

The Blue Collar

Blueprint

For Success Online

The Blue Collar Blueprint For Success Online



In any project, the blueprint or manual is what outlines a step by step process to success. Consider this your blueprint for building an online presence for your business. Laborers, craftsmen and blue collar workers across the country build economic value with their skillful handiwork. Despite this excellence in their industry, many blue collar businesses cut corners when it comes to developing a presence online and it ends up hurting their bottom line.

This blueprint will guide you through tips and tricks for capturing your work in high-quality visuals, constructing social media profiles and building your online presence on a foundation of brand consistency.

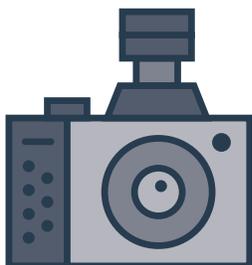


Visuals

Consider social media profiles part of your online portfolio. In today's world, before any potential clients contacts your business, they will have done research online. What they see on your website and social media platforms will determine whether or not they want to work with your business.

Blue collar industries are unique in that many have tangible outputs. Workers take pride in their hard work and the finished product is often worth celebrating. For many blue collar industries, visual platforms can make or break your business. High-quality photos of beautiful masonry, incredible landscaping, detailed woodwork or any number of other examples will effectively set your business apart from the competition.

Posting quality visual content online will not only build your reputation externally, but it will also provide value for your internal operations. Use social media as a way to highlight your employees and their talents. Featuring your team members will encourage them to take pride in their work. It's also an opportunity to show your employees at every level that you appreciate them.



KEEP THESE SEVEN TIPS IN MIND TO DEVELOP AMAZING VISUALS FOR YOUR BUSINESS'S SOCIAL MEDIA PROFILES.

EDITING

When showcasing your work on social media, keep the editing to a minimum. Layering on filters and making other changes will distort the photo. You want to highlight your work, which means it should look natural.

LIGHTING

If you want to keep the editing to a minimum, your photos need to be quality images on their own. Lighting is an important part of good photography. Practice taking pictures at different times of day with different settings. Avoid backlighting and harsh, bright lights. Natural lighting is best but if your work is indoors, you may need to invest in additional lighting.

POSITIONING

Take multiple photos at different angles and moving the focal point to different positions. Play around with small adjustments and different light settings. It's always better to have options before you post content online.

PROPS

Think about props that will enhance your photos and feature your work. You don't want to distract from the product itself but accenting your image with little details will take an image to the next level. For example, if you're a plumber who just finished remodeling a bathroom, stage the area with decorations and accessories before taking the photo. These details will make your photos more interesting and more engaging for your followers.

HOLD STEADY

Now that you've set the lighting, positioned your product and added decorations, it's time to capture the image. At this stage, remember to hold your smartphone or camera steady. Blurry images cannot be fixed. Fuzzy pictures look terrible and will not help your business grow in the virtual world or the real one.

INVEST IN A CAMERA

Smartphones will take good photos but professional cameras will help you take great photos for your company's social media profiles. If you're serious about establishing your online presence with amazing visuals, it's worth the investment. There are several online resources, tutorial videos and classes available to help you through the learning curve. With a little practice and a good camera, the visual assets for your business will improve significantly.

HIRE A PROFESSIONAL

Instead of a professional camera, you could also consider hiring a professional photographer. If you don't have the time, talents or interest in collecting your own photos, a professional can do it for you. Schedule the photographer on a weekly, monthly or quarterly basis to gather images of your recent work. Once you have a collection of high-quality photos, it's easy to post them on your social media profiles.



Video

Use videos to walk your audience through your latest project. Show your followers the entire process from start to finish and let them witness the transformation. Create brief video tutorials while you're on the job. This will establish your business as the industry experts and provide a valuable resource for your followers. When they have a simple question about their DIY project, they'll visit your website or your company Facebook page. When followers need an entire remodel or large-scale project, your business will be the first one they contact for that job.

If your videos are poor quality, people won't watch them. Don't waste your time with bad videos. Follow these seven easy tips for the best video results.

CREATE A VIDEO OUTLINE

Before you begin filming, outline the story you're going to tell in the video. Whether you're showcasing your latest project, announcing a new promotion or offering DIY tips, it's important to have a clear message. This will make it easier for people to follow and help keep you focused on the purpose of the video.

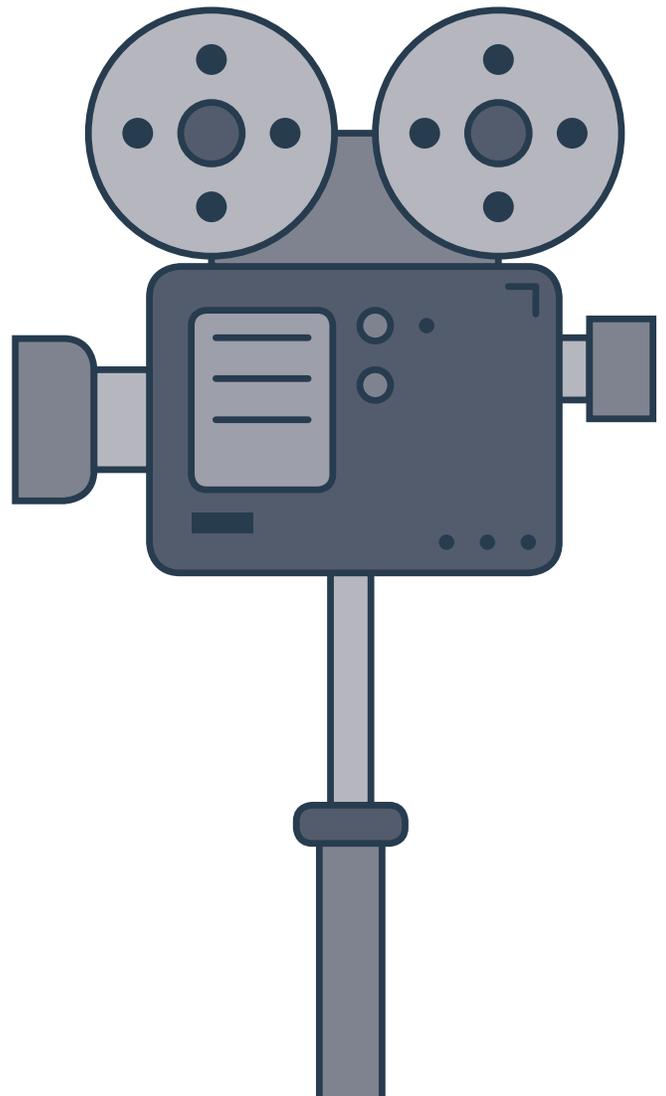
KEEP IT SHORT

Depending on the social media platform you use, you will have only seconds to tell your story. Twitter videos are limited to 30 seconds. On Instagram, videos must be one minute or less. If you're using Facebook or Youtube for video content, your videos can be longer.

Although these platforms allow longer videos, your audience likely will not spend more time watching them. You still want the videos to stay relatively short and to the point.

KEEP THE CAMERA STEADY

Nobody wants to watch shaky video footage. Instead of making your audience suffer from motion sickness, invest in a tripod or attachments designed to stabilize your equipment during a video shoot.



MICROPHONES

If audio is important to your video, consider investing in some external microphones. Most smartphones and cameras will capture audio but the quality might be low. Think about background noises on a jobsite or the distance between the speaker and the camera. There are many different types of microphones. The right microphone for your business will depend on your video equipment, your budget and the level of audio quality that you need.

LIGHTING

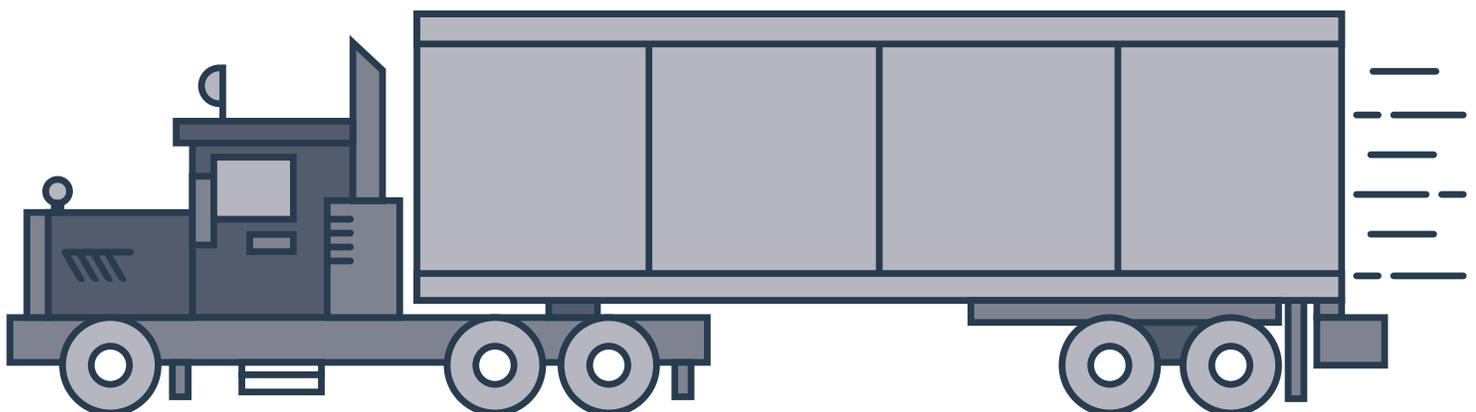
As you choose a setting for each video, consider the lighting situation. You want to make sure the lighting looks good before you start filming, whether your equipment is a smartphone or camera equipment especially for video shoots. As a general rule, avoid backlighting and harsh spotlights on the speaker's face. The face or focal point of the video should always be facing the light source, whether it's a window, a lamp or anything else. Smartphones will automatically adjust to different lighting settings but it can be a slow transition. Keep this in mind if you're moving to different locations within a single video shoot.

EDITING

The video editing process can be as thorough or as brief as you want it to be. If you don't have the time or resources to focus on the details, consider the basics. You can easily add subtitles if necessary and cut out bloopers or unnecessary footage before posting the video online.

LIVE STREAMING

When you're live streaming, the audience will be able to interact with your content in real-time. Followers can tune in, ask questions and engage with your business through Facebook or Instagram live. The video, shot from a smartphone, will still be available once you finish shooting. This content is great for your followers to share across their own social media profiles. Often, if you develop a consistent schedule with interesting content, an online audience will look forward to your business's live streams each week. As with all videos, be mindful of lighting, audio and messaging. Always hold the phone vertically while you're filming because that's how the audience will view it.



Social Media Blueprint

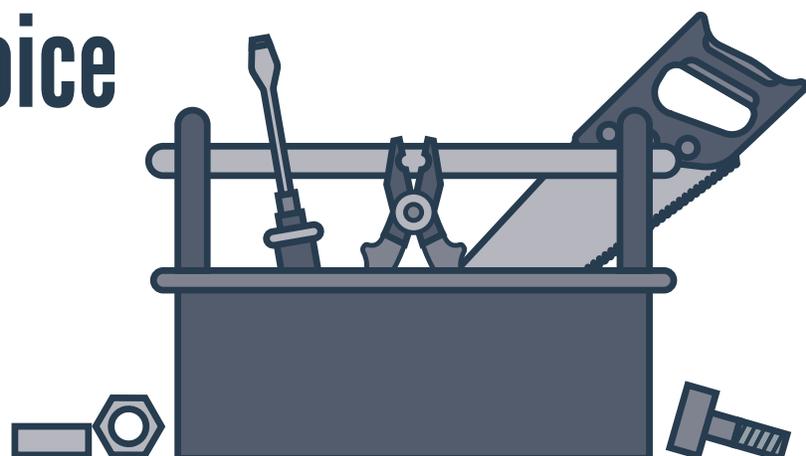
Constructing your business's social media profiles starts with setting goals. These goals are the foundation of your online strategy. Your goals determine what you do online and which social media platforms you use. Once you have goals, build a content schedule. Develop a plan of what you're going to post and when. This plan should also include information about the voice of your business. Every business should establish a voice or a tone to build stronger relationships with consumers. This tone depends on your values, your goals and who you are as a company. Ask yourself and your team who you want to be, whether it's funny, informational, family-oriented or any other brand personality.

Once you determine a voice for your business, it should stay consistent across all media platforms. All your brochures, website copy, visual assets and the content you share on social media should reflect this voice. Not only should your voice be consistent, but your content schedule should also be constant. Include engagement in your content schedule. Set aside a few minutes each day to respond to consumers and interact with other posts online.

Engagement is an effective way to build valuable relationships with clients, partners and team members.

To recap, here are the five steps to construct your social media blueprint.

- 1 Set Goals
- 2 Develop A Content Schedule
- 3 Establish Your Voice
- 4 Stay Consistent
- 5 Engage



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An important part of social media strategy is identifying your target audience. Think about the people you're trying to reach. All of the content you create and share on your business's social media profiles should be relevant to the people who follow your page. In blue collar and grassroots industries, that usually means posting content that's informal and conversational.

The more people relate to your social media page, the more they will engage with it by liking, sharing and commenting on your posts. These are the interactions that help drive business development.

As with any project, it's important to use the right social media tools to build a finished product with stability and value. Here are a couple social media tools that will help you build your online presence.

FACEBOOK

A majority of your clients, business partners and potential customers are going to be on Facebook, so you should be too. Developing a business profile on Facebook is a great way to engage with a large number of people. You can help grow your reach by encouraging followers to like, comment and share your posts. Make sure all your content looks good. Your business's posts will be more successful if they look more like regular content and less like a traditional advertisement.

YOUTUBE

Youtube is one of the most popular search engines online. People are going to this video platform to find how-to videos, epic fails and behind the scenes looks at business operations. Your goal on Youtube is to post relevant videos that attract viewers. This will help position your business as an online resource for clients and customers.

INSTAGRAM

Instagram is a visual platform that showcases photography. Make sure your Instagram photos are high-quality and engaging for your audience. Feature your best work, highlight your employees and make sure to include lots of relevant hashtags. Don't forget to engage with customers and other businesses by liking photos and leaving comments.

LINKEDIN

LinkedIn is all about businesses. Your profile should represent your business in a professional manner. Having a strong presence on LinkedIn will help you recruit qualified team members and network with potential business partners.



CRAFT YOUR BRAND CONSISTENCY

Craft your brand to represent your work and your skill. Whatever industry you work in, the logo, social media profiles, brochures, and website for your business should all reflect the same excellence that you expect of your service or product. Each time a consumer interacts with your business, it should have the same look and feel.

Keep your social media profiles on the level with regular content schedules and balanced posts. A balanced social media profile means that you're not overwhelming the audience with advertisements. Social media is an effective way to promote your brand but it's also a customer-service opportunity. Respond to all comments, even the negative ones, with a tone that's genuine and professional. Brand consistency should extend beyond the Internet to everything from the color scheme on your business cards to the design on your brochures.

CONSTRUCT A SOLID ONLINE FOUNDATION

A good website is the foundation for constructing a successful online presence for your business. Your website should have all the information current and potential clients need to know about your business. This means hours of operation, contact forms and examples of your work. Consider a blog to boost your web page in search engine results.

Invest in a website that's user friendly and has a design that appeals to a variety of audiences in today's digital world. User-friendly sites are easy to navigate. People don't want to read through large blocks of text. While it's important to get your message across, keep the copy to a minimum. In a blue collar industry, it's often about visual presentation. Your website is a great way to showcase your best work with high-quality photos and videos.

BUILD A MOBILE-FIRST WEBSITE

In any industry, mobile responsive web design is important. In blue collar fields, it's critical. The people who will be visiting your site aren't sitting at a desktop computer. They're outside, on the job or in the middle of a DIY disaster. You want your site to work well and look great on any smartphone, tablet or mobile device. Make sure consumers are able to connect with your business from anywhere. That way when their at-home weekend project goes wrong, they'll look to your website for answers.

MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF

Creating an online presence with quality visuals, social media strategy and consistent branding will help you make a name for yourself and your business. Recruiters, staffing agencies and potential employees will look at these platforms as a representation of your business. Use them to build a foundation that establishes you as the industry experts. A solid online presence will help you develop relationships with employees, clients and business partners.

Handymen in all industries are used to making changes on the job. These adjustments often lead to a better finished product. This blueprint to constructing your online presence is no different. Modifications are expected based on the needs of your unique company. You may want a second opinion on how to customize your company's social and digital efforts. Consult with the digital and marketing experts at **Evol Empire Creative**, and together we'll craft something that's truly excellent.



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