

How to find your founder voice: overcoming your fear of posting

From driving sales and app downloads to advocating for important causes and securing funding, there are many benefits to posting regularly on social media as a startup founder. It builds relationships, drives action and creates opportunities

Temps de lecture : minute

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But, having worked with hundreds of entrepreneurs and having also gone through my own social media journey as the founder of *More Diverse Voices*, I know there is still a reluctance to post online.

I've boiled it down to three reasons:

1. Feeling overwhelmed - with small teams and limited budgets, many founders feel they don't have the resources to manage an active social media presence. It's another thing for them to think about on an already very long list and so, despite its benefits, it drops down in priority.
2. Discomfort with the spotlight - a common thing that I've found is there's a fear of appearing too self-promotional, which can make founders uncomfortable and hesitant to share their insights and achievements with their audience.
3. Fear of making a mistake - social media has fed polarisation, created echo chambers, encouraged a cancel culture and enabled trolling. As a result, it's understandable why founders are nervous that they might say "the wrong thing" and be punished for it, which in turn paralyses them into silence. This is especially true when it comes to talking about topics linked in justice, diversity, equality, and inclusion.

At this point, I'd like to stress that being a thought leader on LinkedIn or Instagram or TikTok isn't for everyone. It might not make sense with your business strategy, you might not have the time to commit to making it really work for you, it may not be one of your strengths.

But for lots of founders trying to establish themselves in a competitive market place, it does. And for these people it's usually a case of starting, remaining consistent and learning how to be ok with taking up space.

To help you get started and keep going, here are my top tips to getting over your posting fear and remaining consistent.

Mindset shift - it's not about promotion, it's about connection

One of the first things I help founders with is a key mindset shift about the purpose of content and "personal branding".

The best content is very rarely "promotional" - eg buy this thing now or look at how great I am - it teaches your audience something new and it forges relationships. The stuff you share should focus on you sharing your journey, your failures, your wins, your learnings and helping others.

This approach will help you build meaningful connections, ones based on offering genuine value. It's about starting conversations and building connections, not about chasing virality.

Know your why

Get clear on "why" you are posting.

Your "why" can be broken down into vision, mission and values. These will act as your guiding principles, your north star. They give you focus and meaning. When making any decisions, you should always come back to

your mission and vision.

- Vision - the desired world you aspire to create
- Mission - what the company does, who it serves and the road map to making the vision tangible
- Values - the core standards that guide the way you do business. They sum up what your business stands for, influence the organisational culture and drive how and why you do things.

Understand what good looks like for you

When it comes to social media, followers and likes are just one part of the puzzle. I advise my clients not to focus too much on chasing followers - although reaching a particular goal does provide useful points in time to reflect - but to think about KPIs that indicate your impact and real connection.

- Instead of likes, think about how many comments, conversations and DMs started off the back of your post
- Instead of followers, how people turned up to a free workshop you run?
- Instead of subscribers, how many people emailed you back saying that your newsletter was really good this month?
- Instead of worrying about how viral your posts are, how many people have downloaded your super useful toolkit?

Focus on one channel first - less is more

Feeling overwhelmed by social media is one of the biggest deterrents for founders. There are so many channels, so many formats, so much to say and not enough time to say it.

My advice here is less is more.

Focus on one channel, one format and get really good at it. Choose one social media platform and master it before branching out. This approach allows you to build a strong, focused presence without feeling overwhelmed.

It's also easier to build out other social media platforms when you're already established on one.

When it comes to picking the right platform, go where your audience is. Don't expect them to come to you. As a general rule of thumb - for business-to-business products & services, think LinkedIn and a really good newsletter (I would recommend investing in something like *Flodesk* or setting up a *SubStack*). For business-to-consumer products think Instagram and TikTok.

The content idea conundrum

Coming up with different content ideas can feel hard and very time-consuming. But you don't have to reinvent the wheel. Resources like the More Diverse Voices *Inclusive Communications Toolkit* offer ideas and templates to get you started, but here's how to develop some engaging concepts:

I like to break them down into 5 different categories:

1. Educate - how can you upskill your audience? What new skills will they gain from your content?
2. Inform - a summary or analysis of a news story or academic paper. This is a great way to join current discussions.
3. Inspire - Your story, your journey as a founder or thought leader - what have you learnt? How have you failed? What learnings can you share?
4. Entertainment - how can you bring a smile to someone's face?
5. Update - share exciting company updates, product launches, awards

and new hires

Also, here's a list of ideas as a jumping off point:

- Why you do what you do - share what inspired you to set up your company
- Share your process - how do you do what you do, what is your method?
- Case study of how you helped a client, with key learnings and results
- Your biggest failure and what you learnt from it
- Something you are very proud of
- People that inspire you and why
- A book, podcast or newsletter review
- Things I wish I knew before setting up my business
- Share a link to a talk you are doing and what you will be talking about
- Share an awards/ prize you have won/ been nominated for
- Share a rejection - maybe you didn't get a grant that you applied for, what did you learn from it?

Take your audience on a journey

Create a narrative with your posts.

1. Start with a hook/ headline - a short line that summaries the key takeaway of the piece.
2. Share what you found challenging or difficult
3. Outline how you overcame this challenge and what your learnt from it
4. Conclude in one line, with a call to action eg inviting people to do something
5. Redirect to some useful resource or link to your services in the comments section

Set a super simple strategy

At an early stage, a content strategy is essentially about forming a habit.

Develop a straightforward content strategy - even if it's just a couple of bullet points - and revisit it as your brand awareness grows. It can be as simple as committing to posting once a week, which is something I recommend in my [*8-week LinkedIn posting challenge*](#).

This approach keeps you on track without adding unnecessary pressure.

Post what you're comfortable with posting - you don't have to overshare

Personal stories, particularly those where you are vulnerable and share a failure or a learning experience, are usually the most engaging. However, they are not for everyone.

You don't need to share anything you're not comfortable with, especially when it involves lived experiences or revisiting traumatic events. Start with content you feel confident and comfortable sharing. As you grow more confident online, you can gradually expand the topics you discuss.

It should be fun and inspiring (or at least not an absolute bore)

If you enjoy the process, you are more likely to stick with it. Remember: you are not a media company; you're a human being. Write about topics that interest you, write from the heart, and write in your voice.

Follow people who inspire you and learn from their work. This can give you ideas and boost your confidence.

Finding a community who are on their own journey of visibility can offer

support and keep you accountable. My course the *Conscious Campaigners Sprint* brings together founders and marketers, building a network of inspiring changemakers to come along on your journey.

If you are on any social media platforms, try to be a creator and not solely a consumer. Otherwise you are wasting your precious time and resources.

Stay consistent and prioritise quality over quantity, but don't let perfectionism hold you back

There are lots of hacks to “quickly” grow your social media profile. But building an engaged audience and establishing yourself as an authority on a particular topic is a long game. Here, a combination of consistency and quality are key.

At the same time, perfectionism can be paralysing and often leads to procrastination. It's important to understand that your content doesn't need to be flawless to be valuable. Focus on delivering meaningful and authentic messages rather than aiming for unattainable perfection. Over time, you'll improve through experience and feedback.

Overcoming your fear of posting begins with reframing self-promotion and taking small, manageable steps. Consider exploring programmes (like the *Conscious Campaigners Sprint*) and resources (check out my free *Inclusive Communications Toolkit*) to equip you with more skills and confidence to support you in your journey. Remember, building your online presence isn't about perfection. It's about sharing your journey in an authentic way that resonates with others.

Emily Horton is the founder of inclusive communication consultancy *More Diverse Voices*.



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Article by Emily Horton