



# Sophie Bujold

Demystifying Social Media for Travel Professionals



[www.sophiebujold.com](http://www.sophiebujold.com)



[www.facebook.com/sbujold.online](https://www.facebook.com/sbujold.online)



@SophieBujold

*Q: Which channels should an agency consider using?*

## FOR LEISURE:

### \* Facebook

Definitely the giant, with 500 million users and growing.

### \* Twitter

This channel is dedication-heavy but can pay out big if used correctly. The key is to find people who will help carry your message forward and engage them.

### \* Blogging

Blogs are especially good for niche topics. Not as easy if you are a generalist unless you are REALLY good with the info you give or find an original way of presenting it.

## FOR CORPORATE:

### \* LinkedIn

Great link to the business community. With it, you can gather intelligence on corporate prospects, get your existing connections to introduce you to new ones, get advice and answers to business questions and a whole lot more.

### \* Any of the leisure tools suggested above

## OTHER OPTIONS:

### \* Flickr

### \* YouTube

For the most part, travel is about dreams and meaningful experiences. Any channel that can help you show off the experiences you can create or get your customer dreaming of travel should be considered. Adjust your choice according to your audience, time availability, and comfort zone.



*Q: If someone is just starting out on social media, what should they be doing?*

- \* Listen first (pay attention to language, etiquette, format, etc)
- \* Try out a few channels before deciding which one works best for you
- \* Try out a personal account first to get a feel for how things work
- \* Once you feel ready, try a few posts to test reaction

*Q: What are some major no-no's you should avoid?*

- \* Don't turn into a billboard
- \* Don't spam
- \* Don't just add noise
- \* Don't lie
- \* Don't use delete to get rid of negative comments without thought

*Q: What are some must-do's?*

- \* Listen
- \* Add to the conversation
- \* Be consistent
- \* Be persistent (getting attention can take time)
- \* Use social media in conjunction with your other efforts, not in a silo
- \* Find a niche
- \* Be authentic
- \* Care for your audience



*Q: How much time is realistically required to manage an effective social media presence?*

It can be time-consuming and require several hours per week.

Every medium requires a different time commitment so agencies should consider this when they consider social media marketing. Usually, the shorter the post length, the more often you need to post.

For example:

- \* Blogging once per week
- \* Facebook once per day
- \* Twitter 3-8 times per day

With some smart planning and some healthy limits though, there are ways to streamline and save time.

*Q: What are some good strategies to adopt to help save time and maintain a healthy presence?*

- \* Set a schedule
- \* Do only what you can handle
- \* Use tools such as Hootsuite to schedule activity ahead of time
- \* Vary your content: use some of your own & borrow from others
- \* If you can, get someone to help
- \* Space out your activity strategically
- \* If you are handling more than one channel, connect them together so that they share content



# Sophie Bujold

Demystifying Social Media for Travel Professionals



[www.sophiebujold.com](http://www.sophiebujold.com)



[www.facebook.com/sbujold.online](http://www.facebook.com/sbujold.online)



@SophieBujold

*Q: Are there any tools agencies can use to manage their social media channels?*

**\* Hootsuite**

One of my favourites for Twitter especially but it also manages Facebook, LinkedIn, Wordpress, MySpace, Foursquare, and others...

**\* Google Reader**

Helps you tune in to and keep track of online activity in a panel that is similar to email.

**\* Google Alerts**

Choose a topic and get email updates any time new content has been posted about it online.

**\* Social Mention**

Analytical information on any topic you are thinking of tackling. Helps you identify which channels are getting the most buzz, who is talking about it, general sentiment, etc.

**\* Mailchimp**

My favourite for anyone doing email marketing. It has great features that connect your email campaigns to your social media. It includes reporting and a bunch of other goodies.

*Q: What is the biggest social media marketing mistake people make?*

Underestimating its importance – Agencies need to think about a strategy, goals, why they need to be there, resources, etc. This needs to be seen as another marketing channel and a little planning goes a long way.

DON'T just leave your strategy up to chance.



# Sophie Bujold

Demystifying Social Media for Travel Professionals



[www.sophiebujold.com](http://www.sophiebujold.com)



[www.facebook.com/sbujold.online](http://www.facebook.com/sbujold.online)



@SophieBujold

*Q: Once you are online, what are some things you can do to build a following?*

**\* Get out of your fishbowl!**

People won't know you exist unless you join the conversation. Seek out people, pages or blogs where you can contribute to the discussion. Make sure you provide links back to your own channels in your profile and when it's appropriate in conversation.

**\* Make sure you are promoting your channel on EVERYTHING**

This includes offline channels too...marketing pieces, stationery, ticket jackets, e-newsletters, email signatures, websites, other online profiles, etc.

**\* Invite existing customers, family, etc to join**

Consider an incentive for them to invite their friends and connection to your channel.

**\* Create incentive to join**

Offer content that cannot be found anywhere else, create an offer page that is unique to your channel, etc. People need a reason to start following you.

**\* Consider social bookmarking sites**

Delicious or Digg for example are sites where members bookmark good content. Create an account and bookmark your best blog posts, your twitter feed or your Facebook page with a good description that uses the keywords you want to be recognized for.

**\* Facebook Page specific:**

Social ads if you can afford to pay a bit  
"Suggest to friends" feature.



**Sophie Bujold**

Demystifying Social Media for Travel Professionals



[www.sophiebujold.com](http://www.sophiebujold.com)



[www.facebook.com/sbujold.online](https://www.facebook.com/sbujold.online)



@SophieBujold

*Q: Can I hire someone to do social media marketing for me?*

Yes and no. Social media is about genuine interaction, which is hard to do if you are hired help. I would not suggest hiring a contractor for the day-to-day content generation. You want someone who is intimate with your company, its ethics, philosophy, and its inner workings for that. This is your voice online. If you can't manage it yourself, pick carefully. You want someone who can represent you well.

If you are promoting yourself personally, I would not suggest having someone else managing the account.

However, hiring a consultant that can help give direction and strategy is a much better choice. They can suggest a path and let you execute to retain your authentic voice or help set up the tools that will help your efforts go smoothly.

*Q: Can I use social media to make direct sales?*

You can try but social media isn't really the best place for direct sales all the time. Social media can lead to sales but should not be your primary sales channel. It should be more of a soft sales channel or a connector to your website where offers reside. This does not mean that you can't ever publish deals or promotions. They need to be interspersed with other information though. The sales leads will come on their own once you have established trust with your audience.

**EXAMPLE:** There is an agency I know who has been consistently posting on their Facebook page and purchasing Facebook ads for about 6 months. A consumer recently saw their ad and also saw that a friend of hers was a fan of the agency. As a result, she contacted the agency and they ended up booking a total of 1,200 passengers on a cruise...and got a 5-year contract to do more. This happened without deals or promotions being posted.