



[Workbook] How to design your social search optimization strategy

Getting discovered on social doesn't have to be a game of chance. Virality is fleeting—but strategic visibility lasts. As platforms like TikTok, Instagram and YouTube become your audience's go-to search engines, social teams have a powerful opportunity to create content that's not just relevant, but findable.

This social search optimization workbook is your hands-on resource for building that strategy. Inside, you'll find content production checklists, keyword research tips, a network prioritization matrix and more—everything you need to strengthen your presence and guide your audience from search to discovery.

Section 1: Evaluate your discoverability

Use the prompts below to evaluate how easily your content can be found today, and where there's room to grow. These are great conversation starters for your next content planning session or strategy retro.

What platforms does your brand currently have a presence on?

<input type="radio"/> YouTube	<input type="radio"/> Reddit	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> TikTok	<input type="radio"/> LinkedIn	<input type="radio"/>
<input type="radio"/> Instagram	<input type="radio"/> Pinterest	<input type="radio"/>

When you search your brand name on the platforms you're active on, how often does your account appear in the top results?

When you search for a product or category your brand is known for, where does your content show up (if at all)?



Did you know?

Sprout Social's Q2 2025 Pulse Survey found that 37% of people use social search for product reviews. Searching your brand's name on each platform shows exactly what they see, and helps you spot ways to improve it.

Which platforms are currently driving the most discoverability for your brand?

How would you rate your team's understanding of the keywords or phrases your audience is likely to use when searching for content on social?

Section 2: Identify your platform priorities

Use your answers from the previous step to complete the following prioritization activity.

TikTok Best suited for trend-driven, visual discovery and emotional engagement (e.g., product demos, user-generated content, lifestyle content)			
Priority	<input type="radio"/> High	<input type="radio"/> Medium	<input type="radio"/> Low
Where we want to show up <div><div>1</div><div>2</div><div>3</div></div>			
Notes			

YouTube

Best suited for high-intent search and long-form learning, research and peer validation (e.g., how-tos, product reviews, expert explainers)

Priority

☐ High

☐ Medium

☐ Low

Where we want to show up

1

2

3

Notes

Instagram

Best suited for aesthetic-led discovery and brand lifestyle inspiration (e.g., product showcases, user-generated content, behind-the-scenes content)

Priority

☐ High

☐ Medium

☐ Low

Where we want to show up

1

2

3

Notes

Reddit

Best suited for community-driven research, product validation and candid peer feedback (e.g., reviews, recommendations, AMA-style thought leadership)

Priority

☐ High

☐ Medium

☐ Low

Where we want to show up

1

2

3

Notes

Pinterest

Best suited for evergreen, visual discovery and planning inspiration (e.g., product collections, how-tos, seasonal content, lifestyle ideas)

Priority

☐ High

☐ Medium

☐ Low

Where we want to show up

1

2

3

Notes

Priority	<input type="radio"/> High	<input type="radio"/> Medium	<input type="radio"/> Low
<p>Where we want to show up</p> <div data-bbox="218 714 306 802">1</div> <div data-bbox="218 850 306 938">2</div> <div data-bbox="218 987 306 1075">3</div>			
<p>Notes</p>			

Priority	<input type="radio"/> High	<input type="radio"/> Medium	<input type="radio"/> Low
Where we want to show up			
<div><div>1</div><div>2</div><div>3</div></div>			
Notes			

Section 3: Plan content with social search in mind

Use the table on the next page to map out social search-optimized content ideas across your top-priority platforms. Focus on topics your audience is actively searching for, and how your brand can show up in those moments.

💡 **Before you fill out the table:**

Identify the right keywords

A Q2 2025 Sprout Social Pulse Survey found that **36% of consumers are more likely to trust information about a brand and/or products found on social media** compared to information found through other forms of search, like Google or AI chatbots.

To create content that's truly discoverable, start by understanding what your audience is already searching for. Use tools like in-network search bars (e.g., TikTok or YouTube autocomplete), keyword research tools, comment sections, Google Trends or social listening to surface relevant phrases, questions and themes.

If you're a Sprout customer, [Listening](#) can help you spot emerging social search patterns, trending topics and the exact language your audience uses, so you can create more hyper-relevant content.

Platform	Topic or Search Intent	Keywords or Phrases	Format or Content Type(s)	CTA or Next Step

Section 4: Follow social search optimization best practices

The world of social search is still evolving—and so are the rules. Platform algorithms, user behavior and search conventions shift fast, which means the way you create content should too. Use these quick checklists as a foundation, and keep an eye out for new best practices as platforms evolve.

Optimizing text posts

- ☐ Use natural, conversational language your audience would use in search or everyday speech.
- ☐ Integrate relevant keywords thoughtfully. Avoid keyword stuffing or sounding robotic.
- ☐ Make the post skimmable (think short paragraphs, spacing and lists when relevant)
- ☐ Use a mix of branded, trending and hashtags relevant to your brand's product or service.
- ☐ Include CTAs when relevant, whether that's encouraging likes, comments and shares or prompting deeper engagement (e.g., checking out a resource, event or product).

Optimizing image posts

- ☐ Write alt text that describes what's in the image using clear, keyword-friendly language.
- ☐ Use the caption to reinforce what the image shows or teaches.
- ☐ Make sure any text on the image itself is legible on mobile.
- ☐ Include location tags when relevant.
- ☐ Pair your image with a natural CTA (for example, prompting further engagement in the comments, guiding audiences toward a “link in bio”, including a shoppable product tag, etc.)

Optimizing short-form video

- ☐ Use keywords in your video file name (e.g., social-search-optimization-tip-short.mp4).
- ☐ Hook viewers in the first three seconds with a clear value prop or question.
- ☐ Speak or display keywords early in the video to boost searchability.
- ☐ Use on-screen text that reinforces the key topic or question.
- ☐ Whenever possible, use captions and transcripts for videos to provide context.
- ☐ Add relevant keywords to your video description and hashtags.

- ☐ Include CTAs that encourage likes, comments and shares.
- ☐ Use story links, product tags or pinned comments to direct viewers to related web content or shoppable experiences.

Optimizing long-form video

- ☐ Title the video with a clear, keyword-rich phrase your audience might search.
- ☐ Use keywords in your video file name (e.g., social-search-optimization-101-video.mp4).
- ☐ Write a detailed description summarizing the content in plain language.
- ☐ Include timestamps if the video covers multiple topics.
- ☐ Upload accurate captions to improve accessibility and keyword recognition.
- ☐ Design a custom thumbnail (1280x720px) that's clear, bright and features bold, minimal text.
- ☐ Stick to a consistent thumbnail style to reinforce brand recognition.
- ☐ Include CTAs that encourage likes, comments and shares.
- ☐ Add links in video descriptions or end screens to guide viewers to more in-depth resources, product pages or other brand-owned channels.

About Sprout Social

Sprout Social is a global leader in social media management and analytics software. Sprout's intuitive platform puts powerful social data into the hands of more than 30,000 brands so they can deliver smarter, faster business impact.

With a full suite of social media management solutions, Sprout offers comprehensive publishing and engagement functionality, customer care, influencer marketing, advocacy and AI-powered business intelligence. Sprout's award-winning software operates across all major social media networks and digital platforms.

Learn more at sproutsocial.com

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