

How To Stay Popular In The BBQ Social Media World

By The Smoky Poet

When it comes to BBQ and Social Media, this is so true, I might know a thing or two.

You see, prior to the Internet, we gathered friends and family around the BBQ. Surely there were a few BBQ cookbooks, but we mainly learned word-of-mouth. Now, thanks to the Internet and social media, accessibility and creativity of the BBQ world is now on full display.

Today we have BBQ pitmasters, backyard competitors and everyday enthusiasts from moms, dads and kids, altering the way that you, as a BBQ lover, should view your approach to the BBQ social media world.

For me, it all started as a result of my day job where I was the CEO of a social media-related entity. I noticed individuals and brands had a difficult time crafting and creating a concise and impactful way of communicating who they are or what they offered.

Around this same time, I ditched my gasser and bought myself a Big Green Egg and learned how to go low-and-slow or hot-and-fast. I've had some terrible cooks along the way and some People's Choice Award voted ribs. Today, I still cook on my Big Green Egg, but I also now cook on a Kamado Joe and a Weber kettle grill.

Regardless of what method of grill or smoker you're using - gas, pellet, briquette, lump charcoal or stick burner - we are one big BBQ family. We're all brothers and sisters, aunts and uncles and cousins, trying to elevate, educate and gather around our new happy place, the social media BBQ.

When it comes to social media and BBQ, I've learned a fair amount through trial by fire. Things are constantly evolving. What worked yesterday, might not work tomorrow. Yet I view each cook as a unique learning experience and I love to educate my on-line community about BBQ.

As a result of this experimentation and trial by fire, I have built up an extensive on-line, social media presence with over 150,000 social media connections. So, if I can do it, so can you. It just takes a little bit - not a lot - of effort.

Should you have a Facebook page? What about Twitter, how about Instagram, YouTube, SnapChat or even LinkedIn and a website?

The answer to that question is well, maybe. It depends on how you want to stand out and differentiate yourself in the BBQ Social Media World.



If you focus on recipe creation and sharing those recipes, then a website and YouTube channel might be a great approach.

Perhaps you want to just take great photos and post your tasty meats, treats and eats you are grilling and smoking. Then Instagram, a Facebook page and Twitter might be more in order.

However, the number one rule I always tell everyone is a simple concept I call ABE, which stands for Always Be Engaging. After all, the most important word in social media is SOCIAL, right?

All too often I see someone just post a picture or a tweet and never ever interact with their on-line community. That's not social media, that's just media. So, don't do that please. Have conversations with your on-line community. Share your BBQ secrets. Help to educate the next generation of BBQ pitmasters. Perhaps through these conversations, you will leave your own BBQ social media legacy.

Now, I know you are already thinking social media takes a lot of effort and time. In reality, it doesn't. Social media shouldn't consume what you do: making great BBQ. Which by the way, that is the hardest part about the BBQ social media world, right? The actual prepping, cooking and then the best part, eating or competing.

For me, almost all of my pictures and posts are all taken on my iPhone. I have a table-top tripod so that I can film videos of prepping meat or the sizzle of the grill or to hear how juicy my pork shoulder is when being pulled. I try to use natural light as much as possi-

ble for my pictures, but I also have some inexpensive lights for night pictures or video.

I use iMovie for editing any videos and then I use certain free services such as If This Than That to auto-post the same picture to multiple social networks. See, pretty easy peasy. Just need to know which tools to use to help make you the next BBQ King or Queen of social media.

When it comes to my captions for my BBQ social media posts, I like to tell a story about what I'm making. I'll go into detail on my prep, my smoker setup, my temperature, my smoke time and ultimately show the final pictures of all my whole effort.

While I might spend 16 hours on a brisket, I'll take those extra 15 minutes of taking pictures and posting

so that way I too can help to educate my on-line community about my love for BBQ.

Lastly, for me, having a social media presence is a necessity for being a pitmaster. But not a necessity for the likes, comments and retweets. It is a necessity because I hope to inspire my BBQ family to keep on being awesome BBQ enthusiasts and to always and forever keep on staying smoky.



The Smoky Poet is a Pitmaster, Poet and Story-

teller. With over 150,000 social media connections, The Smoky Poet (formerly known as The Product Poet) uses a blend of poetry and storytelling when it comes to all things smoky. You can find him on Instagram and Twitter as @TheSmokyPoet or you can visit his website at <https://theproductpoet.com>. You can reach The Smoky Poet by also sending him an email to thepoet@theproductpoet.com.

Minnesota Upcoming Events

Aug 23-24, **Big Island BBQ**, Albert Lea MN, KCBS pro competition. www.bigislandfestivalandbbq.com

Sept 13-14, **King Turkey Day Smokin' Gobbler Cook off**, Worthington MN. www.kingturkeyday.net

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