

SOP: CREATING A CONTENT CALENDER

Some days you have a ton of news to share with your fans. Everything feels equally important and you don't know what to prioritize. Other days it seems like nothing is going on. You're not feeling creative, but you know you need to post something... anything...

Sound familiar? Phew. You need a beer. (Actually, you may or may not need a beer, but you definitely need a content calendar.) Whether you're a brewery, distillery, or malthouse, here are content creator Alyssa Powers' top tips for creating a simple and effective content calendar.

LET'S TALK FORMAT

Go with a user-friendly digital format such as Google Sheets. Not only can you replicate your layout for future months, but you can easily share it with your team so everyone can access the calendar on-the-go. Your exact formatting will vary, but here is our simplest recommendation to get you started:

- Columns: Days of the week complete with dates (ex: Monday 8/31, Tuesday 9/1...)
- Rows: Different content buckets (in other words, the various channels you use.) This could be as simple as Social Media, Email Blasts, and Website Content. Or, it could be as detailed as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Email, Web, Paid Ads, Press Release... and so on.)
- TL;DR? This calendar shows you where & when you're going to promote something, and what you're going to say to promote it. The columns are the "when," the rows are the "where," and the individual cells are the "what."

Now that you've built the skeleton, let's get this thing fleshed out!

START WITH THE BIG IDEAS

Make a short list of your major company initiatives for the year. (Think product launches, location openings, etc.) This is not an exhaustive list of every important project. You cannot have 45 big ideas and support them all effectively, so narrow your list down to the top three or four.

Add these company goals to the top of every month of your calendar. As you're building out your content, craft the majority of your messaging so it supports one (or more) of these goals. This will prevent you from getting off track, and provide you with a North Star to guide future promotions.

PRO TIP:

This doesn't mean 100% of your content has to directly support one of your company's main focuses. By all means, celebrate National Golden Retriever Day and post a photo of a very good boi posing with your product, simply because it sparks joy. (But you get the idea, most of your content should serve a greater purpose.)

PREP NOW FOR LATER

Consider including a "pre promotion" section every month to prevent last minute surprises. What should you be working on now, for next month? Don't be shy about setting reminders and adding to-do's into this calendar... Future You will thank you!

RINSE & REPEAT

Recurring content can be extremely effective. For example, maybe you send out an email blast on the 1st of every month, or you post your tasting room's weekend menu every Friday morning. Not only does recurring content create a pattern for your fans (they'll know what to expect and look forward to the next post), but it's easier for you to plan ahead when you have a set schedule.

SHARE IT

Make. Your. Calendar. Visible. To. Other. Team. Members. Trust us, this is crucial to avoid last minute headaches. If others have visibility to your posting schedule, you're less likely to receive requests that don't fit the overall plan. (Remember the company's Big Ideas?)

SURPRISES HAPPEN

Alas, an effective content calendar isn't set in stone. Don't let a delightful change in plans go by just because you originally planned to post something else. We're in the craft beverage industry, after all... sometimes there are surprises!