

# USING A SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOL

## SYNDICATING YOUR SITE CONTENT & STREAMLINING YOUR ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

propel *your* practice

With the rise of social media giants like Facebook and Twitter, it's no surprise that many law practices are utilizing these platforms to connect with prospects, clients and colleagues. If you don't have a dedicated marketing manager who can handle these various accounts and regularly post to them, it can be a time-consuming task. We are often asked by clients whether or not there is an efficient way to manage accounts, and make sure that site content gets published to them automatically. Luckily, there are several Social Media Management (SMM) platforms that allow you to control various social media accounts from one central control panel.

AMICUS™  
creative media

## SOME OF THE MOST POPULAR SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGEMENT TOOLS

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|---|------------------|---|----------------------|
| 1 | <b>HootSuite</b> | 4 | <b>Sprout Social</b> |
| 2 | <b>TweetDeck</b> | 5 | <b>Sendible</b>      |
| 3 | <b>Shoutlet</b>  |   |                      |

All of these platforms have slightly different capabilities and interfaces so if you are considering a serious social media marketing campaign, we highly recommend that you carefully examine each of these different options to determine which is best for your firm.

The pricing of these services also varies quite a bit. Monthly plans can range from \$10 to \$70 a month. Most of our clients, however, don't require all of the bells and whistles that many of these SMMs provide. Many of the attorneys we work with have elected to use HootSuite which allows for as many as five social media accounts in its free basic option which is generally sufficient.

While Amicus Creative does not endorse any one provider, we are often asked about social media management systems. In this whitepaper, we explore one of the popular options – HootSuite, and take take you through the process of setting up an account, adding your social media networks and integrating your RSS feed so all updates to your firm's blog are automatically published to your various connections on social media.

## SETTING UP AN ACCOUNT

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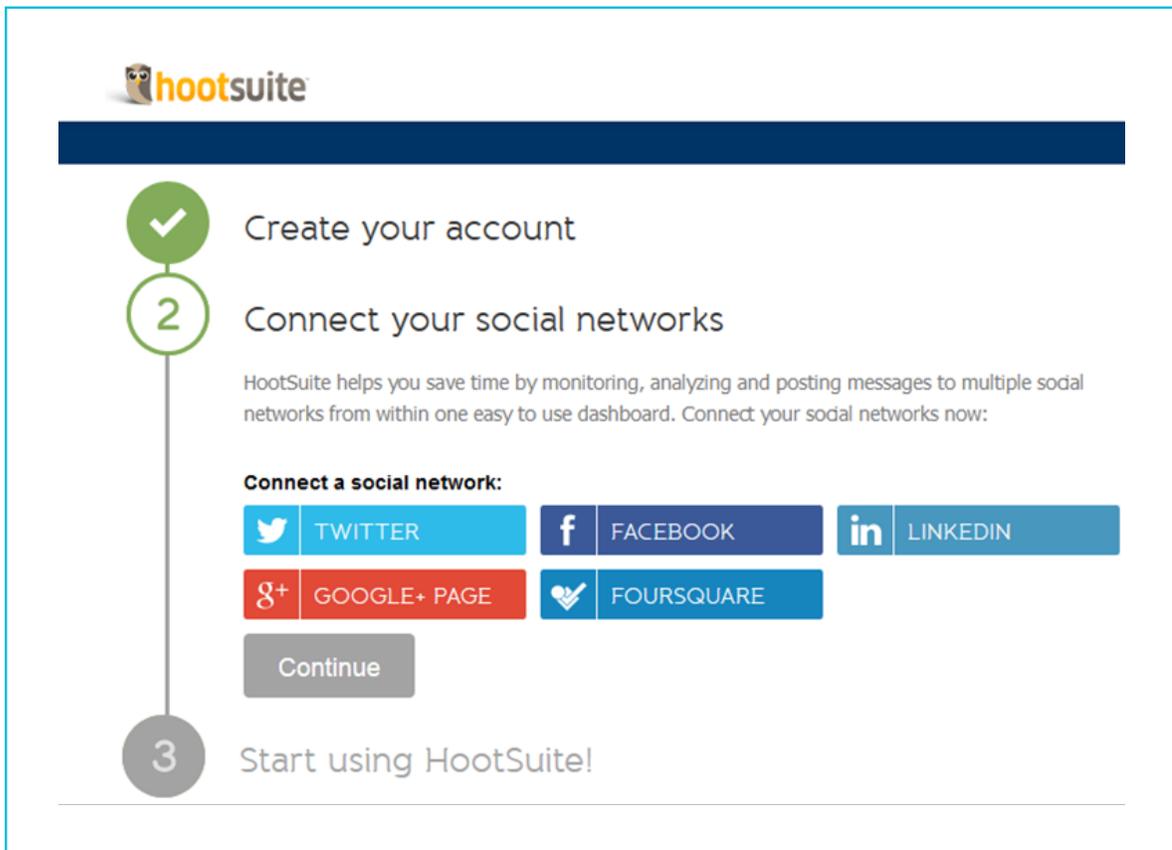
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### CREATE YOUR ACCOUNT

Visit <https://hootsuite.com/plans> and select "Get Started Now" under the free plan. All you need to do to sign-up is enter your name, email address and password. We generally recommend that the email address of one of the partners is used so the account can be accessed even if a member of your support team leaves the firm after setting up the account.

## 2 CONNECT YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA ACCOUNTS

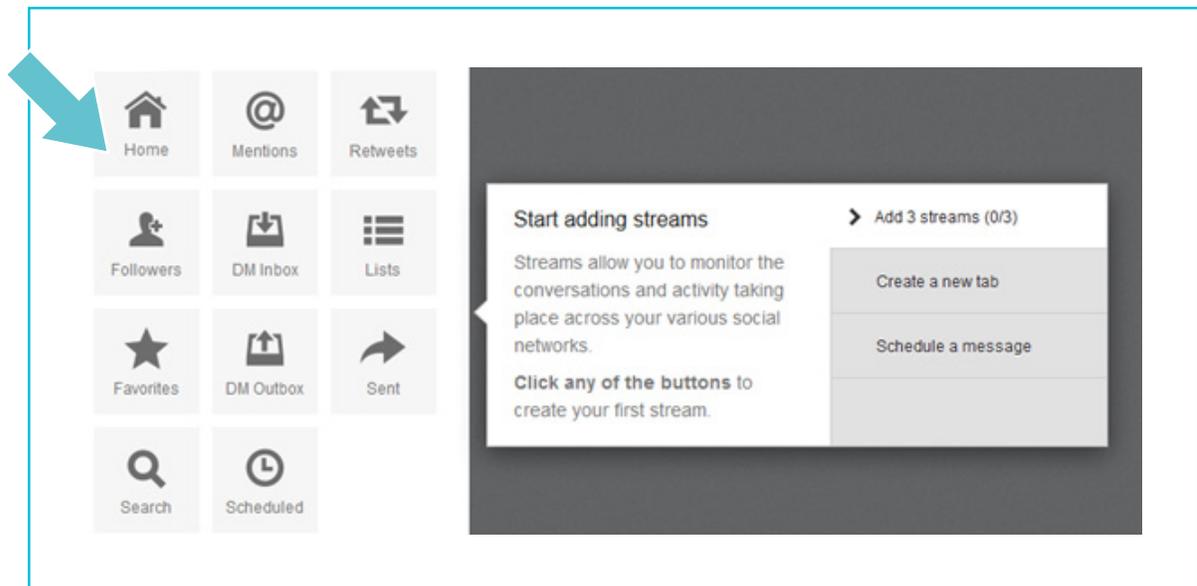
After submitting your basic contact information, you will see the following screen where you will be able to link your social media accounts to your new HootSuite account.



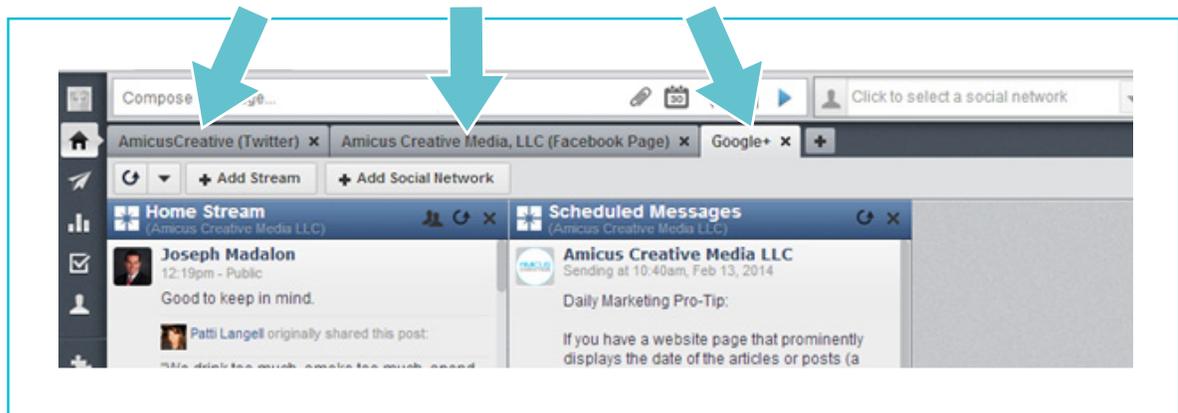
Please note that you will have to provide HootSuite with the username and password for each of your social media networks; this is the only way that the service will be able to access your various accounts and automatically post to them when a new blog entry is published on your website. As each is added you will find that they appear in a list which is labeled "Connected." After you have added each of your networks, select the "Continue" button as seen in the graphic above. You will automatically be taken to your new dashboard where you can control all of your accounts.

### 3 SET-UP YOUR STREAMS

Once you are in your dashboard, you will be asked to add your streams which essentially allows you to customize what you would like to see when you log into your account. Users most commonly add their home stream which allows them to see all of their connections' updates (this is important so you can respond and see content of interest). The diagram below shows this home feed which is a good starting point.



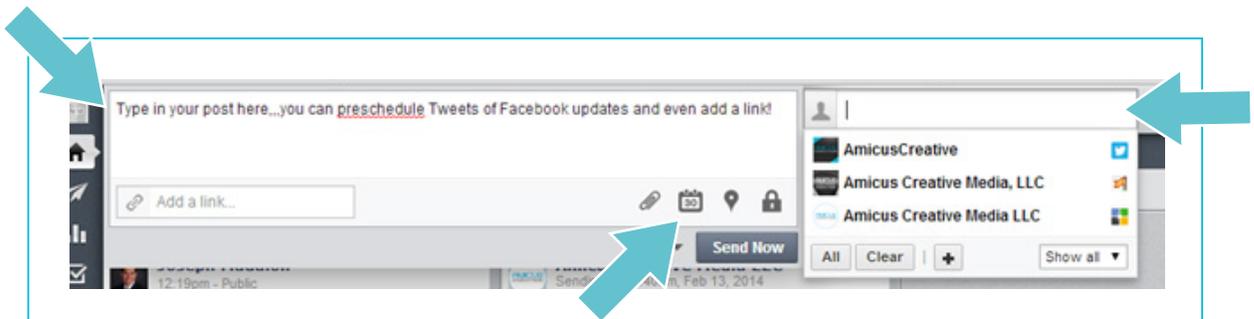
We recommend that you follow the HootSuite Tour to get this all set up. Of course, all of these streams can easily be changed as you get more familiar with the tool. Once you are all set-up, you will see a screen with all of your accounts. The below graphic is an example of this. You can easily navigate between accounts using the tabs at the top:



## 4 PRACTICE POSTING TO YOUR ACCOUNTS

With all of your accounts set up, you can easily post an update to one or all of them in just a few minutes. At the top, you will find a compose box where you can write your message, select your intended networks and even schedule the update to fire off at a later date.

First, type in your message then click on the drop-down menu on the right labeled “Click to select a social network” to choose where it will post. The following diagram depicts this process.

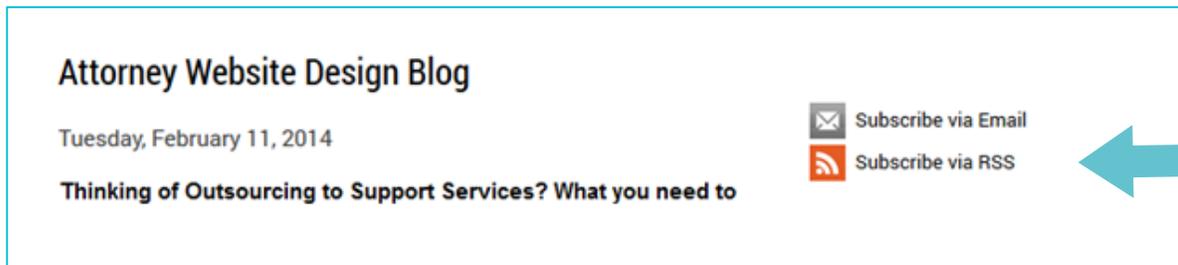


## 5 ADD YOUR RSS FEED LINKING YOUR BLOG TO YOUR HOOTSUITE ACCOUNT

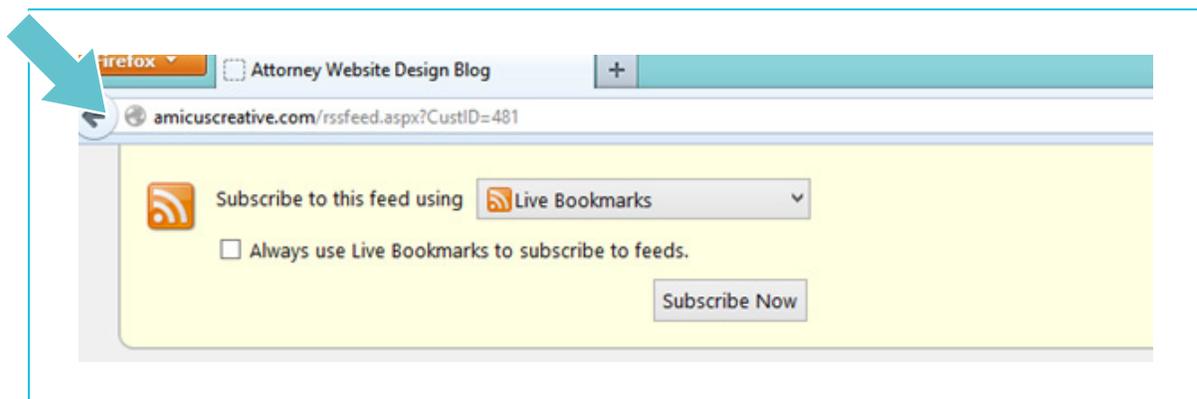
HootSuite allows you to add an RSS feed to automatically share posts to 2 of your social network accounts. If you have more than two accounts, you will want to upgrade to HootSuite Pro which allows auto-posting to additional networks.

In order to add your Blog RSS feed, you will first need to identify the URL for your site's RSS feed. To do this, visit your blog page on your website (we recommend using Firefox or Internet Explorer for this as Chrome requires a special plugin for RSS feeds) and click on the “Subscribe via RSS” link on the top right hand corner. Upon doing that, you will find a new page with your blog feed appears. The URL in the browser URL field is your RSS URL. The following diagrams are screenshots of where this information will be located. You can always call the Amicus Creative support team for this information too.

## STEP 1 OF ADDING YOUR RSS FEED



## STEP 2 OF ADDING YOUR RSS FEED



Once you have located your blog's RSS URL, copy it. You will need to paste this into your HootSuite Account.

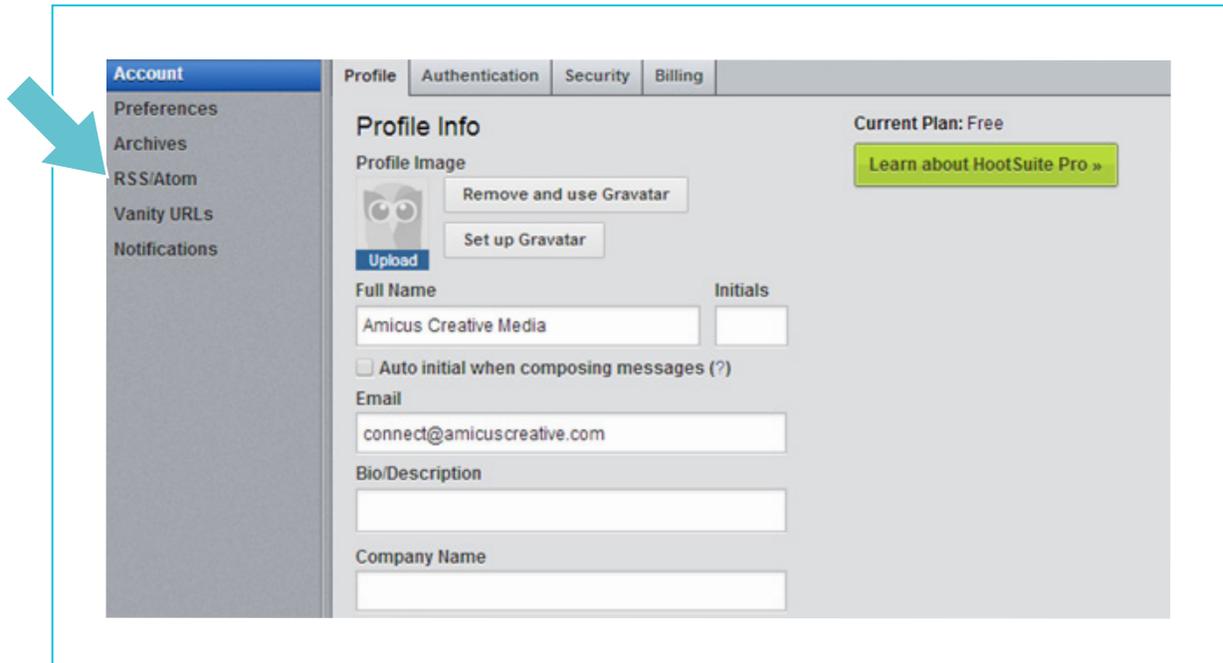
## STEP 3 OF ADDING YOUR RSS FEED

In your HootSuite account, click on the "Settings" icon on the right hand side of your control panel.



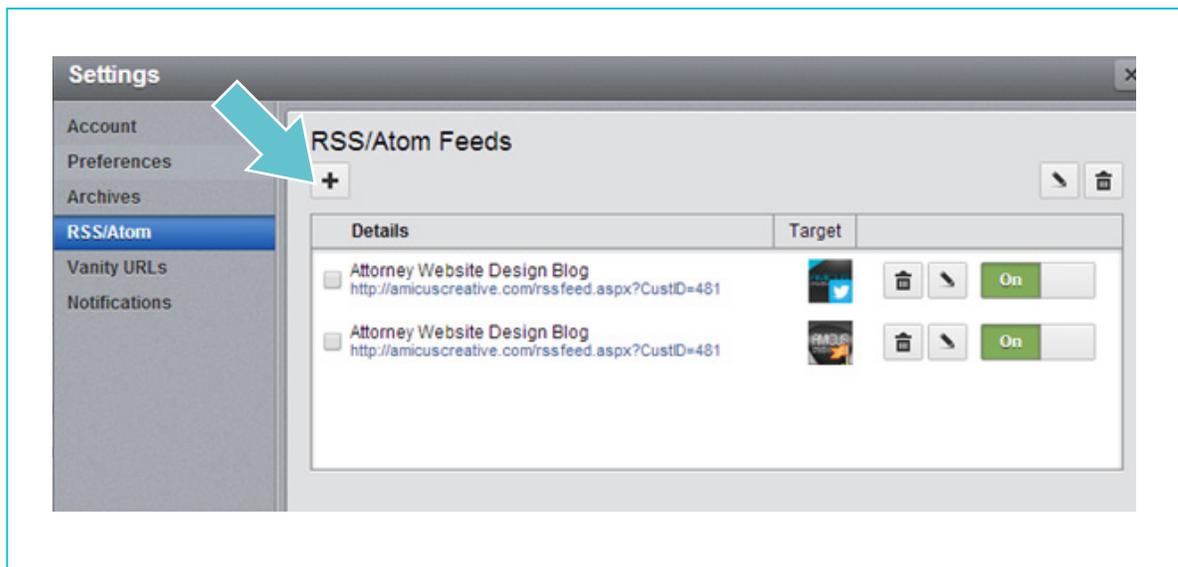
## STEP 4 OF ADDING YOUR RSS FEED

Within the settings window, you will find an item labeled "RSS/Atoms". Click on this option.



## STEP 5 OF ADDING YOUR RSS FEED

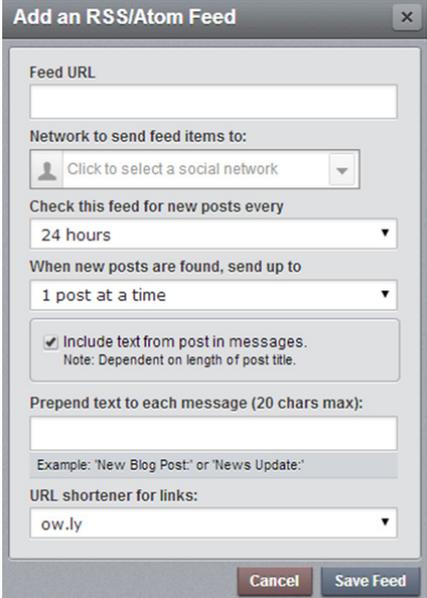
Click on the "+" symbol



## STEP 6 OF ADDING YOUR RSS FEED

Here you will simply paste in the URL for your blog feed and then select the two networks that this should automatically feed to. If you have upgraded to HootSuite Pro, you can select additional accounts. You can also tell the system how often the system should check your RSS feed for updates (we would recommend every 12 hours if you are posting daily). You also have the option to add in some text to accompany each link.

You will want to repeat this process for each social network you would like the blog automatically posted to.



Once these feeds have been set up, each time a new blog is posted to your website an update will be posted to the appropriate social network(s). Please note that there may be some delay from the time you post till the time you see the updates appear (this is because HootSuite only checks your feed every few hours).

## GENERAL SOCIAL MEDIA TIPS FOR SUCCESS

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### Successful social media marketing centers on regular engagement.

While posting links to your site content can be a useful syndication strategy, it will only drive people to your website if you actually have a following. The best way to gain a following is to engage, not just promote your practice with links to your work. Sign into your HootSuite account at least once a day to see what's going on with your networks. During this time, follow people of interest and comment/share other people's posts. This is the best way to establish a presence, and let people know that you have an account.

## 2 People are more likely to connect with a person rather than a company.

Whenever possible, set up a profile as an attorney, rather than as the firm.

## 3 You probably shouldn't hire an outside consultant to do it for you.

Our clients are often approached by consultants who will manage their social media campaigns for a monthly charge. They set up a Facebook page, establish the company page on LinkedIn and they keep the Twitter account up-to-date. Generally, the fees are astronomical (ranging from \$400 - \$800 per month) and include regular Facebook updates and if you're lucky—2 or 3 tweets daily. The consultants assure the firm that they will get them followers. Sounds great, right?

Here's the issue with those types of services: the point of social media is to engage and connect. What can a person who isn't even a member of your team have to offer the legal industry? The answer is not much. Often, these consultants tweet about local news stories pertaining to your area of practice or promote your blog posts but they don't connect. They may get your firm 1500 followers but the followers are for the most part junk—largely spam accounts that follow all those that follow them first. These accounts add nothing to your marketing strategies and if anything, they make your firm look bad.

## 4 Have some fun.

As you spend more time on social media, you'll find a lot of posts that share photos, funny videos and interesting articles. Don't be afraid to infuse some personality and share a photo of you at the homecoming game of your alma mater or post a fun fact that you heard on your drive into the office.

## 5 Merely having a social media account(s) doesn't help with SEO.

A lot of attorneys we work with erroneously believe that simply having an account on Facebook or Twitter will help improve their site's ranking. Unfortunately, it's just not that easy. The search engines are increasingly looking for "social signals" to help determine how you are associated with certain search queries, especially on networks like Google+ where they can clearly see what is shared or liked within the network. With that being said, this will only significantly impact your firm if you are social on the networks, attract a following and share high-quality content that gets noticed.