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## Shelf Space: What's Not to Like About Likes? How CPG Founders Can Build Smarter Social Media Strategies That Actually Work

We know that consumers want to *know* brands beyond the shelves. In fact, nearly 70% of shoppers in a recent survey said they prefer to buy from brands with an online community. So yes, a digital marketing strategy is clearly part of the modern CPG playbook. But when do you launch that strategy — and how do you know if it's actually working?

Social media may be a generation old, but its rapid ascension as a first-day priority for new founders is stunning. We're paying attention to what founders are posting and love the courage — and even audacity — to use the brand as an excuse to present your personality on social media. Unboxing videos. Behind-the-scenes clips. Unfiltered, day-in-the-life reels. Founders are telling the world about their experiences building their brands through a variety of social media forums. But is it working? And what does it mean to be “working”?

### Social Media Strategy for CPG Founders: Start With a Clear Goal

A social presence isn't just a box to check: it's a tool. But for it to work, you need to know what you're building toward. Are you trying to direct traffic to a splash landing page? Building a loyal following? Getting people excited about a new ingredient in, or functionality of, a product?

If a CPG founder determines that social media is a necessary piece of their early-stage brand-building puzzle, then their first goal should be to define what they hope to achieve.

### How to Turn Strategy Into Content: Building a Social Media Voice That Converts

With a clear and concise goal, unraveling the next step becomes a bit easier: figuring out how you'll show up. Will your tone be informational or educational? Light-hearted or comedic? Shock and awe? Outright salesy? The tone you choose shapes not just your feed, but your brand storytelling.

Whatever the voice, it should serve the strategy. We often see social media presences that look like a founder-stream-of-consciousness. While entertaining for those of us stuck

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behind a desk, the approach tends to confuse, misdirect and even lose the focus of the followers founders hope to convert to customers. If your goal is to turn followers into customers, your content needs direction, not just personality.

## **Who Should Run Your CPG Social Media Strategy and How to Define Success Metrics**

I would not be the right person to represent a brand on social media. I know it. You all know it. So if I were a founder who had decided social media was critical, and I had a plan, I'd look elsewhere for a partner who understands early-stage CPG marketing and can execute the strategy. There's nothing wrong with hired help.

We've discussed before the challenges of negotiating equity in an advisor context. It gets even harder when the deliverable is something as slippery as "followers." Using followers as a metric of success can misfire, leading to nuisance equity grants, unexpected dilution when someone overperforms, or advisor incentives that prioritize quantity over quality. At the same time, not tying comp to results can lead to bloated agency agreements or long-term social media contracts that circle us right back to an earlier Shelf Space premise — the power of terminability.

## **When Should CPG Founders Launch Their Social Media Strategy?**

CPG founders spend a lot of energy hoarding followers — often, before there's even a product to sell them. Is the message captivating enough that they'll stay engaged until launch? Or will they lose interest before your first day of sales? How can you time the launch of a social media strategy to coincide with conversions that mean something to investors or retail partners?

There's a sweet spot to social media strategy, when peak engagement equates to sales. That's not to say there's no other reasonable objective. But stress-testing those objectives can help save time, energy, money, social capital and digital overload.

If you're exploring CPG founder strategy, launch timing, partnerships or strategies for a meaningful social media policy, fill out this short Shelf Space form and we can help you consider your options.

Continue the conversation on April 16, 2026, at our next Polsinelli Pulse Series event, *Shelf Space: Strategies for Dominating the CPG Marketplace*, featuring insights from leading CPG founders and investors. Please RSVP by April 10.