



THE PT SERVICES GROUP®

NEW PROSPECTS. NEW BUSINESS. SINCE 1992.

3 TACTICS

TO STAY AHEAD OF THE CURVE

A WHITE PAPER

BY

JOHN POJETA

VICE PRESIDENT OF BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

THE PT SERVICES GROUP



INTRODUCTION

“

There will always be people who are ahead of the curve and people who are behind the curve. But knowledge moves the curve.

- Bill James, American baseball writer, historian, and statistician

”

Future-Proofing - you've probably heard of the concept. According to Wikipedia, "Future-proofing is the process of anticipating the future and developing methods of minimizing the effects of shocks and stresses of future events." In business, future-proofing is imbued with ideas like trend forecasting, developing deliberate partnerships, and hiring, among many other concepts. The benefits of working towards future-proofing your business are obvious and numerous.

So, how can you stay ahead and employ a future-proof mentality in your business? We all want prospects and clients to see and feel that we are always one step ahead of the game, and ideally, we'd like them to see us as two, three, or four steps ahead of our competitors.

INTRODUCTION

I get it; it's hard to stay ahead of the curve, let alone stay current. For some of us, the older we get, the more we hold on to what we have and what we know. It can be effortless to procrastinate on updating, making changes, and being comfortable maintaining the current status quo.

January seems like a great time to look at some tactics that can give us a leg up. A new year is an opportunity to look ahead, plan, and implement new practices (let's just avoid the whole "resolution" thing, though).

Three categories will benefit you immediately when it comes to getting ahead of the curve: Technology, Regulations, and Knowing Your Competition. For each, we'll provide some actionable tips and finish up with additional tactics that are beneficial in all aspects of business regarding forward-thinking and future-proofing.



THE TACTICS

01

Technology

02

Regulations

03

Competition

04

How To Do It

01

TECHNOLOGY

“

Companies that invest more in digital transformation actually outperform their peers over time. These companies are more prepared for disruption, better able to monetize new digital channels, and better able to build a bigger user base. What's more, this phenomenon exists regardless of industry.

– Geoff Cubitt, CEO, Isobar US American Express Business Class

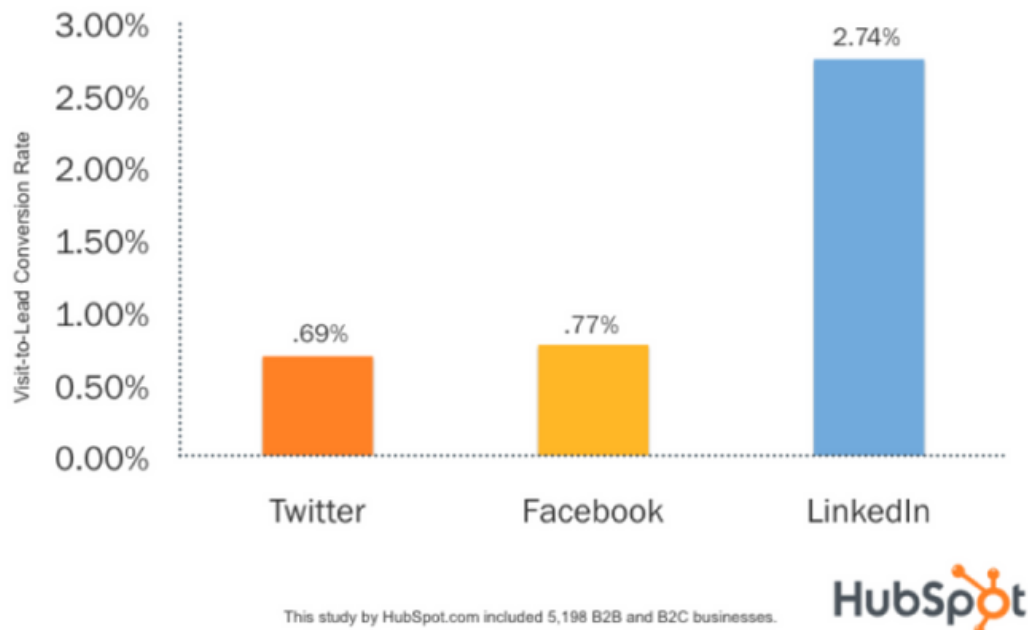
”

Tech is probably the most apparent and easy-to-recognize area that requires both a time and financial investment to ensure that you are not only up-to-date but leading the way in the industry.

Social Media is a good jumping-off point. Get active on channels that make sense now. Probably the most appropriate channel for our audiences is LinkedIn. The demographics are fantastic - 44% of LinkedIn users earn more than \$75,000 annually.

01 TECHNOLOGY

LinkedIn Best Social Network for Lead Generation



According to a [2020 Hubspot report](#), LinkedIn's conversion rate also outranked social media as a channel overall. In other words, of all the traffic that came to these businesses' websites via social media, .98% of that traffic converted into leads, compared to LinkedIn's 2.74%.

However, only 3 million LinkedIn users share content regularly, equating to only 1% of LinkedIn's 260 million monthly users. This makes LinkedIn the perfect place for your company to begin getting active on social media. You can share articles by influencers and informative pieces from trade organizations. However, it would be most beneficial for you to venture into writing or recording your own content. If you take one thing away from this White Paper - I hope, it's this - **CREATE CONTENT!** There is a lot of room for success by reaching desirable audiences today.

Fast Company recently [shared a list](#) of the four social media platforms your brand should consider using in 2023. The list includes TikTok, BeReal, Discord, and Shuffles by Pinterest. I readily admit that I had to Google BeReal and Shuffles. However, what may not make sense today, could be a perfect fit in the future.



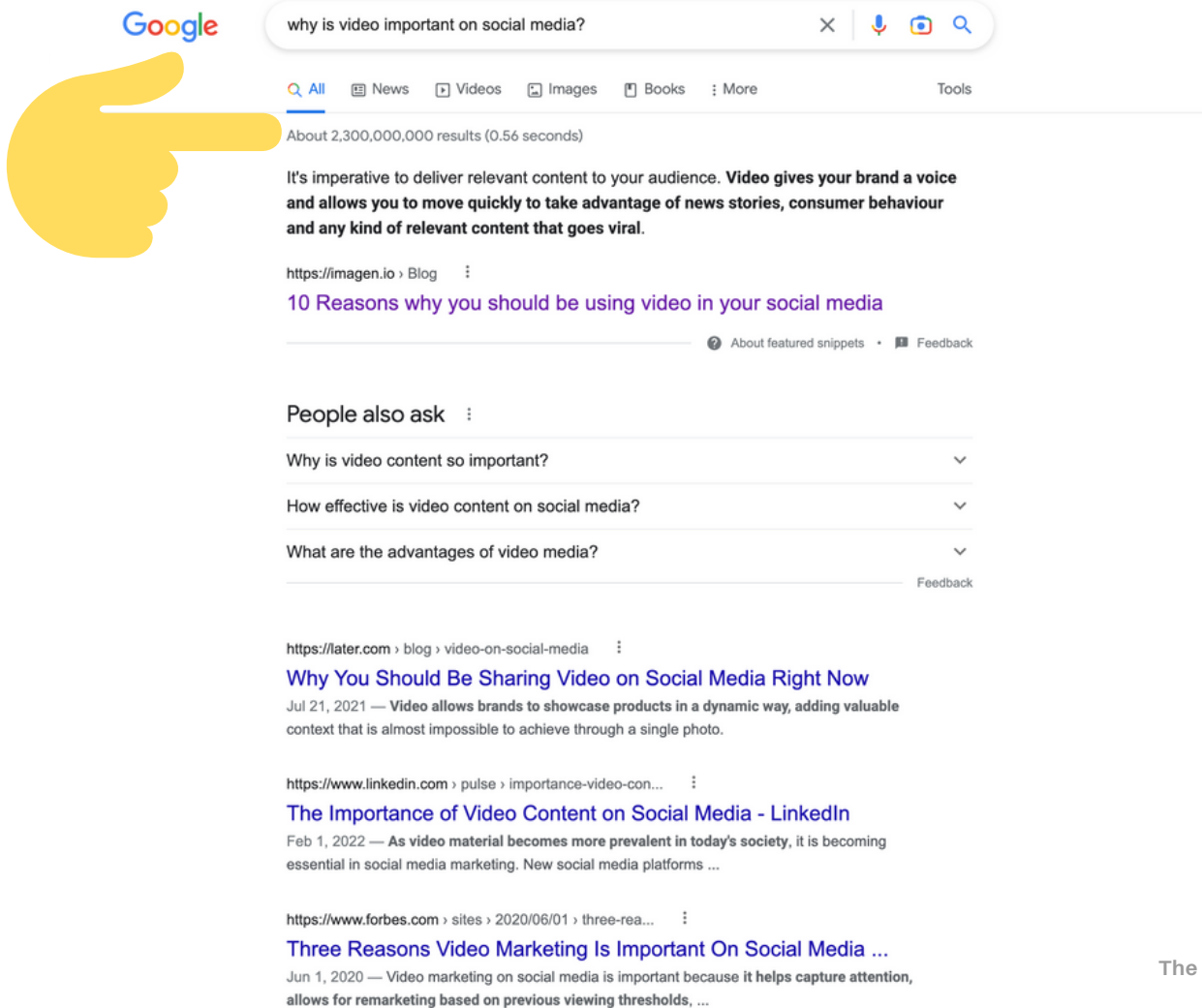
01

TECHNOLOGY

I bet your first thought was, "What would I even do on TikTok? How could it be possible or relevant to something like financial planning?" Consider this statistic from **CFP Board**, three-fifths of Americans, including 71% of Gen Z and 72% of Millennials, say there are financial topics they want trustworthy advice on but aren't sure how to get it. Additionally, **Northwestern Mutual's 2022 Planning & Progress Study** recently revealed that Americans between 18 and 25, Gen Z, were the most likely to build savings during the pandemic and begin working with an advisor. Now consider that TikTok has 80 million active users in the United States, with 60% between the ages of 16-24. It's clear that figuring out how to deliver your message on TikTok is a potentially lucrative example of getting ahead of the curve when reaching current and future audiences.

Currently, video is everything when it comes to social media. Do a quick Google search of the topic "Why is video important on Social Media?"

Look at this screenshot - there are more than 2 billion hits on the topic.



The screenshot shows a Google search interface. The search bar contains the text "why is video important on social media?". Below the search bar, there are tabs for "All", "News", "Videos", "Images", "Books", and "More". The search results show "About 2,300,000,000 results (0.56 seconds)". The first result is a featured snippet from <https://imagen.io> with the title "10 Reasons why you should be using video in your social media". Below this, there is a section titled "People also ask" with three questions: "Why is video content so important?", "How effective is video content on social media?", and "What are the advantages of video media?". The next result is from <https://later.com> with the title "Why You Should Be Sharing Video on Social Media Right Now". The final result is from <https://www.linkedin.com> with the title "The Importance of Video Content on Social Media - LinkedIn". A yellow hand icon is pointing to the search bar.

01 TECHNOLOGY

Video can be straightforward and inexpensive to produce. At The PT Services Group, we have a daily video series called "**PT Asks Dan,**" where we talk to our sales guru Dan Hudock, of Sandler Training. The videos are recorded using Zoom and edited with the free iMovie app that comes with Apple computers - honestly, nothing fancy here at all. The free series shares tips about sales, hiring, personal growth and development, marketing, and more.

We have been successfully attracting new business through this content. I credit the success to several factors:



Quantity

We post a fresh video on LinkedIn daily, Monday - Friday.



Quality

We provide helpful and immediately actionable advice that has been proven and tested to work.



We Don't Sell

We position ourselves as thought leaders. We have never posted a video sharing what makes PT great and wonderful.

01 TECHNOLOGY

The way you present your company online is also essential.

Let's think about your website. When was the last time it was updated? If you can't remember, this is something you should consider investing in immediately!

UPDATING YOUR WEBSITE



Keep Your Website Current

We see a lot of very dated sites – imagine what a prospect thinks when they visit a site that feels like a generic placeholder. How about sites that don't even bother to update the basics, like the copyright date in the footer? We've seen some that are more than ten years old!



Informative Websites Are Best

Websites should help your prospects understand who you are, what you do, how you do it and provide tools for prospects to utilize.



If It's Time to Update, Spend Money

Don't just log into the backend of your site and make a few text updates. Hire someone. Do some research on good web designers who also specialize in Search Engine Optimization (SEO) and User Experience (UX) to truly maximize your spend and ensure your site is easily found and navigable by clients and prospects.

Here are a few final tech thoughts.

Consider hiring a social media manager and content developer.

Social Media is a constantly changing beast with shifting algorithms, new features, and updates almost daily. Just because you use LinkedIn or Instagram daily does not equate to a solid understanding of building a company brand and online presence. An excellent social media manager will uncover what you are trying to achieve and recommend a program of platforms, content, frequency, and potential spend that will benefit your company and move the needle.

A content developer can help you create relevant pieces of writing, videos, infographics, and more to populate your online presence. We work with **Leigh Frank**, on all our content creation and it has been a very productive relationship. Content creation is an excellent way to position yourself as a subject matter or thought leader in your industry.



02

REGULATIONS

“

Staying ahead of the curve prevents a leader from being overwhelmed when pressure is applied and enables greater decisiveness.

- Jocko Willink, Former Navy Seal, Author, Podcaster, and Leadership Instructor

”

When it comes to keeping up with regulations, a great example is Secure Act 2.0. The ink is barely dry on this new federal legislation, signed into law with the Omnibus Budget Bill on December 29, 2022. The new legislation includes significant changes and regulations affecting our industry.

Regulations are constantly coming our way in many forms. If you affiliate with a broker/dealer (BD), you have one set of regulations, and Registered Investment Advisors (RIA) have another set. And if you are a hybrid - you have both! Not to mention Insurance regs, fiduciary regs, your clients may have specific regs...the list goes on and on and changes regularly. Not to mention that in the Insurance Industry, regs differ from state to state - I'm especially looking at you New York!

02 REGULATIONS

HOW DO WE STAY AHEAD?

Online Sources

Online news resources and sites are excellent sources of up-to-date helpful information. In addition to visiting their sites regularly, many have regular e-newsletters and active social media accounts, be sure to follow and interact with them.



Among the most helpful sites I've found include:

- o [National Association of Plan Advisors](#)
- o [Society for Human Resource Management](#)
- o [Think Advisor](#)
- o [Insurance News Net](#)

Your Affiliates

Whom you choose to affiliate with plays a significant role. Your BD or RIA will undoubtedly help in keeping you informed and anticipate industry regulation changes.

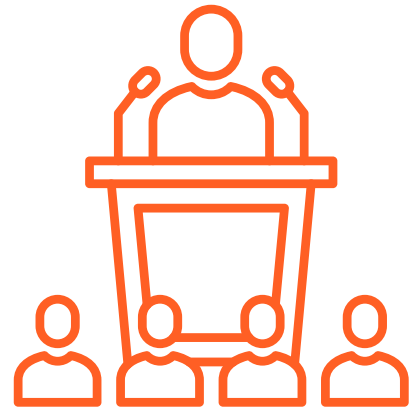


02 REGULATIONS

HOW DO WE STAY AHEAD? (CONT.)

Attend Industry Conferences

There is so much value in keeping ahead when it comes to conferences. First, if you are a small business, you can get a glimpse at what the big companies are doing and discern what pieces make sense for you to implement. Regulatory compliance and legislative updates are frequent workshop topics. Networking at conferences is invaluable on many levels; what happens informally is frequently more important than the workshops and keynotes.



Work With Consultants

Consultants can be very informative. We recently hosted a [podcast with Rebecca Hourihan](#) of 401K Marketing. She discussed her specialized marketing company's role in keeping clients up-to-date. Secure Act 2.0 was a big end-of-year topic for them, and the day the new limits hit, her clients received an email update. While the information on oversized items like Secure Act 2.0 is easy to find, the more minor, more subtle changes can be more challenging to track, so finding a partner or method to ensure you are compliant is vital.



03

COMPETITION

“

Whether in services or in manufacturing, the trick is to stay ahead of the curve. I believe we should not wait to be disrupted – we should become disruptors ourselves.

– Anand Mahindra, Indian Billionaire Businessman

”

There are many good reasons to keep track of your competitors and what they do in the market. Everything from how they do business to how they handle marketing, who they are marketing to, and what new products or services are being launched is essential and valuable information to analyze.

It can be very easy to get away from tracking your competition. Indeed, the most successful firms are regularly changing and evolving. Not to mention new companies entering the market; how do you keep track?

03

COMPETITION

HOW TO KEEP TRACK OF THE COMPETITION

Prospects

Strange but true, we often learn about our competition from prospects. We shared [8 Questions That Lead to Sales](#) in a previous White Paper. One of the questions we recommend is, "Tell me about your relationship with your current provider. If there were one thing you wish the current provider would do better or differently, what would that be?" The information gleaned from that question can provide you with a tremendous amount of detail about how your competitors do business - good and bad.

Competition Knowledge

Assign one of your team members to be responsible for competition knowledge. Providing a regular overview of the competition's activity to your team can help to build a complete picture of what is going on in the overall industry. Here are a few things to keep an eye on:

- New products/services - what is launching? Why? Is it replacing an old product or a way of servicing clients?
- New marketing initiatives - who is the target audience? Where are they being targeted? What is the messaging?
- Hiring - what positions are available? Are they new? If so, why are they needed, and what is changing in this business? If it's a tech position, is it because of investments in new technology? If it's a marketing position, are they launching a new campaign? Is the job in a new location, and if so, are they expanding to new territory?
- Online presence - working with your SEO expert, you can track competitors targeted keywords, search rankings, and web traffic. You can see how they are faring and uncover ideas for your SEO needs.

Conferences

They aren't just great for keeping up with regulations; they are a fantastic opportunity to learn about your competitors. You have a golden chance to get to know other vendors, review their marketing materials, and understand their business priorities.

I've also had many important realizations at conferences. Whatever your role, you quickly get a feel of your standing in the industry - it's easy to determine if you are ahead or behind.



04

HOW TO DO IT

“

No matter how many mistakes you make or how slow your progress. You're still way ahead of everyone who isn't trying.

– Tony Robbins, Business Strategist & Author

”

I have three solid suggestions for tactics that will help you get and stay ahead.

1) **Don't procrastinate.** For some people, this is going against their very nature. But if you desire to stay ahead of the curve, procrastinating already puts you at a disadvantage. [Harvard Business Review](#) suggests some great strategies to help procrastinators. One of the tips is to schedule your work consistently. Maybe every day, as you finish lunch, you make it a point to spend 10 minutes reading an industry website or newsletter. Simple concessions like this can help you begin to get ahead.

2) **Surround yourself with the right people.** Whether this is hiring staff or bringing in consultants, augment the talent around you with the skills and resources needed to help your company get ahead of the competition. Our podcasts and daily video series talk a lot about hiring. One of the pieces of advice that I always share is not to hire people who are just like you. This never makes for an innovative, forward-thinking team. However, thinking about the skill sets and characteristics that are lacking in your team and hiring people who fill those needs can help your company to flourish. In a [blog post](#) last year, we shared lessons to be learned from the old tv show "House." The biggest tip is about the value of diverse teams.

3) **Always be innovating.** I'm unsure if I've ever written a white paper or blog post where I don't extol the virtues of innovation. When it comes to being a forward-thinking, future-proof, ahead-of-the-curve company, learning to be innovative and spending the time to plan for and implement innovation cannot be overstated.

CONNECT WITH THE PT SERVICES GROUP

About The PT Services Group

The PT Services Group is committed to helping you open the doors to new prospects and new business. While the methodology and expertise behind our appointment setting, business intelligence, and data collection programs are powerful tools, the secret to their effectiveness is the people using them. We are owned, operated, and staffed by professionals with expert knowledge of the financial services and insurance industries. Visit our website at ThePTServicesGroup.com to learn more.

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel



"PT Asks Dan" is our free daily video sales tip. You can connect with John on LinkedIn, to interact and suggest topics (click the link in his contact info below). Or even better, you can subscribe to our YouTube channel where you can explore past episodes and even watch playlists of specific topics!

[Subscribe Today!](#)

About the Author

Contact

John Pojeta

Vice President of Business
Development

[The PT Services Group](http://ThePTServicesGroup.com)

john@theptservicesgroup.com

412-291-6685



John Pojeta is Vice President of Business Development at The PT Services Group, where he initiates and manages strategic, corporate-level relationships. Previously, he owned and operated an Ameriprise Financial Services franchise for 16 years. Connect with John on LinkedIn to check out his new, daily sales tip video series - **PT Asks Dan**, with sales guru Dan Hudock.