan Schwabel's personal branding model:

DISCOVER In the discovery process you conduct a self-assessment of your goals and personal characteristics. As you continue personal brand development, it is useful to discover what others are saying about you in a professional context. Many of us use one or more alert tools by setting up alerts for our name. Google Alerts is probably the best known for content alerts as well as the names of individuals. It is free and easy to set up and has a number of options for the scope of the monitoring and methods of reporting.

In addition to Google Alerts Prof. Roberts uses both Mention and Talkwalker because they tend to report different items. She does not have social platforms connected as you can see from this example.¹ Only uses of her name on the Internet are reported, as shown here in the web listing. The information was initially received by email.



The screenshot shows the Mention web interface. At the top, it displays 'Mary Lou Roberts' and '14 mentions'. On the left, there's a sidebar with 'MENTIONS' (unread: 11, Priority, Favorites, Archive, Inquiries, Trash), 'SOCIAL ACCOUNTS', 'TASKS', and 'ACTIVITY'. The main content area shows a list of mentions. The first mention is from 'Gardens on the Personal Spaces of Master Gardener' with the text 'and Randy Garry, Eastham **Mary Lou Roberts**, Eastham Polly Grant, Truro. All Gardens Open'. Below this, there's a note about alert settings being modified on 23 Jun. At the bottom, there are links for 'Invite your friends to earn extra mentions for free' and 'How likely are you to recommend Mention to your friends and colleagues?'.

Source: <https://web.mention.com/#alert/>
267119

If you want to monitor mentions of your name in social media, consider Social Mention. Prof. Zahay and her classes use it to monitor mentions of their content in social media. Social Mention monitors over 100 social media channels and offers real time and other reporting options.

CREATE Chapters 5 through 12 have discussed platforms on which you can create content and each includes a discussion of personal branding applications. There are tools for each of the platforms, some of which are covered in this chapter. It is important to investigate the tools offered by each platform you are using as a first step.

You may want to use Google Trends to see what others in your geographical region or your industry are publishing. Many publishers use it to generate ideas about what to write. You can simply search when you are in need of inspiration or you can subscribe to reports on topics of special interest.

Additional content creation tools that are useful in personal branding applications include:

- Evernote offers a variety of support options for writers
- Headline Analyzer rates the quality of your headline
- Canva offers easy-to-use graphic design tools

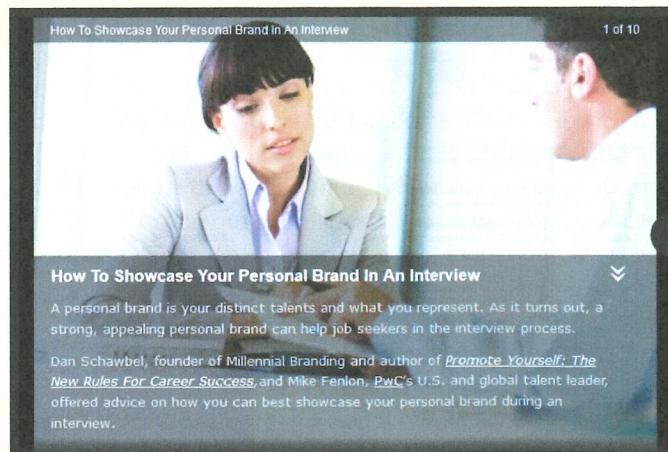
There are literally thousands of others, depending on which aspect of content creation you need assistance with.

As you think about creating original content that supports your personal brand, remember that what you do—what you create—in marketing classes and on the job is a key part of your personal content.

COMMUNICATE There are also numerous tools that can ease the task of communicating across your chosen platforms:

- Hootsuite, discussed in the chapter, offers scheduling options.
- Buffer facilitates scheduling posts across various platforms.
 - Both of these tools also offer monitoring data.
- IfThisThenThat (IFTTT) offers more complex scheduling options called recipes.

An especially important aspect of communicating your personal brand is how to include it in the job search process. Forbes offers a slideshow that offers useful tips on how to present your personal brand in a job interview.²



Source: <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/fmln45kkm/how-to-showcase-your-per/>

Maintain Part of maintaining your personal brand is to continue to create and post relevant content to your chosen platforms. Another part of maintenance is to monitor the growth of your reach and effectiveness on the various platforms that you use. Broadly-based analytics tools like Google Analytics can be used for this purpose.

Many SMM tools that are used for other tasks also offer analytics. Hootsuite and Buffer were given as examples in the previous section. Others include:

- Sendible, which integrates email and lead generation activities into its platform.
- Cyfe, which is a comprehensive business analytics platform that can include data from all aspects of the business including SMM.

In a different category is Klout, a tool for measuring an individual's influence across all the social media channels in which he participates.

Wishing you well on your personal branding journey

The advice given in the chapter holds true for the personal branding context; start small and simple—and probably free—and add to the number and complexity of your tools as you learn and as you identify a genuine need.

Developing a personal brand that presents you authentically and positively as a person and as a professional is a rewarding process. Good luck in your journey!

Sources:

1. "Mary Lou Roberts," Mention (July 3, 2015). Retrieved July 22, 2015, from <https://web.mention.com/#alert/267119>
2. (n.d.), "How to Showcase Your Personal Brand in an Interview," Forbes. Retrieved July 22, 2015, from <http://www.forbes.com/pictures/efld45fmgi/how-to-showcase-your-per/>

Single Platform Tools

Since Facebook is such a dominant force in the social media world it's easy to assume that it has also generated the most tools. There are many tools for using Facebook, but perhaps not as many as for other platforms. It may be that Facebook is so central to the social strategies of so many marketers that they use fewer tools to automate their dealings with it. There are, however, many useful tools to assist marketers in Facebook tasks.

Some basic tools for tracking brand activity and brand mentions on Facebook and other platforms include:

- Facebook Insights. We discussed Facebook Insights in Chapter 13 as a source of Facebook metrics (see Figure 13.13). Is it a tool? Yes, although it is not a standalone tool; it is a tool that Facebook furnishes to business users. It allows them to see a variety of metrics about the use and popularity of posts and is accessed directly from the brand page.
- Mention. Mention allows the user to create alerts (an alert for your own name, for example) and to be notified when it appears virtually anywhere on the web. The user can connect the alert to social media accounts, to Facebook for example, and react as soon as the notification is received. It also provides a variety of metrics and can be shared with other members of the brand team. Like many tools, it has a free version with limited functionality and offers a variety of premium plans.¹¹

- NutshellMail. This is a free tool from email firm Constant Contact that monitors activity on Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn and consolidates it into an email for analysis and response. It also covers Yelp, FourSquare, and Citysearch, allowing the marketer to stay abreast of ratings on those sites.¹²

Each of these tools (and many others) does similar things, but no two are exactly alike. One is provided by the platform, one is free, and one charges for premium services. There are many other tools that offer these services, but these three were chosen because they have straightforward, limited functionality. Other tools to be discussed in sections that follow offer similar monitoring services but combine them with many other types of services. That may make them more useful, but it also makes them more difficult to learn to use. Starting with some simple tools makes the learning curve easier to climb.

Platforms provide various tools to help marketers make use of various platform features and services. The purpose of these tools is not only to make the services easier to use but also to improve the effectiveness of the marketing activities. Facebook made enhancements to targeting services offered to marketers in late 2014 and quickly announced a set of tools to help marketers take advantage of them. Tools in this set include:

- Interest targeting. Instead of targeting posts to all people who Like their page, marketers can now choose a subset based on their interests. This interest targeting includes the ability to target people who have recently read stories on the subject, not just people who Like the marketer's page. This allows more precise targeting of messages and it also expands the marketer's reach.
- Post end date. Publishers can specify the date a post will no longer appear on the news feeds of followers, although the post continues to be shown on the marketer's page. This may sound trivial, but it is in the best interest of the marketer to show content users are interested in, not the starting quarterbacks for last week's football game.
- Smart publishing. This tool was initially available only to a few large publishers. It allows them to see which of their stories are being posted on Facebook by readers. If enough readers post a link to a story on Mashable, for instance, Facebook will send the content out to everyone who has liked Facebook but will not post the story on Mashable's page. Facebook has developed a dashboard to allow the publisher to monitor this activity, however.^{13, 14, 15}

This brief summary barely scratches the surface of tools intended to make use of Facebook more efficient and more productive. Multiply the large number of tools for Facebook by the number of platforms marketers can use and you begin to see the magnitude of the job of choosing productivity tools. You also begin to see the desirability of tools that work across multiple platforms.

Multiple Platform Tools

Multiple platform tools are complex and few are free beyond a typical trial period. That makes the line between multiple platform tools and purchased services a little blurry. We will use as examples two that are accessible to an individual or to a small business. They are tools that are used by a person, not a suite of services that is executed by a supplier and reported to the client.

One such tool used by many of us is Hootsuite. Its basic functions are to allow users to:

- Publish on various platforms and to monitor activity there.
- Schedule their posts.

- Create reports for each of the platforms connected to their accounts.
- Connect apps in order to be able to access other platforms.
- Monitor content from selected blogs and websites.

There is more, including sharing between the entire SMM team, but these are the functions that are available, although limited in number of activities or platforms, to the Pro user of the platform. There is a free plan that allows the beginner to experiment with the tool.¹⁶

Zahay and Roberts both use Hootsuite to manage their social media efforts. Figure 14.4a shows Prof. Roberts' home page, a dashboard she has created from among the social media channels and pages she maintains. It shows her real-time Twitter feed, a record of her own Tweets, one of her Google+ pages, and a tool (app) called Tailwind for scheduling and posting Pins. Tailwind provides analytics that track Pinterest activity over time and allows the user to connect his website to monitor conversions (sales, information requests, and more) from Pinterest activity.

Figure 14.4b shows how Hootsuite is used to post to multiple platforms. Prof. Roberts' various accounts (profiles) on major platforms are listed in the message box. From those she can choose the desired accounts, write a message, and include a link that

Figure 14.4a A Hootsuite User's Dashboard

Figure 14.4b The User's Message Box on the Hootsuite Dashboard

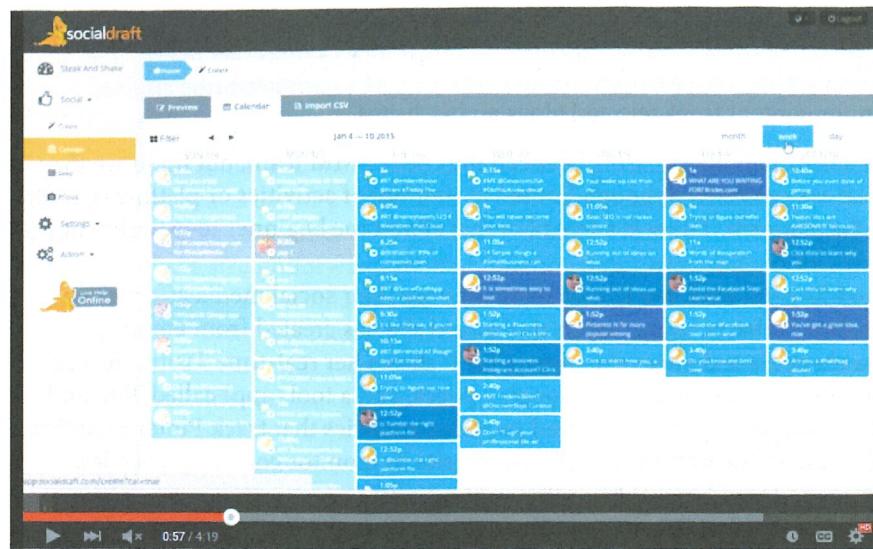


Figure 14.5 A Calendar-Style Dashboard from SocialDraft

is automatically shortened. The Send Now button is not covered in this shot. Instead it shows a calendar that allows the user to select the day and time of the post with an option for notification when the post is made. Among the other options are the ability to include an image in the message or to select a particular group for message targeting.

Optional plans in Hootsuite allow the creation of teams for collaborative work and management of the social media effort. This is typical with the addition of more people and more social media accounts requiring more costly usage plans.

Another approach to multiple platforms is the SocialDraft social calendar such as the one in Figure 14.5.¹⁷ It services Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, and Instagram with a drag and drop scheduling calendar. It accommodates social media teams who create content in comma-separated values (CSV), a format that stores numbers and text in plain text format. Users can add images to their CSV file and upload them to the scheduling calendar.

This tool, as is typical for comprehensive tools, includes other tools. Link shortener Bitly allows creation of custom links. Users can monitor social feeds or receive alerts about selected topics. SmartDraft also has a feature that allows users to identify influencers and engage with them about relevant content.

SocialDraft offers the usual free trial and several feature packages, but tools with this level of complexity do not commonly have free versions.¹⁸

Purchased Services

The tools that have been discussed so far all require ongoing hands-on activity on the part of the user. Purchased services are contracted out to third-party suppliers. In some ways these suppliers behave like advertising agencies; they contract with clients to provide a set of services and advice on their use. The clients are often brands. Clients can also be digital agencies who then provide the services to their own clients as part of their package.

Earlier sections have discussed tools that are somewhat limited in scope. In order to offer a viable purchased services platform the business must offer a set of social media services that meet a wide range of client needs. The exact nature of some of the services differs, but most are organized around basic categories of SMM services reminiscent of the stages in the Social Media Planning Cycle (Figure 2.1). Because of the range of services