



Social Media Management Dashboard Analysis and Comparison



Prepared for the University of South Alabama
Office of Marketing & Communications

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OVERVIEW

"The University of South Alabama is a dynamic and ambitious community of leaders and learners who support and challenge one another to be actively engaged citizens who advance the Gulf Coast region and the world."

The brand essence was presented as part of South's major branding campaign, "We Are South." South incorporated a social media strategy to assist in building anticipation for their brand launch event on March 23, 2016. Several South-related social media accounts came together to promote attendance at the event and foster pride in the South brand. The social media campaign resulted in increased engagement across the university's main social media accounts on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

The University of South Alabama seeks to implement a social media strategy that will continue to engage the current and prospective students, as well as the alumni base. This strategy will be executed through collaboration of team members, automated posting, and metrics reporting to determine the effectiveness of the strategy.

Many social media management dashboards exist to automate social media publishing and reporting, however, South specifically needs a user-friendly dashboard with administrative levels to approve posting, as well as a shared content calendar for scheduling.

Teague Branding Strategies identified the top five social media management platforms and analyzed the pros and cons of each to determine the best option in terms of ease of use, reporting, and collaboration.

Agorapulse is the new leading social media management tool, claiming to offer enterprise-level features at a more affordable price. The dashboard allows you to view all your channels in a centralized location, create custom tags to categorize and easily find content later, and a social inbox workflow. The social calendar allows you to view all posts in a central calendar and an approval process through role and task delegation to team members.

Integrations



Publishing, engagement, reports: app integration includes engagement tools (i.e., sweepstakes, quizzes, coupons); displays dark posts with comments for easy responding; competitor comparison (medium plan and above).; does NOT integrate with Facebook Groups.



Engagement, reports: schedule posts on Agorapulse but must use the Instagram app to publish the post--the Agora Pulse app sends a reminder to publish at the scheduled time; comment on posts through dashboard; monitor hashtags; easily find fans and influencers.



Publishing, engagement, reports: "moderation rules" feature filters out spammy direct messages and mentions; competitor comparison (medium plan and above); easily republish content; easily find fans and influencers by identifying the users who retweet your content the most.



Publishing: includes both pages and profiles; engagement and reports are not yet available.



Publishing: for Google+ pages; engagement and reports are not yet available.

Reporting/Analytics

The Agorapulse reports focus on audience, engagement, and brand awareness to help brands improve their content strategy based on past performance. You can choose to get an interactive Web report or a customizable PowerPoint deck. The medium and large plans each provide unlimited access to reports.



Pricing

SMALL

\$49/MONTH: Includes 5 social profiles, 2 team members, social inbox, monitoring, 2 months of past reporting data, user profiling, and competitor analysis. Limited access to reports.

MEDIUM

\$99/MONTH: Includes 10 social profiles, 5 team members, social inbox and monitoring with advanced sync, 6 months of past reporting data, user profiling, competitor analysis, 10 ad campaigns per ad account (with the ability to see comments on dark posts for past 10 ads). Unlimited access to reports.

LARGE

\$199/MONTH: Includes 20 social profiles, 10 team members, social inbox and monitoring with advanced sync, 24 months of past reporting data, user profiling, competitor analysis, 40 ad campaigns per ad account (with the ability to see comments on dark posts for past 40 ads). Unlimited access to reports.

Buffer is a scheduling tool that is easy to navigate and can increase efficiency in your team. Their browser extension and mobile app make it easy to share content you discover online or on-the-go. You can create a custom posting schedule or choose the frequency of your daily posting. Team members can be assigned roles to manage posting abilities. At this time, Buffer only offers a social inbox workflow through a separate platform, Respond.

Integrations



Publishing, reports: schedule and publish posts to profiles, pages, and groups; use Pablo (a built-in Buffer app) to create custom images to share; RSS feeds find content to share across networks; cannot view streams of network or competitors.



Scheduling: schedule posts on Buffer but must use the Instagram app to publish the post--the Buffer app sends a reminder to publish at the scheduled time.



Publishing, reports: schedule and publish tweets; easily republish best-performing content; automatic link-shortening; use Pablo (a built-in Buffer app) to create custom images to share; RSS feeds find content to share across networks; cannot view streams of network or competitors.



Publishing: schedule and publish posts to profiles and pages.



Publishing: schedule and publish posts to profiles and pages.

BUFFER

Reporting/Analytics

Buffer provides analytics on the reach of each post, as well as clicks, favorites, mentions, and new followers. Their reporting does not track benchmark data or brand awareness. There is no way to track hashtags across any of the networks, however, Buffer does integrate with Google Analytics. Their new feature, "Respond", seeks to integrate a social inbox workflow for engagement and monitoring, but costs an additional \$39/month per network.

★ TOP TWEET

How does your website rank? 7 indispensable (and free!) website graders
<http://buff.ly/1z1yT9x>

4:09 PM via Extension

kevan@bufferapp.com

19 Retweets	44 Favorites	1 Mention	140 Clicks	888k Potential
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How Facebook decides what to show in your News Feed <http://buff.ly/1At7HQ4>

1:59 PM via Extension

kevan@bufferapp.com

22 Retweets	31 Favorites	1 Mention	149 Clicks	278k Potential
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Pricing

SMALL

\$49/MONTH: Includes 5 social profiles, 2 team members, social inbox, monitoring, 2 months of past reporting data, user profiling, and competitor analysis. Offers a 14-day unlimited trial.

MEDIUM

\$99/MONTH: Includes 10 social profiles, 5 team members, social inbox and monitoring with advanced sync, 6 months of past reporting data, user profiling, competitor analysis, 10 ad campaigns per ad account (with the ability to see comments on dark posts for past 10 ads). Offers a 14-day unlimited trial.

LARGE

\$199/MONTH: Includes 20 social profiles, 10 team members, social inbox and monitoring with advanced sync, 24 months of past reporting data, user profiling, competitor analysis, 40 ad campaigns per ad account (with the ability to see comments on dark posts for past 40 ads).

Hootsuite is the most well-known social management tool around. Each network connected is viewed as a stream in the dashboard, allowing you to see multiple network news feeds within one window. You can assign management roles for your team, creating an approval process for posting and assigning specific tasks to team members.

Integrations



Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish posts to profiles, pages, and groups; monitor posts and events (both scheduled and unscheduled); monitor dark posts; monitor posts by others to your page; view all activity in a stream; engage with posts within dashboard.



Scheduling, engagement, reports: schedule posts on Hootsuite but must use the Instagram app to publish the post; monitor home news feed, posts, latest followers, posts you've liked, and popular posts; monitor posts scheduled and with specific hashtags; comment on posts through the dashboard.



Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish tweets; monitor the news feed of everyone you follow and any time you are mentioned; track specific tweets; send and reply to tweets from dashboard; send direct messages to followers from dashboard.



Publishing, engagement, basic reports: schedule and publish to profiles and pages; monitor and comment on updates to your page and posts scheduled; engage with groups; reports are available on Pro and Enterprise Plans only.

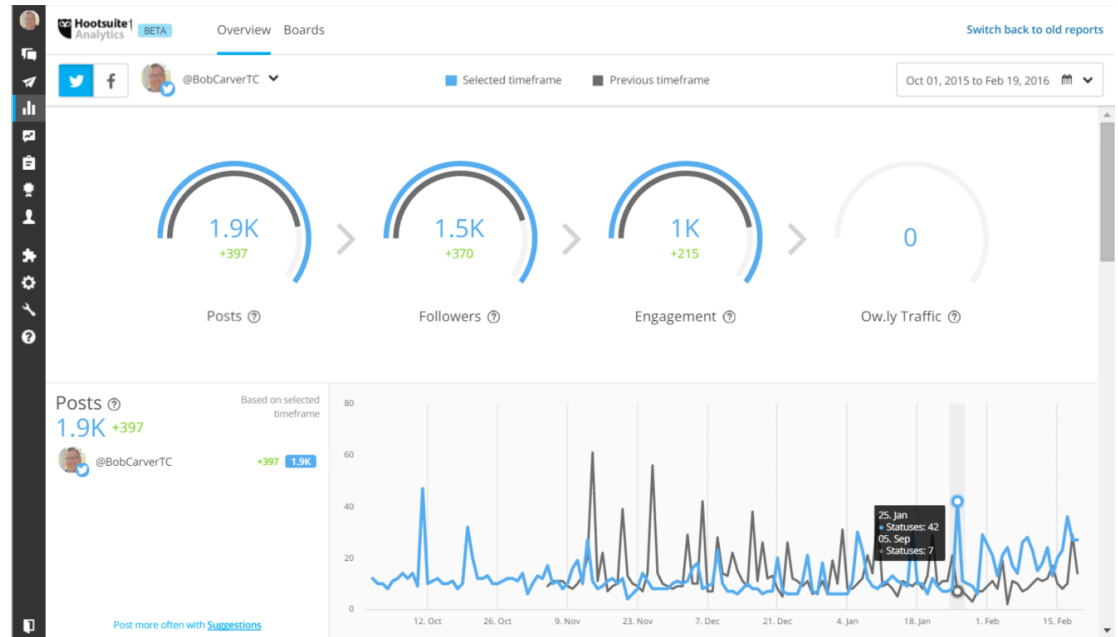


Publishing: send and schedule posts to profile; monitor home news feed and posts made to your page; reports are available on Enterprise plan only.

HOOTSUITE

Reporting/Analytics

Hootsuite uses a points system for their reports, with the average report requiring 50 points (each point=\$1). A limited number of basic reports can be accessed each month, but enhanced analytics or additional reports cost extra points. The Hootsuite link shortener, ow.ly, provides tracking and reporting and can be customized for \$49.99/month.



Pricing

PRO

\$14.99/MONTH or \$119.88/YEAR: Receive a \$5/month discount by paying annually. Includes 1 user, 10 social profiles, real-time analytics, auto-scheduling, and a 30-day free trial. Each additional user costs \$119.88/year. You can connect 10 more social profiles for an additional \$10/month. Includes 50 points for reports with an add-on discount for annual plans.

TEAM

\$49.99/MONTH or \$419.88/YEAR : Receive a \$15/month discount by paying annually. Includes 5 users, 20 social profiles, custom analytics, bulk content scheduling, team assignments, 6 social campaign templates (for 1 user), custom branded URL, 1-on-1 training (15 min.), 1 social media certification, and a 30-day free trial. Each additional user costs \$15/month, up to a max of 10 total team members. Includes 50 points for reports--additional information not available at this time.

BUSINESS

\$99.99/MONTH BILLED ANNUALLY: There is no discount for paying annually. This plan starts at 5 users, includes 50 social profiles, analytics data exports, publishing approvals, unlimited app integrations, 6 social campaign templates (for multiple users), multiple custom branded URL's, 5 social media certifications, 24/7 priority support, extended training (60 min.), and you can request a demo. Includes unlimited points for reports.

Sendible is a unique management tool in that you customize your plan based on services. Each social network represents one service and each list is a collection of services that can be shared with team members for scheduling, publishing, and tracking. The dashboard includes a social flow inbox with a priority view. Sendible integrates with Google Drive, Dropbox, and Canva and offers geo-targeting features to reach specific audience segments.

Integrations



Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish posts to profiles and pages; built-in tool to analyze best posting time for optimized engagement; RSS feed integration; view team assignments/posting in shared calendar and easily re-schedule or edit posts via drag-and-drop.



Scheduling, engagement, reports: schedule posts on Sendible but must use the Instagram app to publish the post; engage with followers from dashboard



Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish tweets; easily republish best-performing content; automatic link-shortening; RSS feeds find content to share across networks; engage with followers from dashboard.



Publishing: schedule and publish to profiles and pages.



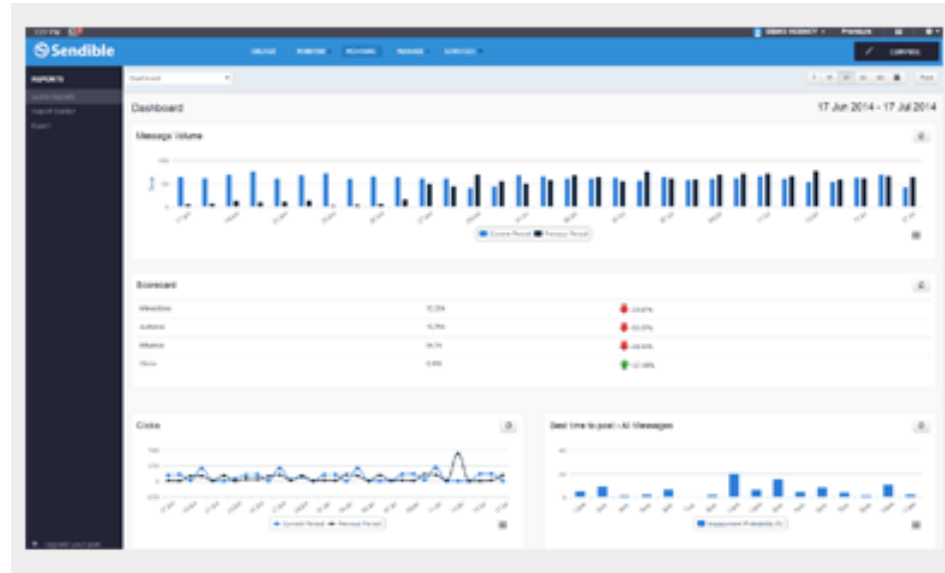
Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish posts to pages; engage with followers from dashboard.

Custom Content Creation: provide a topic to Sendible and they create a custom article for you within 48 hours.

SENDIBLE

Reporting/Analytics

Sendible offers a drag-and-drop method of creating presentation-ready reports with detailed analytics. They integrate with Google Analytics to provide data on the effect of social media campaigns on web traffic. They provide reporting on shortened links through bit.ly integration. Users also have the ability to schedule and send regular reports from the dashboard.



Pricing

STARTUP **\$59/MONTH:** Includes 2 team members, management up to 30 services, automation tools, report builder, Google Analytics integration, and up to 4 branded reports. A 30-day free trial is available.

BUSINESS **\$99/MONTH:** Includes 4 team members, management up to 60 services, team collaboration tools, email support, and up to 8 branded reports. A 30-day free trial is available.

CORPORATE **\$139/MONTH:** Includes 6 team members, management up to 90 services, workflow features, live support, up to 120 lists, and up to 18 branded reports. A 30-day free trial is available.

Sprout Social is great for collaboration and reporting. Their dashboard features a unified social inbox workflow, combining all mentions, messages, and comments from all networks, with the ability to filter by network. Team members can be assigned tasks, with controls to submit, review, and approve posts. The shared publishing calendar shows posts and approval status. Sprout's focus on engagement is clear through their discovery tab, allowing you to see who followed, mentioned, or conversed with you on social media.

Integrations



Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish posts to profiles and pages; manage multiple pages in a single inbox; monitor, engage with and reply to wall posts, comments and private messages from one place.



Engagement, reports: you cannot currently schedule through Sprout Social, however, you can conduct monitoring and manage engagement across multiple accounts from one inbox; set up branded hashtag tracking; and track geo-locations to find and engage with followers posting from your location.



Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish tweets; engage with followers through dashboard; set up keyword searches to discover engagement opportunities; tag, filter, route and mark tweets and DM's complete to track progress across multiple profiles; ability to identify and prioritize important tweets.



Publishing: schedule and publish posts to profiles and pages; approval workflow prior to publishing; integrate RSS feeds for quick scheduling or publishing

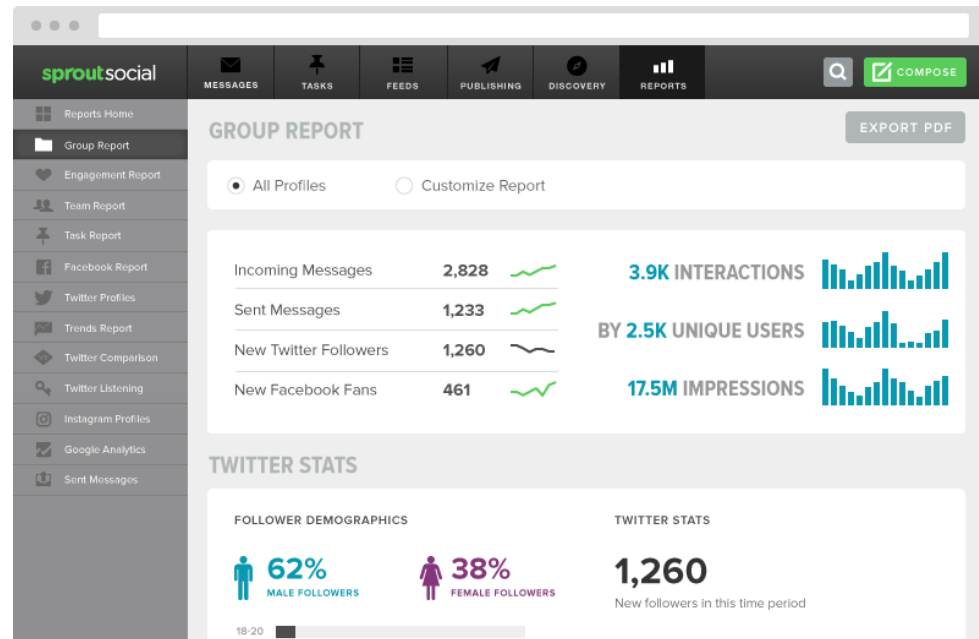


Publishing, engagement, reports: schedule and publish posts to pages; engage with followers through dashboard;

SPROUT SOCIAL

Reporting/Analytics

Sprout's standout features are the reports, which are detailed, visually appealing, and available to all plans without limit. You can group reports by task, team, network, and more. The presentation-ready reports are designed to make social media analytics easily digestible. Sprout integrates with Google Analytics and bit.ly to monitor social campaigns' effect on web traffic.



Pricing

DELUXE

\$59/MONTH: Includes 5 social profiles, 1 user, social inbox, monitoring, content calendar, and unlimited PDF/CSV report exports. Each additional user costs \$59/month. Includes a 30-day free trial.

PREMIUM

\$99/MONTH: Includes 10 social profiles, 1 user, help desk integration, Google Analytics Integration, engagement reporting, and basic listening/trends reporting. Each additional user costs \$99/month. Includes a 30-day free trial.

TEAM

\$500/MONTH: Includes 30 social profiles, 3 users, message and content tagging, message approval workflow, advanced keyword listening, team reporting and permissions, and dedicated account management. Each additional user costs \$99/month. Includes a 30-day free trial.

CONCLUSION

TOP CHOICE: AGORAPULSE

WHY? The management features of Agorapulse, along with their in-depth reports, make it the top choice. It works well for teams with the ability to delegate certain roles to team members. The interface is easy to use and aimed at increasing user efficiency. Although the platform doesn't integrate with Facebook Groups, it makes up for this in the unlimited reports--which can directly export to PowerPoint.

South would do best on the Medium plan, which includes 10 social profiles, 5 team members, and unlimited reports for \$99/month.

RUNNER UP: HOOTSUITE

WHY? Hootsuite may be the best-known, but their limited (and expensive) reports keep them from being a top choice. The Hootsuite interface can be clunky and hard to manage for a new user. They are known for the multi-stream view, which some users find distracting, and their own link-shortener, which is expensive to custom-brand at \$49.99/month.

South would do best on the Team plan, which includes 20 social profiles and 5 team members for \$49.99/month or \$419.88/year. This plan does not include extensive reporting, which can average \$50/report.

LAST PLACE: SENDIBLE

WHY? Sendible comes in last place because of their service-based pricing. The services were not easily found. If different features of Facebook are all billed as separate services, this can be a pricey option. However, Sendible's presentation-ready reporting beats Hootsuite by a large margin.

The best option would be the Business plan, with 4 team members and 60 services for \$99/month.

RESOURCES

Dashboard Direct Links

Agorapulse: www.agorapulse.com

Buffer: buffer.com

Hootsuite: hootsuite.com

Sendible: sendible.com/

Sprout Social: sproutsocial.com/

Articles and Reports

<http://iag.me/socialmedia/top-5-social-media-management-tools/>

<http://www.jeffbullas.com/2016/03/01/17-best-social-media-management-tools/>

<https://www.g2crowd.com/categories/social-media-mgmt>