

# ASM Profile | George McKirdy of Astor Bake Shop

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POSTED BY TINFIELD IN ASTORIA SOCIAL MEDIA

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\*\*\* *originally posted on Astoria Social Media: 8 October 2012* \*\*\*

When it comes to running a business and promoting it on social media, Astoria business owners face a tricky logic problem:



Photo: Aleks Z. Photography

**Example:** *George runs a successful bakery-cafe. He pours all his time and energy into it—happily, because this is his passion. He’s on the move 24/7—shopping, baking, managing staff, and more. In order to help his business thrive, however, George must ALSO spend time promoting it on social media—sending Instagrams to his Twitter followers, writing about specials on Facebook, checking his reviews on Yelp, and more. **Question:** If George has a full-time job—running a bakery-café—how does he handle another, often time-consuming job: managing his social media?*

Since I started this blog in May, I’ve been wondering how small business owners deal with social media. How do you manage to run your business (whether it’s a bakeshop, a hair salon, or a retail store) AND keep up with the demands of social media engagement? How valuable do you think is to your bottom line? How much time do you spend on it? What

are the platforms you’re most comfortable with, and which do you think work best for you?

Recently I put these questions to George McKirdy, chef-owner of Astor Bake Shop on Astoria Boulevard. George told me he had only a moderate interest in social media for its own sake, but he keeps up with it because he knows it’s important for his business. Case in point: There was a stretch of time recently, over the summer, when he got caught up in other things—and his social media output fell off. “Customers mentioned it. They said they hadn’t seen anything new from me for awhile.” It’s hard for George to say whether it was just summer downtime or lack of social media engagement; but business slowed.

Conversely, he says, when he posts a photo of fresh cakes coming out of the oven (or savory lobster potpies), people come in and ask for them. Thanks to the immediacy of Twitter and Facebook, he can post these specials and people know exactly how fresh they really are. [Well, most do: One woman came in looking for a lobster pot pie several days after she saw it on Facebook and was dismayed to realize they were long gone. The whole “Get ’em while they last!” deal is real, thanks to this Twitter/FB immediacy.]



Photo: Aleks Z. Photography

In the Q&A that follows the “Digital Profile” below, George acknowledges that he’s a little hazy on some of the finer points of some platforms and simply doesn’t have time to fully invest in others. But for a super-busy business owner who’s learning as he goes, he’s doing a great job of figuring out what works best for Astor Bake Shop.

### **ASTOR BAKE SHOP// DIGITAL PROFILE**

**BUSINESS WEBSITE** Astor-Bakeshop.com

**FACEBOOK** Astor Bake Shop: Joined 5/28/10. 1,054 Likes • 65 talking about this • 873 were here

**TWITTER** George L. McKirdy @ AstorBakeShop: 315 tweets • 178 following • 293 followers. Favorites: Yes • Lists: No • Recent images: Yes. Custom background photo: Yes, of *The Queens Courier* “Best of the Boro 2012: Best Bakery” award

**YELP** Astor Bake Shop: 4 stars. Of 135 reviews: 40 5-stars • 49 4-stars • 24 3-stars • 17 2-stars • 5 1-star

**PINTEREST** Astor Bake Shop: 7 Boards • 5 Pins • 3 Likes • 33 Followers • 75 Following

**FOURSQUARE** Astor Bake Shop: First check-in: 2010. Total people: 583. Total check-ins: 1,759. Mayor: Jason B. (Yes, George knows the Mayor: “He’s a very regular customer.”)

**FLICKR** Astor Bake Shop’s Photostream. Joined Aug 2012

**LOCAL BLOG (& TRADITIONAL MEDIA) LOVE** Recent mentions in *Queens Love, We Heart Astoria* and *Why Leave Astoria?!* Featured in *BORO’s* “2012 Restaurant Guide Issue.” Named one of the top 5 burgers in Queens by George Motz in *Edible Queens*. Voted “Best Bakery” in *The Queens Courier’s* “Best of the Boro 2012”

[Digital snapshot taken Thursday, October 4, 2012 at 7:30pm]

**Q&A with  
GEORGE**



Photo: Aleks Z. Photography

**McKIRDY**

**Do you like spending time on social media? Or do you feel it takes away from your 'main' job?**

*“If I had nothing else to do I’d love it, but it is a job within itself when using it for business. I try to make my post and get off the site so I can get back to more demanding tasks.”*

**Which one is your favorite forum?**

*“A while ago I would have said FB and Yelp. Now it’s FB and Instagram.”*

**Which social platform came first, or did you start them all together?**

*“FB came first, but as a personal page that I morphed into a business page once the business was opened. (I had a Myspace page too, but rarely used for personal use and never for business). Then came the website then Twitter. Then Yelp, foursquare and Flickr.”*

**George on FACEBOOK and INSTAGRAM:**

*“I try to at least make a daily effort to check our FB page. If I can get something noteworthy up, I’ll take a photo and write up a few words—as often as possible. Lately I’ve been posting a lot of photos to Instagram because they’ve made it very easy to link my other social media (Twitter, FB, Flickr, foursquare), so with one Instagram photo I cover more social media platforms.”*

**George on TWITTER:**



George L. McKirdy @AstorBakeShop

25 Sep

Another seasonal addition to our menu, cinnamon apple cheesecake. @AstorBakeShop [instagr.am/p/QBbD1VQMAq/](https://www.instagram.com/p/QBbD1VQMAq/)

📍 Hide photo ↩ Reply 🔄 Retweet ★ Favorite



Another seasonal addition to our menu, cinnamon apple cheesecake.

📷 Instagram @instagram · Follow

Twitter isn't George's favorite forum, but he does an excellent job of keeping followers up-to-date on "Get 'em before they're gone!" seasonal specials

*“Twitter always seemed vague to me. Little blurbs that you always seem to have to investigate more or be privy to some inside info to know what people are referring to. The original format with the lack of pictures wasn't much help either.”*

### **George on foursquare:**

*“I first got onto foursquare because of a guest who came in and turned me on to it about a year ago. I haven't really kept up with it and am a little vague on some of its functions.”*

## Astor Bake Shop

76 Photos



Here's a look at ABS's foursquare photo gallery. There are currently 76 photos and 33 tips. [Tip from Mayor Jason B.: "Breakfast is thoughtfully served until 5pm. Not all of us are up by 11. :)"]



Astor Bake Shop gets a lot of love from local bloggers. Shown here is a photo from a Queens Love blog post by Bradley Hawks, who calls the Astor Burger "arguably one of the most delicious in the whole city."

**George on PINTEREST:**

*“I just signed on to Pinterest in May, after receiving an invite from my sous chef. Really don’t know enough about it to comment. I’m still not an avid Pinterest user, though if I could learn more about it I might be. Time constraints...”*

#### **George on YELP:**

*“It took me a while to complete our Yelp profile. I didn’t have the free time and didn’t want to rush through it and make mistakes. I’ve responded to both good and bad reviews, but focus more on responding to anything negative.” **Have you gotten any feedback that has helped you improve your business?** “Absolutely.”*

#### **George on YOUTUBE: Any thoughts or plans?**

*“I’d love to post short cooking clips or some of our food events on it, but haven’t made the time to add ‘filming’ to my to-do list.”*

**Many thanks to George for taking the time to discuss his thoughts on social media with me. (And for being brave enough to be the first Astoria Social Media// Profile subject!)**

**Thanks, too, to Astoria-based photographer Aleksandra Zganiacz. For some really gorgeous, truly artsy photos of our area, see the “Gallery-New” page of her website at [www.AleksZphotography.com](http://www.AleksZphotography.com).**

***For further reading about Astor Bake Shop and George’s professional background, check out Nancy Ruhling’s excellent interview with him in “Astoria Characters: The Celebrity Pastry Chef,” published a few weeks after he opened the shop in June 2010.***



Have a favorite Astoria business you’d like to see interviewed for a future Astoria Social Media//Profile? Please let me know! Suggest a business via Twitter (handle: TracyInfield) or email me: tinfield at hotmail.com.

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