



Social Media Marketing For Small Business

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The power of social networking is in building relationships. Think of the ways you build relationships in real life and then how to replicate or enhance that experience online. You're building trust. You're providing some free answers and advice. If you're compelling enough to follow, you'll get followed. If you're followed, you're going to build trust and relationships and THAT is what ends up making your business the choice when it comes time to purchase what you sell.

The Small Business Social Media Success Cycle

1. Do you need to participate?
2. Choose your platform(s)
3. Make a plan
4. ENGAGE!
5. Measure results
6. Course correct
7. Return to step 2

Do you need to participate?

Ask yourself these questions:

1. Are your customers on social media? According to marketingtechblog.com, "Social networking is one of the top online activities in the United States, with the average American spending 37 minutes per day on social media." Pew Research has the data:
<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/10/08/social-networking-usage-2005-2015/>
2. Is your brand, product or service going to benefit from broader exposure?
3. Is effective marketing that is very cash inexpensive attractive to you?
4. Do you have time, or are you willing to use a human resource in your organization, to engage in social media to benefit your company?

If your answers are yes, you need social media as part of your marketing plan!

Choose your platform(s)

There are two sides to this coin:

Who is your company? What platforms make the most sense for your voice? Are any of your marketing team members particularly skilled at building an audience on one platform over another? How many staff hours do you have available to maintain your efforts? Answering these questions will help you determine how many channels to start with, as well as which ones fit your needs best.

Who is your average customer? Each social media platform draws a specific demographic group. There's no point in wasting resources fishing in a pond with the wrong catch.

If you haven't yet created a buyer persona, start there. Creating buyer personas will help you determine what kind of content you need; set the tone, style, and delivery strategies for your content; target the topics you should be writing about; and understand where buyers find and consume information. A great how-to can be found at <https://blog.bufferapp.com/marketing-personas-beginners-guide>

Once you've got a better understanding of the kinds of people who are buying products, research where these people spend time on social media (and, since demographics often shift, do this at least once a year).

Pew Research has an OUTSTANDING article with a buyer persona for each social media platform. Match your customer persona to these and you'll know exactly which media will most benefit your business.

<http://www.pewinternet.org/2015/08/19/the-demographics-of-social-media-users/>

Overwhelmed by data? Here's a quick, non-scientific breakdown of who uses which network:

- Teens are all over Vine, Snapchat, YouTube, Tumblr, and Instagram.
- Crafters, project-ers (or wanna be crafters and project-ers) young and soon-to-be parents and soon-to-be brides are the core of Pinterest.
- Young parents, grandparents, and all ages in between can be found on Facebook (this is a good starting point for most businesses).
- Those disgruntled by Facebook are on Google+
- Business networkers and leaders rule LinkedIn.
- Influencers and bloggers love Twitter and Tumblr.

Make a plan

Without a plan, you will absolutely, without a doubt, waste time online. Social media is ENGAGING and it can be challenging to stay focused on your purpose when using the platforms for marketing. Set aside personal social media time and train yourself to engage as a person during that time.

Set goals for engagement. For example, by x date, my business page will have x people liking it and an average of x number of people engaging with a post.

Editorial calendars are indispensable in setting your course to achieve these goals. They map out what types of posts you'll make on which days of a given month. They can include who is responsible and include content creation tasks so you have the information and images you need on posting day.

An editorial calendar not only keeps you on track to meeting your goals, it saves you time and delivers a more consistent brand message to your customer. Quicksprout has an infographic highlighting the features and benefits of this excellent tool: <https://www.searchenginejournal.com/need-social-media-calendar-create-one/132518/>

In my own business, I start with a pencil and monthly view calendar print-out. You can grab a freebie at www.timeanddate.com. For the first 1-2 months, this is my tool of choice. When it comes time for multiple people to be sharing the editorial calendar, I switch to a Google calendar where it is easy to share and assign tasks. A bonus of the Google calendar is the ability to layer multiple calendars into one view. For example, I have a personal calendar, an office projects calendar, and multiple client project and editorial calendars all connected. I can turn on and off the various calendars from showing, allowing me to see what I need to see on any given day.

ENGAGE!

Now that you know which social media platforms you're going to use, have set goals and begun mapping out your editorial calendar, it's time to brush up on the particulars of how to get the most out of each channel you've chosen.

I have great news for you. The folks over at Constant Contact have written beginners guides for:

[Facebook 101](#)

[Pinterest 101](#)

[YouTube 101](#)

[Twitter 101](#)

[Instagram 101](#)

[Snapchat 101](#)

[LinkedIn 101](#)

[Google+ 101](#)

[Blogging 101](#)

[Online Listings and Reviews](#)

Here are some tips and links to help you stay on track:

“Share the correct mix of content. On every social network, you need a solid mix of self-promotion, testimonials, and randomness as well as original content that’s of pure value to your readers. Self-promotion includes direct links to your website, peeks behind the scenes, and news about your company. Testimonials can be pulled from a Yelp page, an email, or a blog or article endorsing your product. Randomness can include funny photos, holiday wishes, quotes, and shared content from other resources that is interesting and relevant. It’s time to get creative, people. This is when a freelance writer can come in handy.”

<https://contently.com/strategist/2014/11/18/social-media-101-10-tips-for-small-businesses-just-getting-started/>

Images are critically essential to your social media success. Want to know why?

<https://blog.bufferapp.com/a-complete-guide-to-creating-awesome-visual-content>

April 30, 2016: **“...video is the most effective way to reach users in Facebook’s newsfeed, with video content driving more than twice as much reach in Facebook as photo posts.”**

<http://fivesparrows.com/marketing-on-facebook-what-not-to-do/>

“Turns out, there’s tons of actionable, research-backed advice on **how to create social media images that get shared**—the ideal colors, fonts, text, and more, all leveraging what we know about design, psychology, and the Internet to **get more shares and engagement.** “

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/best-typography-colors-templates-used-highest-converting-social-media-images/134539/>

Need a great **image editor** anyone can use? <http://www.picmonkey.com/>

“What Makes a Shareable Social Media Image?

Emotion: When your readers feel it, they’ll share it.

Relevance: Your image should not only fit your niche, but fit your audience, too.

Colors: Using the right colors, to get maximum shares.

Typography: Choosing a font that not only looks good, but also says what you’re trying to say.

Hashtags and Text: Using the right words, phrases, and hashtags that will make your audience interact.”

<https://www.searchenginejournal.com/best-typography-colors-templates-used-highest-converting-social-media-images/134539/>

Drink the Kool-Aid. Every [social media platform] has a unique presence online. There will be hashtags. There may be tweet-ups. There could even be a meme. It’s your job to research this kind of thing so you can become a part of your community. They will welcome you with open arms when you play the game and look at social media as a two-way conversation. You’ll get more followers and make important connections in the process.” <https://contently.com/strategist/2014/11/18/social-media-101-10-tips-for-small-businesses-just-getting-started/>

Measure results

If you don't take the time to measure the result of your social media activity, you won't know where to increase your efforts or where to quit investing time and money in things that aren't working.

One way to measure engagement is to create a point system that grades the results speaking to your goals. For example, a Facebook share is more helpful in terms of getting your message seen by potential followers than a "Like". We favor a grading scale system where a "Like" is worth one point, while a share is worth five points. Tallying up the engagement each posts receives according to your grading scale will show you what types of posts are performing best for your business.

Facebook Insights does this – and more for you. Many social media platforms offer analytics tools that can help you know if you are meeting your goals and third-party tools are available to give you a more thorough understanding of your results.

What's important is that you set aside a block of time every week or month to review the data you've captured and use it to improve your efforts going forward.

Course correct

Using your insights and analytics, go back to your goals and editorial calendar and make adjustments. Were your goals reasonable? Were the types of posts you thought would engage those that were most shared and commented on? If you changed "video post Wednesday" to "video post Sunday" would it get more engagement?

Now that you've gotten your feet wet, it's time to check in. Are you doing any of these?

25 Ways to Look Dumb on Facebook

<https://beachdog.com/25-ways-to-look-dumb-on-facebook>

Return to step 2

Each time you loop through these steps, they'll become easier. What's important is your commitment to cycling through them at regular intervals. Do so and you'll see your social media engagement growing continuously.

Something magical happens when you reach 2500 followers on a Facebook page. Doing the work to get there can be arduous but, once you hit that mark, you'll realize all that pushing on the flywheel was worth it.

Call if you'd like help!

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